BRITAIN AND THE WORLD

BRITISH POLICY IN THE PERSIAN GULF, 1961–1968

Conceptions of Informal Empire

HELENE VON BISMARCK

Britain and the World

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To Julian

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Series Editors' Preface

British Policy in the Persian Gulf, 1961–1968: Conceptions of Informal Empire is the seventh book in the *Britain and the World* series, edited by the British Scholar Society and published by Palgrave Macmillan. From the sixteenth century onward, Britain's influence on the world became progressively profound and far-reaching, in time touching every continent and subject, from Africa to South America and archaeology to zoology. Although the histories of Britain and the world became increasingly intertwined, mainstream British history still neglects the world's influence upon domestic developments and British overseas history remains largely confined to the study of the British Empire. This series takes a broader approach to British history, seeking to investigate the full extent of the world's influence on Britain and Britain's influence on the world.

Helene von Bismarck's book examines British policy in the Persian Gulf between June 1961, when Britain granted independence to Kuwait, and January 1968, when Britain announced its intention to end its military presence in the Gulf by 1971. *British Policy in the Persian Gulf* is the study of a curious exception in the history of decolonization: at a time when Britain was rapidly winding up its empire, sometimes fighting wars in the process, Britain's position in the Gulf seemed as secure as ever and the idea of withdrawal was but a distant thought. The book argues that British policy during this time was shaped by a popular conception of 'informal empire' held by British officials in London and the Gulf: that Britain's rights, influence, and responsibilities in Eastern Arabia extended well beyond its treaty-based obligations; and that Kuwait and Oman, although independent, were in fact an integral part of Britain's diplomatic and security apparatus in the region. It uncovers a good deal of new and interesting material in the National Archives on the subject – most notably Britain's involvement in the depositions of Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah in 1965 and Shaikh Shakhbut

of Abu Dhabi in 1966 – offering a fresh perspective that will be of great interest to historians of the Gulf and the British Empire in the 1960s.

Editors, *Britain and the World*:

James Onley, *University of Exeter*
A. G. Hopkins, *University of Texas at Austin*
Gregory Barton, *The Australian National University*
Bryan Glass, *Texas State University*

Photographs

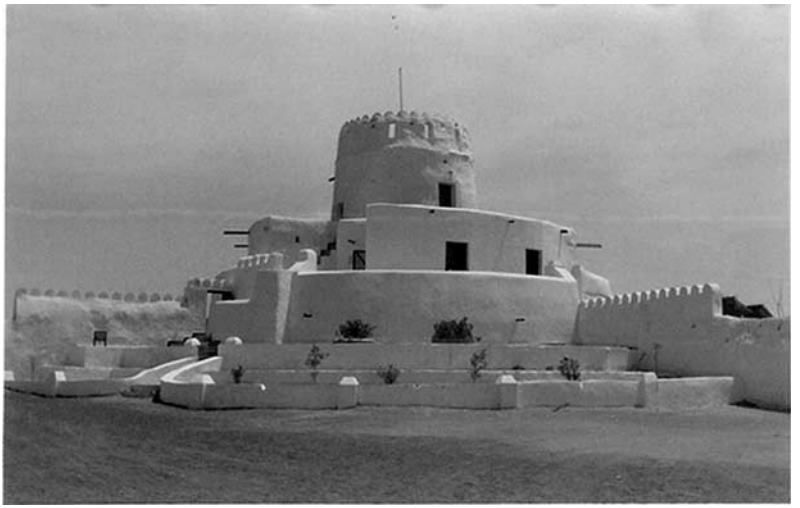
Sir William Luce talking to Shaikh Rashid bin Said Al-Maktoum of Dubai, c.1961–1966. Photo from Hugh Nicklin's collection.

From left to right: Shaikh Rashid bin Said Al-Maktoum of Dubai, James Craig, Shaikh Shakhbut bin Sultan Al-Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, Hugh Boustead, Shaikh Ahmad bin Rashid Al-Mualla of Umm al-Qaiwain, Shaikh Muhammad bin Hamad Al-Sharqi of Fujairah, Colonel Freddie De Butts, Shaikh Saqr bin Sultan Al-Qasimi of Sharjah, and Shaikh Rashid bin Humaid Al-Nuaimi of Ajman, c.1962–1964. Photo from Glencairn Balfour-Paul's collection.

H. R. H. The Duke of Edinburgh during a visit to the Gulf, with Shaikh Saqr bin Sultan Al-Qasimi of Sharjah, Glencairn Balfour-Paul, and Colonel Freddie De Butts 1965. Photo by P. C. Aitkens.

Hugh Boustead, political agent in Abu Dhabi, at his farewell parade 1965. Photo by P. C. Aitkens.

Bagpipes and drums in Manama, Bahrain, in 1966. Photo by P. C. Aitkens.



Jahili Fort in Al Ain, Abu Dhabi. Photo by P. C. Aitkens.

Sergeant Ali Batti being presented with his George Medal by Sir William Luce in 1963. Photo by P.C. Aitkens.

Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan on his wedding day in 1961. Photo by P. C. Aitkens.

P. C. Aitkens' photos can be found at https://secure.flickr.com/groups/tos/.

Hugh Nicklin's photos can be found at http://trucialomanscouts.org/TOS/Welcome.html.

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Writing a book is a solitary business, and it does not get easier when you do it in a language that is not your own. I am deeply grateful to William Roger Louis, Kiran K. Patel, James Onley, Jason Parker, Anne Neubauer, Katharina Droste zu Vischering, Bryan Glass, Pillarisetti Sudhir, Dane Kennedy, Marian Barber, Miriam Hauss Cunningham, and Philippa Levine for their invaluable support and advice offered at different stages of this project. I also thank Lindy Ayubi for the fantastic job she did of copy-editing, and the entire team at Palgrave Macmillan, especially my editor, Jennifer McCall. Special thanks are due to Jenny Balfour-Paul, Peter Aitkens, and Hugh Nicklin for allowing me to use their photo material. If there are any mistakes in this book, they are, of course, my own.

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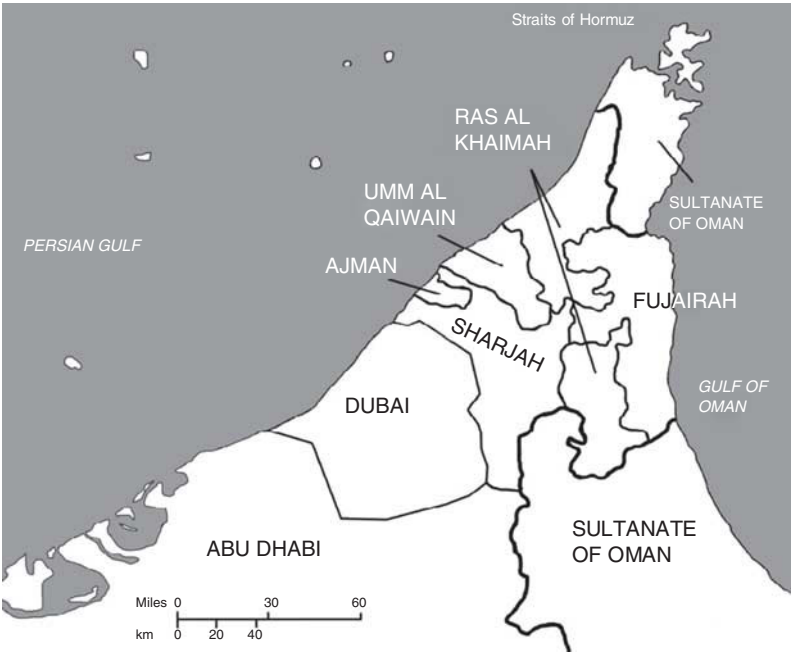
Abbreviations

ADMA	Abu Dhabi Marine Area Company
ADPC	Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company
AIOC	Anglo-Iranian Oil Company
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BP	British Petroleum
CAB	Cabinet Office
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
CIA	Central Intelligence Agency
COS	Chiefs of Staff
DEFE	Ministry of Defence
FO	Foreign Office
FRUS	Foreign Relations of the United States
GCMG	Grand Cross of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George
HMG	Her Majesty's Government
IPC	Iraqi Petroleum Company
KCMG	Knight Commander of the Order of Saint Michael and Saint George
KFAED	Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development
KOC	Kuwait Oil Company
KSO	Kuwait State Office
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration (USA)
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
OPEC	Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries
QPC	Qatar Petroleum Company
PREM	Prime Minister's Office
RAF	Royal Air Force
RG	Record Group
SEATO	Southeast Asia Treaty Organization
T	Treasury
TSDO	Trucial States Development Office
TSDF	Trucial States Development Fund
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UAR	United Arab Republic
UN	United Nations

Maps

Map of the Arabian Peninsula, ca. 1963



Map of the Trucial States, 1963

Introduction

Books about the final years of the British Empire in any given overseas dependency frequently begin with an anecdote about withdrawal: a prime minister announcing Britain's projected departure; a flag being lowered and another one raised; a British ship leaving a foreign port forever. The trouble with the use of such images – powerful though they may be – is that they often reflect a tendency to concentrate exclusively on the reasons for British retreat, with the result that what emerges is a somewhat retrospective view of the last years of the British Empire. This book takes a different approach in its analysis of Britain's policy in the Persian Gulf from 1961 to 1968.[1] Instead of discussing the reasons for the eventual withdrawal from the region, it examines how Britain conducted its relations with the Gulf States while its presence in the area was still intact. Its content is focused on the political strategies that were designed to protect Britain's substantial economic, political, and strategic interests in the Persian Gulf during the period between the independence of Kuwait in 1961 and the decision by the Wilson Government in January 1968 to relinquish Britain's special position in the area as part of the general retreat from East of Suez.

In many ways the Persian Gulf is a perfect example of the central dilemma that is inherent in the study of British imperialism during the twentieth century: that it is not only 'difficult to say exactly when empire did end, but what precisely that empire was.'[2] This problem results from the fact that the British Empire was not merely a large group of constitutionally dependent territories held together by a formal allegiance to the British Crown, but also a global phenomenon that had been created gradually over a period of four centuries and that was characterized by a great degree of flexibility and pragmatism

on the British side.[3] British imperialism, which can best be defined as a deliberate 'incursion into the sovereignty of another state', took on many different forms.[4] The establishment of colonies was but one way to extend Britain's hegemony over territories and keep rival powers out. As a result, the British Empire included colonies, constitutionally independent countries and territories with only limited sovereignty, like the British protected states of the Persian Gulf: Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras-al Khaimah, Umm al Qaiwain, and Fujairah.[5]

The legal relationship between Britain and the protected states was defined by a series of treaties that were concluded in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[6] These limited the independence of the protected states and the sovereignty of their rulers, and committed the British Government to defending the shaikhdoms against foreign aggression. Unlike the British protected states of the Persian Gulf, the State of Kuwait, and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman were, at least constitutionally, two fully independent and sovereign countries during the period examined in this study. However, this book argues that British policy towards the protected states from 1961 to 1968 can only be understood if it is put into the context of Britain's relations with Kuwait and Oman. Britain played an important role in both countries during the 1960s.[7] The British Government remained committed to defending Kuwait against foreign aggression and maintained Royal Air Force (RAF) staging posts and airfields in Oman as part of its substantial military presence in the Persian Gulf.[8]

The analysis in this book of Britain's policy in the Persian Gulf is based on a more general observation of the workings of the British Empire: the fact that, to the British Government, the importance of a dependency was defined not by its constitutional status, but by Britain's strategic, economic, and political interests there.[9] Therefore, the relationship between Britain and a dependent territory cannot be properly understood if the analysis concentrates exclusively on the constitutional connection between them. The legal relationship explains neither the degree of control exercised by the metropolis on the dependent territory, nor the motivation, dynamics, and methods of British imperialism in that particular country. A more promising way to examine Britain's policies towards its dependencies is to analyse the conceptions held by the relevant policy-makers of the role played by Britain in those dependencies. If one seeks, as a historian, to understand the political strategies that were developed by the British Government for a certain part of the empire, one has to put oneself in the place of the people who developed

these strategies and understand the alternatives they faced at the time. The choices made by the British policy-makers were not based upon, or informed by, an objective view of Britain's relationship with the dependency in question. Their decisions resulted from their very personal conceptions of that relationship and of Britain's interests, rights, and responsibilities in the dependency. It follows that, in order to understand British policy in any part of the empire at any given time, the historian has to examine the conceptions of empire upon which this policy was based.

Between 1961 and 1968, Britain's Persian Gulf policy was to a very large degree initiated and implemented by civil servants, not politicians. The influence of government ministers remained relatively minor. No fewer than five different secretaries of state were in charge of the Foreign Office during the period in question and none of them had a very decisive influence on British policy in the Persian Gulf.[10] This book, therefore, concentrates on the historical actors who were responsible for running the day-to-day affairs that shaped Britain's relationship with the Persian Gulf states: the civil servants in the Arabian Department of the Foreign Office in London, and the British diplomats or 'men on the spot' who were stationed in the area. It examines their perception of the regional situation in the Persian Gulf, their definition of British interests in the area and their assessment of Britain's ability to protect these interests. It is important to note that the decision-makers who conducted Britain's relations with the Persian Gulf States between 1961 and 1968 never used the word 'empire' to describe Britain's role in the area. They referred to it as Britain's 'special position', or simply 'presence', in the Persian Gulf. However, this study will show that during the period in question, British policies resulted from a conception of what amounted to an informal empire that was based on far more than constitutional foundations. The officials responsible for the Persian Gulf frequently disagreed about the best ways to protect Britain's interests there, but there was, nonetheless, a consensus on the nature of Britain's role in the area. This role went far beyond Britain's formal treaty-based rights and commitments. The British policy-makers regarded Britain's position in the Persian Gulf as a complex, interdependent, and inseparable system that was defined by a complicated structure of economic and strategic interests, formal commitments, and informal privileges. These conceptions of informal empire provided the framework for the development of Britain's Persian Gulf policy between 1961 and 1968, and defined its dynamics and methods.

This study is based almost exclusively on British Government records from the National Archives in London, including documents from the Foreign Office, the Cabinet Office, the Treasury, the Ministry of Defence and the Prime Minister's Office.[11] Documents from the US National Archives and Records Administration at College Park in Maryland have been used as a supporting source.[12] British policy in the Persian Gulf during the 1960s has not received much attention by historians, with the result that the secondary literature is limited. There are a number of studies which analyse Britain's interests and policies in the Middle East and its relations with individual countries in the region.[13] These help to place Britain's policy towards Kuwait, Oman, and the protected states into context, but they do not dedicate much attention to it. An excellent analysis of the British involvement in the protected states until 1971 has been presented by Glencairn Balfour-Paul, the former political agent in Dubai. However, as a result of the 30-year rule limiting access to the National Archives in London, his study, which was published in 1991, is not based on government records, not even the ones he authored himself.[14] The Kuwait crisis of 1961 has been examined from several perspectives by other scholars, but its significant impact on Britain's strategic and political planning for the entire Persian Gulf has hitherto been overlooked.[15] Miriam Joyce has contributed a monograph on Britain and the Persian Gulf during the 1960s. While she illustrates local events in the area in detail, her study remains largely descriptive; nor does she analyse Britain's interests in the Persian Gulf or the political methods that were employed to protect these interests.[16]

The bulk of the existing historical research about the British presence in the Persian Gulf from 1961 to 1968 has concentrated on one central subject: the reasons for the eventual withdrawal from the region. Saki Dockrill and Simon C. Smith both argue that the decision was taken as a result of the series of Defence Reviews conducted by the British Government from 1965 onwards in reaction to Britain's long-term economic decline,[17] while William Roger Louis underlines the impact of the devaluation crisis of November 1967 that led to the plan to abandon Britain's military presence East of Suez altogether.[18] Jeffrey Pickering and Shohei Sato claim that the decision to leave the Persian Gulf was taken for essentially political reasons after a shift in power within the Labour Cabinet in November 1967.[19] The discussion of Britain's retreat from the Persian Gulf by other historians has resulted in a neglect of an equally relevant question: what were the motivations and methods of British imperial involvement in the Persian Gulf until the decision to withdraw from the area was taken in 1968? An analysis of Britain's last years in the

Persian Gulf which concentrates exclusively on the reasons for the eventual retreat is in danger of telling only one part of the story. Such a study easily falls into the trap of examining history prejudiced by hindsight. Until 1968, British policy-makers had to decide every day how Britain's relations with the Persian Gulf States were to be conducted. The political strategies they developed are the focus of this book.

1
Structural Foundations

1.1 Constitutional relations between Great Britain and the Persian Gulf States

It is not easy to define the constitutional relationship that existed between Great Britain and the states of the Persian Gulf before the former withdrew from the area in 1971. Certainly Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and the seven Trucial States never fitted into any of the categories of constitutional dependency that constituted Britain's formal empire: at no moment in history were they colonies, protectorates, condominiums, or mandate territories.[1] The situation was further complicated by the fact that each of these Gulf States had a different legal relationship with Britain. From the point of view of international law, while the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was always a fully independent state,[2] throughout Britain's long presence in the region, the constitutional status of the others was described differently by British officials and politicians, being variously referred to as protected states, dependencies, dependent states, and states in exclusive treaty relations with the British Government.

The term commonly used during the period with which this book is concerned – that is, 1961–1968, was 'independent states in special treaty relations with the United Kingdom'.[3] The vagueness of this description indicates that Britain's legal position vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf States was *sui generis* and unique within the British Empire.[4] It was the complex outcome of an evolution that had begun early in the nineteenth century, when the British East India Company was still empowered to conclude treaties in the name of the British Crown.[5] From 1858 to 1947 the British Government of India was responsible for relations with

the Gulf States; following Indian independence in 1947, the Foreign Office in London then took over.[6] Development of the legal connection between Britain and the Gulf States was deeply influenced by the flexibility and the pragmatism that characterized British imperial expansion in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[7] The consequence of this process was described by the British political agent in Dubai, Glencairn Balfour-Paul:

> [. . .] attempts by jurists to define the nature of a British Protected State have a somewhat ex post facto look. Indeed the indeterminate status of the Gulf Shaykhdoms wears in retrospect all the marks of that scrupulous imprecision characteristic of so many of Britain's imperial contrivances. Britain may be said to have made up the rules of the game as she went along, with the result that no one really knew what they were.[8]

His view was borne out by the numerous lists of Britain's undertakings and commitments in the Persian Gulf that were prepared by the Foreign Office during the 1960s. The constitutional situation was so complex that the British Government itself did not always know what it was officially entitled to do in the area. The relationship between Britain and the Gulf States was based on a combination of published and secret treaties, unofficial letters, and oral assurances.[9] With regard to their differing implications for the sovereignty of the Persian Gulf States, the agreements reached between their rulers and the British Government fell into two groups. The first included treaties that concerned the external relations of these states and the responsibilities that Britain had acquired in this respect. The second group consisted of agreements granting Britain specific rights to intervene in the internal affairs of the Persian Gulf States.

From the end of the eighteenth century, the East India Company felt that the Arabs of the Gulf represented an increasing threat to its trade with India through their frequent raiding and levying of tolls on the company's vessels.[10] To re-establish maritime tranquillity and put an end to these disturbing practices, which it regarded as acts of piracy, the company authorized naval expeditions into the Gulf and, in 1820, signed a General Treaty of Peace with the shaikhs of Ras al-Khaima, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, and Umm al-Quwain.[11] When this treaty proved to be ineffective in ending maritime violence in the Gulf, the East India Company mediated a series of truces at sea among the leading shaikhs of the area, a development that culminated on 4 May 1853 with the Treaty

of Perpetual Maritime Truce between the East India Company and the signatories of the General Treaty.[12]

The signing shaikhs promised that, should the perpetual peace agreed upon be broken, they would not themselves retaliate but would instead inform the East India Company authorities of the breach and await the company's mediation of the dispute. Article 3 of the treaty contained a specific undertaking by the East India Company to supervise a state of truce at sea,[13] and a naval squadron under the command of the company's resident was then assigned to patrol the Gulf and to enforce the treaty terms.[14] In requiring the parties to refrain from retaliating against external attacks, including even unprovoked acts of aggression, the Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Truce denied the local rulers any right of self-defence, while helping to install Britain's maritime hegemony in the Persian Gulf.[15] The Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Truce was initially concluded with only six states. However, this changed in 1952 when the British Government recognized Shaikh Muhammad bin Hamad as 'Ruler of the Shaikhdom of Fujairah under British protection',[16] and with the ruler's acceptance of the same commitments that bound the other six rulers to Britain. Fujairah became the seventh Trucial State, a name used by the British Government until 1971.[17] The term merely described the fact that the seven shaikhdoms shared the same constitutional relationship with Britain; it did not describe any formal links among them.[18] The name was dropped following Britain's withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and the founding of the United Arab Emirates in 1971.

While the General Treaty of 1820 and the Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Truce of May 1853 gave the British East India Company the right to enforce maritime tranquillity in the Persian Gulf, neither formally excluded any third party from the relationship between Britain and the rulers of the Trucial States.[19] This arrangement was sufficient to preserve the British interest in peace at sea in the Persian Gulf provided that no other external power intervened in the region's affairs. However, the situation changed towards the end of the nineteenth century when France, Russia, and Persia showed increasing interest in the states of the Persian Gulf. This intrusion into the affairs of the Persian Gulf represented a possible danger to the defence of Britain's Indian Empire and to the safety of imperial communications. Between 1865 and 1869, the British had established two telegraph lines through the Persian Gulf, one land-based, the other submarine, which had enabled much speedier contact between Britain and India. This had turned the Persian Gulf into a very important corridor for imperial communications and made it an area that was highly relevant to Britain's global strategy.[20] This strategic

interest motivated the British Government of India in December 1887 to conclude 'Exclusive Treaties' with the rulers of the Trucial States,[21] according to which the rulers promised not to enter into agreements with any foreign government except the British, not to allow any representative of a foreign power to reside inside their territory without British consent, and never to 'cede, sell, mortgage or give for occupation' any part of their territories, except to the British Government.[22]

These Exclusive Agreements, which were added to, instead of replacing, the Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Truce, formed the legal basis for the British position in the Gulf and remained valid until the final withdrawal of the British in 1971. The commitment of the Trucial rulers not to correspond or enter into treaty relations with any government other than that of Britain meant that the British themselves dealt with the external relations of the Trucial States. Until its decision in 1968 to withdraw from the Gulf, the British Government insisted that no foreign government should be allowed to open a diplomatic representation in the Trucial States. The rulers of the Trucial States were thus prevented from having contact with any other powers or from joining international organizations.[23] While none of the Trucial States – with the exception of Fujairah – had been put explicitly under Britain's protection, the British Government regarded Article 3 of the Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Truce, which had provided British supervision of the truce at sea, as an implicit commitment to defend the integrity of the Trucial States.[24]

The evolution of Bahrain's treaty relationship with Britain, though similar to those with the Trucial States, differed in some important points. Like the latter, Bahrain was admitted to the General Treaty of 1820 and thereby promised to abstain from piracy in the Persian Gulf.[25] However, it took no part in the development of the Trucial system in the area during the decades following the General Treaty. Instead, Shaikh Muhammad Al Khalifah concluded a Perpetual Treaty of Peace and Friendship with the British Government of India on 31 May 1861.[26] Unlike the Maritime Truce of 1853, this treaty contained an explicit British commitment to the defence of Bahrain, with the ruler promising in turn to end all warlike activities at sea.[27] In 1892, one week after the rulers of the Trucial shaikhdoms had signed their Exclusive Agreements, the Ruler of Bahrain concluded an identical treaty with Britain.[28]

The constitutional link between Qatar and Britain was more recent in origin than the links with Bahrain or the seven Trucial shaikhdoms. The East India Company and later the British Government of India had regarded Qatar as a dependency of Bahrain during the nineteenth

century and, therefore, saw no need to make a shaikh of the Qatari peninsula sign the Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Truce or an Exclusive Agreement.[29] Only after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War was Qatar formally incorporated in the system of British protection in the Persian Gulf.[30] In the Treaty of 3 November 1916, the Ruler of Qatar accepted the commitments made by Bahrain and the Trucial States through the General Treaty and the various maritime truce treaties. He also promised not to conduct relations with countries other than Britain or to allow diplomats or representatives of other powers to reside within his territory. This undertaking enabled Britain to conduct Qatar's relations with the outside world on behalf of the ruler until 1971. As a *quid pro quo*, the British Government of India promised formally to protect Qatar against all external aggression.[31]

Like Qatar, Kuwait was never part of Britain's Trucial system in the Persian Gulf. Until the end of the nineteenth century, the British regarded Kuwait as a dependency of the Ottoman Empire. Since the Kuwaitis had not been involved in the maritime struggles in the Gulf during the nineteenth century, there was no reason to incorporate Kuwait into the Trucial system or to challenge the Turkish claim.[32] However, due to increasing German and Russian involvement in the region towards the end of the nineteenth century, the British changed their attitude: as Sir Arthur Godley, permanent under-secretary at the India Office, famously remarked, Britain did not want Kuwait, but neither did it want anybody else to have it.[33] Therefore the British Government of India, represented by the political resident, Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm J. Meade, concluded an Exclusive Agreement with Shaikh Mubarak on 23 January 1899, according to which 'Kuwait undertook not to receive agents or representatives of other powers or to alienate territory without prior British consent.'[34] What the British offered in return remained vague: the Amir of Kuwait was promised the 'good offices' of the British Government, without further specification as to what these offices included[35]; nor was there any formal commitment by Britain to defend Kuwait militarily. Only with the outbreak of the First Wold War did the British promise to protect Kuwait against foreign aggression.[36]

In June 1961 an Exchange of Letters between the British Government and the Ruler of Kuwait formally abrogated the Exclusive Agreement of 1899.[37] The new agreement stressed that both sides wished for continued good and close relations, and provided for consultations on subjects of mutual concern. It also confirmed the process of Kuwait's acquiring independence, which had started in 1959 when the Amir insisted on conducting Kuwait's external relations with its Arab neighbours himself

and began to apply for full membership for Kuwait in international organizations.[38] While the 1961 agreement formally confirmed Kuwait's independence and full sovereignty, it did not end the military protection that Britain had extended to Kuwait since 1914. The Exchange of Letters stated that 'nothing in these conclusions shall affect the readiness of Her Majesty's Government to assist the Kuwaiti Government if the latter requests such assistance.'[39]

Britain's constitutional relationship with the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was different from that with the Trucial States, Bahrain, Qatar, and Kuwait. Between 1961 and 1968 the sultanate was a fully independent and sovereign state which had not been formally granted British protection.[40] The British Government had never invited Oman to join the system of maritime truce in the Persian Gulf, nor had the sultan ever entered into an Exclusive Agreement comparable to those signed by the rulers of Bahrain, the Trucial States, Qatar, and Kuwait.[41] In 1891, the sultan did sign an agreement that committed him not to give away parts of his territory without British consent. However, this did not include any clauses that prevented him from conducting his own foreign affairs or from concluding treaties with other foreign nations.[42] Thus, until Kuwait became independent in 1961, Oman was the only state in the Persian Gulf to have concluded treaties with foreign nations other than Britain (i.e. with France, the Netherlands, India, and the USA),[43] while the sultan's commitment of 1891 not to give away territory without British consent ended in 1958.[44]

The extraordinarily close relationship that existed during the 1960s between Britain and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was officially based on two different treaties. The first and more general agreement, dated 20 September 1951, was a treaty of friendship, commerce, and navigation which stressed the friendly relations between the two signing parties and their resolve to extend their commercial connections. It was the last of a series of comparable agreements that had been concluded between Britain and Oman in 1798, 1839, 1891, and 1939,[45] but it had no formal effect on the sultanate's sovereignty. The close relationship between Muscat and Oman and Britain was formally confirmed by the Exchange of Letters Agreement of 25 July 1958, which related to the military and financial assistance that Her Majesty's Government would provide to the sultan 'in raising and equipping his armed forces and in the economic development of his country, and to the renewal of the lease of RAF bases at Masirah and Salalah.'[46] This full cooperation between Britain and the sultanate in the military and economic fields meant that the sultan would receive British assistance for the economic

development of his country and the build-up of his army. British army officers were to be dispatched to Oman to serve in the sultan's armed forces and to train his soldiers. In exchange, the British RAF would be allowed to maintain staging bases on Masirah Island and in Salalah. The 1958 agreement constituted the first official document that committed the British Government to providing military assistance to the Sultan of Muscat and Oman; however, it did not formally extend British protection to the sultanate against external aggression.[47]

Even though the Sultan of Muscat and Oman never entered into an Exclusive Agreement of the kind that the other Persian Gulf States had signed between 1891 and 1916, his country's foreign relations were managed by the British Government from the 1900s onwards.[48] This state practice was not based on a written treaty, and differed in one very important respect from the situation in Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, and the Trucial States. Whereas the rulers of the other Persian Gulf States had ceded full rights to the British to run their foreign affairs, the British Government carried out the sultanate's external affairs only when requested to do so by the sultan. Legally, therefore, the sovereignty of the sultan was not impinged on, since he retained his formal right to manage the external relations of his country. Officially, Britain only represented the sultan externally at his own request and on a case-by-case basis. During the 1960s, it was very important for the British Government to present its responsibility for Oman's foreign relations as an exception to the rule in the Persian Gulf, and to stress publicly the independence and sovereignty of the sultanate.

The Treaty of Perpetual Maritime Truce and the Exclusive Agreements restricted the sovereignty of the Gulf States with regard only to their external relations, whereas officially the rights of the local rulers to conduct their own internal affairs remained unaffected. However, during the first half of the twentieth century, the British developed two major exceptions to their rule of non-interference in the internal government of the Gulf States: the privilege of exercising extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Persian Gulf States and the agreements limiting the rights of the local rulers to grant oil concessions to foreign companies without Britain's consent. Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Gulf was established during the first decades of the twentieth century when the British Government of India felt compelled to secure the right to protect the increasing number of British subjects residing in the area.[49] The legislative basis of this practice was the Foreign Jurisdiction Act concluded by the British Parliament in 1890, which had provided the legislative base that made treaties and agreements of the Crown enforceable and

which conferred extra-territorial jurisdiction on the British Government in countries outside British territory.[50]

However, a closer look at the formal agreements concluded between Britain and the Gulf rulers reveals that in most of the Persian Gulf countries, British extra-territorial jurisdiction as exercised between 1913 and 1971 was not based on treaties. Only the Sultan of Muscat and Oman and the Ruler of Bahrain had formally granted the British the privilege of extra-territorial jurisdiction. In the case of Oman, the treaty of 1839 concerning friendship, navigation, and commerce had included the sultan's agreement to this practice,[51] and this provision was renewed in the treaties of 1891, 1939, and 1951.[52] As for Bahrain, the consent of the ruler to the practice of extra-territorial jurisdiction was included in the treaty of 1861.[53] Apart from these two cases, there were no treaties concluded with the Persian Gulf rulers regarding extra-territorial jurisdiction in their territories.[54] The question, therefore, arises as to what foundation it rested on in Kuwait, the Trucial States, and Qatar.

Sir Rupert Hay, political resident in the Persian Gulf from 1947 to 1953, stated in his memoirs that extra-territorial jurisdiction was exercised by the British in the Persian Gulf States on the basis of oral agreements with the rulers.[55] However, there are no other sources to confirm that claim. Balfour Paul described the transfer of jurisdiction to Britain as a process that did not meet with any visible reluctance by the rulers.[56] Silent acquiescence is not the same thing as an explicit agreement, but it is impossible to establish whether the British practice was based simply on acquiescence on the part of the rulers or on oral agreements of the kind described by Hay.[57] What is certain is that, from the British Government's point of view, the Foreign Jurisdiction Act had legalized informal agreements as a basis for the right to exercise extra-territorial jurisdiction: 'Whereas by treaty, capitulation, grant, usage, sufferance, or other lawful means, Her Majesty the Queen has jurisdiction within divers foreign countries.'[58]

Whatever the nature of the original agreement might have been, during the first half of the twentieth century the British managed to acquire the right to exercise their own jurisdiction over a clearly defined group of legal subjects, and the rulers accepted the established British practice until 1971. The extent of Britain's jurisdiction in the Persian Gulf was specified by several Orders in Council, issued by the British Government under the general authority of the Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890.[59] British extra-territorial jurisdiction was more extensive in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States than in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and also extended to all non-Muslim

foreigners residing in these countries. The local rulers retained jurisdiction over their own subjects and Muslim foreigners, the exceptions to this rule being Muslim citizens of Britain, who also fell under British jurisdiction.[60] The situation changed in 1961. Kuwait gained full independence with the Exchange of Letters on 19 June 1961, and Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction rights in Kuwait were relinquished at that time. In Oman, Britain's jurisdictional rights extended only to non-Muslim citizens of Britain and some Commonwealth countries.[61] In contrast to the situation in Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, this provision did not include citizens of India and Pakistan. This was a significant difference, because at that time Indians and Pakistanis formed the largest group of expatriates living in the Persian Gulf. Therefore, British extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman extended to a much smaller group of people.[62]

To organize the exercise of extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Persian Gulf, the British Government had established a judicial system for the region that was very different from Britain's domestic system. Overall responsibility for the administration of the extra-territorial jurisdictions in the Persian Gulf was in the hands of the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, who shared this responsibility with the British Resident in the Persian Gulf. This was a major contrast to the situation in Britain, where the organization and control of the judicial system was shared by the lord chancellor and the home secretary.[63] The 1959 Orders in Council established an identical court system for all Persian Gulf States, except the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. Four different types of court were established in each state, with their own jurisdiction and powers. Criminal and civil cases were tried in the first instance before Her Britannic Majesty's Court, and the Chief Court for the Persian Gulf tried original as well as appellate cases, while decisions of Her Britannic Majesty's Court and the Chief Court could be appealed against before the Full Court of the Persian Gulf. These three courts were all used to try cases that involved only persons who were formally subject to British jurisdiction. The Joint Court and the Joint Court of Appeal were established to try the so-called 'mixed cases' that involved individuals subject to British jurisdiction as well as the jurisdiction of local rulers. Britain's extra-territorial judicial system in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was similar, except that there was no Joint Court in operation there. The foreign secretary appointed the judges who headed the British courts; they had to be members of the Bar of England, Scotland, or Northern Ireland and were empowered to exercise all the jurisdiction and powers of their courts. Only in

the case of the Joint Court were the judges joined by the local ruler concerned.[64]

The second major exception to the principle of British non-intervention in the internal affairs of the Persian Gulf States concerned the agreements restricting the sovereign right of the local rulers to explore for and exploit the natural resources of their countries. In the early decades of the twentieth century it became apparent that the larger Persian Gulf area contained vast reserves of hydrocarbons.[65] Fearing that the search for oil resources might encourage foreign intervention in the Persian Gulf,[66] and in order to control exploitation of the area's natural resources and to keep out undesired potential rivals, the British Government proceeded to extract new agreements from the local rulers. The first and most significant treaty of this kind was concluded on 27 October 1913 with the Amir of Kuwait, who promised that if oil was ever found on his territory, nobody would receive a concession to exploit these resources unless approved of by the British Government.[67] Agreements with the other rulers soon followed: in a letter to the political resident on 14 May 1914, the Ruler of Bahrain promised that he would not grant concessions for the exploitation of Bahrain's oil resources to anyone, nor would he himself embark on such an enterprise without consulting the British authorities.[68] Similar undertakings were obtained in 1922 from the six rulers of the Trucial States, all of whom gave the same commitment as the Shaikh of Dubai, whose letter to the political resident on 2 May 1922 promised 'that we agree, if oil is expected to be found in our territory, not to grant any concession in this connection to anyone except to the person appointed by the High British Government'.[69] The Ruler of Qatar did not explicitly surrender his right to give away oil concessions. However, the treaty of 3 November 1916 that formally extended Britain's protection over Qatar included a provision that concerned concessions in general, according to which the ruler agreed not to give monopolies, concessions or cable landing rights to anyone without British approval. The British Government considered that the restriction on the Ruler of Qatar's right to give away oil concessions was implicit in that article.[70] The final agreement regarding exploitation of the oil resources of the Persian Gulf was concluded on 10 January 1923 with the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, who promised not to start exploring his territory for oil before consulting the British Government.[71]

The result of these agreements was that any potential oil concessionary had to obtain political consent from the British Government in addition to the oil concession given by the ruler.[72] The significance of

these agreements is obvious. In the decades that followed, oil became the single most important source of income in the Persian Gulf for Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi. By restricting the right of the local rulers to allocate concessions as well as the way they exploited and managed the most important source of income for their countries, the rulers' sovereignty with regard to their internal affairs was significantly diminished.[73]

1.2 The political residency and its responsibilities

The British Government was represented in the Persian Gulf by the political resident, who held the diplomatic grade of an ambassador.[74] His title derived from the institution of which he was in charge: the political residency in the Persian Gulf, based in Ras al-Jufair on the island of Bahrain. This institution was a relic of the days when Britain's interests in the Gulf were still represented by the East India Company.[75] Until the end of the Second World War, the number of British political personnel dispatched to the Persian Gulf Residency was very restricted. Apart from one colonel from the Indian Service stationed in Bushire, dealings with the Arab rulers of the Persian Gulf were in the hands of two political agents stationed in Kuwait and Bahrain, and a political officer who was stationed in Sharjah only during the winter.[76] The situation changed after 1947 when the Foreign Office took charge of Britain's relations with the Persian Gulf States. Motivated partly by the growing economic importance of the Persian Gulf after the discovery of oil, and partly by the increasing international interest in the situation of the area, the Foreign Office began to strengthen its representation, a process that was concluded in 1961 and resulted in the stationing of four political agents in Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai, respectively.[77] These agents reported to the political residency in Bahrain, which was the coordinating point between the British men on the spot in the Persian Gulf and the Foreign Office in London. The political agents met annually at the Political Agents' Conference to discuss the events of the past year and to conclude long-term political guidelines for the future.

The duties of the political resident and the political agents who were subordinate to him were not confined to the conduct of diplomatic relations between the British Government and the rulers of the Persian Gulf. Since the Exclusive Agreements had forbidden the rulers to have diplomatic relations with any country other than Britain, the political resident and his staff were the only foreign diplomats stationed in Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States. Therefore, the political residency

was not only the coordinating point of every contact between the local rulers and the British Government but also ultimately the very small window through which the rulers were obliged to channel their communications with the outside world. The British Government wanted the British officials on the spot to use the exclusive nature of their presence in the Persian Gulf to gain the trust and confidence of the local rulers and make them receptive to British advice. The role that such informal influence was intended to play in the relationship between the men on the spot and the Persian Gulf rulers was impressed upon Sir Stewart Crawford when he took up office as political resident in 1966. The head of the Arabian Department, Frank Brenchley, described Crawford's future job as follows:

> The role of the Political Resident is a particularly challenging one where personal influence can have a very strong effect upon the achievement of our objectives. We have very few actual powers to make the nine protected Rulers do the things which we know it to be in the interest of themselves and their people that they should do. One of our chief weapons therefore has to be persuasion and the Political Resident must above all be a forceful persuader.[78]

In addition to its responsibility for political relations between the British Government and the rulers of the Persian Gulf, the political residency also played an important coordinating role for Britain's military presence in the area. From the point of view of British military planning, the Persian Gulf was part of Britain's Middle East Command which had its headquarters in Aden.[79] Until 1961, Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf itself consisted of a small navy station in Bahrain, and RAF bases and staging posts in Sharjah, Bahrain, and in Oman at Salalah, and on Masirah Island. The British deployment to the Persian Gulf was increased after the Kuwait crisis in July 1961, when a British army base was created in Bahrain.[80] Every week, the respective commanders of the different British services in the Persian Gulf met at the political residency to discuss questions involving the military security of the area and the British forces stationed there. The meetings of this Military Coordination Committee for the Persian Gulf were chaired by the political resident,[81] while his deputy chaired the weekly sessions of the Intelligence Committee for the Persian Gulf, which coordinated Britain's counter-subversion and intelligence activities in the area.[82]

Another military duty of the political resident was the Trucial Oman Scouts, which had their headquarters in Sharjah. Founded as the Trucial

Oman Levies in 1951 and renamed in 1955, this was a security force under direct British control designed to preserve law and order in the seven Trucial States and to protect their borders. It was established following two years of discussions between the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence as to how the security situation in the Trucial States could be improved. At the beginning of the 1950s, inter-tribal fighting was still common and the rulers' authority within their own shaikhdoms was frequently challenged. Another reason for the founding of the Trucial Oman Levies was Britain's determination to suppress the slave trade, which continued in certain parts of the Trucial States.[83] The soldiers of the Trucial Oman Scouts were recruited from the Trucial States, but many of the British officers had originally been trained in the Arab Legion in Jordan. While its initial size had been limited to only 70 men, the scouts reached brigade strength during the 1960s.[84] The political resident was said to be 'the only British diplomat commanding a private army'.[85]

The responsibility of the political residency in Bahrain was officially restricted to the countries that were defined as protected states, including until June 1961 Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the seven Trucial States. With Kuwait gaining independence on 19 June 1961, the situation changed. The political resident of the time, Sir William Luce, felt that a change in Britain's diplomatic representation in the area needed to be made to underline the full independence and sovereignty that Kuwait had acquired. Britain had therefore to accredit an ambassador to Kuwait. To discuss this problem, a meeting was held on 18 August 1961 at the Foreign Office in London, at which Luce was present, along with leading members of the Arabian Department and the chief clerk. During that meeting, Luce expressed his conviction that even after the independence of Kuwait there should be a high level of coordination of the British political representation in the Persian Gulf:

> He thought it would be desirable to retain some political integration in the Persian Gulf, particularly as regards political/military coordination. The Commander-in-Chief [Middle East] agreed with this view and thought such coordination very desirable, if not essential. In a crisis he would come to Bahrain and all problems would be dealt with in consultation between the Political Resident and the Commander-in-Chief.[86]

However, for the sake of appearances, the post of Ambassador to Kuwait could not be held by the same person as the political residency in the

Persian Gulf, regardless of whether that person resided in Kuwait or Bahrain. British diplomatic representation in the Persian Gulf and in Kuwait needed to be reorganized in a way which would demonstrate that from now on the connection between Britain and Kuwait would be different from that between Britain and the other Persian Gulf States, since it would now be based on normal diplomatic relations between equal and independent countries. Both the amir and Gamal Abdel Nasser (President of the United Arab Republic (UAR) and the greatest and most prominent critic of Britain's military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf) had to be convinced of Kuwait's new constitutional status as a fully independent and sovereign state. If Britain's diplomatic representation in the Persian Gulf was not reorganized and a British ambassador accredited to Kuwait, this would give rise to suspicion that the Exchange of Letters had in fact left Britain's dominant position in the emirate unchanged. Luce warned: 'Both the Kuwaitis and the United Arab Republic would say that there had been no change and that the Political Resident was still in charge.'[87]

Sir William Luce and the others at the meeting agreed that there was only one solution to this dilemma: the existing British political agency in Kuwait had to be transformed into an embassy, and the current political agent, Sir John Richmond, appointed British Ambassador to Kuwait. At the same time the new ambassador should continue to report unofficially to the political residency in Bahrain, since this informal arrangement would give the right impression while at the same time guaranteeing the continued political coordination in the Persian Gulf. It was, therefore, agreed between Luce and the Arabian Department that

> [...] for Her Majesty's Government's purposes the Political Resident should remain the senior authority in the Gulf, that he must be kept fully informed by the Ambassador, and that in the event of a difference of opinion between the Ambassador and the Political Resident on important matters the latter's view would usually prevail.[88]

The Amir of Kuwait was not informed about this arrangement. The Arabian Department decided that to account for the frequent exchanges between the political resident and the ambassador in Kuwait, the amir should be reminded that the political resident was the head of the Military Co-ordination Committee for the Persian Gulf and, as such, was responsible for every military problem in the area as a whole, including the defence of Kuwait to which the British Government had committed itself in the Exchange of Letters of 19 June 1961.[89]

The arrangement decided upon at the Foreign Office meeting in August 1961 demonstrated the British determination to look at the political and military problems of the Persian Gulf as a whole. In the eyes of both the Foreign Office and the men on the spot, Britain's relations with the emirate could not be divided from British policy in the rest of the Persian Gulf, even though Kuwait had achieved independence. To ease coordination between the British posts in the area, the political resident retained the supreme authority there. His responsibilities also extended to the formally independent and sovereign Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. To emphasize Oman's formal independence and the normal bilateral diplomatic relations which Britain conducted with this country, the British Government posted a consul-general to Muscat.[90] However, the consul-general reported to the political resident, who frequently visited Oman and undertook to discuss matters of great importance personally with the sultan. When Luce took office as political resident in May 1961, the British secretary of state for foreign affairs, Lord Home, sent him a despatch in which he explicitly included relations with Oman on the list of Luce's responsibilities.[91] In his five years as political resident, Sir William Luce travelled very frequently around the Persian Gulf to meet the amir, the sultan, and the various rulers, and to visit the political agencies, the embassy in Kuwait and the consulate-general in Oman.[92]

Despite the different constitutional status of Kuwait and Oman on the one hand, and the nine protected states on the other, in the eyes of the British Government the Persian Gulf remained throughout the 1960s an interdependent area in which Britain's policy had to be coordinated to guarantee the preservation of British interests. The organization of Britain's diplomatic representation in the area reflected this perception.

1.3 Oil in the Persian Gulf

At the beginning of the 1960s, more than three-fifths of the world's proven oil reserves were located in the Middle East. The region accounted for a quarter of the world's oil production and for half of the available oil on the world market. This disparity resulted from the fact that the Middle Eastern oil-producing countries exported most of their oil, while the USA, the world's largest oil producer, remained a net importer of oil due to its own very large consumption.[93] The Middle East had entered the oil age in 1908, when oil was discovered in commercial quantities in Masjid-i-Sulaiman in Iran by William Knox d'Arcy, the British entrepreneur and founder of the Anglo-Persian Oil

Company (renamed the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in 1935). At that time, petroleum had already been explored for half a century in other parts of the world, most importantly in the USA.[94] The discoveries in Iran led to a search for resources in other parts of the Middle East, and, between 1918 and 1939, oil fields were found in Iraq, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Qatar, and Egypt. The success of these explorations resulted in a great expansion of Middle Eastern oil production, and the annual output of the region's oil fields increased from 16 million tons in 1938 to 264 million tons in 1961.[95] The British and US governments both expected this trend to continue.[96]

Kuwait played a very significant role among the oil-producing countries of the Middle East. Although its resources were discovered relatively late, in 1938, and commercial production did not start until 1946, by 1961 it had become clear that a fifth of the world's known petroleum reserves were located in the emirate. By then, Kuwait's oil output had evolved into the largest in the Middle East, followed by Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq.[97] An important reason for the rapid expansion of oil production in Kuwait after the Second World War was the nationalization of the Iranian oil industry, initiated in 1951 by Iranian Prime Minister Muhammad Mossadegh, following unsatisfactory negotiations with the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company over a new profit-share agreement between the state and the company.[98] The British Government reacted by organizing a world-wide boycott of Iranian oil.[99] This enhanced the importance of Kuwait's petroleum resources since production in the emirate was rapidly expanded to compensate for the drop-out of Iranian oil (which until 1951 had accounted for a third of Middle Eastern petroleum exports).[100] Kuwait's success as a petroleum-exporting country was further increased by the fact that its crude oil was the cheapest in the world to produce.[101] Furthermore, the specific gravity of Kuwait's oil was far above the average for the Middle East, which meant that it was particularly suitable for refining as fuel. World demand for the latter steadily increased during the 1950s and 1960s.[102]

As a result of its extensive and ever-increasing oil production, Kuwait became extremely wealthy during the two decades after the Second World War, with its annual oil revenues rising from £4 million in 1949 to £150 million in 1960.[103] Initially the Amir of Kuwait received payments from the oil companies in Indian rupees, the official currency in the Persian Gulf at that time, but from 1950 he agreed to receive his oil revenues in sterling. From the British perspective, this was an extremely important development because by 1961 Kuwait had become one of the world's largest holders of sterling.[104]

Until the beginning of the 1960s the only other states apart from Kuwait in the Persian Gulf that produced and exported oil were Qatar and Bahrain.[105] Their oil reserves provided both states with important sources of income but could not be compared in any way to Kuwait's resources. Qatar's oil production in 1960 amounted to 8 million tons, which was a tenth of Kuwait's output in the same year. Bahrain's oil reserves were even smaller than Qatar's and in 1960 its production was limited to 2 million tons.[106] However, the picture in the Persian Gulf changed significantly in 1958, when oil was first discovered in commercial quantities off the coast of Abu Dhabi, followed by even greater findings on the mainland. Abu Dhabi's reserves greatly outranked those in Qatar and Bahrain, and its oil exports, which began in 1962, promised within a few years to turn Abu Dhabi into the richest state in the Persian Gulf after Kuwait.[107]

During the 1960s the Middle Eastern oil industry was controlled by seven international companies: British Petroleum (BP), Royal Dutch Shell, Gulf Oil, Standard Oil of California, Standard Oil of New Jersey, Mobil, and Texaco. These companies, which became known as the 'Seven Sisters', cooperated and formed multiple joint ventures in the Middle Eastern region,[108] sharing most of the concessions for the exploration and extraction of oil in the producing countries, as well as the use of pipelines and refineries.[109] Among the 'Seven Sisters', five of the big companies that controlled oil production and export in the Middle East were registered in the USA: however, the two non-US companies, BP and Royal Dutch Shell, had the greatest share in the Middle Eastern oil industry and were responsible for two-thirds of the regional oil production during the 1960s.[110]

The British Government had a significant economic interest in the commercial success of both Royal Dutch Shell and BP. Although the majority of Royal Dutch Shell was Dutch property, 40 per cent of the company was owned by British shareholders,[111] while BP (the former Anglo-Iranian Oil Company which had been renamed in 1954) was entirely British-owned, with the British state holding 51 per cent of its shares. The House of Commons had decided in 1914 that to prevent the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company (which had been on the brink of bankruptcy ever since its foundation in 1908) from being taking over by a non-British group, Britain needed to buy the majority of its shares. The British Government and Parliament had been convinced by Winston Churchill, who was then first lord of the admiralty, that Britain needed its own source of Middle Eastern oil to provide for the Royal Navy, which had recently replaced coal with oil to fuel its ships.[112]

In the Persian Gulf, the allocation of concessions for the exploration and extraction of oil had started in Bahrain during the late 1920s. The Bahrain Petroleum Company, a joint venture between Standard Oil of California and Texaco, did not obtain its concession without difficulty. While the ruler's consent was acquired quite easily, the British Government was unwilling to allow the entry of US oil companies into the Persian Gulf. Having extracted assurances from the local rulers not to give away oil concessions for their territories without consulting with the British Government, the latter had the right to veto the involvement of non-British companies in the area's oil industry, and until 1929 remained unwilling to abandon this so-called 'nationality clause'.[113]

However, the US companies received diplomatic backing from the US Government, which pressed Britain to change its mind, and the British Government eventually accepted that the entry of US capital might encourage and accelerate development of the oil industry in the Persian Gulf. This decision promised to benefit the local rulers, who would receive an additional source of income, as well as the Royal Navy, which was always in need of regular oil supplies, and marked the beginning of US involvement in the exploration for Persian Gulf oil. The Bahrain Petroleum Company started drilling in 1931 and found oil the following year.[114] Over the next three decades the international oil companies, hoping to find new sources in the Persian Gulf and desperate to outdo their competitors, were anxious to secure concession agreements with all the rulers in the area, whether oil had been discovered or not. By the beginning of the 1960s this process was almost concluded, with most territories in the Persian Gulf being covered by a concession agreement with an international company.[115]

During the 1960s, Bahrain was the only oil-producing country in the Persian Gulf in which neither BP nor Royal Dutch Shell was involved, although both owned significant percentages of the companies that held the oil concessions in Kuwait, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi. BP's most profitable operation in the area was its ownership of a 50 per cent share of the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC), which had been founded in 1933 as a joint venture with the USA's Gulf Oil Corporation. In the following year the Amir of Kuwait granted the KOC a 75-year concession to explore and extract the vast oil reserves of the Kuwaiti mainland.[116] BP also owned stakes of 23.5 per cent in both the Qatar Petroleum Company (QPC) and the Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company (ADPC), with the latter being extremely profitable through its concession for the mainland of Abu Dhabi in which enormous resources were discovered in 1962. The offshore concession for Abu Dhabi was in the hands of the

Abu Dhabi Marine Area Company, of which BP owned two thirds. Royal Dutch Shell's stake in the Persian Gulf oil industry during the 1960s consisted of its ownership of 23.5 per cent of QPC and 23.5 per cent of ADPC.[117]

By virtue of their concession agreements with the local rulers, the oil companies became the legal owners of any oil found in the Persian Gulf. The revenues from oil production were then shared between the companies and the rulers of the producing states. In Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain, the rulers received 50 per cent of the oil companies' profits. This 50/50 principle had been established during the 1950s throughout the Middle East as the dominant system for profit-sharing between the international oil companies and the producing countries.[118] The exception to this rule was Abu Dhabi, where a 50/50 profit-sharing agreement between ADPC and the ruler was concluded only in 1965. Up till then the ruler had received less than 15 per cent of the company's revenues.[119]

Calculation of the royalties paid to the rulers of the Persian Gulf was based on a system of 'posted prices'.[120] The companies listed an official price at which they would offer their oil for sale at the tanker terminals and refineries in the Persian Gulf, and the rulers were paid accordingly. The benefit of this system was that it allayed the rulers' suspicions that the companies were taking advantage of them by quoting different prices for different purposes. In practice, however, the actual sale of the oil was frequently made at less than the posted price since the companies were trying to undercut each other. As a result, the chairman of BP informed his shareholders in 1962 that the profit split in the Middle East was generally more in the nature 'of a 60/40 or even 70/30 division in favour of the producing country'.[121]

In the decades following the Second World War, oil evolved into the world's leading source of energy. Between 1950 and 1970 the share of oil in the world energy market rose from 29 to 44 per cent, while the share of coal dropped from 56 to 31 per cent during the same period.[122] In the 1950s alone, global oil consumption had almost doubled, but this did not mean that the supply-and-demand situation facing the international oil industry during the 1960s was satisfactory. At the time, there was a great surplus of oil on the world market which, as a result of a combination of factors, was putting a lot of pressure on prices. Rapid and continuing expansion of the Middle Eastern oil industry during the 1950s and 1960s created a surplus capacity in the region, while new and extensive resources were being discovered elsewhere at the same time, most importantly in Libya and Venezuela. In addition, the Soviet Union began during the late 1950s to export oil to the West at a very

low price,[123] using such aggressive marketing practices that US Senator Kenneth Keating was convinced that Khruschev had decided 'to drown us [the Western bloc] in a sea of oil'.[124] While the world oil market was flooded with Middle Eastern, Venezuelan, and Soviet exports, the USA, previously an important importer of oil, entered a period of oil protectionism in 1959. Thus, while numerous US companies were involved in exploring for Middle Eastern oil, importation of the resulting petroleum to the USA was strictly limited. The reason behind this regulation was Middle Eastern oil's price advantage in the US market, despite the distances involved in its transportation, and the desire of the US Government to protect its own oil industry, which was still the biggest in the world.[125]

At the beginning of the 1960s, the surplus in the global oil market persuaded the international oil companies to reduce the posted prices for Middle Eastern oil. They wished to compensate for the lower prices at which they were in practice having to sell their oil by paying a smaller royalty to the producing countries. In 1959, BP announced a cut of 10 per cent of its posted prices for Middle Eastern oil, and was quickly followed by the other six of the Seven Sisters, while a further reduction of 4 per cent was agreed between the international oil companies in 1960. The producing countries did not take well to the fall in the posted prices. They were angered by the loss in revenue and convinced that the oil companies were taking advantage of them, a perception that was reinforced by the fact that despite strong competition on the world markets, the incomes of the oil companies had risen in recent years. Although the companies had been forced to sell their oil at a lower price and had therefore suffered a relative loss in revenue, the increase in production, especially in the Middle East, had provided them – in absolute terms – with a significant expansion in their income.[126]

The reduction in the posted prices also had significant political consequences. In September 1960, representatives from Venezuela and the four leading Middle Eastern oil-producing countries, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, met at a conference in Baghdad to discuss a joint reaction to the oil companies' move. Their decision was to set up the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), with the principle aim of unifying the petroleum policies of its members and representing their joint interests, while their first important project was to restore the posted prices to the levels that had prevailed before the reductions. The five founding members all sent formal letters of protest to the international oil companies.[127] Another of OPEC's projects was to study the possibility of maintaining prices through the method of

international 'pro-rationing' of oil production, which meant that in order to prevent the development of a surplus, OPEC would dictate the level of their annual crude oil output to the individual producing countries. Qatar joined the organization in 1961, followed by Libya and Indonesia in 1962.[128]

Throughout the 1960s, OPEC's ability of to influence the international oil industry remained very limited. Its biggest success was to prevent a further cut in the posted prices for Middle Eastern oil, since the international oil companies became more cautious about taking unilateral steps without consulting the producing countries. However, the notion of pro-rationing was dropped soon after the Baghdad conference. The problem for OPEC was that although its members shared a common economic goal, it was very difficult for them to make joint decisions and to coordinate their policies because of the considerable political rivalries and disagreements among them.[129] Even so, the British Government remained alert to the future possibility that OPEC could make the life of the international oil companies and the oil consumer countries more difficult.[130]

2
The Kuwait Crisis and Its Consequences

2.1 Instructions for the new political resident

In May 1961, Sir William Luce took up office as the new political resident in the Persian Gulf.[1] He was not a career diplomat but had served in the Sudan Political Service for 26 years, before being seconded to the Colonial Office as Governor of Aden from 1956 to 1960.[2] The Foreign Office took the occasion of his appointment to Bahrain to re-examine Britain's policy aims in the Persian Gulf, focusing particularly on the question of whether the relationship between the British Government and the rulers of the Gulf States, along with Britain's military presence, continued to be the best means of protecting British interests in the region. The results of this debate were conveyed to Luce in a despatch from Lord Home, the secretary of state for foreign affairs.[3] Despatch No. 77, which explained Britain's responsibilities and interests in the Gulf before outlining the tasks Luce was expected to perform as political resident, mirrored the conception of Britain's informal empire in the Persian Gulf region that prevailed in the Foreign Office on the eve of Kuwait's formal independence.

Lord Home stressed in his despatch that Britain's role in the Persian Gulf was not exclusively defined by the treaty relations between the British Government and the rulers of the various Gulf States. The existing treaties did not entirely cover Britain's defence commitments in the region, or its political role in the Gulf States. Thus, although the British Government was only bound by written obligation to defend the independence of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and Fujairah, its responsibility, as the protecting power, also extended 'no less strongly' to the other six Trucial shaikhdoms and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.[4] In contrast with its military role in the Persian Gulf, Britain's political responsibility

in the area was confined to the nine protected states (Bahrain, Qatar, and the seven Trucial States), whose external relations were conducted by the British Government. However, it was stressed in the despatch that while the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman had always been responsible for its international relations, and Kuwait had itself recently taken over such responsibility, both countries 'continue[d] to look to us [the British Government] for advice and assistance'.[5]

The secretary of state also explained to Luce that Britain's power in the Persian Gulf rested on the two interdependent pillars of its military presence and its political influence, neither of which could be expected to survive long without the other. Since none of the Gulf States was a formal colony, the deployment of British troops to the area depended on the goodwill of local leaders and Britain's privileged political position in the Gulf States. Political influence, on the other hand, could only be maintained if the local rulers remained confident that Britain was not only willing but also militarily able to defend them against foreign aggression. As a result, it had to be the British Government's aim to preserve the confidence and trust of all the local rulers by maintaining its military presence in the entire area. To disappoint one of the rulers could result in a loss of confidence among the others and thereby lead to the erosion of Britain's power in the Persian Gulf:

> Moreover, failure to support one would react immediately on the confidence in Her Majesty's Government of the others. Likewise loss of influence in any part of the Persian Gulf e.g. Oman or Buraimi, might render it difficult or impossible to retain control over bases in other parts, e.g. the Trucial Coast. These two factors have been and remain cardinal elements in Britain's policy in the Gulf and explain to a large degree why it is necessary to follow, mutatis mutandis, a uniform policy in relations with all Rulers.[6]

The British Government had two major interests in the Persian Gulf: one political, the other economic. Its political interest lay in preventing the Arabian Peninsula from falling under the domination of the Soviet Union. Since an extension of the latter's influence to the Gulf could facilitate the spread of Communism to the entire Middle East and Africa, it had to be the aim of the British Government to keep the Soviet Union out of the area. Lord Home admitted that this political interest had to be protected mainly by the general Cold War policies of the British Government and in cooperation with Britain's allies in the North

Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), since, on its own, the notion of preventing the spread of Communism to the Arabian Peninsula did not justify Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf.[7]

It was Britain's economic interest in the Persian Gulf's oil, and above all in the oil in Kuwait, which necessitated the preservation of its military presence and political influence in the region. The economic interests of the British Government in the Persian Gulf were 'immediate and direct, and [...] in themselves justified the continuance of present British policy there'.[8] Oil was produced in commercial quantities by three different Gulf States: Kuwait, Qatar, and Bahrain. There had been some findings off the coast of Abu Dhabi in 1958, but export had not yet started. Since the known resources of Qatar and Bahrain did not remotely compare to those of Kuwait, the emirate remained the single most important oil-producing country in the Persian Gulf and, as such, was at the centre of Britain's economic interest in the region:

> An important element in the economic stability and continued growth of the United Kingdom economy, [...] is access on satisfactory terms to the oil of the Persian Gulf States. In this perspective, the role of Kuwait oil, including the terms on which it is made available to the United Kingdom and the arrangements for the use and investment of Kuwait's sterling balances, overshadow all the rest in their importance. Oil in Qatar and Bahrain, and prospects in Abu Dhabi on land and in both Qatar and Abu Dhabi in the seabed, for the present rank far behind Kuwait.[9]

According to Lord Home, Britain's economic interest in the oil of Kuwait resulted not only from British industry's need for energy resources but also from the positive effect on the stability of the pound sterling of investing Kuwait's oil revenues in the City of London.[10] Furthermore, its close and friendly relations with Kuwait strengthened Britain's bargaining position vis-à-vis other oil-producing countries. Should Kuwait be annexed by, or fall under the domination of, another state, a radical change could be expected in its oil and financial policy, which would result in considerable damage to the British economy. Therefore, the main aim of Britain's Persian Gulf policy had to be to safeguard Kuwait's independence, and British military protection of the emirate was regarded as the only way of preventing Kuwait from being invaded and annexed by one of its neighbours. Alternatives, such as

protection by the United Nations (UN) or some form of joint guarantee by several larger powers to preserve Kuwait's independence, had been considered by the British Government but had been dismissed as insufficient and unreliable for defending Kuwait against foreign aggression.[11]

In the despatch to Luce, Lord Home emphasized that the British Government's strong economic interest in Kuwait's oil not only shaped their bilateral relations but had significant repercussions for Britain's overall regional policy in the Persian Gulf. The British aim to protect the emirate against foreign aggression was the main reason for Britain's military presence in the entire Persian Gulf area. The defence of the emirate was defined as 'the primary justification' for its bases and staging posts in Bahrain and Sharjah, and on Masirah Island in Oman,[12] which existed because the British Government was unable to station troops in the emirate itself. The amir had refused to allow the permanent presence of British defence forces on his territory because he wished to avoid criticism from Arab nationalists,[13] and was afraid of being accused of allowing Britain to retain too much control over Kuwait after the emirate's formal independence. The British Government therefore depended on the use of bases elsewhere in the Persian Gulf to fulfil its military commitment to protect Kuwait.[14]

The secretary of state concluded that Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf and its political privileges in the protected states had to be maintained, at least until the end of the 1960s,[15] and Luce, as political resident, was instructed to pursue this aim. The British Government's strong economic interest in Kuwait's oil and, as a result, in the emirate's independence justified its military presence; however, this presence could not be expected to survive if the British abandoned their political responsibilities in the protected states. Despite the constitutional differences in Britain's relationships with the protected states and those with Kuwait and Oman, the British Government had to pursue a Persian Gulf policy with regard to all 11 Gulf States as a whole. Only a policy like this could hope to protect Britain's principal interest in the region, which was access to the oil of Kuwait.

2.2 Operation Vantage

Sir William Luce's first significant duty as political resident was on 19 June 1961, when he signed the formal Exchange of Letters between the British Government and the Amir of Kuwait, Shaikh Abdullah al-Salim Al-Sabah, granting independence to Kuwait. This document

ended the gradual two-year process during which the amir had taken control of his country's foreign affairs,[16] and confirmed that from now on Kuwait was a sovereign state and an independent member of the international community. While Britain maintained its commitment to defend Kuwait if requested, the political privileges it had enjoyed since 1899 in Kuwait had ended.

Since the British Government hoped to keep the public profile of the new Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement as low as possible, the Exchange of Letters was presented to the world as an insignificant document confirming simply that control of Kuwait's foreign affairs now lay with the amir instead of the British Government. This was because the British Government and Shaikh Abdullah were both concerned that the Exchange of Letters would draw too much attention to the previously predominant British position in Kuwait as well as to the special treaty relations that still existed between Britain and the nine protected states of the Gulf. The amir and the Foreign Office also feared that the new Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement might trigger a new round of Arab nationalist criticism of the British position in the Gulf.[17] However, British attempts to minimize public attention towards the new agreement proved futile, since the Exchange of Letters provoked a series of strong reactions throughout the Arab world. While most Arab governments conveyed their congratulations to the amir for attaining independence from British control, the President of Iraq, General Abd al-Karim Qasim, reacted with surprise and anger,[18] and at a press conference held in Baghdad on 25 June 1961 he stated that the new Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement was illegal and invalid. In Qasim's view, the Kuwaitis responsible for its conclusion had no authority because Kuwait was an integral part of Iraq. He therefore announced his intention to appoint Shaikh Abdullah, the Amir of Kuwait, to the position of Qaimmaqam of Kuwait, thereby reducing his status from a head of state to that of a district governor, subordinate to Baghdad.[19]

The claim of the Iraqi President that Kuwait was part of Iraq was not new. Succeeding Iraqi governments had made similar statements since Iraq had become independent in 1932.[20] Nevertheless, Qasim's speech caused great concern in London, where it was interpreted by the British Government under Prime Minister Harold Macmillan as being Qasim's announcement of a concrete Iraqi plan to annex Kuwait. Ever since Iraq's pro-British Hashemite monarchy had been overthrown by Qasim on 14 July 1958, the British Government had feared that Iraq might attack its neighbour to gain control of Kuwait's vast oil resources, on which Britain was heavily dependent. In a memorandum of 15 July 1958

about the possible consequences of the 14 July Revolution, the Minister of Power, Lord Mills, had warned:

> The greatest danger from the oil standpoint is an extension of trouble to Kuwait. Oil production in both Iraq and Kuwait in the hands of a strongly anti-Western alliance would be a very powerful weapon. We certainly could not replace this production from sterling sources; even with unlimited dollar resources the whole of Western Europe would probably still have to ration at least for a time.[21]

From summer 1958 onwards, British strategists had concentrated on drawing up contingency plans to counter a possible Iraqi attack on Kuwait.[22] The plan eventually agreed upon in November 1960, named Operation Vantage, depended on exploiting Britain's military resources throughout the Middle East region, and envisaged the use of the Middle East Command's facilities in Aden, a strategic reserve based in Kenya, and the British airfields and staging posts in the Persian Gulf at Bahrain and Sharjah, and on Masirah Island.[23]

In the days following Qasim's press conference of 25 June 1961, reports reaching London led Macmillan to believe that the moment for the implementation of Operation Vantage had come. The British Ambassador to Iraq, Sir Humphrey Trevelyan, informed the Foreign Office of rumours circulating in Baghdad that Qasim was concentrating troops in the Basra area, only 40 miles away from the Kuwaiti border,[24] and on 27 June 1961 he warned that Qasim might plan to attack Kuwait on 14 July, the day on which the anniversary of the 1958 Revolution was celebrated in Iraq.[25] The British Government reacted to Trevelyan's warnings quickly and decisively: in a series of meetings chaired by Macmillan on 29 and 30 June, the Cabinet Defence Committee decided that the annexation of Kuwait could be prevented only by a British military intervention and that British troops should therefore be sent immediately to Kuwait.[26] Initial preparatory steps to ensure that Operation Vantage could be implemented as swiftly and efficiently as possible were endorsed at the first meeting of the Defence Committee on the afternoon of 29 June. The most important measure was to instruct the commander-in-chief for the Middle East in Aden to increase the state of readiness of British troops stationed in his theatre.[27]

While these military measures were being taken on 29 and 30 June, the British Government was concentrating on important political preparations for the planned intervention. Prime Minister Macmillan was unwilling to begin sending British troops to Kuwait before a formal

request for military intervention had been obtained from the amir. Such a request would be in line with Article 4 of the Exchange of Letters, which obliged Britain to come to Kuwait's defence if the amir asked for this,[28] and would present the British Government with a legal justification for a military operation in Kuwait, thus making the planned intervention less open to international criticism.

However, the request was not as easily obtained as the British had hoped, and Lord Home had to inform the Defence Committee on 29 June that the Amir of Kuwait was reluctant to ask formally for British military intervention since he feared that doing so would cost him moral or even military support from other Arab countries, such as the United Arab Republic.[29] The Defence Committee reacted to this announcement by instructing the British political agent in Kuwait, Sir John Richmond,

> [...] to inform the Ruler of the serious nature of the Iraqi treat, to say that we were taking certain measures to increase our readiness to assist him, to point out the desirability of introducing British forces into Kuwait before an invasion actually occurred and to persuade him to request help in accordance with the recent Agreement.[30]

This statement demonstrates the British Government's determination to counter the perceived Iraqi threat with a military operation: it also shows the diplomatic strategy used to make the planned intervention politically acceptable. Richmond's skills of persuasion were employed to convince the amir to ask for British help so that the launch of Operation Vantage could be presented to the world as a British reaction to a Kuwaiti initiative. The strategy agreed upon by the members of the Defence Committee on 29 June was successful, and on 1 July Macmillan was able to inform the British Cabinet that, following new intelligence about the imminence of an Iraqi invasion in Kuwait, Shaikh Abdullah had asked for military assistance on the previous evening.[31]

The determination of the Macmillan Government to demonstrate to the world, and especially to Arab public opinion, that Britain was not acting unilaterally over the Kuwait crisis meant that the backing of the US Government would be needed. When the Cabinet met to discuss the Iraqi threat to Kuwait on the morning of 29 June, it was agreed:

> It was important that, if military action by British forces became necessary, this should receive the clear and public support of the United States Government. It was therefore necessary to impress on

> the United States authorities the gravity of the threat and the serious consequences of a failure to maintain the independence of Kuwait.[32]

Lord Home had already sent a letter to Dean Rusk, the US secretary of state, on 28 June informing him of the imminent Iraqi threat and asking for US support should a military crisis arise over Kuwait. This letter was followed by a series of messages on 29 and 30 June. His efforts were successful, and the situation in Kuwait was considered in detail at a meeting of the US National Security Council on the afternoon of 29 June. During the discussion, President Kennedy stressed the great economic importance of Kuwait to the Western world and announced his intention to give Britain full political and logistical support.[33] A Letter of Accord was duly despatched by Rusk to Home on 30 June.[34] Following the reception of Rusk's letter and of Shaikh Abdullah's formal request, Macmillan ordered the introduction of British troops into Kuwait, and the first British contingent arrived on the morning of 1 July 1961. So far, no Iraqi soldier had crossed the border into Kuwait.

2.3 The Arab League Security Force

The British military build-up in Kuwait was completed during the first week of July without any disturbances, and the total number of British troops in Kuwait eventually reached 7000.[35] Yet despite more and more British troops being sent into Kuwait, there were no signs of increasing troop movements in the Basra area, let alone any indication of the Iraqi army crossing the border into Kuwait. The Defence Committee was informed about this as early as 1 July, but it was agreed in discussions that the Iraqi troops already assembled fully justified the British intervention, especially in view of Qasim's threat of 25 June.[36] At a meeting of the Defence Committee on 2 July it was argued that the lack of information about progress in the Iraqi build-up had to be attributed to the fact that the Iraqi invasion would probably be launched according to the original plan in mid-July, under cover of the 14 July celebrations. It was therefore vital that the build-up of British troops in Kuwait was not interrupted or slowed down but completed as quickly as possible: 'It seemed likely that these forces were still conforming to an earlier plan for an operation timed for mid-July. Their organization might not be sufficiently flexible to enable them to seize the advantage they would gain from an earlier attack.'[37]

This expectation proved to be ill-founded. The anniversary of the 14 July Revolution came and went, and no invasion occurred. In the

meantime, the political pressure on the British Government increased. The British operation was criticized both inside certain Kuwaiti circles and in Arab public opinion in general, and conspiracy theories became increasingly popular, with claims that the entire crisis was a British plot using Qasim's aggressive speech to create a pretext for the military occupation of Kuwait. The absence of a visible Iraqi threat to Kuwait was used as proof of this theory.[38] Arab leaders, such as Gamal Abdel Nasser, joined in criticising the British operation. Even though Qasim had very few friends among the governments of the Arab world, the British Government had even fewer.[39] Nasser had already committed himself to Kuwaiti independence directly after the Exchange of Letters had been made public. While he was therefore bound to condemn the Iraqi claim to Kuwait, Nasser also insisted that the Arab peoples should find their own solution to this problem and that the Kuwaiti Government should not rely on the military strength of imperialist Britain.[40] The US Government also concluded by the end of the first week of July that the British had overstated the military threat that Iraq posed to Kuwait.[41]

The Macmillan Government very soon realized that with every day that the troops remained in Kuwait, the British political position was becoming more difficult, but it remained unwilling to withdraw Britain's forces prematurely from the emirate. In a meeting of the Defence Committee on 18 July, Lord Home stated that Britain had to provide military assistance to Kuwait until the amir was satisfied that there was no further likelihood of an Iraqi invasion.[42] The Defence Committee felt that even though an Iraqi attack was becoming increasingly unlikely at this stage, it was still too early to rely on the ostensibly stable situation. Qasim was an unpredictable character and an immediate attack following a British withdrawal remained a possibility: 'In fact it was now more probable that the Iraqis would aim at subversion of the present regime from within than make a direct military attack. The possibility of rash action by General Qasim could not, however, be discounted.'[43]

Before a British withdrawal could even be thought of, an alternative deterrent against the threat posed to Kuwait's integrity by Qasim's Iraq had to be established. Of two different possibilities, the first was quickly dismissed: in the eyes of the British Government, a peacekeeping force raised by the UN was not a realistic option. Although the Kuwait crisis had been discussed in the UN Security Council in the first week of July, no agreement of any kind had been reached. A British resolution defending the military operation on the basis of the Exchange of Letters had been vetoed by the Soviet Union, while a resolution of the UAR that called for the immediate withdrawal of British troops had been vetoed

by the Western powers.[44] It seemed very likely that an attempt to secure a mandate for a peacekeeping force would suffer the same fate and be vetoed by the Soviet Union.[45] The British Government also disliked the idea of a UN peacekeeping force for Kuwait because its presence would render any further British military intervention impossible:

> It seemed unlikely that agreement would be reached on the dispatch of a United Nations Force to Kuwait; even if it could be organized, the presence of such a force would almost certainly prevent us from coming to the Ruler's assistance in an emergency.[46]

This extract from the minutes of the Defence Committee meeting on 18 July implies that even though the British Government regarded military withdrawal as a political necessity, it was unwilling in the long term to abandon Britain's traditional role as protector of Kuwait. A solution for the conflict which would bring an end to the exclusive position that Britain still enjoyed in its military relations with Kuwait was not regarded as an acceptable option.

Another way of establishing a form of political deterrent against an Iraqi attack on Kuwait, thereby enabling the British troops to withdraw, presented itself in the shape of a peacekeeping force raised by the League of Arab States. All members of the league were committed by its charter to supporting and respecting the independence and integrity of the other members. Kuwaiti membership was therefore a necessary prerequisite for the establishment of an Arab League peacekeeping force. King Saud of Saudi Arabia had already asked Abdul Khalek Hassouna, secretary-general of the Arab League, on 30 June to put the Kuwait question on the agenda of the organization's next council meeting. During that meeting, which took place on 5 July, the discussion concentrated on Kuwait's application for membership. The Iraqi Government strongly opposed the admission of Kuwait, threatening to withdraw entirely from the league if Kuwait was made a member. President Nasser of the United Arab Republic, on the other hand, supported the Kuwaiti application and successfully convinced other league members to do the same. For Nasser, the establishment of an Arab force for Kuwait would be an opportunity to get rid of the British troops without playing into the hands of Qasim, whom he regarded as an adversary in the struggle for leadership in the Arab world.[47]

The British Government supported the idea of a regional solution to the Kuwait problem, and encouraged the amir to despatch his nephew, Shaikh Jabir, to various Middle East capitals during the second week of

July to seek support for Kuwait's membership application to the Arab League. In turn, Shaikh Jabir promised that the amir would be willing to request a British military withdrawal as soon as an Arab League peacekeeping force had been sent to Kuwait.[48] Shaikh Jabir's proposal was incorporated into the Saudi Arabian resolution that formed the basis of Kuwait's admittance to the Arab League as a full member on 20 July 1961.[49] An Arab League military committee arrived in Kuwait on 8 August to discuss the necessary preparations for a peacekeeping mission with the amir, and a mere four days later, Shaikh Abdullah and Abdel Khalek Hassouna signed an agreement providing for the establishment of an Arab League Security Force that would be responsible for the defence of Kuwait.[50] The troops would be under the command of a Saudi Arabian officer with a Jordanian deputy commander. After this agreement had been signed, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, and Sudan began to despatch soldiers to Kuwait. The gradual withdrawal of British troops started on 27 September and, by 10 October, all British soldiers, apart from a small group responsible for preparing vehicles and equipment for storage, had left Kuwait.[51]

2.4 A new intervention plan for Kuwait: Operation Sodabread

Once the agreement for the establishment of a peacekeeping force had been signed by the Amir of Kuwait and the secretary-general of the Arab League, an intense debate started in London about the future of Britain's military commitment to Kuwait. The debate in the Cabinet and in the appropriate departments – the Treasury, the Foreign Office, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Power – centred on the possible effects that the arrival of the Arab League's Security Force might have on Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf. It was agreed that the government needed to decide about the future of the British defence commitment that had been included in the Exchange of Letters of 19 June, and about redeployment in the Persian Gulf before the British troops had been withdrawn from Kuwait.

A first step in the decision-making process was the evaluation of Operation Vantage by the British military establishment. A working party was set up by the Chiefs of Staff Committee to prepare a report on the soon-to-be-concluded intervention, the aim of which was to examine the British methods and organization that had been used to implement Operation Vantage and to analyse both its successes and its drawbacks.[52] The final version of this report, which was approved by the Chiefs of

Staff Committee on 6 September 1961, concluded that the major weakness of Operation Vantage had been its reliance on having a relatively prolonged warning period. The plan

> [...] had assumed, based on a Joint Intelligence Committee appreciation, that there would be a warning period of at last 4 days; this was based on the time required for the build-up of a sufficient Iraqi military concentration in the Basra area. Reviews of the Kuwait situation, with particular reference to the intelligence basis of Plan VANTAGE, were made periodically, but up to the evening of 28th June, 1961, there was no change in this assessment. It was not until 29th June, 1961 (COSMID 9) that the Commander-in-Chief, Middle East was informed that a complete tank regiment could be in Basra by the morning of 1st July, 1961.[53]

Because Iraq had then unexpectedly abstained from attack, the insufficient warning period had not had any serious consequences for the success of the operation. However, the chiefs of staff agreed that if the military commitment of Britain to defend Kuwait was to be upheld, the intervention plan for future operations would have to take this risk into account and reduce the calculated warning period. This was stated in a plan for 'Redeployment of British Forces after Withdrawal from Kuwait' that was approved by the Chiefs of Staff Committee on 22 August 1961.[54] In fact the chiefs of staff had little faith in the value of the presence of the Arab League forces in Kuwait as a military deterrent against an Iraqi attack. Based on a new and detailed assessment of the military threat to Kuwait, the report concluded that during the following 12 months, an Iraqi attack could take place at any time with no warning at all: 'A force of up to one infantry brigade supported by 39 tanks and a parachute unit of 550 men in an infantry role could attack without warning.'[55] Because such an invasion would probably aim to conquer the town of Kuwait and to occupy the emirate's airfields, any British plan to counter an Iraqi surprise attack had to take into account the fact that the Arab League forces in Kuwait would be able to hold the airfields and other vital points of re-entry for British troops against the Iraqi invasion for a limited period of only 36 hours. The conclusions reached by the chiefs of staff were incorporated into a new intervention plan for Kuwait, which the minister of defence, Harold Watkinson, submitted to the Cabinet on 1 September.[56]

The minister informed his colleagues that from the military point of view, the only realistic way to implement the British obligation to

defend Kuwait was to prepare for an intervention within 36 hours. A smaller section of the British forces would be introduced in Kuwait within this period to defend the points of entry until the remaining British troops arrived during the following 60 hours. Watkinson also pointed out that the new intervention plan had far-reaching consequences for the scale and cost of Britain's military deployment in the Persian Gulf. To meet the requirements of the increased state of readiness, the total number of British troops earmarked for the Kuwait operation had to be increased. The intervention plan relied on land forces deployed at the British bases in Aden and Kenya, and on air forces stationed in Aden, Kenya, Germany, Cyprus, and Britain.[57] Since the latter was supposed to defend Kuwait without having any troops stationed inside the emirate, the plan provided in addition for the increase of forces stationed in the Persian Gulf. This was necessary should a swift introduction of British troops into Kuwait have to be made in the event of an emergency. So far, Britain's military installations in the area included an RAF base and a small navy station in Bahrain, as well as RAF airfields and staging posts in Sharjah, and in Oman at Salalah and on Masirah Island. To meet the requirements of the new intervention plan, a parachute battalion group would have to be stationed permanently in Bahrain.

The minister emphasized that the implementation of the plan to deploy additional troops to the Persian Gulf required the construction of suitable barracks for the troops in Bahrain, a costly enterprise for which the British Government would have to be prepared to pay:

> Such a redeployment will involve stationing more troops in Bahrain/Sharjah than there were before the Kuwaiti operation, keeping some of them at a higher state of readiness, and employing more armour and artillery. The increased numbers will require additional accommodation, which in early days, at least, would have to be tents. If the commitment is to be a long-term one and certainly before the next hot season, better accommodation would be required. It is estimated that the cheapest air-conditioned accommodation would cost some £500,000.[58]

Watkinson added that the RAF should increase its presence in the Persian Gulf by stationing a detachment of Hunter fighter planes in Bahrain. This deployment, which was required to ensure the re-entry of Britain's forces into Kuwait within the proposed time-scale, would also involve the provision of air-conditioned accommodation at Bahrain

which would cost the British state a further £100,000. He did, however, concede that the air-deployment plan was the most flexible element in the scheme.[59]

Another necessary but costly aspect of the new intervention plan was to create a stockpile of British weapons in Kuwait and to leave the personnel needed for maintenance behind once the British troops had withdrawn. The equipment that would have to be pre-positioned in the emirate included 24 tanks, 24 armoured cars, and 12 field guns, as well as engineering equipment, heavy vehicles, and ammunition.[60] It was also necessary to deploy a mobile radar system in Kuwait that the RAF could use in the event of a British intervention. The amir had already been consulted on this matter and had agreed to pay for the running costs of the stockpiling.[61]

Watkinson concluded his memorandum by reporting the discussions among the chiefs of staff about possible economies of scale that could be made regarding the planned intervention. Having considered different military scenarios,

> They [the chiefs of staff] have reached the conclusion that, at least for the present, while the likelihood of an Iraqi attack on Kuwait may be reduced by the presence of the Arab League force, the military risk remains, particularly of a surprise attack by a Brigade group; and that nothing less than their earlier proposals will do if the United Kingdom is to retain the capacity to re-intervene on an appropriate scale within 36 hours, and to build up the total force requirement within four days.[62]

The defence minister's memorandum was discussed in a Cabinet meeting on 5 September, and while the ministers agreed that a stockpile of British weapons should immediately be established in Kuwait, they concluded that a fresh political assessment of British interests and responsibilities in the Persian Gulf was needed before the expensive and time-consuming redeployment of British troops described by Watkinson could be endorsed. Lord Home, the foreign secretary, was therefore instructed to prepare a review, in consultation with the Treasury and the Ministry of Defence, of the continued need to maintain the defence commitment to Kuwait. This would consider whether the British military deployment in the Persian Gulf should be reorganized, in light of the responsibility that the Arab League had recently accepted for the defence of Kuwait. Lord Home was also invited to analyse the potential of the British Government to safeguard its interests in the Persian Gulf

by political means.[63] Discussion as to the costs and benefits of the continued commitments to Kuwait then moved into an interdepartmental working party of officials that included representatives from the Foreign Office, the Treasury, the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of Power. Their findings were presented to the Cabinet by Edward Heath, the lord privy seal, on 2 October 1961.[64]

This interdepartmental report provided a detailed assessment mainly of Britain's economic interests in Kuwait and analysed the possible dangers to those interests.[65] It explained that Kuwait's vast oil reserves benefited the British economy in three different ways. The concession for the exploration of Kuwait's oil reserves belonged to the Kuwait Oil Company, 50 per cent of which was owned by BP and 50 per cent by the Gulf Oil Company of Pittsburgh, PA, USA. Some 51 per cent of BP's shares were the property of the British state. The enormous profits made by the Kuwait Oil Company through extracting and selling Kuwait's oil were therefore of significant benefit to Britain's balance of payments. A policy designed to safeguard British interests would have to ensure that the profitable way in which Kuwait's oil was extracted and transported was maintained in the future. The second economic advantage for Britain was Kuwait's membership of the Sterling Area. During a period of dollar-shortage, British industry was able to meet its ever-growing need for energy by buying oil from Kuwait and paying for it in sterling. Kuwait held large sterling reserves and invested a large proportion of its oil earnings in the City of London, thus contributing to the stability of British currency. Any change in policy by the Kuwaiti Government that included withdrawal from the Sterling Area would therefore have serious repercussions for the British economy.

The third economic advantage for Britain was Kuwait's position as an independent oil producer in the Middle East, with friendly policies towards Britain and the West in general. The report stressed that the main aim of a policy intended to preserve British interests was to make sure that Kuwait's integrity was not compromised by another Middle Eastern country. This reasoning reflected Britain's increasingly difficult bargaining position in the Middle East. Following the overthrow of the Anglophile Hashemite monarchy of Iraq in 1958, the only British allies remaining in the region were the protected states of the Gulf, Kuwait, Oman, and Iran. The interdepartmental report argued that the invasion and annexation of Kuwait by one of the other Middle Eastern oil-producing countries would reduce the number of independent oil producers and give those that remained too much power to dictate

prices. If Kuwait was put under the control of one of the Middle Eastern transit countries, such as the United Arab Republic, there was a danger that the transport of sufficient quantities of oil to the West could no longer be guaranteed:

> Because of its independence, affluence and friendship with us Kuwait stands in the way of a consolidation of control of Middle East oil by one or more of the remaining major Middle Eastern oil producers (Iraq, Saudi Arabia and Iran) or transit States (the United Arab Republic), and thus provides an invaluable insurance that oil will continue to flow from the Middle East in adequate quantities and on reasonable terms [. . .].[66]

Having analysed the various ways in which Kuwait's integrity could be threatened in the future, the report then discussed whether Britain could rely on a purely political strategy to safeguard its significant economic interests in the emirate, arguing that Kuwait's membership of the Arab League and the prospect of joining the UN added to its security. A British policy aimed at persuading the amir to invest some of his oil wealth in other Arab countries might also help to stabilize his position and give him greater immunity against attempts to stir up subversion in his country. However, while such a political strategy might help to counter some of the threats that Kuwait faced from its neighbours, simply ignoring the risk of an Iraqi attack was not satisfactory. Iraq's potential to annex Kuwait was seen as the greatest danger to the integrity of the emirate, and thus to Britain's economic interests there; it was a threat that could not be dealt with through diplomacy alone:

> It was possible, though far from certain, that the risk of attack from Saudi Arabia or of subversion by the UAR could be discounted, provided the Kuwait Government followed sensible policies, but the threat from Iraq is in a different class, given the unprecedented and conspiratorial nature of General Qassim [sic] and his need for a striking success to bolster his position in Iraq and the Arab world. For him, the seizure of Kuwait would represent a tremendous success, and at least for so long as he is in control of Iraqi policy [. . .], there is bound to be a serious danger that the Iraqi claim will be pursued by violent means if the Iraqis see a chance of success. There is no political instrument open to us to influence General Qassim against pursuing his claim; [. . .].[67]

The broad conclusion of the interdepartmental report's detailed analysis of Britain's interests in Kuwait, the risks threatening those interests, and the political methods employable to safeguard them was that the British Government should maintain its military commitment to defend Kuwait for at least as long as Qasim remained in power. Members of the Cabinet were asked to endorse the military intervention plan for Kuwait submitted by the defence minister that provided for a 36-hour state of readiness for the British troops earmarked for the Kuwait operation. Since this was the only militarily viable plan for Britain to retain the ability to defend Kuwait successfully against Iraqi attack, and since the existing threat made a defence commitment necessary, the report also recommended that the Cabinet should agree to the construction of housing for the additional troops that had to be stationed in Bahrain. These recommendations were duly endorsed by the Cabinet on 5 October.[68] At the same meeting, ministers also agreed that authority should be given to the commander-in-chief, Middle East, to take immediate limited military action in case of an Iraqi attack on Kuwait, provided that the amir had requested British assistance and that the political resident had agreed that it was politically desirable to meet this request.[69] The commander-in-chief could not afford to lose valuable time for the implementation of the defence plan by having to wait for instructions from the British Government in London.[70]

On 24 October 1961, the Chiefs of Staff Committee instructed the commander-in-chief, Middle East, to adopt Reinforced Theatre Plan No. 13 – codenamed Operation Sodabread – as a contingency plan for a British intervention in Kuwait in case of an Iraqi attack.[71] The total British land force earmarked for the operation consisted of one reinforced brigade group of four infantry battalions, including tanks, armoured cars, artillery, and a parachute battalion group. The entire force was stationed in the Middle East Command area, with two infantry battalions in Kenya, one in Aden, and the parachute battalion group in Bahrain.[72] The RAF deployment for Operation Sodabread consisted of two fighter plane squadrons stationed in Aden and Bahrain. In the event of a British intervention in Kuwait, a squadron of Canberra planes from Germany was to be deployed to Sharjah to fly ground attacks from the RAF airfield, supported by a Canberra Photographic Reconnaissance detachment from Bahrain. The British Navy would participate in the operation with three frigates, an amphibious warfare squadron, and coastal minesweepers from the Middle East Command area.[73]

2.5 Redeployment to Bahrain

The implementation of the new intervention plan for Kuwait, Operation Sodabread, depended upon permission from the Ruler of Bahrain for the permanent stationing of a British parachute battalion group on his territory. Until 1961 the presence in Bahrain of British Army personnel – as opposed to Royal Navy sailors or RAF airmen who had been there since the 1930s – had been based on the ruler's acquiescence rather than on formal agreements. When deployment of British troops to Bahrain had begun in March 1956 and had been accelerated during the Suez Crisis later that year, the ruler had reluctantly conceded, while expressing his hopes that the troops would not remain indefinitely in Bahrain, and had accepted the political resident's oral assurance that they would eventually be withdrawn. However, this did not happen, and 425 British Army soldiers continued to be stationed in Bahrain until 1961. They were accommodated at the British naval base in Jufair and the RAF base in Muharraq since the British Army did not own any land in Bahrain.[74] During the Kuwait intervention in 1961 the British brought in more troops, informing the ruler about the increase, but not asking for his consent; eventually there were 1100 British troops stationed in Bahrain. When it was decided in London in October 1961 that these forces should remain permanently in Bahrain, it was acknowledged that they could not be accommodated within the Royal Navy base at Jufair or at the RAF base at Muharraq, since the land occupied by the British services was not sufficient to meet the requirements of an entire battalion group.[75] Additional land had therefore to be purchased or leased for the construction of suitable accommodation, which meant that the British Government had no choice but to seek the ruler's consent to its new deployment plan:

> Any additional land forces to be stationed more or less permanently in Bahrain would have to be accommodated outside these bases, which would involve asking the Ruler for more land: this in itself would be tantamount to asking his permission.[76]

On 25 October 1961, Sir William Luce despatched a formal letter to the ruler, Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al Khalifah, asking for his consent to the increase in British troops permanently stationed on his territory.[77] He also informed Shaikh Salman of the British Government's request to lease additional land for the construction of a new army camp, and requested him to submit suggestions for suitable sites. Luce's strategy

was to persuade Shaikh Salman by convincing him that the stationing of additional troops on his territory was in his own interest. The letter opened with a statement of Britain's interests in the Gulf, which lay in the fulfilment of the British Government's treaty obligations towards the rulers of the Gulf States. In reminding Shaikh Salman of the importance of Kuwait's independence and integrity, Luce explained that Britain could no longer guarantee the defence of Kuwait if Shaikh Salman did not agree to the increase in British troop numbers in Bahrain:

> Without this force in Bahrain it would not be possible for Her Majesty's Government to meet any request which the Amir of Kuwait might make in the future for military aid in defence of the integrity of Kuwait, a cause which I know is very close to Your Highness's heart.[78]

He also stressed the benefits that the stationing of additional troops would have for the local Bahraini economy. He reminded Shaikh Salman of the contribution that the presence of British Army personnel had already made to the commerce and trade of Bahrain, and assured him that the planned redeployment would increase this effect and also create new employment on the island. [79]

The ruler's response was less welcoming than the British had hoped. While Shaikh Salman accepted the stationing of an entire battalion group in principle, he made his consent to a lease agreement subject to two conditions. Since he did not welcome the idea of the British troops being stationed indefinitely on the island, he wished to limit the British deployment to a period of 15 years, stating in his formal reply to Luce's letter on 1 November that the threat to Kuwait's integrity was unlikely to exist for any longer than that.[80] This condition reflected his worry that Bahrain's image in the Arab world could be damaged if the island appeared to be permanently occupied by foreign troops. The political resident was also informed by the Bahrain Government that 'they wished to be in a position to say, if questioned, that they had agreed to the stationing of these forces in Bahrain at the request of the Amir of Kuwait'.[81] Notwithstanding his very close relationship with Britain, the ruler did not want to be too closely associated in public with the British military presence. He preferred that the increase in British forces on his territory should be presented to the world as an inter-Arab affair: a temporary measure designed to help Bahrain's ally, Kuwait.

Shaikh Salman's second condition was an assurance by the British Government that the troops stationed in Bahrain would be used only

for the defence of Kuwait or Bahrain. Referring to the statement in Luce's letter that an increased deployment was necessary from the point of view of British political and strategic interests in the area, the ruler expressed his fear that British troops stationed in Bahrain could be used for an attack against a country with which he wished to maintain cordial relations. Such an attack would expose Bahrain to the criticism of the Arab world:

> [...] it is inevitable for Us to foresee the possibility that the military force stationed in Bahrain might be used by Her Majesty's Government against a country with whom We had every wish to maintain friendly relations. The consequence would certainly be that We should be accused by such country and by the whole Arab world of allowing Our country to be used as a base of operations against them with incalculable harm, in the case of Saudi Arabia for example, to Our economy.[82]

The background to this stipulation was the unresolved dispute between Saudi Arabia, Abu Dhabi, and Oman over the Buraimi Oasis.[83] The Ruler of Bahrain was afraid that, as the protecting power of Abu Dhabi and the close ally of Oman, Britain might support these two countries militarily against Saudi Arabia by using British troops stationed in Bahrain.[84] This scenario worried the ruler because of Bahrain's economic dependence on Saudi Arabia. His greatest fear was that in the event of an armed conflict with Britain, Saudi Arabia could cut the oil pipeline to Bahrain: this had happened during the Suez Crisis and had caused severe economic problems in his country.[85]

The British Government was taken by surprise by the conditions laid down by Shaikh Salman for the stationing of additional troops in Bahrain, and they were discussed extensively by the Foreign Office as well as among the chiefs of staff. It was soon agreed that the ruler's request for a time limit on the stationing of British troops on his island could be met without complications. Representing the military standpoint, the commander-in-chief for the Middle East agreed that a limited period of 15 years covered the requirements for countering possible threats to Kuwait,[86] and his opinion was shared by the Foreign Office.[87] British consent to Shaikh Salman's first stipulation was made even easier when Mr Smith, secretary of the Bahraini Government, assured the political resident on 10 November 1961 that should the threat to Kuwait still exist beyond that period, the lease could be extended by a new agreement between Britain and Bahrain. He promised Luce that 'if the

threat to Kuwait looked like continuing beyond that period, the lease of the site for the battalion could be extended by mutual agreement and the lease agreement could provide for such an extension'.[88]

Shaikh Salman's request for an assurance that the British troops stationed in Bahrain would be used solely for the defence of Kuwait and Bahrain posed greater problems for the British Government. The Foreign Office had political reasons for its severe reservations about accepting this condition, fearing that if the agreement were to become public, it would damage the deterrent effect of Britain's military presence in the Gulf against possible Saudi Arabian aggression towards Abu Dhabi and Oman.[89] The Foreign Office expected that another negative side-effect of the ruler's request for assurance might involve the British relationship with the Ruler of Sharjah, and concern was expressed that the latter might try to follow the Bahraini example and obtain a similar agreement from the British Government by making the use of the RAF airfield and staging post on Sharjah's territory subject to conditions.[90]

There was also some reluctance within the Ministry of Defence to accept Salman's second condition since the chiefs of staff did not wish to have their hands tied for military planning in the Gulf by an agreement that limited the free use of British troops in the area.[91] However, apart from these general reservations, it turned out that from a military viewpoint, the requested agreement was less problematic than from a political perspective. The commander-in-chief for the Middle East saw no problem in accepting Salman's conditions, pointing out that in any case Britain's current military planning for an armed conflict with Saudi Arabia over Abu Dhabi did not provide for the use of the troops stationed in Bahrain. In a telegram to the Ministry of Defence on 10 November 1961, he explained that any reinforcement of the Trucial Oman Scouts for the defence of Abu Dhabi would come from outside the Gulf, using the command reserve battalion in Aden, and that the military operations could be mounted from Sharjah.[92] Furthermore, the commander-in-chief took the view that the Ruler of Bahrain's stipulation did not limit Britain's freedom of action with regard to Oman. This was due to the specific wording of Shaikh Salman's condition as formulated in his letter of 1 November, which had demanded that the British troops stationed in Bahrain were not used for supporting any 'shaikhdom' other than Bahrain or Kuwait.[93] According to the commander-in-chief, this stipulation did not apply to Oman, which was a sultanate, not a shaikhdom.[94]

The commander-in-chief and the chiefs of staff maintained a very pragmatic position over the question of whether or not to accept Shaikh

Salman's request. They were willing to find ways to accommodate the ruler while maintaining Britain's freedom of action. Another possibility was to formulate Britain's assurance to Shaikh Salman in a way that did not exclude the use in the Gulf of army personnel stationed in Bahrain after they had spent a quarantine period in some other place. In such a scenario the troops would be removed from Bahrain to Aden or Sharjah, and then launched from there into operation in the Persian Gulf.[95] The greatest concern of the British chiefs of staff was that the ruler's condition might include not only British Army personnel stationed in Bahrain but also the use of Britain's base facilities on the island. Since the use of the base was regarded as indispensable in the event of an armed conflict over Abu Dhabi, especially if the use of British aircraft proved necessary, it was agreed by the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office that this point needed to be clarified with Shaikh Salman before any assurances could be given.[96] However, following a meeting with Mr Smith on 10 November, Sir William Luce was able to inform his government that the requested assurance did not apply to the use of British base facilities.[97]

Luce, as political resident, played an important role in convincing the British Government to accept the stipulations of the Ruler of Bahrain. He did not share the political reservations of the Foreign Office, and, while he acknowledged the danger of a leak about the new agreement, he did not think that this would do any real harm to Britain's relationship with either Saudi Arabia or Sharjah. Luce believed that the Saudis 'must surely realize, particularly in view of the manner in which we came to the defence of Kuwait, that we would be able to do so in the case of Abu Dhabi by bringing forces from elsewhere than Bahrain'.[98] He thought it highly unlikely that the Ruler of Sharjah would formulate a request to the British Government that was in any way similar to Shaikh Salman's stipulations, since, in his view, Sharjah had no reason to oppose a British conflict with Saudi Arabia. Since the shaikhdom was almost entirely dependent economically on Britain's military requirements there, the ruler could not afford to make their use subject to conditions.[99] Luce felt certain that Britain would not obtain the required permission for redeployment without meeting the ruler's requests. In his view, the only result of continued discussions over these requests would be loss of valuable time, which could be better used for building the accommodation needed for the additional British troops.[100] He repeatedly reminded his government that the general tone of Shaikh Salman's letter was friendly and cooperative, and that the British should not jeopardize the friendship of the Bahrainis by

insisting 'to move against their will on a matter about which they feel strongly'.[101]

Eventually, on 20 November, the political resident was able to inform the Ruler of Bahrain that the British Government had consented to his conditions. Confirming that the lease of the site for the new accommodation should be for a limited period of 15 years, he stressed that 'the British troops in question will not be sent from Bahrain for the purpose of supporting any Shaikhdom in the Gulf other than Bahrain and Kuwait without your [the ruler's] agreement in each case'.[102] According to the British Government, the wording of Luce's letter was not prejudicial either to the British troops stationed in Bahrain being used to support the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, or to their being sent into action in the Gulf after they had been stationed elsewhere for a quarantine period. Shortly after this, a lease agreement was concluded, followed by the construction of a British army camp at Hamalah on the western coast of Bahrain.

The discussions with the Ruler of Bahrain about redeployment were one aspect of the immediate and direct impact that the decision to maintain the Kuwait commitment had on Britain's policy towards the protected states of the Persian Gulf. Because Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States were not British colonies, deployment of British troops to the area depended on the goodwill of the local governments. More than ever the British Government was forced to aim for the best possible relations with the rulers of the protected states.

2.6 Consequences for Britain's Persian Gulf policy

The Kuwait crisis had significant repercussions on British policy in the whole of the Persian Gulf. The events of the summer of 1961 triggered an animated discussion in the Foreign Office about the future of Britain's special position in the region. Pointing the way for this debate was Sir William Luce, who conveyed his analysis of the lessons which could be learned from the Kuwait crisis in a letter to Lord Home, the secretary of state for foreign affairs. This highly influential communication, Despatch No. 98 of 22 November 1961, summed up the developments of the last six months and discussed Britain's assets and liabilities in the Persian Gulf.[103] Luce explained in detail the consequences of the Kuwait crisis for Britain's political and military position in the Persian Gulf. The political resident regarded the events of summer 1961 as confirmation of the value and necessity of Britain's traditional policy of maintaining a military presence and exercising political influence in the region.

Operation Vantage had, according to Luce, been a significant success. By preventing the annexation of Kuwait by Iraq, the intervention had not only strengthened Anglo-Kuwaiti friendship but also bolstered British prestige in the rest of the Persian Gulf. He described the great concern that had been caused among the rulers of the protected states by Qasim's aggressive stand over Kuwait, and also stressed Kuwait's satisfaction with Britain's swiftly executed military intervention, interpreting these positive reactions to the Kuwait crisis as an indication that the local rulers now believed more than ever that Britain's presence in the Gulf was vital to their own survival:

> The abruptness and crudity of Qasim's declaration of his intention to annex Kuwait shocked them [the rulers of the protected states] and brought home to them forcibly the value of the Pax Britannica in the Persian Gulf. British stock in this area has perhaps never stood higher than it did on the morrow of our intervention in Kuwait.[104]

Establishment of the Arab League's Security Force and the withdrawal of British troops from Kuwait had not been popular among the rulers of the protected states. They did not have great faith in the deterrent effect of these troops against an Iraqi attack, and the political resident reported that he had been obliged to defend the temporary Arab solution to Kuwait's security problem against the noticeable scepticism expressed in Qatar, Bahrain, and the Trucial States in the months following Operation Vantage. Only their awareness of the continued readiness of the British Government to come to the emirate's defence had reassured the local rulers in their concern about Kuwait's and their own safety.

The consequence of this increase in British popularity in the Gulf was a renewed British commitment to the defence of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States. Luce was convinced that Britain's influential position in the Gulf was to a large degree based on the confidence and trust of the local governments. He believed that Britain could not withdraw from any part of its responsibilities in the Persian Gulf without running the risk of a serious loss of prestige, which would ultimately lead to the slow erosion of British power in the region. In order to organize their deployment in the Persian Gulf in such a way that they would be able to maintain their defence commitment towards Kuwait, the British needed continuous good relations with the rulers of the protected states. Therefore they could not afford to disappoint the expectations of the rulers of Qatar, Bahrain, and the Trucial States.

The Kuwait crisis had, according to Luce, strengthened solidarity among the Gulf States. United by the realization of their shared vulnerability to the territorial ambitions of the larger regional states, namely Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia, and by their increased awareness of their dependence on Britain's protection, the rulers now were more ready than previously to work together in military matters. This was especially true for Bahrain and Kuwait:

> The ancient ties between the Khalifa and the Sabah ruling families of Bahrain and Kuwait, and the former's heightened realization of their dependence on Britain in the face of Iraqi, Saudi Arabian and even Iranian ambitions have brought about a greater degree of cooperation in military matters than was possible before Qasim's threat to Kuwait.[105]

This was an advantage for the British who, in view of the increased threat from Iraq that faced Kuwait, had depended on the consent of the Ruler of Bahrain for the realization of their redeployment plans in the Gulf.

Another factor that in the political resident's opinion had made Operation Vantage a success was that the British intervention had not damaged Britain's relations with any Arab nation other than Iraq:

> It is indeed remarkable that in this day and age it should be possible for British Forces to intervene in defence of one Arab country against another and, in the process, to strengthen Anglo-Kuwaiti friendship without, as I believe, harming British relations with the rest of the Arab world, other than of course the country whose ambitions were thwarted by our intervention.[106]

The reason for this positive development was the shared interest of Britain and most of the Arab states in preventing Iraq's annexation of Kuwait. Had Qasim been successful in laying his hands on the emirate's wealth, this would have caused a dramatic shift in power among the larger Arab nations in favour of Iraq. Even though most Arab countries did not want to regard the British as allies in their attempts to prevent the extension of Qasim's power, even Nasser's UAR had to accept that, in the prevailing circumstances, Kuwait owed its security and independence to Britain.

Luce regarded the Kuwait crisis as proof that the Persian Gulf remained for the foreseeable future an inherently unstable area in which

the only guarantee of peace and stability was the British military and political presence. The greatest danger had to be faced by Kuwait, whose independence remained constantly threatened by Iraq. Luce stressed that for at least as long as Qasim remained president, there was no alternative to Britain's continued commitment to defend Kuwait, which was too weak to defend itself. Nobody but the British would be able to guarantee the emirate's integrity and independence. Saudi Arabia was perhaps the only Arab country able and ready to station forces permanently in Kuwait and substantial enough to withstand an Iraqi attack. However, such an arrangement was in itself a danger to Kuwait's independence because it would allow the Saudis to extend their influence in the Gulf:

> In our preoccupation with the Iraqi threat, we should not lose sight of the possibility that the Saudis, who have their own ambitions, may try to extend their 'protection' more permanently to Kuwait by declining to withdraw their garrison and even by strengthening it.[107]

Iran was the only other regional power that was geographically in a position to help Kuwait promptly in case of an attack. However, dependence on the support of this non-Arab country was politically unacceptable to the Ruler of Kuwait and to the rest of the Arab world. Nor, according to the political resident, was a UN solution to the problem of Kuwait's security a realistic option. In his opinion, UN observers on their own were inadequate for deterring any sort of surprise attack by Qasim's Iraq. The amir's requirements could only be met by a strong UN military force that would be permanently stationed in Kuwait. However, it was highly unlikely that the UN could provide such a strong force, even if Russia refrained from using its veto power against it.

Luce was of the opinion that Britain's role as guarantor of regional stability was as indispensable in the protected states as it was in Kuwait, and could not envisage any circumstances in which any of the Gulf shaikhdoms, other than Kuwait, could become viable states with a real prospect of remaining independent after Britain had withdrawn its protection. The protected states were too small, both in territory and in population, to be able to survive on their own. Some, such as Bahrain, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi, were very rich, but this did not add to their prospects: it only made them more vulnerable to the territorial ambitions of the larger regional powers of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran. Britain's military presence was therefore indispensable in preventing the

outbreak of armed conflicts that could easily involve the entire Arabian Peninsula:

> The plain fact, as I see it, is that British withdrawal from the Gulf, whenever and for whatever reasons it may come about, is likely to turn that area into a jungle of power politics and smash-and-grab, and there is very little that Her Majesty's Government can do about it in the meantime.[108]

The formation by the protected states of a federation or supranational organization remained, according to Luce, a theoretical solution to this problem. Due to the peculiar constitutional status of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, the British Government had no power to impose any form of political integration on them against their will. The rulers of the Gulf shaikhdoms were individualistic in character, and in several cases were involved in disputes and feuds with their neighbours, while the richer shaikhdoms were unwilling to share their wealth with the poorer ones. Furthermore, the protected states were geographically too scattered to form any sort of viable unit:

> The Trucial States, with a combined population of about 85,000, are linked with Qatar, with about 45,000 inhabitants, by a long narrow strip of desert; both are more accessible to Saudi Arabia than they are to each other. Bahrain, with a population of about 150,000, is separated from Qatar by 40 miles of sea and is more accessible to Saudi Arabia on whom she is economically heavily dependent. [...] The most ardent federalist would boggle at the task of making any political or military sense out of such a situation.[109]

The political resident argued in his Despatch No. 98 that Britain's special political and military position in the Gulf was not only necessary for maintaining regional stability but also important in the context of the Cold War. If Britain withdrew from the Gulf, the struggle for control over the Gulf shaikhdoms could present the Soviet Union with an opportunity to extend its influence to the Arabian Peninsula, which, in turn, would seriously endanger Western access to the oil of the Persian Gulf. Luce concluded that at present there seemed to be no policy available to the British Government which would enable Britain to withdraw from the Gulf in the foreseeable future. The dangers to Britain's major interests in the area – general political stability and undisturbed access to the oil of Kuwait – were too great. He was convinced that

> [...] it is no exaggeration to say that Britain at this moment stands more deeply committed in the Persian Gulf, both politically and militarily, than at any time since the last war, a situation which is in marked contrast with the great contraction of our political and military commitments elsewhere in the world over the past fifteen years.[110]

The political resident concluded his despatch by suggesting that the British Government should try to enlist the support of other Western powers, namely the USA, for its policies in the Persian Gulf. At that time the US Government approved and supported Britain's position in the area but left the burden of maintaining stability entirely to the British. Even though the US Government could not be expected to establish a greater military presence in the Gulf, Luce recommended joint Anglo-US contingency planning with regard to possible military problems in the region. The US Government had to be informed that crisis situations might arise, such as a Communist victory in Iraq or Iran, that would make the burden of defending the Persian Gulf too heavy for the British to bear alone.[111]

Despatch No. 98 was widely circulated in the different departments of the Foreign Office, where it met with widespread approval.[112] Even though there was some dissent on minor matters, such as the possibly damaging effects that the British presence in the Gulf might have on Britain's image in the rest of the Arab world, there was general agreement with Sir William Luce's most important conclusion that the Kuwait crisis had once again proved the inherent instability of the Gulf region. Mr Given of the Arabian Department commented in January 1962:

> The larger neighbors of the Gulf States are notoriously rapacious and it would have been asking a good deal of the most Buddhist-minded state not to help itself to the riches of even so modest a place as Bahrain, let alone Kuwait, Qatar or (in the future) Abu Dhabi. We must face the fact that the Gulf States are so scattered that they cannot defend their riches against their larger neighbors.[113]

Given the prevailing circumstances, and most importantly the threat emanating from Iraq, the British Government was unable to formulate a policy that prepared it for withdrawal from any part of its responsibilities in the region. It was also agreed in the Foreign Office that Britain's relations with Kuwait could not be separated from its policy towards

the protected states. The defence of Kuwait remained the most important of Britain's interests, on which its policy in the entire Persian Gulf region had to be based. As Luce had stated in his Despatch No. 98, 'given Kuwait's geographical position, it is British and Western interest in her independence which is at the root of our [Britain's] present-day position and commitments in the Gulf as a whole'.[114]

3
The Limits to Anglo-American Cooperation

3.1 Preparations for discussions with the State Department

Luce's suggestion in November 1961 of enlisting US support for Britain's Persian Gulf policy resulted in an intense debate in the Foreign Office as to how this aim could best be achieved. In January 1962, Denis Greenhill of the British Embassy in Washington DC, who had read Luce's Despatch No. 98, suggested holding detailed discussions with the US State Department about Britain's problems and policies in the Gulf.[1] He wrote to Sir Roger Stevens, deputy under-secretary of state in the Foreign Office, informing him that the US Government relied on the stabilizing effect on the Gulf of Britain's special position and hoped for this presence to be maintained, although there was a feeling in the State Department that the British Government did not make enough use of its political influence in the Persian Gulf. Greenhill warned:

> While the Americans are, I believe, quite content to let us carry the responsibility for maintaining the stability and security of the Persian Gulf, and indeed have recently appeared somewhat nervous lest we should be thinking of cutting down the military force which we can bring to bear there, I also have the impression that they feel there must be a more 'progressive' alternative to our present political policy in the area.[2]

To put an end to possible misunderstandings between the two governments, it was worthwhile for the Foreign Office to have a frank discussion with the State Department in order to explain to them Britain's interests, policies, and problems in the Persian Gulf. Greenhill

agreed with Luce that the US Government would remain unwilling to become involved in local problems of the Gulf or take on military commitments in the area as long as it remained convinced of the British Government's ability to maintain its position there. On the other hand, he was confident that the Americans would be prepared to discuss with the British Government the possible consequences of a regional crisis in the Arabian Peninsula, such as a revolution in Saudi Arabia. In his opinion, joint contingency planning with the US Government for such crisis situations was a possibility.[3]

Greenhill's suggestion to hold talks with the State Department was endorsed by the Foreign Office, but it was decided that the discussions should not involve the subject of joint Anglo-American military planning in the Persian Gulf, as had been proposed by Luce and Greenhill. The reason for this was the fact that Britain's long-term military programme in the Middle East and East Africa was under review. As long as the future of the Kenyan base was unsure and the question of redeployment from Kenya to Aden remained unsettled, long-term military planning with another power was a pointless exercise. There was a risk that during the discussions with the Americans, the British Government would take on military commitments that it would later be unable to maintain.[4] Nor could the Foreign Office suggest joint military planning to the State Department without having discussed the matter in London with the Ministry of Defence, and it was doubtful whether the latter would agree to the proposal. It was more likely that the Ministry of Defence would object due to fearing that a formal approach to the US Government to agree to joint military planning would result in the existing practical cooperation between the military authorities of the two countries being ended or at least interrupted. Steward Crawford, assistant under-secretary at the Foreign Office, warned that 'we know from past experience that they [the British military authorities] are concerned not to spoil the prospects for the low level joint discussions which go on at present, by raising big issues which might bring contacts to an end.'[5] The Foreign Office also doubted whether military discussions with the Americans would result in effective US help with Britain's most important military commitment in the Persian Gulf, which was the ability to forestall an Iraqi attack on Kuwait within a very short period of time. Since the nearest US land forces were stationed in Germany and the nearest US naval force was cruising in the Mediterranean or in South East Asian waters, they would be too far away from the Gulf to assist Britain in the first and crucial phase of any operation. The USA would only be able to help with the defence of Kuwait

at very short notice if US land forces were permanently stationed in the Gulf. However, according to the Foreign Office, this was so unlikely that it was not even worth discussing it with the US Government.[6]

Due to these reservations, it was decided to limit the discussions with the State Department to political questions. The main British objective was 'to ensure the fullest possible understanding of our policy, and the reasons for it',[7] since this was necessary to secure continued US diplomatic and political support for Britain's position in the Persian Gulf. While the Foreign Office decided against discussing military matters with the State Department for the time being, it was nevertheless hoped that in the event of a severe crisis, a full understanding by the US Government of the British Persian Gulf policy would result in US military support for Britain.[8]

In preparation for the discussions, the Arabian Department produced a briefing paper for the British Embassy in Washington,[9] which was to be read in conjunction with Lord Home's Despatch No. 77 to Luce of May 1961, and Luce's Despatch No. 98. The brief demonstrated the limits of the frankness that the Foreign Office planned to demonstrate during its talks with the State Department. To achieve the ultimate objective of obtaining full US support for Britain's Persian Gulf policy, a discussion tactic, aiming to show the State Department that the present British policy in the Gulf served US interests as much as it served those of Britain, was developed by the Arabian Department. The Foreign Office also informed itself as much as possible about current US aims and interests in the Persian Gulf before the discussions took place.[10] The plan was to use this knowledge during the talks with the State Department, emphasizing British interests and policies that were most similar to those of the US Government:

> It would be undesirable to explain to the Americans what we think their own policy is. Our aim could be attained by describing British interests in such a way that they appear to coincide as far as possible with what we believe US interests to be, and then showing that our present policy is the only effective means of ensuring our interests. The Americans can be left to draw their own conclusions.[11]

According to the Arabian Department, the USA had three major interests in the Gulf: to keep out communism, to ensure undisturbed access to the region's oil on reasonable terms, and to foster peace and stability in the area. These coincided largely with those of the British, with the main difference between Britain and the USA being found in the

relative importance to each of their economic interests in Persian Gulf oil.[12] British policy in the Persian Gulf was not aimed only at the continued flow of the region's oil to the West; it was also directed towards maintaining the present conditions of extraction and export, which significantly benefited the British balance of payments. The British Government wished to preserve the existing arrangements between the local rulers and the big Western oil companies, most importantly BP. In addition, British currency depended for its stability on the investment of the region's oil revenues in the Sterling Area, which was another major factor contributing directly to the economic interests of the British Government in Persian Gulf oil. The USA, on the other hand, had a much smaller direct economic interest in the area, as Denis Greenhill stressed in a letter to Robert Walmsley of the Arabian Department:

> [...] the national economy of the United States is not nearly so deeply involved as that of the United Kingdom as a result of Middle Eastern oil production [...] – this being true from the point of view of oil supply as well as balance of payments – and [...] the maintenance of the present degree of profitability [underlining in the original] is therefore not of close concern to them.[13]

The US Government was more focused on the importance of Persian Gulf oil as an energy source for Western Europe than on its relevance to the US economy. Since 1959 it had become increasingly worried about the expansion of Soviet oil exports to the 'Free World', and stability was needed in the Persian Gulf in order to secure Western Europe's oil supplies.[14] Greenhill also explained to Walmsley that the Americans looked upon the Persian Gulf as one of the very few parts of the Free World that they did not have to think about and expected that Britain would maintain its stability and security. As far as the Arabian Peninsula was concerned, the US Government was much more interested in Saudi Arabia than in the Persian Gulf States. Greater US economic interests and a determination to bolster Saudi Arabia's strictly anti-Communist government meant that while Saudi Arabia was regarded by the Americans as one of 'their' countries, they preferred to restrict their involvement in the Persian Gulf to support for Britain's position.[15] However, even this support had its limits, since the US Government would only cooperate with Britain's policies in the Gulf as long as this did not cause it embarrassment elsewhere.

It was concluded in the Arabian Department that during discussions with the State Department, the emphasis should be on Britain's role

as the provider of peace and security in the Gulf, through which it became the protector of one of the major suppliers of energy for Western Europe.[16] However, before the British Embassy in Washington could be instructed to approach the State Department for discussions, the briefing paper that had been drafted in the Arabian Department had to be cleared with the Treasury and the Ministry of Power, since the information contained in the brief about Britain's Persian Gulf oil policy concerned both departments.[17] While the Ministry of Power consented to the planned discussions immediately, the Treasury raised two serious objections.[18] Its officials were unhappy about the Foreign Office's idea of discussing Britain's Middle East oil interests with the State Department, and also felt that it would be counter-productive to raise this point in connection with the British aim of ensuring US support for their policies in the Persian Gulf.

The Arabian Department had hoped that it would be feasible to convince the Americans that Britain maintained its position in the Gulf mainly to protect Western Europe's interest in continued access to the region's oil supplies. However, the Treasury considered this to be unrealistic, and Alistair Mackay, a Treasury official, warned that the State Department would 'simply think that our whole [underlining in the original] concern in the Gulf is our financial interest, even though we go on to say that of course we are at the same time safeguarding the supply of oil to the West as a whole'.[19] In addition, the Treasury wished to avoid discussion with the Americans about the value of Britain's oil interests in the Persian Gulf in terms of Britain's balance of payments. It was extremely difficult to reduce this value to figures: according to the briefing paper, the yearly benefit to the country's balance of payments from Britain's position in the Gulf could vary from £100 million to £400 million,[20] and the Treasury considered it irresponsible to base discussions with the State Department on insecure figures on which there was no consensus in London.[21]

The second objection raised by the Treasury concerned the idea of showing Lord Home's Despatch No. 77 and Luce's Despatch No. 98 to the State Department. Both contained detailed information about Britain's military intentions in the Persian Gulf: Luce had emphasized that Britain needed to defend Kuwait militarily for an indefinite period, and Lord Home had explained that the British Government's present Persian Gulf policy was designed to protect Britain's economic interest in Kuwait, and was likely to be continued at least until the end of the 1960s. The Treasury disapproved of informing the US Government that Britain intended to maintain indefinite

military commitment towards Kuwait, believing that to present this to the State Department as considered British policy would impair the British Government's freedom of planning.[22] As Alistair Mackay wrote to Walmsley,

> It is not necessarily to question the policy, to which there seemed no better alternative, to ask ourselves whether it is necessary or desirable to seek American approval of it, thus nailing the flag more firmly to the mast. After all, in this uncertain area unforeseen changes can happen.[23]

However, the Foreign Office refused to accept the Treasury's position since, apart from the general Anglo-American interest in keeping Communism out of the area, there would have been very little left to discuss with the State Department if Britain's oil interests and its Kuwait commitment had been omitted from the agenda. The approach to the State Department for discussions about the Persian Gulf was therefore postponed, although the debate between the two departments about a suitable compromise rumbled on for months.

3.2 Resistance against a greater US presence in the Persian Gulf

During the spring of 1962, while interdepartmental disagreement over the desirability and scope of Anglo-American talks on the Persian Gulf remained unresolved, another question concerning specific cooperation with the US Government occupied the minds of the Arabian Department. Denis Speares of the British Embassy in Washington wrote to Walsmley in May 1962, reporting on a meeting with Robert Strong, director of Near Eastern Affairs at the State Department. Strong had informed Speares of the State Department's view that it was prudent to prepare for a time when the USA might have to establish a diplomatic representation in Oman or in the protected states. The possibility of closing the US Consulate-General in Dharan in eastern Saudi Arabia and instead opening a consulate in Bahrain had been considered but decided against for the moment. However, the State Department felt that some Foreign Service officers could usefully be trained in Gulf Arabic while increasing their knowledge of the area, and for this purpose wished to attach several young language students to the consulate-general in Dharan, while encouraging them to make trips to Oman and the protected states. During those trips, the officers would have the opportunity

to meet the 'young people' of the Gulf and to write reports about what they had learnt and seen.[24]

Close contacts between the political residency in Bahrain and the US Consulate-General in Dharan were an established practice, and the consul-general or a member of his staff travelled weekly to Bahrain to exchange information about recent events in Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States.[25] This was an advantageous arrangement for both sides: the US Government had no diplomatic representation in Oman or the protected states, while the British Government had not had an embassy or a consulate in Saudi Arabia since 1956, when Anglo-Saudi relations collapsed during the Suez Crisis.[26] In addition to these regular meetings, individual members of the consulate-general in Dharan often toured the British diplomatic posts in the Gulf, having previously announced their visit to the political resident and the relevant political agents, and a number of US Foreign Service trainee officers had already visited Oman and the protected states. Every year, three or four language students from the US School of Arabic in Beirut would travel to the Gulf for a maximum of ten days. These trips, which had to be cleared with the political residency and were documented in detail, always started in Dharan with a careful briefing of the students. The State Department now suggested a new scheme that would involve an increase in the number and length of visits to the Gulf by trainee officers. The US representation in Dharan was housed in a large compound that was not fully occupied by the consulate-general, and it had therefore been suggested that the remaining accommodation could be used for training Foreign Service officers in Saudi and Gulf Arabic. Six young officers would be based in Dharan for six months, three of which they would spend in Oman or the protected states.[27]

The Foreign Office was very pleased about the State Department's decision not to close the consulate-general in Dharan, since it saved the British Government the embarrassment of having to decline a request for a US consulate in Bahrain. In British eyes the establishment of a US diplomatic representation in the protected states was out of the question because it would lead to similar demands from other countries.[28] As a result of Britain's privileged position in conducting the foreign affairs of the protected states, no other country was diplomatically represented in Bahrain, and the British Government was determined not to give up its exclusive relations with the rulers of the protected states.

The State Department's proposal to train some junior officers in Gulf Arabic was discussed at length in the Foreign Office, and with officials on the spot in the Gulf, who had strong reservations about the idea

of having three American language students being permanently 'loose' in the area.[29] They feared that the presence of young, inexperienced, and only partly trained officers making contacts among the local population could negatively affect the image of Britain's position in the Persian Gulf, since there was a danger that ignorance of local customs and sensitivities on the part of the American officers would provoke the citizens of Oman and the protected states, resulting in criticism not only of the USA but also of the British Government. The political residency had already had some negative experiences on that account. In a letter to Walsmley, Luce wrote that he and the political agents 'used to suffer somewhat from visits by rather brash young men from the United States' Foreign Service who in their attempts to "get to know the young people" often sought out malcontents in the younger generation and (possibly unwittingly) encouraged their criticisms of H.M.G.'[30]

The British officials were also concerned that a longer stay by US Foreign Service officers in the Gulf and their getting to know the local population might have unforeseen consequences on their view of Britain's policy in the area. In particular, Hugh Boustead, the political agent in Abu Dhabi, and J. F. S. Philipps, the consul-general in Oman, were worried that the language students might draw conclusions about the state of affairs in the Gulf that did not coincide with the British Government's point of view. There was even the possibility that the students would pass on such opinions to the American press when they returned to the USA, which would damage the positive public image of its position in the Gulf that the British Government tried hard to create.[31]

With regard to Oman, Phillips warned: 'It is hard enough for us, with our self-interest, to take an unequivocal view of some aspects of Sultanate affairs, and although to the well-informed there is little to hide (if little to display), trainees in particular might well conceive, and propagate, distorted ideas.'[32] This statement reflected the British aim of guiding American visitors in their opinion-making about the protected states and Oman. The Foreign Office and the diplomats stationed in the area were not opposed to visits by US consular staff or even by language students, as long as their trips to the Gulf were short, and provided that they remained in close contact with the British posts in the area throughout their stay. Since the new US scheme involved a longer presence of their Foreign Service officers in the Gulf and greater opportunities for them to establish personal contacts with the local population, it involved the risk that they would form independent opinions that might not be in agreement with Britain's Persian Gulf policy.

Another reservation on the part of the British agents on the ground about the State Department's scheme was that it could result in speculation and wrong impressions in Oman and the protected states. The political agent in Dubai, James Craig, warned that a longer presence of US Foreign Service officers might cause rumours that Britain was planning to cede some of its responsibilities in the Gulf to the USA, or that the latter intended to provide development aid to the Gulf States.[33] Another possible rumour – one that the British were particularly anxious to avoid – was that the USA was intending to open a consulate in the protected states in the near future.[34] Such a rumour would have disadvantageous consequences for the British Government because it could lead to requests by other countries for diplomatic representation there. Craig suggested that in order to avoid these wrong impressions, it was important that the American trainees in the protected states had a proper job of some sort. Language studies and wandering 'round the shops and the countryside with no visible purpose' was not an adequate occupation for the visitors.[35]

As a result of these concerns, the political residency urged the Foreign Office to consent to the State Department's scheme only under certain conditions. Since the political agent in Abu Dhabi and the consul-general in Oman had expressed strong reservations about the proposal, the American language students should not be allowed to visit these two states. The programme should operate initially as a small pilot scheme, involving no more than one or two American officers. Furthermore, the political residency insisted that it must receive 'proper control and notification from Dharan in advance, that the trainees must call on and keep in touch with our own posts, and above all that they must have jobs to do or pretend to do and not just go wandering about'.[36]

In the end there was no discussion along those lines between the Foreign Office and the State Department because the latter changed its mind about the scheme.[37] However, the debate provoked by the State Department's original suggestion was an example of the British dilemma regarding Anglo-American cooperation in the Persian Gulf. On the one hand, the British Government wanted to interest the USA in the area and to gain its support for Britain's Gulf policies, and during the first half of 1962, the Foreign Office had hoped, and prepared, for general discussions with the State Department about this subject. On the other hand, the relevant officials saw serious dangers in an increased US presence in the Gulf. Convinced that nobody understood the people and the problems of the area as well as they did, they feared that the US Foreign Service officers might come to the wrong conclusions about the state

of local affairs and of Britain's Persian Gulf policy in general. Although they were trying to enlist US support for Britain's position in the Gulf, the British were not ready to allow the Americans to form their own opinions about the local situation, fearing that a greater US presence in the area could lead to disagreements between both governments.

3.3 The State Department's perspective

In June 1962, the Foreign Office learnt that a paper on the future of the Persian Gulf was being prepared by the State Department's Policy Planning Council.[38] Six months later, the British Embassy in Washington received a copy of the completed paper from Talcott Seeyle, Arabian desk officer in the Office of Near Eastern Affairs of the State Department. The paper was entitled 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', and, although it had not been submitted for approval to the secretary of state, it represented State Department thinking on the political and economic situation of the Gulf and on likely developments in the area over the next decade.[39] It was a very detailed study which discussed the geostrategic position of the Persian Gulf, British policies in the area, the local development situation, and the state of affairs with regard to oil.[40]

While 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' showed that there were substantial similarities between British and US thinking on the Gulf, it also revealed that there were several important questions on which the State Department's opinion differed from that of the Foreign Office. The most significant difference was the way the Persian Gulf was defined as a geographic entity by the British and the Americans. From the British Government's point of view, the Persian Gulf consisted of the nine protected states, Oman, and Kuwait, and British Persian Gulf policy planning concerned these 11 countries. The State Department, on the other hand, defined the Persian Gulf area as encompassing Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, Kuwait, Oman, and the nine protected states. The State Department differentiated between the 'rim states' of the Gulf (Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran) and the 'Persian Gulf proper' (consisting of Kuwait, Oman, and the protected states). Though being geographically detached, the UAR was also defined as a rim state of the Persian Gulf, because UAR policies were likely to affect the situation in the Persian Gulf proper.[41]

This significant difference of perception between the Foreign Office and the State Department had consequences for their respective assessments of Western interests and adequate policies in the region.

As shown by the discussions arising out of Lord Home's Despatch No. 77 and Luce's Despatch No. 98, the British were convinced that the protected states, Kuwait, and Oman formed an interdependent area in which Britain's military and political presence protected immediate British economic interests and, in addition, the general interests of the West in continued access to the oil resources of the Gulf States. It was in this area that the Foreign Office hoped for US support and for the US Government to share the burden of preserving security and political stability.[42] 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', on the other hand, proved that the State Department – based on its wider definition of the geographical area called the Persian Gulf – had a different approach to the subject. The paper discussed Western interests, likely developments, and suitable US policies in the larger Persian Gulf area, but the State Department was more interested in the interdependence between the rim states and the Persian Gulf proper than in specific developments in the latter. From the American perspective, it was not possible to formulate an independent US policy in the Persian Gulf proper that disregarded this interdependence. As a result, the paper set out a comprehensive policy vis-à-vis the Persian Gulf area.[43]

Another difference between British and US thinking on the Persian Gulf became apparent in the discussion in the paper about US interests in the region. While the State Department concurred with the Foreign Office that the importance of the Persian Gulf area was defined by its oil reserves, the US reasons for this conclusion differed from the British point of view. The State Department defined as the primary interest of the USA in the Persian Gulf the preservation of the Free World's access to the region's oil reserves, on which Western Europe and Japan were both heavily dependent, with Western Europe having relied on the Gulf for 60 per cent, and Japan for 75 per cent, of their oil requirements in 1961.[44] This situation was expected to remain largely unchanged until the end of the 1960s. As a result, the most important interest of the US Government was to ensure the continued access of the Free World to the oil of the Persian Gulf area over the next decade. Even though the Persian Gulf was also a significant area for US investment, US commercial interests were of secondary importance in comparison.[45] This statement in 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' proved Denis Greenhill to have been correct in his assessment in January 1962 of US interests in the Gulf. While Britain and the USA both had immediate and direct commercial interests in the Gulf, there was a significant difference in the importance of these interests in relative terms to the economies of the two countries.

The US paper included an extensive discussion as to whether Britain's position of military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf proper was the best way to preserve Western access to the oil of the Persian Gulf area. While the British tendency 'to equate "access" with political and military control' was criticized, it was admitted that the end of Britain's presence could lead to difficulties for the 'Free World'.[46] The State Department was less afraid of the possibility that Western access to Persian Gulf oil was cut off altogether than of the political danger of this access being used as a bargaining tool by local regimes that were hostile to the West:

> It does, of course not follow that a loss of the present Western position of political influence or control would automatically lead to a loss of commercial access to Middle East oil at reasonable prices. Such access could continue after the establishment of Communist or neutralist regimes or after nationalization. However, access would have become much more insecure and the threat of denial of access could be used by whomever [sic] controlled the oil-producing countries as a means of pressure against the West.[47]

According to the State Department, Britain's presence helped to prevent the development of a power vacuum in the Persian Gulf. The status quo of the Persian Gulf area was subject to a number of internal and external pressures, and Britain's military presence and political influence helped to keep these forces in check. Among the internal forces endangering the stability and security of the region were the territorial ambitions of the rim states in the Persian Gulf proper: Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq. Their ambitions threatened the integrity of the protected states, Kuwait, and Oman, and, on account of their competitive nature, they risked the possibility of conflict among them.

The Policy Planning Council of the State Department warned that not only did Saudi Arabia lay claim to the Buraimi Oasis, which belonged partly to Abu Dhabi and partly to the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, but it also coveted the entire Trucial Coast. This territorial ambition was described in the paper as being a result of the 'natural urge of the power which controls the hinterlands and land mass to extend its hegemony to the coast'.[48] Saudi Arabia's desire to control the Trucial States had recently been heightened by oil discoveries in Abu Dhabi and the prospect of more findings in the other six shaikhdoms. Saudi Arabia had always maintained good relations with Qatar, with whom it shared a Wahhabi heritage.[49] Therefore, although it was likely in the event of

a British withdrawal from the Gulf that Saudi Arabia would be content with influencing rather than conquering Qatar, it was important to remember that from the point of view of military capability, the Saudis would have no difficulty in overpowering Qatar. Only the island state of Bahrain was not in danger of falling victim to Saudi expansionism, because Saudi Arabia's non-existent naval power prevented this. It was argued in 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' that Saudi Arabia was only prevented from pursuing its territorial ambitions by Britain's presence as the protecting power of the Persian Gulf proper:

> As long as the British maintain a paramount position of influence in the Persian Gulf, including special treaty relationships with the Trucial Coast Shaikhdoms and the Sultanate of Muscat, Oman and Dependencies, the present Saudi Arabian regime will recognize the folly of recourse to military means to press its territorial claims. Should the British completely sever their special ties with these shaikhdoms, Saudi Arabia would probably not hesitate to occupy the Trucial Coast by force. It is unlikely that Iraqi or Iranian threats to intervene would deter the Saudis in this move, nor would the 1,000 British-officered Trucial Oman Levies pose much of an obstacle.[50]

The State Department believed that Britain's position in the Persian Gulf also limited Iran's expansionist policies since, as well as laying claim to several small islands in the Gulf, Iran claimed Bahrain, which it regarded as its fourteenth province. In addition to this territorial claim, Iran was determined to prevent any domination of the Persian Gulf by a powerful, hostile state; thus an extension of Saudi or Iraqi power to the Gulf States was contrary to Iran's interests. An important element of Iran's foreign policy was its ambition for influence or even hegemony in the Persian Gulf, a desire that was encouraged by the realization that Britain would not be able to maintain its position in the Persian Gulf forever. It was very likely that in the event of British withdrawal from the region, Iran would continue resolutely to pursue its territorial claim to Bahrain and its political ambitions in the remainder of the Gulf.

Furthermore, Britain's role as protecting power of the Persian Gulf proper served, in the State Department's view, to contain Iraq's claim to Kuwait, which was likely to be sustained even in the event of a regime change in Iraq. The State Department was convinced that by 1968 at the latest, Qasim would have lost power in Iraq. However, it was equally certain that the successor government would not relinquish Iraq's traditional ambition to annex Kuwait. The Iraqi claim to Kuwait was not only

contrary to Western interests but also entailed a risk of conflict between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, since the Saudis were determined to keep Iraq out of the Arabian Peninsula. 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' also pointed out that it was the British defence commitment to Kuwait that was inhibiting Iraq's military capability and attempts to occupy the emirate. The Arab League Security Force that had been stationed in Kuwait since the conclusion of Operation Vantage in September 1961 was not sufficient to deter an Iraqi attack.

In addition to the territorial ambitions of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, Arab nationalist ideologies weakened local regimes and threatened the stability of the Persian Gulf area. Both Iraq and the UAR, though by no means partners or allies, pursued active policies of discrediting the existing governments in the Gulf as 'reactionary', and decrying Britain's presence in the region as 'imperialistic'.[51] Their aim was to undermine the British position in the Persian Gulf proper and ultimately to extend their own influence there. To this end, Iraq used propaganda through Radio Baghdad in the hope of forming closer links with Oman and the protected states. According to the State Department's description of Iraqi policy in its policy planning paper,

> Iraq's aims are likely to be the gradual establishment of ruling groups in the Gulf whose political orientation toward the West had been diminished, and who would fall into a generally Arab nationalist, neutralist fold. Iraq would hope by that time to have established herself as prime supporter of these regimes, with a view to the maintenance of a strong influence in their affairs.[52]

Iraq's main rival in the pursuit of this aim was the UAR. Nasser attempted to motivate and support Arab nationalist movements in the Gulf and to turn himself into their leader, although he was also anxious to oppose similar ambitions on the part of Iraq. Apart from propaganda, the UAR employed cultural and educational means to extend its influence to the Gulf. A significant number of Egyptian teachers who propagated Arab nationalist ideas were working in Kuwaiti schools, and some even taught in Qatar and the Trucial States. Nasser's propaganda attacks against reactionary regimes, which he contrasted with his own Arab socialist agenda, were directed not only against the states of the Persian Gulf proper but also against Saudi Arabia. According to the State Department, the UAR was in the middle of a 'propaganda battle' with the Saudis,[53] with the result that there was a significant danger of a regime change in Saudi Arabia in favour of a reformist and Arab nationalist government. Such a development was likely to have two

significant consequences: first, that Nasser, having succeeded with Saudi Arabia, would devote all his attention and energy to destabilizing the regimes in the Persian Gulf proper; and second, that a new Saudi government would pursue Saudi Arabia's territorial ambitions on the Trucial Coast more actively and aggressively.

It is important to note that in the opinion of the State Department, the establishment of neutralist or Arab nationalist states in the Persian Gulf area was merely an interim stage that was bound to lead to Communist domination of the region's oil-producing countries. The Soviet Union was regarded as the major source of external pressure aimed at altering the status quo in the Persian Gulf area. The heads of the Communist bloc profited from the anti-imperialist and anti-British propaganda spread by neutralist leaders such as Nasser and Qasim because it helped to undermine Western control of the Gulf. The Policy Planning Council stressed in its paper that the Soviet Union was not likely to allow neutralist regimes to maintain control of the oil-producing countries of the Gulf for very long.

Given these significant dangers to the security and political stability of the Persian Gulf area, the Policy Planning Council concluded in its paper that, for the moment, Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf proper represented the best assurance against the development of a power vacuum in the region that initially would be filled by Arab nationalist regimes and ultimately would invite Soviet infiltration. However, it acknowledged that Britain's ability to control the situation in the Persian Gulf proper was seriously limited, due partly to circumstances in the metropolis of the British Empire, and in part to developments in the empire's periphery that remained outside British control. Regarding the metropolis, the Policy Planning Council accused the British Government's ability to formulate rational and successful political strategies in the Gulf of being impaired by its old-fashioned and imperialistic tendencies, which rendered Britain's policy in the Gulf inflexible and impervious to the needs of future developments:

> Internally in Britain, the Persian Gulf is the last sensitive nerve of the British Empire. Because it is both a vital resource to Britain and a focal point for vestiges of imperial sentiment, the official tendency in Britain is to move quickly and in traditional ways to defend what is left of the British position.[54]

On the periphery of the British Empire in the Gulf, the ability of the British Government to influence events was limited by the nature of its

relationship with the local rulers. In the absence of a formal right to control the internal affairs of the Gulf States, the British depended on informal methods such as careful negotiation, persuasion, and attempts to build an identity of interests with the rulers. This was increasingly difficult at a time when international attention for the Persian Gulf was increasing, Arab nationalist ideas were being propagated by Nasser and Qasim, and local rulers like Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi were becoming financially independent as a result of oil discoveries on their territories. To a large degree, Britain's influence in the Gulf was based on a highly personalized system of allegiance that depended on the willingness of the local rulers to allow British advice to influence their decisions. As a result, British ability to control the situation lessened with every change that took place in the area:

> To a large degree, the future of Britain's position in the Persian Gulf depends upon the life of the Amir of Kuwait and the character of his successor and on the degree to which the divisions among Iraq, the UAR, Saudi Arabia and Iran will continue to protect the Gulf Principalities from their respective predatory ambitions.[55]

In view of these constraining factors, which were limiting Britain's ability to influence events in the Persian Gulf, the State Department's Policy Planning Staff felt certain that Britain would be unable to maintain its position in the area for much longer than five years, and that '[b]y 1970 the British process of gradual disengagement from the Gulf will probably have reached its final stages'.[56]

The prospect of British withdrawal from the Gulf by the end of the 1960s and the danger of regional conflict that could eventually be exploited by the Soviet Union led the Policy Planning Council to conclude that the USA needed to take a more active role in the Persian Gulf area over the next five years. This increased involvement of the USA had to be coordinated with the British Government, and would aim to motivate and support political and social evolution in the region that was favourable to Western interests. Support should be given by the USA to the non-Communist, pro-Western regimes in the Persian Gulf area, most importantly the Iranian Government, through the provision of active economic and military assistance. In countries where regime change could be expected in the near future, the USA had to prepare for this possibility which, in the case of Iraq, meant being ready to support whatever non-Communist regime succeeded Qasim. In Saudi Arabia, while maintaining good relations with the House of Saud, the

USA had to keep internal developments under close surveillance and establish contacts 'with educated, nationalist and young military elements [...] in preparation for the day when one or a combination of these groups comes into power'.[57]

The Policy Planning Council also suggested that the USA should become more involved in the Persian Gulf proper, and consider opening an US Consulate in Bahrain and offices in Muscat or the Trucial States. The best way to protect US interests in the Persian Gulf proper was to support and influence the British Government in the development of suitable political strategies. 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' argued that the USA had to

> [...] continue to endorse and give political support to the special U.K. position in the Persian Gulf proper, recognizing that for the time being US interests can best be preserved by U.K. actions and programs. In this connection, begin to take a more active role in consulting, encouraging and supporting those British policies which we believe will deal successfully with the problems of the region.[58]

Among these policies was the encouragement of the political evolution of the protected states, which was necessary because of their small size and vulnerability to the territorial ambitions of the 'rim states'. According to the State Department, this evolution could take the form either of a federation among the protected states or the Trucial shaikhdoms only, or a political accommodation with Saudi Arabia. Another British policy which the USA had to support was the preservation of Kuwait's independence. Militarily, Kuwait was protected by the British defence commitment. Politically, the emirate's integrity and independence could best be assured if Kuwait invested a substantial part of its enormous oil wealth in development projects in poorer Arab countries without their own oil reserves. In December 1961 the Kuwaiti Government, with British encouragement, had established the so-called Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development (KFAED),[59] and the State Department regarded it as essential that both Britain and the USA should continue to support this project. Growing economic and political interdependence between the oil-rich states of the Persian Gulf and the oil-poor Arab countries along the Mediterranean could add significantly to the stability of the Persian Gulf area, while the dependence of a growing number of Arab countries on development aid from the small states of the Persian Gulf proper enhanced the standing of these states in the Middle East and thereby added to their security.[60]

3.4 Luce's vision of a joint Anglo-American policy in the Arabian Peninsula

The paper by the State Department's Policy Planning Council was discussed in detail in the Foreign Office, and met with approval, being regarded as an 'encouraging recognition of the British rôle in the Persian Gulf' by the Americans.[61] Its assessment of the state of affairs in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula, and of British interests and policies in the area, was judged to be correct, with one important exception: there was general agreement in the Foreign Office that the State Department was overly pessimistic about Britain's ability to maintain its military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf in the long term. In British eyes, the State Department had no reason to suspect that Britain would withdraw from the area by the end of the 1960s.[62] On the contrary, given the importance of British interests in the Persian Gulf, it was regarded as a certainty by the Foreign Office that the British Government would be both willing and able to maintain Britain's position in the Gulf for a much longer period than the five years the State Department had predicted. While it was acknowledged that the character of the present Amir of Kuwait and the political disunity between Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Iran, and the UAR were significant factors favouring Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf, the idea that the latter's future depended on these factors was considered to be an exaggeration.[63] It was agreed in the Foreign Office that it was most important to convince the State Department to alter its assumptions about the future of Britain's role in the Gulf.

Of the US policies that were recommended in the State Department paper, the Foreign Office criticized only one: the idea of opening a diplomatic representation in the protected states. This plan would have to be abandoned by the Americans for at least the next five years because of its negative side-effects for Britain. The opening of a consulate in Bahrain or an office in the Trucial States 'would only serve to weaken our [Britain's] own special position in the Gulf which would be the reverse of what American policy intends'.[64]

While the State Department's paper entitled 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' did not inspire the evolution of significant new ideas about Anglo-American cooperation in the Persian Gulf in the Foreign Office in London, it resulted in a thorough re-assessment of this question by the political resident. In January 1963, Luce sent a long letter to Sir Roger Stevens, in which he suggested a joint Anglo-American policy in the Arabian Peninsula as the best way of protecting Britain's interests

in the Persian Gulf in the long term.[65] While he interpreted the State Department paper as a sign that US understanding of the importance to the West of Britain's position in the Persian Gulf had increased during the last two years, he felt that this US awareness had still to be extended by the British Government.

Luce's political propositions were based on an assessment of the evolution of Western Europe's interest in access to Middle Eastern oil during the 1960s and 1970s. Quoting as his source a speech given by J. H. Loudon, president of the Royal Dutch Petroleum Company, in New York in October 1962, the political resident argued that Western Europe's oil requirements were likely to treble by 1977. As a result, the importance of the substantial reserves of the oil-producing area on the south-western shores of the Persian Gulf, including Kuwait, the protected states, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, was likely to increase significantly for the Western bloc. To preserve access to these resources was a joint Anglo-American interest, and Luce felt certain that during the 15 years to come, the West could not afford to rely exclusively on normal commercial processes to ensure the flow of Persian Gulf oil. The Arab world was an extremely unstable and insecure region, and the oil-producing countries of the Persian Gulf area were situated in rather too close proximity to the Soviet Union. Therefore, the production and selling of Persian Gulf oil on the world market could not be expected to be regulated solely by the laws of supply and demand.

In his letter to Stevens, Luce addressed a question that had been debated in the British Treasury for some time: whether the maintenance of Britain's military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf was really necessary to preserve Western access to the region's oil. The Treasury maintained that the need for financial revenues among the oil-producing countries obliged them to sell their oil to the West, and that Persian Gulf oil would therefore continue to flow, whether or not Britain maintained its position in the region. This argument had already found numerous supporters,[66] but Luce disagreed with it strongly:

> I am not much impressed by the argument that because the Arabs cannot drink their oil they will ensure that it flows to the markets whatever the political conditions. They are quite capable of damaging themselves economically for political reasons, and, in any case, if they were under Communist domination, they would not have the final say.[67]

The consequence of this conclusion was to stress that Britain could not allow the development of a power vacuum in the Persian Gulf and that it had therefore to maintain its military presence and political influence in the area indefinitely. This position was Britain's greatest asset for preserving regional stability and preventing Soviet infiltration into the oil-producing countries. Luce vehemently criticized the State Department's assumption, as expressed in 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', that the British were in a process of disengagement from the Persian Gulf that would lead to complete withdrawal by 1970. In his opinion, Britain's presence was acceptable to most of the local populations and, more importantly, to the ruling elites of the Gulf States, with the result that Britain's position was not in danger of being eroded from within the Persian Gulf. Luce recommended that the British Government should do everything in its power to preserve Britain's position in the Persian Gulf and to persuade the US Government of the necessity of doing so:

> To that end we should not allow ourselves to become obsessed with the inevitability of early and total withdrawal from our special position in the Persian Gulf or to suffer from any quite unnecessary guilt complex about the respectability of that position. What we need is a firm recognition, by ourselves and other Western powers, particularly America, of the need to maintain our position indefinitely (by which I mean not putting its duration in terms of years) and a robust policy to enable us to do so.[68]

Furthermore, the British Government had to ensure the preservation of the military base in Aden, on which depended Britain's capacity for maintaining stability in the Persian Gulf and protecting Kuwait.

In Luce's view, the greatest danger to the British position in both the Persian Gulf and Aden emanated from Gamal Abdel Nasser, who had always been, and would remain, hostile to Britain's political influence and military presence in any part of the Arab world. Luce admitted that a brief uniting of interests had existed between Britain and the UAR during the Kuwait Crisis because Nasser was opposed to an Iraqi annexation of the emirate. However, he was convinced that it was Nasser's long-term aim to destroy the remainder of Britain's empire in the Middle East; it therefore followed that the British Government had to thwart this ambition. Luce admitted that the British Government was in no position to end Nasser's rule in the UAR and that it would be a futile exercise to try to bring about his downfall. Instead, British efforts had to be directed

towards containing Nasser and the ideology that he represented. Luce used the term 'containment of Nasserism' to describe a policy aimed at preventing an extension of Nasser's influence, and proposed that this policy should be adopted jointly by Britain and the USA throughout the Arabian Peninsula: 'I believe that we should strive for an agreed and concerted Anglo-American policy to build up the whole of the Arabian Peninsula, including Jordan if possible, as a bastion against the expansion of Nasserism.'[69]

The policy of containing Nasserism consisted of two different elements. The first was to give active encouragement and, if necessary, military support to local resistance movements against attempts by the UAR to impose a Nasserist regime in any part of the Arabian Peninsula. Luce had been inspired in this suggestion by the recent revolution in Yemen. In September 1962, the regime of Imam Mohammed al-Badr had been overthrown in a military coup led by the chief of the Royal Guards, Colonel Abdullah Sallal, who had proclaimed the Yemen Arab Republic. The imam had survived the coup and fled to the north of Yemen, from where he mobilized tribal support against the new regime. While he received military support from Saudi Arabia, Sallal was aided in the civil war between royalists and republicans by the UAR.[70] The Yemen revolution was perceived by the British Government as a serious threat, because it was feared that the new regime would stir up Arab nationalist feelings and anti-British subversion in Aden, thereby diminishing the security of the British base.[71] To Luce, the revolution was 'the first attempt by Nasser to impose a stooge republican regime by force of arms' in the Arabian Peninsula,[72] and he was critical of the guarded reactions of the British and US governments towards Sallal's coup. So far, the British Government had abstained from recognizing the new regime but had not publicly condemned it. The US Government had employed methods of diplomacy and negotiation with both Sallal and Nasser to ensure that the conflict did not spread to Saudi Arabia. [73]

These efforts resulted in a declaration by Sallal on 18 December 1962 that the new Yemen Arab Republic would honour its international obligations and live in peace with its neighbours. The following day, Nasser assured the US Government that the UAR would disengage its troops from Yemen, provided that Saudi Arabia did the same. Following the declarations by Sallal and Nasser, the US Government formally recognized the republican regime in Yemen on 19 December 1962 and began to exert pressure on the British Government to do the same.[74] Luce, on the other hand, regarded the civil war there as the best example of a situation where a joint Anglo-American containment policy against

Nasserism should be employed by giving support to the Royalists. In his opinion, it was not too late to tip the balance in the civil war in their favour. Military defeat in Yemen would damage Nasser's prestige in the Arab world, while a success would equal 'the first serious breach [...] in the anti-Nasser solidarity' of the Arabian Peninsula.[75]

The second element of the Anglo-American policy designed by Luce to contain the spread of Nasser's influence to the Arabian Peninsula aimed to reduce the attraction of Nasserism for the local educated classes. If the populations of the Arabian Peninsula were dissuaded from accepting Nasser's ideology, the scope for subversion by the UAR against the local regimes would be significantly reduced. This suggestion was based on Luce's interpretation of the sources and motives of Arab nationalism:

> I certainly do not discount the strength of Nasser's appeal as a revolutionary leader, but I think myself that the discontent and revolutionary tendencies of the educated middle classes in Arab countries stem more from lack of an adequate outlet for their capabilities and ambitions than from any compelling concept of a united Arab nation. If this is so, the revolutionary disease is not altogether incurable.[76]

The political resident proposed that the British and US governments should use their influence on the regimes in the countries of the Arabian Peninsula to satisfy the ambitions of the local young and educated classes, and to reduce the attraction of Nasserism for these people. Britain and the USA should pressurize the ruling authorities to adopt 'enlightened and progressive policies' that would include improving the administration and the distribution of wealth in their countries, and adapting their traditional regimes to the desires and needs of their increasingly sophisticated communities. An important element of this policy would be encouraging infrastructural and educational development. While enough money was available in the Arabian Peninsula as a result of oil production to fund these policies, it would fall upon the British and US governments to provide the countries with technical and educational assistance. In Luce's vision for the future of the Arabian Peninsula, 'We [Britain and the USA] should envisage an Arabian bloc of constitutional monarchy, of ever-increasing prosperity and providing ample opportunity, both political and economic, for the educated class.'[77] For this purpose, the rich oil-producing countries of the Arabian Peninsula had to be encouraged by Britain and the USA to share their wealth with the poorer states of the region without oil reserves of their

own. According to Luce, the cornerstone of the 'Arabian peninsula bloc' that he envisaged would have to be Saudi Arabia,[78] and the House of Saud would have to be encouraged to adopt more progressive policies to prevent the development of revolutionary Nasserism in Saudi Arabia. While Saudi Arabia fell into the US sphere of interest in the Arabian Peninsula, Luce suggested that Britain could also play a role in this process, now that Anglo-Saudi diplomatic relations had been restored.[79] A possible British policy designed to stabilize the Saudi regime might involve removing sources of friction between Saudi Arabia and the small states of the Persian Gulf, especially Oman and Abu Dhabi.

Luce's letter to Stevens proved that the political resident, having read 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', had understood that the State Department was less interested in the internal developments of the Persian Gulf proper than in the Persian Gulf area as a whole. He hoped to use this US perspective to the advantage of the British by proposing a joint and concerted Anglo-American policy that would secure the stability and security of the entire Arabian Peninsula, thereby benefiting Britain's interests in Kuwait, Oman, and the protected states. However, Luce's suggestion was not met with approval in the Foreign Office, which produced two different reasons for rejecting the proposed policy: one regarding British policy vis-à-vis Nasser and the other relating to the question of Anglo-American cooperation in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Foreign Office regarded it as unwise to take a visible stand against Nasser in the Arabian Peninsula in general and in Yemen in particular, fearing that if the British Government openly displayed its determination to contain Nasser, it would make itself vulnerable to anti-imperialist and anti-British propaganda. Furthermore, obvious British military support of the Royalists in Yemen would not lead to a Royalist victory in the civil war but would simply provoke Nasser to become more intensely and indefinitely involved in the struggle. Thus, instead of keeping Nasserism out of the Arabian Peninsula, the containment policy that Luce had proposed would have the opposite effect by leading to a continued presence of the UAR in Yemen, possibly with destabilizing effects for the regime in neighbouring Saudi Arabia.[80] In addition, overt military intervention in Yemen would be politically disastrous for the British Government, both domestically and at the UN.[81]

The second reason why the Foreign Office rejected Luce's suggestions was the conviction that the US Government would never agree to a robust, anti-Nasser, Anglo-American policy,[82] an opinion shared by the British Embassy in Washington.[83] Because the US Government maintained such good relations with the UAR, the Americans could hardly

be expected to agree to a complete reversal of this policy by publicly taking a stand against Nasser across the entire Arabian Peninsula or by giving military support to the Royalists in Yemen. As a result, it was not in the interests of the British Government to suggest such a policy to its US counterpart. In a minute commenting on Luce's letter, Steward Crawford warned that 'We [the British Government] would risk losing our present close cooperation with them if we tried to bring them [the US Government] out openly against Nasser.'[84] As for Luce's plan to reduce the popularity of Nasser's ideology among the populations of the Arabian Peninsula, the US Government was certain to regard this as a futile exercise: 'Their answer would be that Nasserism is another name for the upsurge of Arab Nationalism and radicalism and that you can no more exclude it from evolving Arab communities than you can withstand a tidal wave.'[85] As a result of these reservations, the Foreign Office refused to accept Luce's proposal to initiate a concerted Anglo-American policy designed to stabilize the Arabian Peninsula.

3.5 The Anglo-American discussions of April 1963

Even though neither the Foreign Office nor the British Embassy in Washington DC agreed with Luce's political suggestions, his letter of January 1963 resulted in a renewal of the plan to hold discussions with the State Department about the future of the Persian Gulf. Having read the letter, John Killick of the British Embassy in Washington DC took the opportunity to enquire why nothing had materialized from the original plan of January 1962 and suggested holding 'politico-military talks' about the Persian Gulf with the State Department as early as possible,[86] emphasizing that it would be impossible to leave military considerations out of the discussions because the State Department was most likely to be very interested in Britain's military planning in the Gulf. Killick suggested that such politico-military talks could be held shortly after the planned Anglo-American discussions on energy problems and the international oil industry that had already been authorized by the British Cabinet, believing that a political dialogue about the Gulf between the Foreign Office and the State Department could only benefit if both sides had previously agreed the importance of Middle Eastern oil.[87]

Killick's suggestions were welcomed in the Foreign Office, with one exception. It was decided not to include military questions in the talks with the State Department, the reason for this refusal being the uncertainty of British military planning, just as it had been in January 1962 when the first attempt had been made to organize Anglo-American

discussions about the Persian Gulf.[88] In light of the Yemen revolution and its possible repercussions in Aden, the Cabinet Defence Committee had decided on 9 February 1963 to arrange for a study of the advantages and disadvantages of maintaining the British military base in Aden.[89] Until this study was completed, detailed military talks with the State Department about the defence of the Persian Gulf would be pointless. There were also political considerations that rendered Anglo-American discussions about long-term policy in the Persian Gulf difficult. President Qasim had been ousted from power on 8 February 1963 by the Arab Socialist Ba'th Party and the new Iraqi Government had initiated negotiations with the Kuwaiti Government.[90] It was too early to foresee the outcome of these discussions and their possible repercussions on the British military commitment to defend Kuwait, as well as on Britain's policy in the rest of the Persian Gulf. However, the Foreign Office decided that it was impossible to wait for all the political and military uncertainties affecting Britain's position in the Persian Gulf to be smoothed out before talking to the State Department, with Robert Walmsley warning that 'if we [the Foreign Office] defer Anglo-U.S. talks until we can see our way clear for five or ten years ahead, we may never be able to talk at all'.[91]

The Foreign Office received further motivation for early talks with the State Department when Hermann Eilts of the US Embassy in London informed Walmsley in March 1963 of the State Department's wish to discuss with the British the future of Kuwait and the Persian Gulf as a whole. The proposal by Eilts was interpreted as an encouraging sign of growing US interest in Britain's position in the Gulf, which had to be followed up with detailed discussions as soon as possible, and it was therefore decided not to wait for the Anglo-American talks on international oil problems scheduled for June.[92] Instead the political talks were arranged for 23 and 24 April 1963, and were conducted at the Foreign Office in London by Sir Roger Stevens and Philips Talbot, the assistant secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs at the State Department.[93] The subjects discussed included the present situation and possible future developments in Kuwait, Oman, and the protected states and, following a specific request by the State Department, in Saudi Arabia as well.[94]

The Foreign Office originally intended to base the discussions between Stevens and Talbot on the US paper entitled 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' that had been received in December 1962. This procedure would have had the advantage not only of doing away with the need for a detailed British briefing paper setting out Britain's Persian

Gulf policy but also of avoiding possible interference from other government departments. After the experience of spring 1962, when the Treasury's criticism of the Foreign Office's draft brief had obstructed the planned Anglo-American talks, it was now decided to keep all other government departments out of the preparations.[95] However, Hermann Eilts informed Robert Walmsley that since 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East' had been the work of the Policy Planning Council as opposed to the Office of Near Eastern Affairs, and had never been submitted for approval to the secretary of state, it had no formal status in the State Department; he stressed that the British should not overestimate its relevance.[96] As a result, the Foreign Office could not after all avoid preparing a detailed brief for the forthcoming discussions.[97]

Both the briefing paper and the report of the meeting between Foreign Office representatives and the US delegation headed by Phillips Talbot gave a clear indication of Britain's aim in the talks, which was to convince their American counterparts that the political and economic interests of Britain and the USA in the Persian Gulf were to a very large extent identical.[98] Their joint aims were to contain Soviet expansionism and ensure the flow of the region's oil, on which Western Europe was heavily dependent. In a second step, Stevens explained to Talbot how Britain's present policy in the Persian Gulf protected those interests, and how there was no viable alternative to this policy for the foreseeable future.

Stevens began the discussions with Talbot by stressing that Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf blocked Soviet access to the Indian Ocean and Africa, and encouraged the local rulers to resist attempts by the Soviet Union to extend its influence to their territories. Because of the effect it had on the Shah of Iran, the British position in the Persian Gulf also contributed to the containment of the Soviets.[99] The shah was very sensitive about the situation in the Gulf and had repeatedly informed the British Government that he wished the British position in the area to be maintained, fearing that in the event of a British withdrawal, radical Arab nationalist regimes might come to power in the area, which would jeopardize Iran's traditional ambition for hegemony in the Gulf. It was therefore very important to satisfy him that Britain intended to stay in the Gulf, in order to avoid driving Iran, an important member of CENTO, into the arms of the Soviet Union.[100]

Stevens went on to point out that Britain's military presence and political influence in the Gulf also protected Western interests with regard to the continued flow of oil from the region. In this respect the most important contribution made by the British had been the protection

of Kuwait, because of the emirate's enormous relevance to the West through its abundant oil resources and low production cost. In addition, the Kuwaiti Government was amicably disposed towards the West and – despite being an OPEC member – had so far not tried to press the Western oil companies for better concessionary terms or prices. In short, 'Kuwait's status was unique because of the cheapness of production and the profitability of the operation.'[101] The preservation of Kuwait's independence was extremely important for the West because it increased the number of independent oil-producing countries in the Middle East and gave Western oil companies a better bargaining position vis-à-vis individual governments. According to Stevens, despite Qasim having recently lost power, the greatest danger to Kuwait's independence emanated from Iraq, since there was no reason to expect that the new Iraqi Government would abandon its claim to the emirate. As a result, the British Government had no reason to end its commitment to defend Kuwait.

It was very important for the Foreign Office in its discussions with the State Department to emphasize that the British commitment to protect Kuwait's independence could not been seen in isolation, either militarily or politically, from Britain's position in the rest of the Persian Gulf.[102] Britain's military ability to come to Kuwait's defence against Iraqi aggression was based on the existing British deployment in the Persian Gulf that included the bases and staging posts in Bahrain and Sharjah, and on Masirah Island in Oman. On the other hand, these military dispositions depended on the permission and goodwill of the local rulers, who would be willing to allow the British military presence on their territories only for as long as they remained convinced of Britain's ability and determination to protect them. Stewart Crawford, who also took part in the discussions, explained to Phillips Talbot how the British Government

> [...] saw the system throughout the Gulf and Aden as a whole one turning on mutual obligations and relations of confidence between Her Majesty's Government and the various Rulers. Our behaviour towards each Ruler affected the attitudes of the others; if we were to withdraw from relations with one, the others would be upset.[103]

Certainly Britain could not afford to withdraw from any part of its political or military responsibilities in Oman, Kuwait, or the protected states without running the risk of a loss of prestige in the region, which would jeopardize its ability to preserve Kuwait's independence and integrity.

In discussions with Talbot, Stevens argued that there was no alternative to Britain's military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf that could ensure the stability and security of the region and protect Western interests there. A guarantee of Kuwait's independence either by the UN or by the littoral states – Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Iran – would not add significantly to the emirate's security unless some form of military sanction was at hand. This military protection had to be provided by the British Government, with all the political consequences this had for its position in the rest of the Persian Gulf. From the British point of view, a federation of the nine protected states, or of the seven Trucial States only, as had been advocated by the State Department's Policy Planning Council in 'Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', was an extremely attractive theory but it had no chance of success in the foreseeable future.[104]

In general, Phillips Talbot accepted Stevens' position. He assured the latter that the US Government was very glad about Britain's military presence and political influence in the Gulf and hoped it would be maintained for as long as possible. Asking Stevens 'unofficially' whether a British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf was likely by the end of the 1960s, he welcomed the latter's assurances that it was not,[105] although he did express some criticism of the lack of flexibility that characterized Britain's Persian Gulf policy. According to Talbot, the governments of the USA and Britain did not have to discuss whether Western hegemony over the Persian Gulf ought or ought not to be maintained, but how this could be done at a time when political circumstances, in the Gulf and also in the Middle East in general, were changing – as had recently become apparent during the Yemen and Iraqi revolutions. He made it clear that the US Government could not isolate its attitude towards the Persian Gulf from its overall Middle East policy, explaining this policy as follows:

> [...] the best way to keep access to the oil and to maintain the profitability of the operation was to avoid adamant resistance to the trends in the Arab world, but without encouraging them. This was the policy of having no 'chosen instrument', but to work with whoever was in control [...]; it assumed that the basic forces in the Arab world were not dead against us. It might be necessary to find new ways to cope with new situations.[106]

Talbot was critical of the slow pace of modernization in the protected states and asked Stevens why the British Government did not force the

local rulers to adapt their administrations and state infrastructures to modern standards. He was supported in this by Hermann Eilts, who enquired why the British Government had not concluded advisory treaties with the local rulers that would have given the British a formal right to advise the latter about their internal affairs. Talbot was not entirely satisfied with the position maintained by Stevens and his colleagues; that the British Government had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the protected states; that it could only use its powers of persuasion to press individual rulers for modernization; and that it was too late for advisory treaties, which 'would be a step towards a colonial form of rule'.[107] Talbot was disparaging about Britain's policy in the Persian Gulf being based on its specific relations with individual states instead of resulting from a British 'grand design' for the region.[108]

While the discussions between Stevens and Talbot on 23 and 24 April 1963 reflected the Anglo-American agreement on the economic and strategic importance of the Persian Gulf to the Western bloc and the value of Britain's special position in the area, they also proved that the possibilities of developing joint policies for the region were limited. Phillips Talbot made it quite clear that the US Government was very happy not to have any responsibilities in the Persian Gulf proper and that it had no intention of changing the status quo.[109] The talks represented more of an exchange of assessments of the present political situation in the Gulf and Saudi Arabia by the British and the US governments, respectively, than any form of joint planning session for the future of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, although the talks served to assure the British Government that its US counterpart approved and supported the maintenance of Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf, they did not lead to any tangible increase in US involvement or Anglo-American cooperation in the area.[110]

4
Improving Britain's Image: The Modernization Policy

4.1 The problem

Even though the Kuwait Crisis convinced the British Government that Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf remained a necessity, it was acknowledged at the same time in the Foreign Office that maintaining this presence came at a certain price. There was no alternative to the combination of a military presence in the Gulf with the exercise of political influence on the local regimes if Britain's significant economic and political interests in the area were to be protected. On the other hand, this policy also had certain negative impacts for the British Government. Its main disadvantage was the strain it placed on Britain's relationship with other Arab countries, most importantly the UAR. In the aftermath of the Kuwait Crisis, Luce warned the Foreign Office of the adverse effects of Britain's continued presence in the area.[1]

There were two reasons why Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf was unpopular in the rest of the Arab world and why it invited Arab nationalist criticism. The British Government was accused of maintaining an imperial presence in the Persian Gulf and denying independence to the protected states at a time when large parts of Britain's colonial empire were involved in, or had already concluded, the process of decolonization. In large parts of the Arab world, assurances by the British Government that its role in the protected states was limited solely to military protection and the conduct of the external relations of the nine shaikhdoms were not believed. On the contrary, this presentation of Britain's position in the Gulf was regarded as proof of British duplicity. The idea that the rulers of the protected states were nothing but puppets of the British Government, and that every aspect of the internal and external affairs of the shaikhdoms was controlled by the British,

was widespread in the Arab world.[2] Another Arab nationalist allegation was that the British Government stood in the way of social change by supporting the system of shaikhly rule as the method of government in the protected states. Britain's relationship with the rulers was discredited for its bolstering of anachronistic and autocratic regimes and for ruining the chances for economic and social progress among the populations of the Gulf.[3] A Foreign Office briefing paper prepared for the Anglo-American discussions in April 1963 analysed the negative image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf:

> [...] the picture which we [Britain] present to the eyes of the world is as follows. The British Government is keeping reactionary and discredited Rulers in power for selfish purposes of its own; in doing so, it deliberately excludes all progressive influence, including that of the United Nations, from this area; and since the Rulers are really only British puppets in spite of protestations about their independence, Britain is not only perpetuating colonial rule in contrast to what she says is the aim of her policy but is also directly responsible for preventing constitutional progress of the type achieved even in her own colonial territories elsewhere; moreover, Britain is directly interfering with Arab affairs where the wishes of the Arab States themselves should be paramount. This picture is unfair, but nonetheless exists.[4]

The centre of Arab nationalist criticism of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf was Cairo. Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of the UAR and leader of the Arab Nationalist Movement, used his elaborate propaganda machinery for this purpose.[5] His main tool for spreading anti-British sentiment was the radio station *Sawt al-'Arab* ('Voice of the Arabs'), which was usually described in British Government records as Radio Cairo.[6] To make matters worse for the British Government, this station was not only popular in the Middle East, but was also 'listened to pretty widely in Africa and Asia'.[7] As a result, the impact of Nasser's attacks against Britain's Persian Gulf policy was not confined to the Arab world. Apart from being a symbol of Arab nationalist revolution, President Nasser was also a leading figure of the Non-Aligned Movement,[8] and his anti-British propaganda was, therefore, likely to influence the formation of opinion in the emergent bloc of Afro-Asian nations.

As the 1960s progressed, the Foreign Office became increasingly worried that the negative image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf as propagated by Nasser would ultimately result in interference in the area by the UN. From the perspective of the British Government, the worst possible development was the UN Committee of 24 turning its

attention to the protected states.[9] The Committee of 24 had been founded by the General Assembly in 1961, following the passing in 1960 of UN Resolution 1514, which called for the liberation of all colonies. The committee's task was to monitor the world-wide progress of decolonization.[10]

In December 1963, the British Mission to the UN in New York warned the Foreign Office that the Committee of 24 would in all likelihood put Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States on its agenda during the coming year.[11] In the course of 1963, the General Assembly had devoted increasing attention to the situation in the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and, during these discussions, the British Government's official position that the sultanate was a fully independent state had been challenged.[12] The issue had so far not been picked up by the Committee of 24, but this possibility could not be excluded for the future.[13] According to Sir Patrick Dean, permanent representative of the United Kingdom to the UN, the attention dedicated at the UN to Oman could only be expected to increase in 1964, and the likely consequence was that the protected states of the Gulf would be included in the discussions. Dean warned that 'we [the British Government] must expect that not only will the attack on Muscat and Oman develop but that it will quickly spread to the other shaikhdoms and kingdoms in the Persian Gulf'.[14] He feared that the Arab member states of the UN, under the leadership of either the UAR or Iraq, would raise the issue of the protected states in order to launch a 'concerted attack' on the British position in the Arabian Peninsula.[15]

Dean's warnings were confirmed by Roger Allen, the British ambassador in Baghdad, who thought it very likely that in the near future Iraq would use the forum of the UN to challenge Britain's position in the protected states, and that once launched by one Arab state, this attack would be quickly be supported by others since, despite the numerous rivalries between Iraq, the UAR, and Saudi Arabia, cooperation on such a matter was to be expected from the Arab States who, said Allen, would be 'swept away in the full cry of pan-Arabism and anti-colonialism'.[16] Allen believed that at the UN the Arab critics of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf would employ a simple line of argument:

> The Arab thesis can, perhaps, be reduced to a simple syllogism:
> Arabs are good; but the Arab rulers of the Gulf are bad.
> They are bad because the British support them; and the British support them because they are bad.
> Therefore, the British must withdraw, or be compelled to withdraw, from the Gulf.[17]

Dean and his British colleagues in New York warned the Foreign Office that Britain's position at the UN with regard to the protected states was very weak. If the Committee of 24 decided to put Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States on its agenda, the British Government would not be able to convince its members that there was no reason to define the protected states as non-self-governing territories that had to be decolonized.[18] The British case over the protected states was even more difficult than the case of Oman. From a strictly constitutional point of view, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was a fully sovereign and independent state, and this had enabled the British Government to deny allegations expressed in the UN General Assembly that Britain maintained an imperialistic presence in the sultanate. However, the cases of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States were different. The British Government could not possibly claim that the nine protected states were completely independent, since Britain's military protection of the shaikhdoms and its conduct of their external relations were proof to the contrary. Therefore, the British Government had to admit that the sovereignty of the protected states was limited, at least with regard to their external affairs:

> Despite its oddities the Sultanate is sovereign and independent. It would not however be possible to argue that the protected states are completely independent. We can assert, with reservations, that they are sovereign in the domestic field: we must admit that internationally they have voluntarily surrendered to us the practical exercise of some aspects of their sovereignty.[19]

The best the British Government could hope for at the UN would be to convince the members that the sovereignty of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States was limited only as far as their external relations and defence were concerned, and that the British Government had no power to influence the internal affairs of the nine shaikhdoms.

Britain's representatives at the UN were sceptical as to whether this presentation of the British role in the protected states would be accepted by the Committee of 24. Alan Campbell of the British Mission at the UN felt that it was impossible to convince Britain's allies, let alone its enemies, that the rulers of the Gulf States were in complete control of their internal affairs, and that their sovereignty was only limited externally, since there were too many factors indicative of British influence on the internal affairs of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States.[20] These factors included the obligation of the rulers to obtain the British Government's consent before they granted concessions for the exploration of oil on

their territories. Another was the British privilege of extra-territorial jurisdiction over non-Muslims residing in the protected states. In addition to these two formal exemptions to the internal sovereignty of all nine states, Campbell quoted several agreements between the British Government and individual rulers that limited the rulers' freedom of action. For example, it was the practice of the British Government to give formal recognition to a new ruler upon his succeeding his predecessor. In exchange, the new ruler confirmed the special treaty relationship between his shaikhdom and the British Government. In several instances this procedure had offered an occasion for some of the rulers to give additional assurances to the political resident of their respect for his opinion and advice. Thus in 1948 the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah had undertaken, were oil ever discovered on his territory, to consult the British Government as to how he should invest the revenues. The Ruler of Sharjah had expressed his readiness to accept the advice of the political agent in the Trucial States on matters concerning the government of his shaikhdom. Upon acceding to power in 1928, Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi had even promised the political resident that he would 'always be prepared to comply with your orders'.[21] Arguing that they were examples of Britain's influence on the decisions of the local rulers, Campbell warned that at least some of these individual statements would be known to the Arab delegations in New York and were likely to be quoted at the UN. Furthermore, such individual agreements proved that the British Government did not limit its involvement in the Persian Gulf to the conduct of the external affairs of the protected states.

Campbell also warned the Foreign Office of another dangerous topic that was likely to come up in the event of a debate at the UN. Because the Trucial Oman Scouts were not responsible to the rulers but were under the operational control of the British Government, as represented by the political resident, the Arab critics of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf would most certainly point out that the rulers of the protected states had no control whatsoever over their own defence. Campbell concluded:

> Even our staunchest friends will doubt whether a ruler who gives up the control of external affairs and defence, surrenders his powers to grant oil concessions or spend the revenue from them without British consent, and agrees to accept British advice in all matters concerning the government of his state, retains any independence whatsoever in the commonly accepted using of the term. If we cannot convince our friends of this, what hope have we of convincing the Latin Americans and the French Africans?[22]

If the Committee of 24 decided to put the protected states on its agenda, it would, therefore, be nearly impossible for the British Government to convince the committee members that there was no reason for Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States not to be regarded as non-self-governing territories. The British Government would be accused of maintaining its presence in the area for purely selfish, economic reasons, without paying any attention to the hopes and desires of the peoples of the Gulf.[23] Sir Patrick Dean was even more explicit. He warned the Foreign Office that the British Government had 'no defence here [at the UN] to the charge that we [the British Government] are running an under cover old-fashioned colonial empire with the object of making a large profit out of the oil'.[24]

4.2 The retrocession of jurisdiction in the protected states

The negative image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf had worried the Foreign Office even before the danger of UN involvement became apparent in 1963. In the aftermath of the Kuwait Crisis, there was an intense debate in the Foreign Office about what could be done to alleviate the problematic side-effects of the British Government's Persian Gulf policy. It was decided that, as far as possible, the best strategy would be to reduce opportunities for Nasser and other Arab nationalists to attack both the British Government and the rulers of the protected states,[25] and that to counter the negative image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf, a more positive image of the status quo needed to be created. In this positive image, the rulers of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States would be seen to be in complete control of the internal affairs of their shaikhdoms, while Britain was not an imperial power that pulled strings behind the scenes but a friend of the protected states, providing the military protection they depended upon for their continued existence and integrity, and conducting their external relations in accordance with the wishes of the local rulers. Nor did the British Government stand in the way of social and economic progress in the Gulf by keeping autocratic rulers in power who were unable to govern their states according to the needs and desires of their peoples. In fact the rulers' governments were much better than their reputation suggested, and indeed there were indications of reforms and progress all over the protected states.

In order to create and spread this positive image of the situation in the protected states, the Foreign Office decided on a dual strategy designed to improve the reputation of Britain's Persian Gulf policy in the Arab

world. The first part of this strategy consisted of avoiding the impression that British influence in the protected states extended to the internal affairs of the nine shaikhdoms. The British Government had to refrain from any action that was likely to confirm Arab nationalist suspicions that the sovereignty of the rulers of the protected states was restricted, not only externally but also with regard to their domestic affairs. Robert Walsmley of the Arabian Department, who in February 1962 had assembled a list of palliative measures against the negative side-effects of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf, proposed that the British Government 'should develop [...] political relations with the Gulf rulers in such a way as to present as small a target as possible for Arab nationalist attacks'.[26]

The second part of the British strategy designed to create a more positive public image of affairs in the protected states was the improvement of the governmental systems of the local rulers. Following the Kuwait Crisis there was general agreement in the Foreign Office that the rulers had to carry out administrative, social, economic, legal, and judicial reforms in their shaikhdoms,[27] since good government was the best way of making the rulers of the protected states less susceptible to international criticism. The question was how this aim could be achieved by the British Government, which – apart from the individual promises given by some of the rulers to accept Britain's advice – had no formal right to intervene in the internal affairs of the nine protected states. The solution was a British policy of persuasion and encouragement. Luce suggested that the diplomats stationed in the Persian Gulf should use their personal charisma and influence with the local rulers as a means of convincing them to improve the standards of administration and justice in their states.[28]

At the same time, Britain's agents in the Gulf had to pay close attention to the potential danger of allowing these reforms to go too far. From the British perspective, social and economic progress in the protected states was desirable as long as it did not endanger the government system of shaikhly rule. The British Government was well aware of the fact that Britain's privileged political position in the protected states, and thereby its military presence in the Persian Gulf as a whole, was based on its close relations with the local rulers. As long as the British Government wanted to preserve its presence in the Persian Gulf to protect its economic and political interests in the area, the rulers had to be kept in power.[29] Therefore, in February 1962, Walmsley stressed the need to convince the rulers of the protected states to carry out reforms, 'though not such as to destroy the fabric of their own regime'.[30]

In many respects the two parts of the British strategy designed to mitigate the damaging side-effects of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf appeared to be mutually exclusive. On the one hand, the accusations of Arab nationalists, such as Nasser, that Britain ruled the Persian Gulf and prevented the independence of the protected states had to be denied. On the other hand, the British Government in fact needed to become more involved in the internal affairs of the protected states, in which it claimed to have no part, in order to convince the rulers of the advantages of good government. The combination of both parts of this strategy was a complicated and challenging balancing act for the British agents in the area. They had to utilize the personal respect they enjoyed among the local rulers to gain indirect influence on the internal affairs of the shaikhdoms. At the same time, they had to be careful to avoid attracting international attention with their actions or confirming Arab nationalist suspicions that there was more to the British presence in the Persian Gulf than the British Government cared to admit. It was believed in the Foreign Office that despite its inherent difficulties and contradictions, this complicated dual strategy was the only approach that could improve the images of both Britain and the rulers of the protected states, and contain Nasser's propaganda against Britain's Persian Gulf policy.

The problems and limitations of this dual strategy became apparent in 1963, when the Foreign Office decided to initiate the retrocession of Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction in the protected states. Luce suggested in January 1963 that the British Government should give up those privileges in the protected states that were not essential for preserving Britain's presence, along with the protection of its important economic and strategic interests, in the area. The privilege that could most easily be abandoned was the right to extra-territorial jurisdiction over non-Muslim residents in the protected states. Luce argued that 'there should be a gradual adaptation of our relations with the States in the direction of shedding such rights as our jurisdiction without affecting our responsibility for the peace and security of the area'.[31] In 1960, the British Government had already begun to transfer parts of its jurisdictional privileges to the local rulers in Qatar and Abu Dhabi.[32] Following Luce's suggestions, the Foreign Office decided in autumn 1963 to adapt this policy of relinquishing Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction in all nine protected states and to speed up the retrocession process as much as possible.[33]

From the perspective of the British Government, this retrocession of extra-territorial jurisdiction was politically very advantageous. Britain's jurisdictional privileges were the most obvious feature of its special

position in the Persian Gulf, indicating the existing limitations to the domestic sovereignty of the local rulers.[34] As long as the British Government insisted on exercising extra-territorial jurisdiction, it was vulnerable to the accusation that it not only conducted the foreign relations of the protected states but also controlled many aspects of their internal affairs. The political agents in the Persian Gulf were in agreement that maintaining Britain's jurisdictional privileges in the protected states 'was likely to become increasingly embarrassing in both the Gulf States and the outside world',[35] whereas giving up extra-territorial jurisdiction would mean improving the image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf. Neither the men on the spot nor the Foreign Office were concerned that relinquishing this policy might endanger Britain's economic and strategic interests in the area. It was agreed that the practice of extra-territorial jurisdiction in the protected states was a historic privilege that had been acquired by the British Government under different circumstances, and that its preservation was not essential in the 1960s. The British Government could maintain Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf, and its special treaty relationship with the rulers of the protected states could continue, without insisting on this privilege.[36]

Interestingly, none among Luce, the political agents, and the Foreign Office appeared to worry that this retrocession of jurisdiction might damage the confidence of the protected states rulers in the British Government's will and ability to maintain Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf. This position was in marked contrast with the continued consideration given by Luce (especially after the Kuwait Crisis) to the British Government's prestige among the rulers of the protected states. However, there is no indication in the sources that he or any member of his staff feared that the retrocession of Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Gulf could damage the relationship of trust and confidence that they were so anxious to preserve with the local rulers.

While the policy of giving up Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction in the protected states was in theory very appealing to the British Government, Britain's representatives in the Gulf were soon faced with considerable difficulties over its actual implementation. This was due to the fact that the British Government was unwilling to transfer its jurisdictional privileges to the local rulers before any modern justice systems had been established in the protected states,[37] since legal reform and modernization were considered necessary to protect non-Muslim residents in the protected states, including many British and American citizens. The British Government wanted the rulers of the protected states to employ educated Arab lawyers from Jordan to act as judges for

the local courts; it was also intended that they would reform the courts system of the protected states and establish written codes of law,[38] since in British eyes the existing local legal apparatuses were rudimentary. The most advanced system existed in Bahrain, where three Jordanian judges had been appointed as early as 1962. Even there, however, the justice system was not even remotely developed to a level suitable for British extra-territorial jurisdiction to be relinquished. Sir John Whyatt, judge of the British Chief Court for the Persian Gulf, commented in July 1963:

> In the past the law administered in the Ruler's Courts has been 'tribal' in character. There has been nothing resembling a proper procedure and, in criminal cases, the prosecutors have had no idea of the duties required of them. The new Jordanian judges are seeking to modernize the legal system but as they are only in a position to make suggestions, the change from a tribal to a modern civilised system of justice is likely to be slow.[39]

While legal reform in the protected states was desirable from the British point of view, it was not easy to achieve. This was because the British Government had no formal right to intervene in the local systems of justice; nor could Britain force the rulers to hire judges from Jordan, modernize their courts, or order codification of the local laws. The British Government was able to defer the transfer of its jurisdictional rights to the rulers only until it was satisfied with the standard of the local legal systems. Until then, the political resident and the political agents had to employ their personal powers of persuasion to induce the rulers to modernize and reform their courts. An example of the difficulties of this process was the situation in Abu Dhabi, where the ruler resisted for two years before taking the advice of the British to hire a judge and a legal adviser from Jordan.[40]

On 8 January 1964, Sir Patrick Dean and Luce met in the Foreign Office in London to discuss British policy in Oman and in the protected states, as well as possible ways to present both in a favourable light at the UN. In the course of this meeting, Luce explained that the retrocession of British extra-territorial jurisdiction in the protected states was the best policy for improving the public image of Britain's presence in the Gulf. However, he warned that its implementation depended on the cooperation of the local rulers and their willingness to reform the justice systems in their shaikhdoms. Progress was therefore expected to be 'steady rather than rapid'.[41]

4.3 Debating titles: Changing the nomenclature of Britain's representatives

Another question that was discussed during the meeting at the Foreign Office on 8 January 1964 was Sir Patrick Dean's suggestion to change the nomenclature of the British representatives who were stationed in the Persian Gulf.[42] The titles 'political resident' and 'political agent', which originated in the nineteenth century and had been used in imperial India until its independence in 1947, should be abolished, he proposed. The idea behind this was the hope of improving the image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf and avoiding comparisons between this position and Britain's former empire in India. Furthermore, changing the titles of the British representatives in the Gulf would be useful in underlining the British Government's position at the UN that there was no reason to regard the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman or the protected states as non-self-governing territories. Dean stressed in particular the necessity to change the title of the British representative in Oman from 'consul-general' to 'ambassador', warning that the British Government could not convincingly argue at the UN that the sultanate was a fully independent and sovereign state as long as no British ambassador was accredited there.[43]

Dean's argument found considerable support in the Foreign Office as well as among the British diplomatic posts in the Middle East. During the meeting in London in January 1964, it was agreed that from the presentational point of view, the change in nomenclature of the Gulf posts was desirable, and it was decided that this question should be examined with regard to both the protected states and the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.[44] Frank Brenchley, head of the Arabian Department, pointed out the advantages of adapting more contemporary titles for the Gulf posts: 'We [the British Government] might at least, however, get away from any aura of hegemony inherent in the present British/Indian nomenclature and in the particular case of Muscat, we should be formalising what is essentially the modern relationship.'[45] Roger Allen in Baghdad also supported Dean's suggestions and informed the Foreign Office that the abolition of the traditional titles of 'political resident' and 'political agent' would not only serve to strengthen the British argument at the UN but would also act as a possible 'palliative' by helping to reduce Iraqi attacks on Britain's position in the Persian Gulf, and Arab criticism of Britain in general.[46]

However, although the Foreign Office, the British Mission to the UN, and the political residency were agreed on the disadvantages of the

existing nomenclature of the British representatives in the Gulf, no easy solution was found to change it during 1964. Regarding Oman, a difference of opinion soon became apparent between Luce on one side and Sir Patrick Dean and the Foreign Office on the other. Luce rejected Dean's proposal that the British consul-general in Oman, Mr Duncan, should be accredited as ambassador. In the existing hierarchy of the British Gulf posts, the consul-general in the sultanate reported to the political resident in Bahrain, and the latter frequently travelled to Oman to meet the sultan for discussions.[47] When Luce took office as political resident in May 1961 and received instructions from the foreign secretary, Lord Home, the sultanate had been explicitly included in the list of his responsibilities.[48] In Luce's opinion, it was very important for the British Government to look upon its position in the protected states, Kuwait, and Oman as a whole, and to translate that point of view into a coordinated diplomatic representation in the Gulf, and he was not willing to accept a change in nomenclature that would put the present British representation in Oman on an equal footing with the political residency and thus 'encourage trends towards fragmentation in the Gulf'.[49] Luce therefore proposed a different scheme. He wanted to be accredited himself as ambassador to the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and during his periods of absence from the sultanate, Mr Duncan, retaining the title of consul-general, should act as chargé d'affaires. Similar changes to the titles of the British representatives could be made in the protected states, with Luce accredited as ambassador and the four political agents in Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai nominated as consuls-general and acting as chargés d'affaires.[50]

Dean, on the other hand, believed that altering the titles of the British representatives in the Persian Gulf according to the propositions of the political resident would forfeit their purpose. He strongly opposed the idea of accrediting Luce as ambassador to the sultanate of Muscat and Oman, and although he accepted Luce's argument that the political residency in Bahrain had to retain its responsibility for Oman, and that the political resident was obliged to pay regular visits to the sultan, he warned that accrediting Luce as ambassador would not help the British Government on the presentational level. The agreed British strategy at the UN was to argue that Britain's relationship with Oman was entirely different from that with Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States. While the sultanate was a fully sovereign and independent country, the nine protected states were sovereign domestically but had voluntarily surrendered the conduct of their international relations to the British Government. If the British Government wanted to keep this

distinction credible, it was unwise officially to link the British diplomatic representation in Oman to the political residency in Bahrain. Dean explained:

> For people who do not know much about the area, Luce as Political Resident is generally considered to be responsible for the former [Bahrain, Qatar and the Trucial States] only. His responsibility for the latter [the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman] is not, I think, so widely known. To link the two, therefore, by appointing the Political Resident as Ambassador to Muscat would seem to be a step backwards. What we really need, it seems to me, is something on the Kuwait model where there is a fully fledged and apparently separate Ambassador accredited to the Government of Kuwait.[51]

The Foreign Office took Dean's side in the controversy. Brenchley wrote a letter to Luce in June 1964 in which he proposed to demonstrate the independence of Oman publicly, by the practical gesture of transforming the consul-general into an ambassador.[52] Following Mr Duncan's appointment as ambassador, his formal subordination to the political resident should be ended. This did not mean that the Foreign Office wanted Luce to end his regular visits to Oman and his meetings with the sultan. On the contrary, the Foreign Office regarded it as useful to have the political resident as 'a second and heavier gun', who might be able to convince the sultan of the British point of view in questions where Mr Duncan had failed.[53] Therefore, Brenchley proposed to Luce that his title should be changed from 'political resident' to 'political resident and ambassador-at-large in the Persian Gulf'. This amendment would satisfy the sultan as a formal indication of Luce's continued right to visit him.[54] The only difficulty about the changes proposed by Brenchley was the fact that the existing treaties between the British Government and the Sultan of Muscat and Oman gave Britain the right to appoint only consular officers, and not diplomatic agents, in Oman. Therefore, changing the title of the British representative in Oman from consul-general to ambassador depended on the consent of the sultan.[55] In the eyes of the Foreign Office, which felt certain that the sultan's agreement would be forthcoming, this was merely a minor difficulty.

Luce refused to accept Brenchley's propositions, which he regarded as unrealistic and potentially dangerous for British representation throughout the entire Gulf. While he agreed that the sultan was unlikely to oppose the appointment of Mr Duncan as ambassador, he did not

believe that the sultan would accept the notion of dealing with himself as ambassador-at-large:

> [...] I am by no means confident that he would also agree that the Political Resident should in practice continue in the same relationship with him as before. There is nothing personal about this, but the Sultan is a stickler for protocol and has his own views on the subject. He might well say that he would deal with the Ambassador and his deputy, but a third representative of H.M.G. would be one too many. Nor do I think that my being called Ambassador-at-large in addition to Political Resident would help in this context; the Sultan would only be perplexed by the idea of two British Ambassadors operating in his State.[56]

It followed that the proposed changes in the nomenclature of the political resident and the consul-general would result in the fragmentation of the British representation in the Persian Gulf. This had to be avoided at all costs. Reiterating his argument about the importance of the cooperation between the posts in Bahrain and Oman, Luce stressed that there was much more to his role in Oman than pressurizing the sultan to accept British advice at times when he could not be persuaded by Mr Duncan. The residency was the centre of the British intelligence system covering the entire Persian Gulf. Furthermore, the Military Coordination Committee for the Persian Gulf, which coordinated all British military activity there, such as patrols by the Trucial Oman Scouts and photographic reconnaissance flights by the RAF, met in Bahrain and was chaired by the political resident. The British Government could not afford to run the risk of disturbing this coordinated political and military presence in the Persian Gulf by endangering the close connection between the British representation in Oman and the political residency. Luce concluded his letter with the recommendation that for the time being the title of the British post in Oman should remain unaltered.[57]

Changing the nomenclature of the British posts in the protected states was no easier than in Oman. There were three major objections against altering the status quo. The first problem was that the titles 'political resident' and 'political agent' were part of the existing British legislation – the Orders in Council – for the protected states. As long as the British Government exercised extra-territorial jurisdiction, the British representatives in the protected states had legal as well as diplomatic duties. If their titles were changed to 'ambassador' and 'consul-general',

they would have lost their jurisdictional powers. It followed, therefore, that the British Orders in Council would have to be amended to allow for a change in the nomenclature of the Gulf posts. This was possible, but it entailed a lengthy and complicated amendment process.[58]

The second objection against a change concerned the hierarchy of the British diplomats who were stationed in the Gulf as 'political agents'. The existing nomenclature allowed the Foreign Office to station officers of different ranks in these posts. Changing their titles to 'consuls-general' would have reduced the Foreign Office's freedom of manoeuvre, because only officers of a certain rank were eligible for such a position. The Foreign Office preferred to maintain the old titles in order to prevent the local rulers from noticing if and when decisions were made to send officers of higher or lower ranks to the various posts in the protected states. Brenchley explained in a letter to Luce that 'in an area where every Ruler is chronically jealous of his neighbours, the flexibility so obtained [by use of the title 'political agent'] is not lightly to be discarded, as it would be if we used consular nomenclature'.[59]

The third disadvantage of changing the titles of the British representatives in the protected states was the possibility that the rulers of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States might interpret it as a sign that the British Government was planning to pull out of the Persian Gulf, both politically and militarily. In Kuwait, a British ambassador had only been accredited in 1961 after the emirate had obtained full independence with the Exchange of Letters. The Foreign Office did not want to remind the rulers of the protected states of this example by exchanging the titles 'political agent' and 'political resident' for 'consul-general' and 'ambassador'. The presentational advantage of abolishing the old titles seemed small if it was weighed against the danger it entailed in damaging the confidence and trust of the local rulers in Britain. Since, in the eyes of the Foreign Office, that confidence was the foundation on which Britain's entire presence in the Gulf was constructed, its preservation seemed paramount, and of much more importance than the attempt to improve the British image by replacing the old titles.[60]

It was eventually agreed between the Foreign Office and Luce that, given the numerous difficulties involved, changing the nomenclature of the British representatives in the protected states was premature.[61] The title of 'political agent' for the four British posts in Qatar, Bahrain, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi was not to be replaced for the time being. It was decided instead that the right moment for a change would be the point at which the British Government had completed the retrocession of its

extra-territorial jurisdiction in the nine shaikhdoms. Brenchley wrote to Luce: 'That might be the psychological moment for a change in the title of the resident British representative. It would at that point probably be logical to drop the term Political Agent and give the representative the appropriate Consular title only.'[62] Since the retrocession of jurisdiction would take time, the alteration of the nomenclature of the posts in the protected states had to be deferred for several years.

In October 1964, after 13 years of Conservative rule, a Labour Government was elected in Britain. Harold Wilson became prime minister, and Patrick Gordon Walker was appointed secretary of state for foreign affairs. The latter was in favour of changing the nomenclature of the Gulf posts as soon as possible to improve the international image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf. At a meeting with Luce on 3 December 1964, Gordon Walker stated that 'the present titles of the British representatives in the Persian Gulf were out of date and had to be altered to conform to public opinion in this country [Britain] and in the world generally'.[63] This change had to be made effective as soon as possible, and Luce was unable to persuade the new foreign secretary to the contrary. As a result of Gordon Walker's decision, the controversy between the supporters and the opponents of a new nomenclature for the Persian Gulf posts seemed to have dissolved, and the political agents were informed at their annual meeting in January 1965 that an Order in Council giving effect to the change would be published in February 1965.[64] They protested against Gordon Walker's decision and warned that the abolition of the old titles would not be understood by the rulers and the public. However, a power shift within the Labour Cabinet at the end of January 1965 prevented the implementation of Gordon Walker's decision, since he was replaced by Michael Stewart as secretary of state for foreign affairs. The political resident took the opportunity of Stewart taking office to reintroduce for discussion in the Foreign Office the question of the most suitable nomenclature for the Gulf posts. As a result, a decision was deferred indefinitely.[65]

The futile debate about modernizing the titles of the British representatives in the Persian Gulf was an example of the difficulties faced by the British Government during its work towards a more positive image of its presence in the area. While it was acknowledged that many factors of the relationship with the protected states were strongly reminiscent of a British colonial empire in the Gulf and were therefore likely to attract Arab nationalist criticism, changing these factors was a complicated and lengthy process full of drawbacks.

4.4 Luce's despatch on modernization for the new Labour Government

Contrary to the expectations of the British Mission to the UN in New York, the Committee of 24 did not pick up the issue of Oman or the protected states in 1964. Sir Patrick Dean explained this development as due not to a lack of interest but to the simple fact that the committee had been too busy dealing with other parts of the world. However, he warned in November 1964 that the danger of a discussion on the Persian Gulf at the UN remained great, and that the British Government had to continue to work on its image. To this end, the British relationship with the Gulf States had to be modernized and full responsibility for the internal affairs of the shaikhdoms had to be handed to the rulers as soon as possible.[66]

The creation of the Labour Cabinet in October 1964 had motivated the Arabian Department in the Foreign Office to ask Luce for a despatch on the possible evolution of the relationship between Britain and the protected states of the Persian Gulf.[67] The Arabian Department had reason to believe that the new foreign secretary was interested in this subject. Gordon Walker had visited the Gulf in January 1964, and he had met Luce to learn about the constitutional situation of the protected states and about Britain's present interests and intentions in the area. Peter Tripp, the political agent in Bahrain, had gained the impression from this visit that Gordon Walker appreciated the importance of the Persian Gulf to Britain and the necessity of a British military presence in the area. Gordon Walker also met Shaikh Isa of Bahrain and had assured him that a Labour victory in the next general election in Britain would not result in any radical change in the relationship between the protected states and the British Government. However, he also expressed his concern about Britain's image in the world and, more specifically, at the UN. He told Peter Tripp that it might be desirable to modernize the relationship with the Gulf shaikhdoms and revise the existing treaties with them, and was in full agreement with the policy of retrocession of extra-territorial jurisdiction; he also supported the idea of changing the nomenclature of the British posts in the Gulf.[68] He had given an interview to *The Guardian* newspaper in September 1964 about Labour's plans for the Middle East, in which he was quoted as saying:

> We must also change our relationships with the states and sheikhdoms [sic!] of the Gulf. We have great interests there and we will be ready to make defence arrangements where they are desired,

> but we must modernise and normalise our relationships with the Governments of this area.[69]

The despatch from Luce requested by the Foreign Office was received on 12 November 1964.[70] He discussed in detail how the British Government could modernize its relationship with the protected states in order to make itself less susceptible to international criticism without running the risk of endangering Britain's significant interests in the Persian Gulf. The political resident based his arguments on the assumption that the assessment in Lord Home's Despatch No. 77 of May 1961 of Britain's interests in the Persian Gulf remained valid. Since the continued stability and security of the Persian Gulf was an important British interest, the British Government was obliged to fill the inherent power vacuum in the area, and to this end had to maintain a close political relationship with the local rulers as well as a military presence. According to Luce, there were three different threats to stability in the Persian Gulf, a necessary condition for the undisturbed production and exportation of oil. He argued that if the British Government decided on a modernization policy for the Gulf, this had to be designed in a way which allowed for the containment of these three threats.[71]

The first danger was external, and originated primarily from the UAR and Iraq. Both powers were enemies of the existing shaikhly regimes in the Gulf and the British presence in the area. They used the Arab League as well as the UN as forums through which to attack the rulers of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States as well as the British Government. This determination of the Arab nationalists to destroy both the shaikhly regimes of the protected states and the British position in the area limited the scope for a British modernization policy in the Persian Gulf. There was no point in weakening the relationship between Britain and the protected states too much in order to lessen Arab nationalist criticism at the UN. Improving the British image in the short term could not be allowed to lead to the destruction of Britain's position in the long term.[72]

The second threat to the stability and security of the Persian Gulf originated from within the protected states, where a growing number of educated young people opposed the traditional governments of the shaikhs and supported the revolutionary ideas of Arab nationalism. This group was still quite small, but the UAR and Iraq were exploiting its discontent. The best way to counter this threat was to reduce the attraction of the Arab nationalist agenda to the young people of the protected states by improving local standards of justice, administration,

and development. While good government was the job of the rulers, Luce argued that it fell upon the British Government in this context to persuade them of its merits:

> In my opinion it is by no means too late for the Rulers to remove much of the discontent of the educated class by adaptation of their methods of government and by judicious economic and social development to give greater scope for its abilities and aspirations, and a stake in continuing stability. It is here that our relationship with the Rulers has still a very important part to play, through exhortation and persuasion.[73]

It followed that it was unwise for the British Government to modernize its relationship with the protected states in a way which gave its officials on the ground less opportunity to guide, advise, and influence the rulers towards improving their governments.

The third danger was a lack of confidence on the British side in the respectability of Britain's position in the Persian Gulf. Luce warned the new foreign secretary not to be influenced by the argument that it was wrong to support the government of 'feudalistic' and 'anachronistic' shaikhs.[74] The British Government had to continue to support the rulers, because there was no alternative to shaikhly rule in Bahrain, Qatar, or the Trucial States. If Britain ended its protection of the rulers, the results would be either the annexation of the different shaikhdoms by the larger regional powers of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran or internal chaos. Neither result was favourable to British interests in preserving the area's stability and security. None of the existing opposition groups in the protected states was strong enough to form a functional government. This meant that the end of shaikly rule would not automatically result in improved living conditions for the peoples of the Gulf. According to Luce, the shaikhly regimes of the protected states were better than their reputation. The problem was not shaikhly rule in principle but individual rulers who exploited their states to their personal advantage or refused to adapt their government to the realities of the modern world. The British Government should aim 'to improve the performance of the curable [rulers] and in the last resort to root out the incurable [rulers], rather than to sweep away the whole system for – what?'.[75]

Luce concluded that the British Government – while modernizing its relationship with the protected states – had to be extremely careful not to damage the very foundation on which its presence in the Persian Gulf was built. The protection of Britain's paramount interest in the Persian

Gulf, the preservation of stability and security and thereby the protection of British oil interests, demanded that the British Government must not give up too much influence too quickly. Luce recommended that the modernization policy

> [...] should aim to shed those aspects of our special position which are not essential to our basic purpose but which detract, or appear to, from the sovereignty of the States, thereby reducing the scope for international criticism and strengthening the hand of our friends in the United Nations; it should not weaken the relationship to an extent that would help hostile influences, external or internal, to endanger the stability of the States; it should not deprive us of the opportunity to bring continued pressure to bear on the Rulers to improve and adapt their Governments; finally, it should not involve such sudden or drastic change as would shake the confidence of the Rulers in our intention to continue to support the integrity of their States, and so drive them into reinsuring elsewhere.[76]

The political resident made concrete suggestions in his despatch as to how to develop the British relationship with the protected states. His recommendations were not identical for all nine states, since he differentiated between the situation in Bahrain and Qatar on the one hand and the seven Trucial States on the other. Bahrain and Qatar were, in his opinion, much more suitable for a British modernization policy than the Trucial States because they were bigger and more developed. Even so, the changes that he proposed there were quite limited in scope. Luce reminded the foreign secretary that the British Government had already begun to shed some of its privileges in Bahrain and Qatar. Apart from the retrocession of jurisdiction, full control over the postal services was currently being handed over to the rulers. In addition to these existing measures, Luce also proposed to phase out the practice of issuing British Protected Person passports to subjects of Bahrain and Qatar, while full responsibility for the control of immigration to Bahrain and Qatar was to be handed over to the rulers. Luce acknowledged, however, that this did not end British responsibility for issuing visas for both countries because neither had consular representations abroad. Another British privilege which Luce proposed to give up was control of the importation of dangerous drugs into Bahrain and Qatar. In the future, the rulers were to deal directly with the UN Narcotic Division in Geneva.[77]

Resulting from Luce's conviction that it would be dangerous to take the modernization policy too far, his list of the privileges that the British

Government needed to maintain in Bahrain and Qatar was considerably longer than his list of proposed changes. He insisted that the British defence commitment and the right to conduct the foreign relations of the two shaikhdoms had to be preserved. The obligation to defend Bahrain and Qatar resulted from the need to maintain the stability and security of the Persian Gulf region. So did the continued necessity for the British to conduct Bahrain's and Qatar's external relations. Neither of the shaikhdoms was ready for an agreement comparable to the Exchange of Letters in 1961 with Kuwait, by which the British Government had maintained an obligation to defend the emirate but had relinquished responsibility for its external relations. In contrast to the amir, who had asked the British Government to abrogate the old treaty relationship with Kuwait, the rulers of Qatar and Bahrain both wanted the British Government to continue to conduct their external affairs, especially as neither of them could afford to open up representations in foreign countries. The British Government could not risk disappointing the rulers' expectations and damaging their confidence in Britain. Urging them to take control over their external relations against their will might undermine their trust, thereby weakening an important foundation of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf. Luce also considered it essential that the British Government should maintain two privileges derived from its responsibility for Bahrain and Qatar's foreign relations: control of air traffic to and from the shaikhdoms, and the importation of arms.[78]

It is important to note that Luce regarded continued British control of the external relations of Qatar and Bahrain as necessary because, in his opinion, this privilege gave the British Government at least some indirect influence on the internal affairs of the shaikhdoms:

> Although I realise that it has been the tendency for international political reasons to disclaim any responsibility for internal affairs, I myself believe firmly that direct responsibility for the one [external affairs] gives us an indirect responsibility for the other and therefore the right at least to use the maximum powers of persuasion in the interests of good government.[79]

However, if the British Government decided to force the rulers to look after their own external relations, it could not expect to exert any further influence on the internal affairs of Bahrain and Qatar.

While Luce insisted that the British Government had to maintain its right to conduct the external affairs of Bahrain and Qatar, he did

not suggest that the two shaikhdoms had to remain completely isolated internationally. On the contrary, he regarded it as desirable, from a presentational point of view, to encourage the rulers of Bahrain and Qatar to widen their external relations, particularly with their Arab neighbours. He proposed that as soon as the British Government had completed the process of handing its jurisdictional privileges over to the rulers, the participation of Bahrain and Qatar in international organizations, especially in those affiliated to the UN, should be considered.[80]

Luce's most important conclusion with regard to Bahrain and Qatar was that it was unwise to renegotiate the British treaties with the rulers. He admitted that there were some features of the treaty relationship that had become outdated and unnecessary from the British perspective. However, he urged the foreign secretary not to replace the existing treaties with more modern ones that would cover only the obligation of the British Government to defend the protected states and to conduct their external relations, and that would abrogate all previous agreements. In his opinion, the conclusion of new agreements would attract a lot of international attention and criticism, especially from the Arabs:

> I fear that the re-negotiation of new treaties on these lines in this day and age would precipitate far greater criticism of the Rulers and ourselves than if we allow the present situation to continue quietly under the existing agreements. We might expose the Rulers to such strong Arab pressure that, however unwillingly, they might feel obliged to give way to it.[81]

The British Government had no guarantee that discussions with the rulers would produce the desired outcome once the old treaty relationships had been abolished. Given the considerable interest of the British Government in preserving its position in the Persian Gulf, it was unwise to expose itself to such a risk by altering the existing treaty relationship. It was much better to leave things as they were and to ignore those features of the treaty relationship that, from the British perspective, were no longer important. One such unnecessary aspect was the undertaking by the rulers of Bahrain and Qatar, respectively, not to grant concessions for the exploration of oil on their territories without the consent of the British Government. Since the entire land and seabed areas of the two states were now covered by concessions, these agreements were no longer necessary. In this respect, however, instead of formally ending the 1922 oil agreements with Bahrain and changing the 1916 General

Treaty with Qatar, Luce proposed simply to ignore the British privileges that resulted from them.[82]

If Luce saw only limited potential for the modernization of Britain's relationship with Bahrain and Qatar, he felt entirely unable to recommend such a policy for the Trucial States. These seven states were extremely underdeveloped in comparison with Bahrain and Qatar. Furthermore, none had a proper administration that would have been able to take over some of Britain's administrative privileges. Luce reminded the foreign secretary that the British Government had long ago recognized that all seven Trucial shaikhdoms were too small, in terms of both territory and population, ever to become viable, independent, individual states. It followed that the only hope for future progress and stability in the Trucial States was the creation of some form of federation. If a federation was the long-term aim of the British Government for these states, it was unwise to change the relationship with the individual rulers now, since changing and modernizing Britain's relationship with them one by one would contribute to the fragmentation of the area, and would also conflict with the overall aim of establishing a federation. Luce concluded that the British Government should concentrate its efforts in the Trucial States on encouraging the rulers to cooperate and eventually to federate. Once this ultimate aim was achieved, modernization of the British relationship with the Trucial States would be the next step:

> I strongly recommend that we should regard federation as the road to modernisation of our relationship with the Trucial Shaikhdoms and that we should not hasten to shed our more important functions to individual Shaikhdoms, at least not until we know whether or not we can achieve the federation goal.[83]

An exception to this general principle was the retrocession of Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction, which was to be continued as quickly and as efficiently as possible. Apart from jurisdiction, Luce regarded only two aspects of the British relationship with the Trucial States as being safe to modernize. One was the manumission of slaves. The political agents in the Trucial States still possessed the right to issue certificates of manumission.[84] Since the institution of slavery had been abolished by all seven rulers, there was no need for the British Government to insist on this privilege. Another acceptable change was the reduction of the number of British Protected Persons passports that were issued to citizens of the Trucial States.

Luce concluded his despatch by arguing that the ultimate objective of the modernization policy should be the peaceful evolution of the protected states in a way which would in the long term enable them to stand on their own feet.[85] The modernization of the states and the modernization of the British relationship with them were two sides of the same coin. The former was a necessary prerequisite for the latter.

4.5 Formal endorsement of the modernization policy

Following the receipt of Luce's despatch about the modernization of Britain's relationship with the protected states, Patrick Gordon Walker asked to discuss the subject more thoroughly with the political resident, with the result that Luce flew to London and met the foreign secretary as well as senior representatives of the Foreign Office on 3 December 1964. Gordon Walker opened the discussion at the meeting by accepting the necessity of a British military presence in the Persian Gulf. However, the reason why he had come to this conclusion differed from the argument supported by the political resident and the majority of the Foreign Office. The foreign secretary regarded the British military presence as necessary for strategic reasons, but he was not persuaded that it was essential to defend Britain's oil interests.[86] The present relationship between the British Government and the rulers of the protected states was, in his opinion, full of disadvantages. The British Government appeared to be in control of the Persian Gulf and as a result was criticized internationally, although its power to influence events in the protected states was limited. Gordon Walker stressed:

> It was essential that Britain must be seen to be moving in the direction of modernising these relationships, even though the operation would be difficult. He [Gordon Walker] was keen that we should give a public impression that changes were taking place: this would improve our general image in the world, and we could make an important story out of it.[87]

The foreign secretary also challenged Luce's argument that the British Government could not replace its treaty relationship with the protected states with agreements similar to the Exchange of Letters with the Amir of Kuwait in June 1961. He enquired whether the protection of Bahrain and Qatar could not be arranged on the basis of defence agreements, to which Luce replied that the rulers of Bahrain and Qatar did not want such a drastic change in their relationship with Britain and that forcing

them to accept it against their will might result in the loss of the British base in Bahrain. He then asked if there was a feasible alternative to the base in Bahrain which would suffice to fulfil the British commitment towards Kuwait. Only when Steward Crawford explained that the Shah of Iran would never agree to a British base on his territory comparable to the one in Bahrain, and that Masirah Island in Oman was too far away from Kuwait to be used as a forward base, did Gordon Walker accept that Britain's military needs in the Persian Gulf did limit the scope of the modernization policy.[88]

Having accepted Luce's argument that only Bahrain and Qatar were eligible for the British modernization policy for the time being, the foreign secretary also agreed that with regard to the Trucial States, federation was the path to modernization. While he concurred with Luce that ultimate federation was only possible if all seven rulers agreed to it, and that the British Government could not force them to agree, he instructed the political resident to encourage cooperation between the Trucial States to bring federation at least a little bit nearer. To this end, Luce and the other British agents were to use their influence on the rulers to build up economic cooperation between the Trucial States, establish a central judiciary, and create some central administrative services.[89] The discussion then turned to the specific changes in the relationship between the British Government and the shaikhdoms of Bahrain and Qatar that Luce had recommended in his despatch. Gordon Walker accepted and endorsed the suggestions of the political resident regarding the retrocession of jurisdiction and the transfer of British control of immigration, narcotics, and postal services. He also agreed that the British Government should retain its control of air traffic in the Gulf. Regarding the question of whether British Protected Persons passports should still be issued to citizens of the protected states, he considered it desirable to end this practice and, in view of the complicated legal implications, he instructed the Foreign Office to prepare a separate report on this question.[90]

The only recommendation by Luce that Gordon Walker did not accept concerned the British right to control the importation of arms to the protected states. Luce argued that the British Government should not dispense with a privilege that gave it additional control over the internal security situation in the protected states, even though it was impossible to prevent arms smuggling altogether. He explained that neither the Ruler of Bahrain nor the Ruler of Qatar wanted to take over this duty from the British Government. However, Gordon Walker was determined that this aspect of British involvement in Bahrain and Qatar had

to be ended, emphasizing that 'the Rulers must accept some responsibility for decisions of this kind: there was a limit to what we [the British Government] could be expected to do on their behalf'.[91]

Even though Gordon Walker had accepted Luce's suggestion for a British modernization policy during their meeting on 3 December, the political resident had to wait several months for a formal reply to his despatch, due to the fact that Michael Stewart replaced Gordon Walker as secretary of state for foreign affairs in January 1965. The new foreign secretary eventually sent a formal despatch entitled 'Modernisation in the Persian Gulf' to the political resident, dated 1 April 1965, endorsing Luce's ideas on the subject and instructing him to translate them into actions. Stewart told Luce to regard his despatch as modifying the instructions contained in Lord Home's Despatch No. 77 of 25 May 1961.[92]

Stewart accepted Luce's argument that there were limits to a British modernization policy in the protected states. The British Government had to shed the privileges that detracted from the internal autonomy of the protected states, but this had to be done without jeopardizing the confidence of the local rulers or Britain's ability to maintain its position and defend its interests in the area. Stewart, therefore, endorsed Luce's gradual approach to modernization through a policy designed to liberate the British Government from aspects of its relationship with the protected states, which were no longer needed to protect Britain's interests in the Gulf and which damaged its reputation in the world. On the other hand, the modernization policy could not be allowed to lead to the erosion of the British position in the Persian Gulf.

Stewart also supported Luce's idea that Bahrain and Qatar should be encouraged to widen their international contacts. However, such contacts were desirable only with a certain selection of countries that maintained good relations with Britain. The foreign secretary proposed that Bahrain and Qatar should foster their relationships with Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. From the British perspective, good relations between Iran and the two shaikhdoms were desirable but unlikely, in view of the Iranian Government's continued claim to Bahrain. As for Iraq and the UAR, they could not be allowed to build up closer relationships with Bahrain and Qatar since both were strong opponents of the British presence in the Persian Gulf and were likely to abuse their contacts with Bahrain and Qatar to undermine it. Stewart argued that

> [...] while in the long run the Shaikhdoms seem bound to attract increasing attraction from the larger Arab States, we owe it to them

> and to ourselves to seek to ensure that the relationships which develop are not used to bring about subversion and the consequent erosion of our military position.[93]

This quotation is an example of Stewart's conviction that the modernization policy could not be permitted to jeopardize Britain's continued presence in the Persian Gulf. This position also became apparent in the foreign secretary's attitude to the question of arms control in Bahrain and Qatar. Stewart agreed with his predecessor, Patrick Gordon Walker, that the British right to control the importation of arms to the two shaikhdoms should be transferred to the rulers as soon as possible. But although he supported this plan mainly for presentational reasons, since relinquishing this British privilege would be another contributing factor to an improved image of Britain's role in the Persian Gulf, he did not really want to stop monitoring arms importation to Bahrain and Qatar. He only wanted it done more discreetly and indirectly:

> I nevertheless hope that the Political Agents, by virtue of the good relations which they and their staff have built up with the local security authorities in Bahrain and Qatar, will be kept aware of any proposal to import arms which might have a bearing on internal security or on arms smuggling into the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.[94]

Stewart understood the inherent difficulties and limitations to modernization that resulted from Britain's dependence on the cooperation of the local rulers, but he nevertheless made it clear in his despatch to Luce that the British Government had actively to pursue its modernization policy, arguing that 'while this evolution should be gradual, we [the British Government] must ourselves aim to determine its pace, and seek to ensure that it is not unduly delayed by the innate conservatism of the Rulers'.[95] This comment shows that Stewart understood the interdependence of the two aspects of the modernization policy: modernizing the protected states and modernizing the British relationship with them, with the former a prerequisite for the latter. Local standards of administration, justice, and development needed to improve before the British Government could transfer its jurisdictional and administrative privileges in the protected states to the rulers. Stewart was also unwilling to accept that the British Government should be constantly frustrated in its modernization policy by the unwillingness of the local rulers to adapt to changing circumstances. He wanted Luce and the political agents

to use their personal influence to persuade the rulers of the benefits of improving their administrations, reforming their courts, establishing modern codes of law, and developing the infrastructure of their states. He was also determined that instead of being merely reactive and passive, the British Government should play an active role in determining the progress of modernization.

The foreign secretary was aware that good governance by the local rulers was necessary, given the growing number of young educated people in the protected states who were critical of the old-fashioned shaikhly regimes. He stressed that

> [...] because the spread of education in the richer States is likely to lead to greater dissatisfaction among the educated class with the ruling families, and in particular with their misuse of oil revenues and their reluctance to share power, it is important that we should use our influence with the Rulers, to an even greater extent than hitherto, to persuade them to give wider scope for the energies and talents of the emerging intelligentsia, to devote more of their revenues to State purposes and less to their privy purses, and to work towards a form of government in which at least the educated sections of the community will play a larger part in the affairs of the government.[96]

The consequence of the need for good governance in the protected states, therefore, meant greater British involvement in the internal affairs of the shaikhdoms than before. This was the main irony of the British modernization policy: in order to be able to hand over full control of the internal affairs of the protected states to the local rulers, Britain first had to intensify its influence on the latter. The British officials stationed in the area had to become more involved in questions of administration, justice, and development in order to create the necessary framework for a successful modernization of Britain's relationship with the protected states. However, this involvement had to remain indirect and discreet. The idea was to use the trust of the rulers and the personal influence of the men on the spot to steer the process of modernization in the right direction. Only if British influence on the internal government of the rulers remained indirect and undetected by Arab nationalists and other critics of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf could the modernization policy achieve its purpose: to improve the image of Britain's special position in the area.

5
Excluding the Arab League: The Development Policy

5.1 The Arab League's plan to open an office in the Trucial States

Despite its attempts to improve the image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf, from March 1964 onwards the British Government was faced with a significant increase in Egyptian and Iraqi propaganda directed against it.[1] Radio stations such as Egypt's *Sawt al-'Arab* ('Voice of the Arabs'), and the Iraqi 'Bahgdad Home Service' and 'Voice of Iraq', attacked Britain's relationship with the protected states, and accused the British Government of tolerating and encouraging large-scale Iranian immigration in the Gulf. This 'Anglo-Iranian conspiracy' was aimed at strengthening Britain's imperialist presence in the area and crushing the struggle of the Gulf Arabs for liberation:

> We have concluded from our previous talks that the Arab liberation struggle in the Gulf is facing a conspiracy which it is the duty of every Arab to know. [...] Britain has concluded alliances with a number of new colonialist powers and large economic monopolies, in particular the great oil monopolies. She has also made an alliance with Iran. The object of all this is to confront the Arab demand for freedom, independence and unity in the Arab Gulf region.[2]

On 29 March 1964, the Egyptian press reported that the Political Committee of the Arab League had decided at a meeting on 13 March to send

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a delegation to the Gulf. The purpose of this visit was to discuss with the local rulers the possibilities of limiting foreign, especially Iranian, immigration to the Persian Gulf States.[3] In June 1964, Badr al-Khalid al-Badr, as personal representative of the Amir of Kuwait, visited the protected states and delivered letters to the rulers from Abdul Khalek Hassouna, the Egyptian secretary-general of the Arab League. These letters expressed the Arab League's friendship towards the Gulf Arabs and informed the rulers of the plan to send a 'mission of brotherhood' to the protected states in the autumn of 1964. Hassouna himself would lead the mission, which would include representatives from Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and Kuwait.[4] In a conversation with the political resident in Bahrain on 20 June, al-Badr confirmed that even though this was not mentioned in Hassouna's letters, one of the visit's objectives would be to look into the problem of Iranian immigration.[5]

The letters provoked different reactions among the rulers of the protected states. While Shaikh Ahmad of Qatar saw no harm in the announced visit, Shaikh Isa of Bahrain was extremely unhappy about the prospect of an Arab League mission coming to Bahrain 'to stir up trouble'.[6] He feared that the mission might be followed by more visits of the same kind, and that this could be the beginning of Arab League interference in the internal affairs of the Gulf States. Shaikh Isa therefore responded to Hassouna's letter with a friendly but non-committal reply, using his planned visit to Britain as an excuse for not being able at present to fix a date for the visit.[7] The British welcomed this evasive reaction and encouraged the other rulers to reply along similar lines. However, it was agreed in the Foreign Office that it was unwise to deny the Arab League a visit in the protected states altogether. In British eyes the increasing interest in the Gulf shown by the Arab League in general and by the Egyptian and Iraqi governments in particular was an inevitable development. The best way to counter it was to avoid giving the propagandists additional fuel for their attacks:

> The proposed Arab League visit may appear inimical to our interests in the short-term and we can rely on the local rulers to exercise a little mild procrastination. But I think the important point to stress is that if the Shaikhs try to put them off for too long, the League will be able to draw the propaganda conclusion that the British are keen to keep 'Arabism' out of the Gulf and are working in collusion with the Iranians for this purpose. On this basis, it is in our long term interests that the local Rulers should not put off the visit for too long and that they should receive the visitors in as friendly as possible manner.[8]

The British Government therefore made no attempt to prevent the visit of the Arab League delegation, which eventually took place in October 1964. On the contrary, the British representatives in the Gulf were instructed to persuade the local rulers to welcome the Arab League's delegates in a polite and friendly manner. Shortly before the mission arrived, the political resident travelled through the Gulf to meet the rulers of Dubai, Qatar, Sharjah, and Abu Dhabi in turn and to give them instructions as to how to treat the Arab League delegates.[9] Although the Foreign Office considered that a polite reception of the mission was necessary on presentational grounds, it was determined that the establishment of formal relations between the Arab League and the Gulf States had to be prevented. Neither the opening of an Arab League office in Bahrain, Qatar, or the Trucial States, nor Arab League membership on the part of any of the protected states, could be tolerated. The Arab League's intended work in the Gulf was regarded by the Foreign Office as a cover-up for the extension of Egyptian and Iraqi influence in the region, which could only be damaging to British interests:

> [...] once the Gulf Shaikhdoms had become members (or associate members) or otherwise came under the influence of the League, they would be pressed to follow Nasser's line in all questions, regardless of their own interests; they might thus be called upon to ban the immigration of all non-Arab labour (to the detriment of their and our relations with Iran), to operate the Israel boycott more effectively than at present, and finally to deny us the continuance of our defence facilities at Bahrain and Sharjah, or to exact a higher price for them. Furthermore, in view of the pressures to which they would undoubtedly be subjected, the Gulf States would sooner or later find membership of the Arab League, or other formal relations of a substantial character, incompatible with the continuance of British protection.[10]

The Arab League brotherhood mission began its tour of the protected states in Bahrain on 22 October, followed by visits to Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Quwain, Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah;[11] the delegation departed from the protected states on 4 November. Since the conversations between the secretary-general of the league and the local rulers had been held in private, the British officials in the Gulf had to rely on the rulers' reports about these meetings. They were informed that Hassouna and his colleagues had been at pains to demonstrate their goodwill and their understanding of the local

situation. The topics of Arab League membership for the protected states and an Arab League office in the area were not raised. The secretary-general had even told the Deputy Ruler of Qatar that he did not wish to discuss these subjects and politics in general since he did not wish to embarrass Qatar and the other protected states that had not obtained independence.[12] The aim of the mission was not to establish formal political relations but to gather information about the development situation in the Gulf and to offer the rulers economic and technical assistance. During his conversations with the rulers of the six northern Trucial States, where the need for help was greater than in Qatar, Bahrain, and Abu Dhabi, Hassouna emphasized the Arab League's readiness to provide the protected states with development aid. He proposed to set up a special Arab League fund through which assistance to them would be channelled.[13]

Reports by the political agents about the visits in Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai informed the Foreign Office that most of the rulers had behaved towards the Arab League mission exactly as the British had hoped: they received the delegation, entertained them, listened politely to their propositions but did not commit themselves to any further cooperation.[14] The exceptions to this rule were the rulers of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah. Indeed, the latter was so eager to acquire funds for the development of his shaikhdom that he not only welcomed the Arab League's general offer to provide the Trucial States with aid but even made specific requests for assistance for his own development projects.[15] Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah assured the British after the visit that he had not committed himself to any propositions made to him by Hassouna and his colleagues. However, the acting political agent in Dubai, Mr Marshall, was not convinced that Saqr was telling the complete truth. The Ruler of Sharjah's sympathy for the Arab League had already worried the British before the mission arrived in the Gulf, with the rulers of Qatar and Bahrain having informed Luce earlier in October that Saqr had recently spoken in favour of cooperating with the Arab League.[16] Before the delegation arrived he had prepared his shaikhdom for an enthusiastic welcome: buildings were covered in arches and flags, many of them UAR flags. Shaikh Saqr was reported to have encouraged these decorations by imposing a levy of 500 rupees on every merchant to pay for them and threatening a fine for anyone who failed to put up a flag.

The men on the spot also believed that Shaikh Saqr was responsible for the way in which the Arab League delegation was greeted on its arrival in Dubai. The Ruler of Sharjah had sent a message to Shaikh Rashid of Dubai on the day before Hassouna's mission arrived there,

encouraging him to welcome the secretary-general and his colleagues in a proper fashion. When the delegation arrived at Dubai airport, it was greeted by more than 3000 people, most of whom were not from Dubai itself but came from neighbouring Sharjah. Shortly afterwards a pro-Arab League demonstration started, during which Adeni and Yemeni labourers shouted pro-Nasser and anti-imperialist slogans; the demonstration had to be dispersed by the police. On 30 October, the day when the mission was supposed to travel from Dubai to Sharjah, almost every vehicle that existed in Sharjah arrived in Dubai in order to accompany the delegation on the drive up to Sharjah. Shaikh Saqr's personal preferences were demonstrated again during a lunch that he hosted for Hassouna and his colleagues, when several Egyptian school teachers used the occasion to make speeches demanding that Sharjah should immediately join the Arab League. Shaikh Saqr did not demur at these propositions.[17] All this led Marshall to conclude that Shaikh Saqr had shown more sympathy for the Arab League delegation's proposals about cooperation and development aid than he had revealed to the British, and, even though Saqr denied it, the acting political agent feared that the issue of the opening of an Arab League office in Sharjah might have come up: 'In Sharjah his guest house is being referred to as the Arab League Office already and although he said that this subject was not mentioned to him, I hesitate to believe this entirely.'[18]

On 2 December 1964, the Foreign Office received a translation of the official report that Hassouna had submitted to the Arab League about the brotherhood mission to the Gulf States.[19] The report concluded that while Bahrain, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi were not in need of outside assistance, the other six Trucial shaikhdoms – Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Umm al-Quwain, and Fujairah – hoped for and depended on aid provided by the Arab League; it was therefore recommended that an aid fund should be established through which all Arab countries willing to help the Trucial States could channel their financial aid. It was also proposed that a delegation of experts in roads, water, electricity, agriculture, commerce, and economic development should be sent to the Lower Gulf. The mission would also prepare a comprehensive plan for the development of the Trucial States that would be presented to the Arab League heads of state at their summit meeting in January 1965.[20]

This recommendation was immediately put into effect. On 17 December a technical mission of the Arab League travelled to Sharjah without giving prior notice to either the rulers or the British Government, except for a telegram that Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah received half an hour before the party arrived. This delegation toured the Trucial States for nine days

before leaving on 26 December. The only Trucial States ruler they did not visit was Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi. At a dinner given for the delegation by the ruler of Sharjah, the political agent in Dubai, Glencairn Balfour-Paul, learnt more about the Arab League's plans for the development of the Trucial States. Dr Mohammad Salim, who headed the mission, informed Balfour-Paul that at their summit meeting on 9 January 1965 the Arab League heads of state would vote in favour of contributing several million pounds to Trucial States development. Salim stressed that the Arab League had no intention of paying this money into a central fund under the supervision of the Trucial States Council.[21] Instead, the money would be administered by a comparable agency and, in the same way as the international technical assistance funds, managed by the UN.[22] Balfour-Paul concluded from what he had learnt during the technical mission's visit that 'finance permitting (or perhaps even not permitting), the Arab League is bent on setting up a Development Office in the Trucial States'.[23]

In the following months, the firming up of the Arab League's plans was followed very closely by the Foreign Office, assisted by the governments of Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the two Arab League member states with whom Britain had good relations. They provided the British Government with detailed information about the latest developments, and the news received by the British in the weeks following the technical mission's visit to the Persian Gulf confirmed Balfour-Paul's impression that the Arab League was planning to set up an office in the Trucial States. The Arab League heads of state met in Cairo on 9 January 1965 and endorsed a proposition that had been set out by both Hassouna and Salim in their respective reports: a permanent committee was to be created, responsible for the control and distribution of development aid to the Trucial States. This committee would be in control of a newly created fund, to which other Arab countries – both members and non-members of the league – would be invited to contribute.[24] The new Arab League Trucial States Committee duly met in Cairo on 11 February 1965 to consolidate its plans. It was decided at that meeting to offer £5 million of aid to the Trucial States over five years. Letters would be despatched to the Trucial States rulers conveying the Arab League's offer and asking them for their consent.[25] These messages were then to be followed up by a visit from the league's assistant secretary-general, Dr Sayed Nofal, who was expected to discuss with the rulers the possibility of opening an Arab League office in the Trucial States.[26]

However, these decisions were not immediately put into effect, and there was little progress for the Arab League's project in the Trucial

States during the following months. On 25 March the British Embassy in Kuwait learned from al-Badr that no date had so far been fixed either for Nofal's visit or for the next meeting of the Arab League Trucial States Committee.[27] It was not until May 1965 that the Arab League started to implement its plan.

5.2 The creation of the Trucial States Development Fund

The Foreign Office and the British representatives in the Gulf were from the beginning determined to prevent the implementation of the Arab League's plans to open an office in the Trucial States.[28] In a letter addressed to Stewart Crawford on 25 January 1965, Luce explained that an Arab League office in the Trucial States would severely endanger Britain's position in the Gulf.[29] Luce was convinced that Gamal Abdel Nasser, President of the UAR, was the driving force behind the Arab League's interference in the protected states, and that his aim was to drive the British out of the Persian Gulf and destroy the position of the rulers in order to establish Arab socialist regimes, subservient to Cairo, in the protected states. The political resident stressed that there was no point in distinguishing between the threat emanating from the Arab League and that coming from Cairo, since both endangered Britain's interests in the Gulf and had to be confronted with equal determination:

> While it may be arguable that the Arab League is something different from the UAR and Nasserism and that a man like Abdul Khaliq Hassouna is not necessarily pursuing the same aims as Nasser it would be naive to say the least to think that Nasser will not exploit Arab League penetration to the utmost for his own aims. For practical purposes I therefore lump Arab League, U.A.R. and, in the present state of U.A.R./Iraqi relations, Iraqi activities in the Gulf together as constituting what can conveniently be called the Egyptian threat.[30]

The political resident also warned that if the Arab League succeeded in establishing the planned office in the protected states, this would have severe consequences for Britain's special position in the area. The office would give the Egyptians a permanent base from which to plan their subversive activities in the Persian Gulf, since they would use the cover of the Arab League to move freely and continuously over the whole area. Believing that this discussion was the first round in an open struggle with Nasser for domination in the protected states, Luce

felt it was essential for Britain not to give way on the subject of the Arab League office. In this situation it was vital that the British Government presented itself as resilient and not prepared to allow its adversary to weaken British power in the Gulf. If Britain gave way now, other even more aggressive attempts by Nasser would follow, aimed at driving Britain out of the region.[31]

Luce's analysis of the motives behind the Arab League's offer was accepted in the Foreign Office and confirmed by the British ambassador in Cairo,[32] and it was agreed that urgent measures must be taken to counter the Arab League's plans to open an office in the Trucial States.[33] However, from the beginning, the simplest method of doing so was disregarded: banning all Egyptian and Arab League presence from the Trucial States was not considered a suitable solution to the problem. Technically, the British Government was entitled to take such a step because of its responsibility for the external relations of the protected states. However, due to the geographical situation of the Trucial States and the difficulty of controlling the borders, it was physically more or less impossible to make such a ban effective, especially because any citizen of an Arab League country visiting the Trucial States might turn out to be the founder of the organization's new development office. Furthermore, the idea of using Britain's control over the external relations of the protected states to prevent the Arab League's plans from being implemented was dismissed by the British Government for presentational reasons. The political resident warned that such a step would expose Britain to severe international criticism for depriving the backward Trucial States from well-intentioned Arab League development aid, while the Egyptian propaganda machine would undoubtedly attack the rulers of the Trucial States for submitting to British imperialism, thereby creating precisely the atmosphere of unrest and internal instability in the area that the British hoped to avoid.[34]

Attempts were therefore made during the following months to find less direct ways of helping to stop the Arab League's penetration of the protected states. The British strategy now centred on the foundation of a new institution: the Trucial States Development Office.[35] The Foreign Office believed that the best way to prevent the Arab League from opening an office in the Trucial States was to tell the secretary-general that there was already an institution in existence there, with responsibility for supervising the use of foreign aid and for implementing development plans.[36] The Arab League should be informed that while financial contributions to development projects were welcomed from every source, the league's opening of an office in the Trucial States

would be counter-productive, and that the best way to avoid duplication and overlapping of such projects was through the coordination of all development aid activity by the Trucial States Development Office. This strategy, which was first proposed by Luce in his letter to Stewart Crawford of 25 January 1965, was designed to avoid negative side-effects for the British Government on the presentational level while countering the schemes of the Arab League.[37] Luce believed that the Trucial States could not possibly reject Arab League money altogether, since the only result would be violent attacks by the Nasserist press claiming that Britain was preventing the shaikhdoms from receiving urgently needed help for their development. The political resident hoped that if the Trucial States accepted Arab League money in principle, but rejected the establishment of an Arab League office on the grounds that an institution suitable for controlling foreign development aid was already in existence, the local rulers and the British Government would both be less susceptible to international criticism.[38]

Luce's case was fully accepted in the Foreign Office, and preparations for the establishment of the Trucial States Development Office were started immediately. The plan was to create this new institution before the Arab League had finalized and implemented its own plans, because only a working Trucial States Development Office could serve as an argument against the establishment of an Arab League office. For this purpose the previous practice of British development policy in the Gulf had to be changed very rapidly. Britain had begun to give development aid to the Trucial States in 1956 and had increased this aid in 1964.[39] Until 1965, the funds remained under the control of the Political Agency in Dubai. In 1964, a British citizen had been appointed as development secretary to deal with the increasing workload, and, even though he was not a British diplomat, his office was attached to the Political Agency.[40] Faced with the need to act quickly because of the threat emanating from the Arab League, the Foreign Office decided that the development secretary and his staff should form the nucleus of the future Trucial States Development Office.[41]

The first necessary step in this direction was to separate the development secretary physically from the Political Agency, and to install him and his staff in separate premises. This was regarded as unavoidable if the British argument was to be made convincing to the Arab League, because as long as an institution responsible for distributing development aid to the Trucial States appeared to be under British control, the Arab League could certainly not be persuaded that establishing its own office was unnecessary.[42] For the same reason, the Foreign Office then

attempted to 'Arabize' the Development Office by trying to find it an Arab director. They had been informed by al-Badr that this was absolutely imperative if there was to be any chance that the Arab League would take the new office seriously.[43] It is important to note here that the 'Arabization' of the Development Office was initiated by the Foreign Office for purely presentational reasons. Since the British Government had no intention of abandoning control of the money it was contributing to the development of the Trucial States, it was agreed between the Foreign Office and the Treasury that Mr Kendall, the British development secretary, should stay in the Development Office even after an Arab director had been appointed. Kendall would be given a new title and would continue to control the use of British aid.[44]

The next step in the British plan to counter Arab League penetration of the area was the creation of the Trucial States Development Fund. This was to be a central bank account, administered and controlled by the Trucial States Development Office, through which all development aid to the Trucial States (beginning with Britain's annual contributions) would be channelled.[45] The British idea was to make the acceptance of Arab League money conditional on its payment into the Trucial States Development Fund, which would render the establishing of an Arab League office to supervise the distribution of its money unnecessary. The Trucial States Development Fund would also serve as proof of the centralization and efficient organization of international development aid in the Trucial States.[46]

The British Government depended for the implementation of its strategy on the cooperation of the Trucial States rulers. The Foreign Office was convinced that that the plan had a chance to be effective only if the Trucial States Development Office and the Trucial States Development Fund appeared to be invented and controlled by the rulers of the Trucial States instead of the British Government. Again, al-Badr had stressed this point in a conversation with Luce on 4 February:

> [...] he thought it was worth trying to get Arab League aid channelled through the Trucial States Council. To this end it would be essential that all the Rulers concerned should themselves say that this was what they wanted in reply to further communication from the Arab League.[47]

This was not an easy aim to achieve. The rulers of the Trucial States took different positions towards the Arab League: while Shaikh Rashid of Dubai worried about the Arab League's real aims, Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah,

and his cousin and namesake Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah, were both sympathetic towards the organization. Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah were so poor that their rulers were likely to accept help from anyone who offered it.[48]

The Trucial States Council was the only institution in which all seven Trucial States were represented. Regular meetings of the seven rulers were involved, in which joint decisions could be issued in the form of resolutions. The political agent in Dubai, Glencairn Balfour-Paul, chaired these meetings, and it was he who scheduled a session of the Trucial States Council for 1 March 1965, hoping that at this meeting the rulers would pass a resolution that would formally establish the Trucial States Development Office and the Trucial States Development Fund.[49] His other aim was to convince the rulers to make a formal statement that would welcome foreign development aid in principle but make its acceptance conditional on being channelled through the Development Office. All financial contributions were to be made to the Trucial States Development Fund.

The methods used by Balfour-Paul and his colleagues in the Gulf to influence the outcome of the Trucial States Council meeting on 1 March 1965 were an important example of Britain's informal means of influencing the decisions of the rulers of the protected states. The Foreign Office was unwilling to leave anything to chance in preparing for the rulers' meeting, and in the weeks leading up to the forthcoming session of the Trucial States Council, Balfour-Paul reminded the rulers in several personal conversations of Britain's responsibility for the external affairs of their shaikhdoms and of the rulers' consequent obligation to consult the representatives of the British Government about their relations with the Arab League. He also warned them that the opening of an Arab League office in their territories would pose a significant risk to their security, and asked them to decline the Arab League's offer to establish such an institution in the Trucial States.[50] Balfour-Paul was especially frank with the Ruler of Sharjah: at a meeting on 26 January he accused Shaikh Saqr of maintaining too close relations with the UAR and warned him that the British Government would not stand idly by while Shaikh Saqr gave up honouring the agreements that bound his shaikhdom to Britain. Shaikh Saqr denied any intention of breaking his treaty relations with Britain and claimed that his manifestations of sympathy for Arab nationalist ideas were largely the product of his fear of the Egyptian propaganda machine. However, the political agent remained unconvinced of Shaikh Saqr's sincerity.[51] After Balfour-Paul's efforts, Luce toured the Trucial States and met all seven rulers individually. He

urged them to attend the Trucial States Council meeting on 1 March and to vote in favour of a resolution that would welcome aid from any source but would require it to be channelled through the Trucial States Development Fund and to be administered by its Development Office.[52] In the meantime, Balfour-Paul, in discussion with the political residency, prepared the wording of this resolution.[53]

When the Trucial States Council meeting was eventually held on 1 March 1965 in the political agency in Dubai, Balfour-Paul opened the discussion.[54] Reminding the rulers of their conversations with Luce and of their concurrence with the political resident's suggestions, he then quoted additional reasons why it was in the joint interests of the seven rulers to set up the Trucial States Development Fund along with an office equipped to administer it. It would add to the Trucial States Council's dignity and prestige because it would give real substance to its activities. Well-wishers in the Arab world would certainly feel motivated to contribute to the Trucial States Development Fund, because its executive machinery would be visibly separate from the political agency and directly under the control of the Trucial States Council.

During the following discussion, Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah and Shaikh Saqr of Ras-al-Khaimah again proved to be the weakest links in the British plan. The Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah stated that he could not see the evil in the Arab League offering money to the Trucial States, and also warned that the Arab League was unlikely to contribute to a fund 'controlled by the political agent',[55] while Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah informed the other shaikhs that Dr Sayid Nofal, deputy secretary-general of the Arab League, was coming to the Trucial States in a week's time, bringing £1.5 million with him. The result of this announcement was that the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah expressed his fear that the Arab League might withdraw its offer of aid if the Trucial States Council passed the resolution. Balfour-Paul did his best to counter the ideas of the two Saqrs. His own report about the session and the official minutes of the meeting prove that he did not restrict himself to exercising his duties as chairman; he intervened frequently in the discussion, stressing that the Trucial States Development Office would be under the complete control of the Trucial States Council.[56] The way in which the resolution was eventually passed was an example of Balfour-Paul handling of the proceedings:

> If, I then said, they were all agreed on the principle, perhaps someone would like to propose a form of words to embody it. There was no response from Shaikh Rashid [of Dubai], who had by arrangement

> a copy of the draft resolution in his pocket; so I said that the Arab Adviser [of the political agency], who was sitting next me, had a possible form of words which they might find helpful. He then read out our prepared draft [...] and distributed copies.[57]

This was an example of the indirect methods employed by Britain's officials on the ground in order to influence the rulers' decisions. Even though the resolution had been formulated by the political agent, he did not want to present it to the Trucial Rulers as his idea. Therefore, Balfour-Paul had met the Ruler of Dubai, a close friend of the British Government, before the meeting and had persuaded him to enter the British resolution as his own proposition. However, faced with the other rulers in the Trucial States Council, Shaikh Rashid decided against this move; nor was this the first time that he had been less supportive of Britain's representatives in public than in his private discussions with them.[58] Shaikh Rashid's passivity forced Balfour-Paul to ask the Arab adviser of the political agency to present the suggested wording. The Ruler of Sharjah tried to delay a decision by requesting that the rulers should think about the precise wording of the communiqué and meet again later. However, he was prevailed upon to read the draft during the session, and finally accepted it as unobjectionable. The rulers then unanimously approved the following resolution:

> The Council welcomes unconditional aid from any source for the development of the Trucial States and is grateful for the interest shown by the Arab League and others in contributing to this development. In order to avoid duplication of effort and in order that the Governments of the Trucial States may jointly plan the development of the area for the common good, the Council resolves:
>
> (a) To open an account in the name of the Trucial States Development Fund to which all sums contributed, whether from outside or inside the area, in addition to those already received, should be credited.
>
> (b) To appoint additional staff as required to its central Development Office so that the Office, under the Council's control, may be capable of handling the fund and carrying out development programmes approved.

This resolution provided the British Government with the legitimacy it needed to present the Trucial States Development Fund to the Arab world as an initiative of the rulers. In reality, however, the decisions of

the Trucial States Council on 1 March were prepared and deeply influenced by the British officials stationed in the Gulf. They were nothing but a formal confirmation by the local rulers of the development policy which the British Government had initiated in the Trucial States in January 1965. Even though it was important to the Foreign Office to obtain this confirmation, it did not await the decision of the rulers before proceeding with its strategy to counter the plans of the Arab League.

5.3 The search for financial resources

While the political resident and the political agent in Dubai were preparing the formal establishment by the Trucial States Council of the Trucial States Development Office and the Trucial States Development Fund, the Foreign Office had to deal with another urgent issue, which was to find the necessary financial backing for the new entity. At no time did Luce and his colleagues in the Foreign Office believe that Nasser and the other Arab League members would be willing to contribute financially to the Trucial States Development Fund. The British had urged the rulers to accept Arab League aid in principle, solely as a tactical move designed to forestall the Egyptian propaganda attacks that would have resulted from a general refusal of Arab League aid. In a letter of 8 February 1965 to Steward Crawford, Luce stressed:

> [...] I must make it quite clear that I have no illusions, nor will the Trucial Coast Rulers have any, that Egypt will in fact allow any Arab League funds to be paid into the Trucial States development fund and administered by their development office. I have proposed this approach as a tactical move to prevent the establishment of an Arab League office. Nasser will see through this, just as we see through his designs; [...].[59]

It followed that in order to get the new Trucial States Development Office working, other financial contributors had to be found, and preempting Arab League aid to the Persian Gulf with money from other sources was regarded as the best way of stopping the Arab League's penetration of the Trucial States. Even though all seven rulers had voted in favour of the Trucial States Council resolution which made the acceptance of foreign aid conditional upon it being channelled through the Trucial States Development Fund, the Foreign Office was in some doubt as to whether all of them would eventually insist on these conditions

when the Arab League made them a concrete offer. Luce feared that the rulers of the six impoverished northern Trucial shaikhdoms would give in if the Arab League offered them substantial funds but refused to channel the money through the Trucial States Development Fund. The Foreign Office therefore tried to organize sufficient funding for the Trucial States to ensure that the position of their rulers vis-à-vis the Arab League would be strengthened.[60] It was hoped to collect enough money for the Trucial States Development Fund before the Arab League had made a concrete offer to the Trucial States rulers. As a result, the British search for funds was conducted under considerable time pressure.

The Foreign Office started its efforts by trying to exhaust the sources of finance that were available within the protected states. They wanted the four bigger and richer states – Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai – to contribute to the development of the five poorer ones. The reasons for this move were political rather than economic, with the aim being to set a precedent vis-à-vis the Arab League.[61] In January 1965, the rulers of Qatar, Bahrain, and Abu Dhabi received letters from Hassouna asking them for significant financial contributions to an Arab League Fund of £1.5 million, intended for Trucial States development. The Foreign Office regarded this situation as a good opportunity to 'turn a table on the League'.[62] It wanted the rulers to decline Hassouna's request, explaining that their decision was based on the contributions that they were already making to the existing Trucial States Development Fund. The Foreign Office also wanted all of the 'Big Four', as they called the larger protected states, to donate some money to the Trucial States Fund, even though only Abu Dhabi and Qatar were rich enough to dedicate large sums. In British eyes, contributions by Bahrain and Dubai, however small, were useful on the presentational level, and were an example of the existing cooperation among the protected states in their dealings with development issues. The political agents therefore pressed the rulers of the 'Big Four' to make financial contributions to the development of the northern Trucial States. Shaikh Isa of Bahrain, who was as unhappy as the British Government about the prospect of Arab League penetration of the Persian Gulf, agreed immediately to play the British game by writing the requested letter to Hassouna. He also promised to make a financial contribution of £10,000 to the Trucial States Development Fund, but insisted that the sum was not made public because he was able to donate only this small amount.[63] Initially, Shaikh Ahmad of Qatar, who was hesitant about standing against the Arab League, refused to cooperate with the development plans, but eventually he agreed to write an evasive reply to the secretary-general

and to pay £100,000 into the fund.[64] Shaikh Rashid of Dubai announced his intention of contributing £70,000 pounds annually to Trucial States development.

Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi was more difficult to deal with. While he happily complied with Britain's strategy by declining Hassouna's request in January 1965, his cooperation with the British Government was less forthcoming when it came to money.[65] Hugh Boustead, the political agent in Abu Dhabi, had approached him as early as December 1964 about funds for the development of the other Trucial States, calling on the shaikh on 20 December 1964 in order to talk to him about the recent Arab League missions to the Gulf. They had discussed the best ways to prevent Arab League interference in the protected states, and Boustead reminded Shaikh Shakhbut of his previous statements about how much he resented Arab League interference in his territory, regarding it as a cover for the spread of Nasserist influence in the region. The political agent then tried to convince Shakhbut that the best weapon he could use against the Arab League was his money:

> I said to the Ruler that from what he had said to me previously it was clear that he feared the Arab delegations presence here and wished to have any excuse to dispose of them and that it was equally clear that the most convincing and unanswerable reason would be that he did not require their assistance as he was fully equipped with money for the States advancement and was proposing to use this.[66]

Boustead explained that the ruler's refusal to cooperate with the Arab League would, however, defy its purpose if Shakhbut restricted the use of his money to the development of his own state. The rulers of the other six Trucial shaikhdoms did not possess substantial funds and were therefore not in Shaikh Shakhbut's privileged position. They could only refuse Arab League aid if they received money from elsewhere. Boustead stressed that a financial contribution by Shaikh Shakhbut to the development of the other Trucial States was not an act of altruism but in the ruler's own interest: it would prevent Abu Dhabi from being isolated within the Trucial States while his neighbours were overrun by the Arab League and Nasserist propaganda.[67] Shaikh Shakhbut's response was less favourable than the British had hoped: even though he agreed in principle with Boustead's arguments, he committed himself to a contribution of only £25,000.[68] This amount was extremely small in view of Abu Dhabi's recently acquired enormous oil wealth. In the following months, the British Government continued to ask Shaikh Shakhbut for

money, which he repeatedly promised to give. However, these assurances were followed up only by the slowest of actions, and it was not until May 1965 that Shaikh Shakhbut agreed to donate another £100,000 to the Trucial States Development Fund.

The Foreign Office also looked beyond the frontiers of the protected states for financial resources. In British eyes the most promising contributors were Kuwait and Saudi Arabia. As a result of their oil wealth, both countries had enormous financial resources at their disposal and were therefore able to make donations substantial enough to convince the rulers of the Trucial States that they did not depend on Arab League aid. Apart from these economic considerations, the Foreign Office also had political reasons for encouraging Saudi Arabia and Kuwait to contribute to the fund. Both countries were members of the Arab League and potentially the largest contributors to the planned Arab League Fund for Trucial States development, whereas the other Arab League members were not rich enough to dedicate large sums of money. The positions of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait were therefore crucial for the success of the Arab League's plans to offer the rulers of the Trucial States money for development projects, and to open an office in their territories to administer these funds.[69] The Foreign Office hoped to cross the Arab League's plan by persuading the governments of both Kuwait and Saudi Arabia not to participate in the Arab League's scheme but to donate their money instead to the Trucial States Development Fund. The Foreign Office also wanted Kuwait, which had already contributed to the development of the Trucial States for several years and maintained an office in Dubai for this purpose, to change the practice of its development policy. Instead of providing the Trucial States with aid on a bilateral basis, Kuwait should channel all of its contributions through the Trucial States Development Fund, thereby adding to the centralization of international aid activity in the Trucial States and to the importance of the new institution.[70]

Britain's strategy for convincing the governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait not to comply with the Arab League's plan was to remind them that 'it could not possibly be in their interests to assist the Egyptians to establish a firm foothold in the Trucial States when Nasser's eventual aim is to establish his supremacy in the Gulf, inevitably at their expense'.[71] In the opinion of the Foreign Office, both countries had every reason to oppose the extension of Nasser's influence in the Persian Gulf. Saudi Arabia's own territorial ambitions in the Arabian Peninsula would be endangered by the extension of Egyptian influence, while Nasser's plan to stir up subversion in the Persian Gulf against the shaikhly regimes

of the protected states would eventually spread to Kuwait, and would thereby endanger the amir's position in his own country.

However, British discussions between February and May 1965 with the governments of Saudi Arabia and Kuwait about the Arab League's plan proved to be much more difficult than anticipated. It was one thing for King Faisal and Shaikh Abdullah to provide the British Government with information about the progress of the Arab League's plans, but agreeing openly to cross those plans was quite another matter, and, in the case of Kuwait, British attempts to dissuade the amir from cooperating with the Arab League proved futile. Even though Shaikh Abdullah agreed with the British Government that the Arab League's development programme for the Trucial States was a cover-up for plans by the UAR to penetrate the Persian Gulf politically, he could not be persuaded to abstain from cooperating with the Arab League.[72] On 4 February, al-Badr, the amir's close adviser, informed Luce that Kuwait had promised to make a financial contribution to the Arab League fund for Trucial States development. Al-Badr explained that Kuwait could not afford to cross the Arab League openly, being too small and too young as a country to risk standing up to the organization into which it had been accepted as a member only four years previously:

> Badr agreed that Egypt had her own aims in promoting Arab League activity and that these aims were dangerous. But Kuwait's difficulty was that she could not afford to antagonize the Arab world and particularly Egypt and this sometimes led her into action which at heart she did not like.[73]

In the following months, repeated British attempts to convince the amir to change his mind were unsuccessful. Having promised to donate money to the Arab League fund for the Trucial States, the Amir of Kuwait was unwilling to go back on his word. The British proposition that Kuwait's existing aid programme for health and education in the Trucial States should in future be channelled through the Trucial States Development Fund was also declined by the Kuwaiti Government. The Kuwaitis preferred to continue this separate programme by giving their aid on a bilateral basis and maintaining their office in Dubai.[74]

The discussions with the Saudi Arabian Government were also difficult. Saudi Arabia had from the beginning been critical of the Arab League's development plans in the Persian Gulf, and while the Saudis were unwilling openly to oppose these plans, they tried to use their influence within the organization to discourage them. When the idea

of sending a delegation to the protected states came up in the summer of 1964, the Saudi ambassador to Kuwait had told the Ruler of Bahrain that Saudi Arabia was concerned about the destabilizing impact that the planned mission would have on the protected states.[75] The Saudi Arabian Government then agreed to cooperate with Britain by instructing the Saudi representative on Hassouna's delegation to use his influence to ensure that the mission's report on the development situation in the protected states was as favourable as possible.[76] At the Arab League summit meeting on 9 January 1965, the Saudi Arabian delegate had abstained over the resolution to set up the Trucial States Committee and the fund for development aid.[77] He also made it clear that Saudi Arabia would not contribute to the Arab League fund because it preferred to give development aid to the Trucial States on a bilateral basis.[78]

The Saudi Arabian Government repeatedly assured its British counterpart that the interests of Britain and Saudi Arabia in the matter of Arab League penetration of the Persian Gulf were identical. The Saudis were afraid of an extension of Egyptian influence in the Gulf because it would open the door to the spread of Communism in the area. Therefore, they were willing to cooperate with Britain in its attempts to keep the Arab League Office out of the Persian Gulf.[79] However, despite its critical position towards the Arab League's plans in the Trucial States, the Saudi Arabian Government made it clear to the British ambassador in Jeddah that it had to tread carefully, as it could not afford to take an openly negative attitude towards the Arab League's plans.[80] As a result of this position, Saudi Arabia was initially unwilling to make a donation to the Trucial States Development Fund. When Shaikh Rashid of Dubai, representing the Trucial States Council, approached the Saudi ambassador to Kuwait in March 1965 about a possible contribution to the Trucial States Development Fund, he was told that 'King Faisal could not openly flout the Arab League by giving an immediate donation to our fund, however much his sympathies were with us.'[81] In a conversation with the Political Resident on 8 March, the Saudi ambassador repeated this position, stressing that even though Saudi Arabia approved the steps that the Trucial States Council had so far taken to keep the Arab League out, he felt certain that the Trucial States Development Fund could be successful in persuading the rulers of the Trucial States to decline the Arab League's offer only if it was equipped with substantial financial means. The ambassador therefore suggested that Britain should increase its own aid for the Trucial States. Since Saudi Arabia was unable, for political reasons, to provide the necessary funds, and because Qatar, Abu Dhabi,

Bahrain, and Dubai were only able (or, in the case of Abu Dhabi, only willing) to make a limited contribution, a large British donation was the only effective solution to the problem.[82] Despite repeated British efforts to persuade Saudi Arabia to contribute to the Trucial States Development Fund, the Saudi position remained unchanged until the end of May 1965.

Notwithstanding these attempts to gain Arab contributors to the Trucial States Development Fund, it was believed in the Foreign Office that the key to the fund's political success lay in a large British contribution. Therefore, from January onwards, the Foreign Office tried to persuade the British Government to increase its own aid to the Trucial States. In his letter of 25 January 1965, the political resident stressed the necessity of such a move to counter the plans of the Arab League and to preserve the privileged political position which Britain enjoyed in the Persian Gulf:

> It makes no sense to me to spend tens of millions on our military deployment in the Middle East Command to maintain the stability of the Gulf area and at the same time to refuse a few hundreds of thousands to help in combating an insidious threat to the whole political position on which the military deployment is based.[83]

Luce and the other men on the spot in the Gulf believed that Britain would have to pay a significant sum into the fund to motivate other potential contributors, such as Saudi Arabia or Kuwait, to do the same.[84] They had little hope that the Ruler of Abu Dhabi would eventually pay enough to persuade the rulers of the poorer Trucial States to decline Arab League aid. As for Qatar, Bahrain, and Dubai, even though the Foreign Office welcomed their contributions for political reasons, it believed them to be too small to have an impact on the course of events. Luce therefore proposed to increase British development aid to the Trucial States by £1 million, which he regarded as the minimum sum to get the Trucial States Development Office working, and urged the British Government to declare its intention to dedicate this sum as soon as possible. It was important that the British offer was made before the rulers had received a concrete offer from the Arab League, which could be expected in May, when Dr Sayed Nofal, deputy secretary-general of the Arab League, was intending to visit the Trucial States. Luce wanted George Thomson, minister of state in the Foreign Office, to announce the British Government's plan to increase its own aid during his planned tour of the Persian Gulf in May 1965.[85]

The Foreign Office fully accepted Luce's case. So did the Ministry of Overseas Development, which had financial responsibility for Britain's aid for the Trucial States.[86] However, it proved to be difficult to obtain the required funds. The Treasury was reluctant to dedicate such a large sum to an area where Britain had just increased its aid a year earlier, in 1964.[87] Furthermore, the Treasury found it 'quite absurd to suggest an increase in aid to the Trucial States at a time when we are likely to have to reduce our total overseas aid and at a time when Abu Dhabi is beginning to receive oil revenue on a considerable scale'.[88] If money was needed to get the Trucial States Development Office working, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi was rich enough to provide it.[89] The Treasury was unimpressed by the political arguments of the Foreign Office, nor did the relevant officials regard the plan to prevent the opening of an Arab League office by providing money for the fund at all convincing. It was believed in the Treasury that if the Arab League was determined to open its own office and if it possessed the necessary resources, an increase in British aid would certainly not prevent it from doing so.[90] At the insistence of the Foreign Office, the Treasury tried to find a compromise, and a very small increase in Britain's annual aid for the Trucial States was offered.[91] However, its offer was rejected by Luce, who stressed that such a small contribution to the Trucial States Development Fund would make hardly any impression on the Trucial States rulers and would damage Britain's position in the Gulf:

> We should make ourselves look ridiculous and I would prefer saying outright that Her Majesty's Government are too poor to give any further assistance and leave it to the Gulf Rulers to work out their own salvation. Without a lead from us I have little doubt that they would fail and we cannot hope to lead them effectively with empty hands.[92]

The refusal by the Treasury to provide the funds requested delayed the implementation of the Foreign Office's plans and forced it to reintroduce the issue at ministerial level. As a result, no substantial British contribution to the Trucial States Development Fund was made before the deputy secretary-general of the Arab League had visited the Persian Gulf in early May 1965.

5.4 The situation in the Gulf deteriorates

Dr Sayed Nofal arrived in the Trucial States on the evening of 9 May 1965, having given only a few days' notice of his intended visit. In the

days before his arrival, Balfour Paul called on the rulers of the six northern Trucial States, trying to persuade them to stand their ground in the discussions with Nofal and to refuse to accept Arab League aid unless it was channelled through the Trucial States Development Fund. His attempts to dissuade the rulers from unconditionally accepting Arab League help were not helped by the fact that at the moment of Nofal's arrival, the account of the Trucial States Development Fund stood at only £330,000, since Saudi Arabia and Britain had both failed so far to make a contribution. On the other hand, Nofal claimed during his visit that the Arab League now had £900,000 at its disposal for the first year of expenditure in the Trucial States. These funds consisted of contributions of £250,000 each from Kuwait and Iraq, and £400,000 from the UAR.

Between 10 and 13 May the deputy secretary-general visited each of the six rulers individually, asking them to sign letters to Hassouna welcoming development aid from the Arab League. These letters made no reference at all to the resolution of 1 March by the Trucial States Council in which acceptance of foreign aid to the Trucial States had been made conditional on the money being channelled through the Trucial States Development Fund. Nofal presented each ruler with a separate 'Plan for Arab Technical Co-operation', which listed development projects that were designed to meet the particular needs of each shaikhdom and that the Arab League would finance,[93] and succeeded in obtaining the signatures of five of the six rulers in question. Only the Ruler of Dubai remained firm in his discussions with Nofal, refusing to permit the opening of an Arab League office on his territory, and repeatedly reminding the deputy secretary-general that his acceptance of Arab League aid depended on the money being paid into the Trucial States Development Fund. Shaikh Rashid of Dubai explained to Nofal that he had to act in accordance with his treaty relations with Britain. However, this argument did nothing to impress Nofal, who simply replied that treaties could be broken.[94] The content of the letters that were signed by the rulers of Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm al-Qaiwain was limited to welcoming development aid from the Arab League, without reference to the Trucial States Council's resolution of 1 March. The agreements between Nofal and the two Qawasim rulers, Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah and Shaikh Saqr of Ras-al Khaimah, went even further, since both invited the Arab League formally to open offices in their respective territories.[95] The Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah even offered a newly constructed building as a gift to the Arab League to accommodate its planned office.[96]

Nofal's visit coincided with the tour of the Persian Gulf by George Thomson, the British minister of state at the Foreign Office. Nofal arrived one day before Thomson and, having been informed of the

latter's imminent visit, immediately started to work on the rulers. When Thomson arrived in the Trucial States on 11 May, the five letters opening the doors to the Arab League development scheme had already been signed. He then spoke separately to the five rulers in question, reiterating the position of the British Government to them: while development aid for the Trucial States from any source was generally welcome, the opening of an Arab League office in the Trucial States was unacceptable because such an office would certainly be abused politically and become a centre for Arab nationalist subversion in the Persian Gulf. The rulers of Ajman, Fujairah and Umm al-Qaiwain accepted this position and assured the Minister of State that they had only signed their respective letters because Nofal had claimed that all of the other rulers had already done the same. Whether this was only an attempt to defend their actions in front of the British Government, or whether Nofal had indeed used this trick to obtain their signatures, remained unclear.

The minister of state also spoke to Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah, not knowing at the time that the latter had agreed to the opening of an Arab League office in his shaikhdom. Even though the ruler appeared embarrassed during the conversation with Thomson and did his best to remain non-committal, he did not confirm what he had just promised Nofal.[97] However, Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah did not even try to conceal his actions during the private discussion he had with Thomson on 12 May 1965. He confirmed that he had given his agreement to the opening of an Arab League office in Sharjah and was not impressed when the minister of state reminded him of the conversations which the political agent and the political resident had had with him in February about his position vis-à-vis the Arab League. Nor did the ruler regret having broken the Trucial States Council resolution of 1 March. According to him, the situation had changed completely since then because Shaikh Rashid of Dubai had accepted a loan of £2 million from King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Even though this was a private loan that had nothing to do with development projects but was given to Shaikh Rashid to pay off his personal debts, Shaikh Saqr maintained that by accepting this money, the Ruler of Dubai had broken the conditions of the Trucial States Council resolution. Therefore, Shaikh Saqr no longer felt obliged to abide by its terms. During his conversation with Thomson, Shaikh Saqr refused to accept the minister's accusation that his agreement with Nofal was a clear breach of Sharjah's treaty relations with Britain. Balfour Paul recorded the shaikh's uncompromising position:

> [...] he [Saqr] had little or nothing to thank the British Government for over the years; the Trucial Oman Scouts were of no value to him

> and were intended only to protect Britain's oil interest; he refused to accept that the development of the Trucial States (if foreign agencies were involved) affected the responsibilities of H.M.G.[…]; and he blandly rejected the Minister's strictures that, by allowing the Arab League to open an office on his soil against the repeated advice of the political resident and myself, he was in breach (as Mr. Thompson [sic] made emphatically clear) of his obligations under the Treaties.[98]

The minister of state concluded from what he had learnt during his tour of the Persian Gulf that the opening of an Arab League office was imminent, and that this posed a serious threat to Britain's position in the Persian Gulf region.[99] He agreed with Luce that at least Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah had clearly made his choice between allegiance to Britain and open cooperation with the UAR, to which he had shown strong sympathies for several years,[100] and that it seemed certain that an Arab League office would shortly start operating in Sharjah. Having talked to the rulers of all six northern Trucial States, Thomson despatched a telegram to London in which he warned:

> We are not faced simply with a rival aid programme which will lead to invidious comparisons with our own modest efforts, but with a determined attempt to undermine our whole position in the Trucial States, and to supplant it with the dominating influence of the U.A.R. and Iraq working through the League.[101]

Thomson stressed that all of the rulers of the Persian Gulf States now expected a strong reaction from Britain, and that a failure on the British side to display strength at such a critical time would drive them even further into the arms of the Arab League. According to the minister of state, the British Government had to start its counter-measures against the extension of the Arab League's influence by bringing itself into a position from which to compete with the league's aid programme.[102]

The minister of state's telegram resulted in a rethink of the Foreign Office's proposal to increase British development aid for the Trucial States by the immediate payment of £1 million into the Trucial States Development Fund. This plan – which had not been implemented before, due to Treasury resistance – was reconsidered on 26 May 1965 in a special meeting of the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee.[103] The session was called by the prime minister, Harold Wilson, as a result of the reports he had received from Thomson and from Luce about Nofal's visit

in the Gulf.[104] In view of the Treasury's continued opposition to the Foreign Office's proposal, Michael Stewart, the foreign secretary, prepared carefully for the meeting by circulating a memorandum among the committee members to provide them with the necessary information for discussion. In this memorandum, he stressed that the pending decision as to whether or not substantially to increase British aid for the Trucial States would have far-reaching consequences for Britain's future position in the Trucial States:

> This Arab League visit represents a watershed for us in our relations with the Trucial States. We can no longer exclude the forces of modern Arab nationalism from the area. If we wish to maintain our position we must compete with the Arab League and contain its activities.[105]

Stewart reminded his colleagues of the significant assets that the British Government had to protect in the Trucial States: the RAF airfield in Sharjah, which safeguarded the British supply route through Malaysia, and the oilfields of Abu Dhabi. He stressed that Britain could not hope to hold its special position in the Persian Gulf if it did not counter the Arab League's plans. If Britain failed to withstand the pressure coming from the Arab League and withdrew from the area, the consequences would be catastrophic: a situation of territorial disputes and armed conflict would arise in which not only the Gulf States but also the larger regional powers – Saudi Arabia, Iran, and Iraq – would become embroiled. Stewart warned that Iran in particular, as Britain's important CENTO ally, expected the British Government to show strength in this situation. If the shah was disappointed by Britain, there was a possibility that he would turn his back on CENTO and decide to make his peace with the Soviet Union instead. Therefore, the policy that Britain adopted during the conflict with the Arab League had important regional implications as well as considerable influence on the development of the Cold War.[106] While preparing for the committee meeting, the foreign secretary also did his best to ensure the support of Barbara Castle, the minister for overseas development, for the Foreign Office's position. In a personal letter on 21 May 1965, Stewart reminded the minister that in view of the negligible interest that Britain had so far shown in the development of the Trucial States, an increase in British aid was opportune, not only for political reasons. After 150 years of Britain's 'position for supremacy' in the area, the contribution to the Trucial States Development Fund proposed by the Foreign Office was long overdue.[107]

Stewart's endeavours to convince his colleagues were successful, and on 26 May the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee decided to authorize the political resident to offer the rulers of the Trucial States additional aid amounting to £1 million. It was agreed that the Arab League could not be allowed to intervene in the internal affairs of the Trucial States and open offices there, and that failure to prevent this would lead to the destruction of Britain's position of power and influence in the area, thereby limiting the British Government's ability to formulate a long-term policy for the Persian Gulf region that suited British interests. The increase in British aid funding was regarded as an appropriate 'holding operation' to prevent this scenario.[108] It was also decided by the committee that if the British policy of competing with the Arab League's offer proved unsuccessful, the British Government would have to resort to stronger measures to prevent the opening of the Arab League offices. Harold Wilson concluded:

> If the Rulers proved obdurate we should in the last resort have to enforce our decision to prevent the establishment of Arab League offices and the Foreign Secretary and the Secretary of State for Defence might consider further how this might be done.[109]

In the aftermath of the visits by Nofal and Thomson, the British agents in the Gulf tried to persuade the five rulers who had signed Nofal's letters to change their minds and to reject Arab League aid unless it was paid into the Trucial States Development Fund. Luce and his staff were supported in this enterprise by the rulers of the four bigger and richer Gulf States. The rulers of Qatar, Bahrain, and Abu Dhabi all sent their deputies to Dubai on 22 May in order to dissuade the five dissident rulers from cooperating with the league.

In the case of Sharjah, at least, the political resident was sceptical from the beginning about the outcome of these attempts. In a letter written to Frank Brenchley immediately after Thomson's departure, Luce stressed that the Foreign Office had to start thinking about ways of isolating Shaikh Saqr in the Trucial States and making his life as difficult as possible. The measures discussed by the political resident included closing down the Sharjah's RAF airfield to all civil traffic to prevent any Arab League personnel from entering Shaikh Saqr's territory, supporting Shaikh Saqr's enemies within his shaikhdom – including the Shaikh of Himraya and the Beni Qitab – in a rebellion against his authority, and cutting off the electricity supply to Shaikh Saqr's palace. Luce felt certain that 'if Saqr proves beyond doubt that he has decided to flout the Minister of State's warning to him on 12 May, we must be as beastly

as possible to him'.[110] The expectation that Shaikh Saqr would not alter his position towards the Arab League proved correct, since the Ruler of Sharjah refused even to receive the deputy rulers of Qatar, Bahrain, and Abu Dhabi. As a result, the political resident decided against any further meetings with Shaikh Saqr as he was convinced that the shaikh would not change his mind.[111]

The discussions with the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah proved equally difficult. Following Thomson's visit, Luce still had some hope that if sufficient political pressure was applied by the British, Shaikh Saqr might still be prevented from allowing the opening of an Arab League office on his territory. He believed that Shaikh Saqr could be brought back into line, provided that he could obtain enough funds for the development of his shaikhdom: 'The Ruler of Ras al Khaimah may sit on the fence until he sees which way things go. He is politically shaky but his main concern is to get on with development schemes.'[112] However, the weeks after Nofal's visit proved this assessment to be over-optimistic. On 26 May, in a conversation with Luce who had travelled to Dubai to talk to the five dissident rulers, Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah refused to withdraw from his agreement with Nofal. He did not see why giving his permission for the opening of an Arab League Office should affect his relations with the British Government.[113]

While the political resident and his staff had from the start considered their chances of changing the positions of the two Saqrs to be slim, they had been more confident about Umm al-Qaiwain, Ajman, and Fujairah. Luce was convinced that the rulers of these three shaikhdoms would be willing to stop cooperating with the Arab League if they were satisfied that they would receive sufficient funds for the development of their states from elsewhere.[114] In their attempts to convince the three rulers, Luce and Balfour-Paul were assisted by King Faisal of Saudi Arabia. Alarmed by Nofal's visit and by the consolidating of the Arab League's plans to open an office in the Trucial States, the king now changed his mind about a Saudi Arabian contribution to the Trucial States Development Fund and, on 20 May, he authorized the political agent in Dubai to inform the rulers of Ajman, Umm al-Qaiwain and Fujairah that he was willing to pay £1 million into the fund, provided that they, as well as Shaikh Rashid of Dubai, sent telegrams to the secretary-general of the Arab League demanding that its aid was channelled through the Trucial States Development Office.[115]

To convince the three rulers proved a lot harder than expected. Only Shaikh Muhammad of Fujairah could be prevailed upon to sign the requested telegram to the Arab League.[116] The rulers of Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain refused to do so, and none among Balfour-Paul, Luce, and

the deputy rulers of Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Bahrain managed to persuade them to change their minds.[117] In a conversation with Balfour-Paul on 20 May, the two rulers explained their position: they could not risk losing the money that the Arab League had promised them by making its acceptance subject to conditions. Nobody had so far helped them with the development of their states, and they were in no position to refuse the extensive development programme of the Arab League and the money they were being offered. They were unimpressed by the news that Balfour-Paul had brought them about the Saudi Arabian offer, since it had only been given to them second-hand. The rulers of Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain assured the political agent that the British Government had no reason to fear the Arab League development scheme for the Trucial States because they would guarantee to prevent the Arab League from interfering politically.[118] Both rulers made it clear during their conversations with Balfour-Paul on 20 May and then with Luce on 26 May that they were unwilling to act independently without the consent of the rulers of Sharjah and Ras al-Khaimah. The Ruler of Umm al-Qaiwain also expressed his fear that if he signed the telegram to the Arab League he would become a propaganda target for *Sawt al-'Arab* radio.[119]

In the days following Luce's visit to Dubai on 26 May, the British Government was faced with increasingly bad news concerning developments in the Trucial States. The rulers of Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Ajman, and Umm al-Quwain were reported to be meeting daily. On 30 May the British received information from Shaikh Rashid of Dubai that the four had agreed on a joint policy towards the British Government, which included ending of the treaty relations with Britain, asking the UAR to act as a protecting power for them, and accepting an offer by the Soviet Union – which was reportedly conveyed to them through UAR channels – to supply them with contraband arms.[120] While the political residency dismissed the last rumour as dubious, it considered the first two reports as entirely possible.[121] A few days later, on 6 June, the British were informed that the four rulers had agreed to apply very shortly for full membership in the Arab League.[122]

To make matters worse for the British Government, the pro-British position of the rulers of Dubai and Fujairah, who were faced with the growing resistance of the four other rulers, began to waver. The Foreign Office was informed on 6 June that, following an all-night session with the four dissident rulers, the Ruler of Fujairah had written to the Arab League to inform Hassouna that he had only despatched his previous telegram about his insistence on the Trucial States Council resolution of 1 March under duress from the British political residency.[123]

Shaikh Rashid of Dubai, who had previously agreed to despatch a telegram to the Arab League reminding them of the Trucial States Council resolution, also changed his mind, having been informed about the resistance to this step on the part of the rulers of Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain. Afraid of isolating himself among the other rulers and provoking Egyptian propaganda attacks against his rule, he explained his dilemma to Luce: 'He [Rashid] said his attitude had already been made quite clear in previous letters and he saw no point in sticking his neck out further.'[124]

Having failed to persuade the dissident rulers to send telegrams to the Arab League, the British Government now saw that its last chance to turn the situation around was in the Trucial States Council meeting that Balfour-Paul had scheduled for 9 June. In preparation for this meeting, the British Government concentrated on obtaining from King Faisal of Saudi Arabia a payment of £1 million into the Trucial States Development Fund. Even though it had become clear by 26 May that at least four of the rulers refused to fulfil the Saudi condition for a contribution by sending telegrams to the Arab League, the British Government continued to press the king to donate a large sum. It was hoped that, together with the British contribution of £1 million that the Defence and Oversea Committee had agreed to on 26 May, a large Saudi contribution to the Trucial States Development Fund would convince the rulers that they now had sufficient funds at their disposal to ignore the promises made by the Arab League. This strategy might not suffice to recover the two Saqrs, although the rulers of Ajman, Fujairah, and Umm al-Quwain might be persuaded. The intended result was the isolation of the shaikhs of Ras al-Khaimah and Sharjah in the Trucial States Council.[125] The British ambassador in Jeddah was therefore instructed

> to let King Faisal know that Her Majesty's Government are ready to stand firm against the establishment of an Arab League Office in the Trucial States provided that the Saudi Arabian Government contribute £1 million to the Trucial States Development Fund at an early date.[126]

It took the British Government two weeks and a lot of persuasion to convince King Faisal to make an unconditional contribution to the Trucial States Development Fund. The king was reluctant to act while at least four of the seven Trucial rulers were lined up against Britain and in favour of an Arab League presence in the Gulf. The British Embassy in Jeddah described the difficulty of Faisal's situation:

> Saudi hesitation to act is, therefore, understandable for they are reluctant to appear in the rôle of partners in what our enemies will be quick to brand as an imperialist conspiracy mounted by Britain and some of her Gulf clients, to perpetuate British rule in area and oppose 'Arab nationalism'.[127]

Faced with continued British pressure, King Faisal finally agreed on 8 June that the Trucial Rulers should be informed of an unconditional Saudi Arabian offer to pay £1 million into the Trucial States Development Fund.[128]

However, the announcement of this offer, made by Balfour-Paul on the following day at the Trucial States Council meeting in Dubai, did not have the desired effect. In consultation with the political residency, the political agent had prepared an extensive list of development projects for the rulers to agree upon, now that they had been promised so much money from Saudi Arabia and from the British Government. At the meeting, Balfour-Paul also took the opportunity to introduce an Arab candidate for the job of director of the Trucial States Development Office; this was the Lebanese Hazem al-Khalidi.[129] During the weeks leading up to the meeting, the political residency in Bahrain had done its best to find a suitable candidate who would be agreeable to both the rulers and the British Government. However, despite these extensive preparations, the meeting of the Trucial States Council turned out to be anything but a success from the British perspective. Balfour-Paul reported that even though all seven rulers attended the meeting, only Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah and Shaikh Saqr of Ras-al Khaimah spoke up. They showed themselves unimpressed by the Saudi Arabian and British offers and repeated that they would never agree to break their agreement with Nofal. They also announced that if the British Government forcibly prevented the opening of Arab League offices in the Trucial States, they would deprive the area of £7.5 million of development aid. How this sum could enter the discussion when Nofal had only offered the Trucial rulers £900,000 during his visit in May was not explained. In addition, the dissident rulers opposed the appointment of al-Khalidi as director of the Trucial States Development Office, insisting that the post could only be occupied by a local. As for Balfour-Paul's list of development projects, the two Saqrs insisted that the Trucial States Development Office should not go ahead with any projects that were already included in the 'Plans for Technical Co-operation' that Nofal had presented to the rulers in May. In the end, the political agent adjourned the meeting without any firm decisions having been reached.

A few days later, the dissident rulers, now joined by Shaikh Muhammad bin Hamad of Fujairah, sent Balfour-Paul a reply to the questions that he had raised during the meeting:

> In brief they reject in toto [emphasis in the original] the Development Office as now constituted or envisaged, since they consider it controlled by me and not by the Council. They say it should be reconstituted either
>
> (a) As British Development Office working separately from them but receiving (of course) their cooperation, or
>
> (b) As their own affair with a local director of their own choosing, administering funds with no interference from me.[130]

Balfour-Paul concluded that his position vis-à-vis the Trucial States rulers had now been brought close to 'breaking point'.[131] Every British attempt to dissuade the rulers from cooperating with the Arab League had been unsuccessful. The whole complicated, indirect British strategy of creating the Trucial States Development Office and buying the rulers' loyalty with British and Saudi Arabian money had not paid off.

Given the reluctance of the five dissident rulers to break their agreements with Nofal, the only way left open to the British Government to prevent the establishment of an Arab League office was to prevent any Arab League personnel from physically entering the Trucial States. On 24 May, the Foreign Office warned the political resident that an Arab League delegation might travel to Sharjah in the very near future with the object of establishing an office there. Luce was instructed to prevent this by taking 'administrative action' to interfere with their travel arrangements, which meant that the political resident could use Britain's control of immigration and air traffic in the Gulf to prevent any Arab League personnel from arriving in the Trucial States.[132]

It was a long-established practice that, by virtue of its responsibility for the external affairs of the protected states, the British Government controlled the issue of visas for the nine shaikhdoms.[133] This gave the British Government considerable power over immigration since the only individuals permitted to enter the Trucial States, Bahrain, or Qatar without a visa were citizens of Britain, Yemen, Kuwait and the nine protected states.[134] Faced with the possible imminent arrival of an Arab League delegation in the Trucial States, the Foreign Office instructed the political resident to use this power. On 25 May, Luce duly despatched a telegram to several British embassies in the Middle East, asking them not to issue

any visas for the Trucial States to 'northern area Arabs (i.e. Egyptians, Syrians, Iraqis, Lebanese, and Jordanians)' without prior reference to him.[135] Convinced that any citizen of a northern Arab state travelling to the Trucial States could turn out to be employed by the Arab League and planning to open an office for the organization in Sharjah, Luce was determined not to let in anybody unscrutinized. The plan was immediately to turn back anybody who arrived in the Trucial States without a valid visa.

The advantage of this policy of administrative action was that it enabled the British to hide their determination to counter the Arab League's plans behind their responsibility for the external relations of the protected states. The Foreign Office still hoped, while avoiding a direct confrontation with the Arab League, to exclude it from the Trucial States. The political resident was therefore instructed to draw as little attention as possible to the fact that Britain was ready to prevent the arrival of Arab League officials in the Trucial States:

> You should not therefore take any action to make this known publicly until persons concerned either arrive without visas in the Trucial States, in which case they should be turned back, or apply for visas, in which case they should be refused.[136]

The problem with this policy of administrative action was that in the long term it was not fail-proof. Luce warned the Foreign Office that the agreed strategy presented him and the political agent in Dubai with serious practical difficulties because its effectiveness depended on the immigration control officials at the airports of Dubai and Sharjah. The problem at Sharjah airport was that the immigration officer, who was employed by the ruler, would let in anybody whom Shaikh Saqr wished to enter his shaikhdom, regardless of whether or not the person concerned had a visa. At Dubai, Shaikh Rashid had instructed his police to turn back anybody without a visa; however, the passenger-handling arrangements at Dubai airport remained rudimentary as there were only two immigration officers. The political resident warned that in the normal muddle after the landing of a large aeroplane it would be all too easy for a visa-less passenger to slip out of the airport undetected.[137]

The best solution to this problem would have been to prohibit visa-less passengers from boarding any flights heading to the Trucial States. However, this was a virtually impossible exercise. The political resident had been assured by the airline, Gulf Aviation, that they would

do their best to ensure that all their passengers carried the required documents for entry to the Trucial States. However, the Foreign Office realized that the airline personnel would be in a very difficult situation if they detected an Arab League official and refused to let him board the aircraft. It was doubtful whether they could cope with the pressure if a passenger insisted that a certain ruler wanted him to visit his state and thus that he did not need a visa.[138] The British officials in the Gulf tried therefore to enlist the support of the rulers of Qatar and Bahrain to prevent Arab League personnel from travelling to the Trucial States. The rulers were asked to check all of the transit passengers passing through Bahrain and Doha and – in case someone did not have a visa – to remove the person concerned from the aeroplane going to Dubai or Sharjah. However, the rulers of Qatar and Bahrain refused to cooperate in this matter. Even though they had assured Luce more than once that they feared the opening of an Arab League office as much as he did, they were not willing to 'stick their necks out' and expose themselves to direct attack from the Arab League by arresting its officials.[139]

The insecurity of the immigration control system at the airports in Dubai and Sharjah resulted in another problem for the men on the spot in the Persian Gulf. What were they to do in case an Arab League officer slipped through Britain's 'administrative cordon', and managed to enter and install himself in the Trucial States?[140] This problem was discussed intensively between the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence, the two ministries which had been instructed by the Defence and Oversea Committee on 26 May to think of ways of enforcing the British decision not to permit the opening of Arab League offices in the Trucial States. At the centre of the debate was the question of whether the staff of the political residency should be authorized to arrest and expel Arab League officials from the Trucial States. The expulsion would have to be carried out by the Trucial Oman Scouts, who were under the control and direction of the political resident. Operationally, it seemed uncomplicated to arrest the persons concerned and to escort them to the airports in Sharjah or Dubai.[141] Balfour-Paul and Luce were strongly in favour of this practice. They warned the Foreign Office repeatedly that administrative action was unlikely to keep Arab League personnel out of the Trucial States forever, and that they would need the Trucial Oman Scouts to expel the officials once they had entered.

However, the Foreign Office and the Ministry of Defence were reluctant to permit the use of the Trucial Oman Scouts. They were

hesitant about giving the required authority to Luce because the legal implications were unclear:

> The basic difficulty is that although our responsibility for external affairs gives us a clear right vis-à-vis a particular Ruler to insist that Arab League Officials should be deported, it is not so clear that as against the individuals concerned we would have, in the absence of legislation, a right of arrest and jurisdiction. The rights of the Trucial Oman Scouts have never been defined and one cannot say how far they extend.[142]

The main problem was that the British Government's extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Persian Gulf extended only to non-Muslims residing in the protected states, which meant that it had no jurisdiction over Arab League officials, who were likely to be Muslims.[143] The British authorities were only entitled to ask a ruler for these persons to be expelled. However, if the ruler refused, the political resident and his staff had no legal authority to act in his place. Another problem was that from a legalistic point of view, the involvement of the Trucial Oman Scouts could be regarded as a use of troops to enforce Britain's treaty rights in the Trucial States, which 'in the international sphere, [was] regarded as unlawful'.[144]

The British Government felt uncertain about leaving the realms of legality with its actions in the Trucial States because, internationally, the arrest and expulsion of Arab League officials was unlikely to go unnoticed.[145] The British Embassy in Cairo warned the Foreign Office that the probable consequences were an increase in anti-British propaganda in the Egyptian press and radio, a stepping-up of Nasser's support for the violence in South Arabia, and, worst of all, an attempt by the UAR to bring the conflict over the Arab League office in the Trucial States to the attention of the UN Committee of 24.[146] The British Government was particularly alarmed about the last possibility because for years its policy had been to prevent the Persian Gulf from being discussed at the UN. If the Committee of 24 considered the question of the Arab League offices, it was likely that the next step would be an examination and discussion of Britain's special political and military position in the entire Persian Gulf area. Faced with this possibility, the British Government was very reluctant to authorize any action which could not be defensible in the British House of Commons or at the UN.[147]

After lengthy discussions, the political resident was only authorized to make use of the Trucial Oman Scouts in situations where the Arab

League personnel could be removed speedily and discreetly without causing a major disturbance. However, in cases where use of the Trucial Oman Scouts was likely to be noticed by many people and risked provoking a strong public reaction (for example, if there was a large reception committee present to greet the Arab League delegates), the political resident should refrain from taking this measure. In such a situation the Trucial Oman Scouts should stand aside, and the Arab League mission should be allowed to enter the Trucial States.[148] This half-hearted permission was immediately rejected as impracticable by Balfour-Paul, who stressed that a large reception committee and other major disturbances were inevitable in the event of the arrival of an Arab League delegation. Balfour-Paul regarded the limited authority given to the political residency for the use of the Trucial Oman Scouts as equal to going back on the repeated statements made by Luce and himself to the local rulers that Britain would not permit the opening of Arab League offices in the Trucial States. According to the political agent, such a display of British weakness was equal to 'surrender' and would immediately cause the Ruler of Dubai to end his resistance to the advances of the Arab League.[149] Balfour-Paul's position was supported by the political residency in Bahrain, which reminded the Foreign Office that Britain's allies in the area, namely Iran, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, and Qatar, now expected the British Government to show strength and to exclude the Arab League from the Trucial States. In a telegram despatched from Bahrain on 13 June it was stressed that the time for complicated manoeuvre and indirect action had passed. The British Government could no longer hope to safeguard its interests in the Persian Gulf if it refused to make a direct stand in its dealings with the Arab League:

> We have so far hoped to avoid, by various manoeuvres, a clash with the League and yet to achieve our aim of keeping the League out of the Trucial States. This no longer appears possible [...]. The handling of the arrival of the Arab League will be our first confrontation and it seems crucial to our standing in this area.[150]

Faced with the complaints of the officials on the ground that, as a result of their unworkable instructions limiting the use of the Trucial Oman Scouts, they had no choice but to let an Arab League delegation enter if it arrived in the Trucial States, the British Government decided on a new policy designed to avoid such a situation. On 16 June the airports at Abu Dhabi, Dubai, and Sharjah were closed down for all traffic until further notice, officially because of 'repair works'.[151] The real reason was that the

political residency had received several new reports that Arab League personnel would definitely arrive in the Trucial States in the next few days, possibly avoiding all Gulf Aviation flights and travelling instead by charter plane.[152] The airport at Sharjah remained closed for the next two weeks, while the airports at Abu Dhabi and Dubai were re-opened a few days later. In the case of Abu Dhabi, Luce had been convinced that the risk of Arab League personnel flying there and proceeding by road to Sharjah was remote.[153] As for Dubai, the airfield was only opened for Gulf Aviation flights transiting Bahrain, and every aircraft landing in Dubai had to have received prior clearance from Balfour-Paul, who only gave permission to land after he had been assured in each case by the political agency in Bahrain, by telephone, that there were no passengers without visas on the relevant aircraft.[154]

Notwithstanding all of its various attempts and strategies for preventing Arab League personnel from entering the Trucial States, the British Government was eventually faced with a scenario in which none of its measures was likely to be watertight. On 22 June, Luce reported to London that Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah was preparing to provide representatives of the Arab League with Sharjah passports. As a result, the latter would not need visas and could therefore evade immigration control and travel undetected to the Trucial States. The Arab League party in question was expected to arrive in the Trucial States on 25 June.[155]

5.5 The deposing of Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah

The report of 22 June about Shaikh Saqr's plan to issue Sharjah visas to Arab League personnel is the last available source about the events in the Trucial States. All the records for 23 June and the morning of 24 June are still withheld in the British National Archives. The next open source is a guidance telegram despatched by the Foreign Office on the afternoon of 24 June to all British diplomatic missions in Europe, the Middle East and the USA, informing them that '[o]n 24 June, Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah was deposed by the leading members of his family on grounds of his neglect of his subjects, misgovernment of the State, extravagance and his dissolute way of life'.[156] A letter signed by the leading members of the Qawasim family expressing their wish to depose Shaikh Saqr as ruler had been presented to the deputy political resident at the political agency in Dubai on the evening of 23 June.[157] In order to carry out the wishes of the ruling family by replacing Shaikh Saqr with Shaikh Khalid, the deputy political resident had summoned Shaikh Saqr to the agency on the following morning (24 June) and had informed him about the

situation. He had also told Shaikh Saqr that the new ruler, Shaikh Khalid, wished him to leave the country immediately. The deputy political resident had then escorted Shaikh Saqr to the airport, from where he was flown to Bahrain on an RAF plane.

The guidance telegram of 24 June warned that these events would certainly result in anti-British propaganda claiming that the ousting of Shaikh Saqr had been engineered by the British Government to prevent the Ruler of Sharjah from accepting Arab League aid. The British missions were given clear instructions on how to counter these allegations: 'You should take the line that this is a straight-forward case of the deposition of an unpopular ruler by family consensus, a traditional procedure for which there have been many precedents in the history of the Arab world.'[158] In short, the official line was that the replacement of Shaikh Saqr by Khalid had been entirely the doing of the Qawasim family. The role of the British Government had been restricted to informing Shaikh Saqr of his family's decision and offering an RAF plane to take the deposed ruler out of the country.

Given the events in the days and months preceding Shaikh Saqr's deposition, this official description of his ousting is extremely unconvincing. Since so many records, especially those dating from the two days before and during the overthrow, remain classified in the National Archives, it is very difficult to assess the actual role of the British Government. However, although the exact course of events from the afternoon of 22 June to the morning of 24 June will continue to remain unclear, the available records strongly suggest that the British Government had a much bigger hand in developments than it let on. On 24 July, Balfour-Paul sent a formal despatch to Luce, reporting the events in the Trucial States leading to Shaikh Saqr's deposition. In this document he recalled that on 22 June the British defence secretary, Denis Healey, had 'considered the attitude which H.M.G. should take towards any movement of the members of the Qasimi family to replace Shaikh Saqr bin Sultan on the grounds of his misrule and of his personal misconduct'.[159] According to Balfour-Paul, the political agency in Dubai had, during the two preceding weeks, heard of three different conspiracies concerning plans to remove Shaikh Saqr. Healey then decided on 22 June that if the ruling family of Sharjah wanted to depose the ruler, the British Government should take no steps to oppose this.[160] The political agent's despatch leaves many questions unanswered. Where did the political agency learn about the different conspiracies against the Ruler of Sharjah? Did the British Government encourage these conspiracies? Were there any discussions with Shaikh Khalid or other members of the Qawasim

family before the evening of 23 June? However, despite these omissions, Balfour-Paul's report does prove that the official account of the ousting being entirely a family affair was not true. His description of the consideration given in London to the question of how to react in the event of the ruling family of Sharjah deciding to oust Shaikh Saqr implies that the British Government had the choice of whether or not to support the Qawasim family over the deposition. It follows that the choice made by the British defence secretary on 22 June definitely influenced the course of events. British involvement was therefore not restricted to simply granting the ruling family of Sharjah their traditional right to replace an unsuitable ruler.

According to Balfour-Paul's report, the British role in the deposition of Shaikh Saqr was essentially a passive one: the political agency heard rumours of conspiracies against the ruler; the British Government resolved beforehand not to oppose an attempt by the ruling family to get rid of him; and when faced on 23 June with a specific plan by the Qawasim to replace Shaikh Saqr, the British Government – in line with its previous decision – respected the family's choice.[161] However, the available records make it seem very unlikely that the British involvement in Shaikh Saqr's deposition was restricted to such a passive role. The possibility of solving Britain's problems with the Arab League by deposing Shaikh Saqr was discussed in the Foreign Office for months before the ruler was replaced by Shaikh Khalid on 24 June. Luce in particular was in favour of this solution. In a letter to Stewart Crawford of 8 February, he had warned that Shaikh Saqr was, and would remain, the weakest point in the British front in the Persian Gulf and that he might one day allow an Arab League delegation to enter his territory and establish an office there. In this case the political resident proposed:

> [...] we should then let Shaikh Rashid of Dubai know privately that we were withdrawing our recognition from Saqr and that he (Rashid) was free to take what action he thought fit in the interests of the security of the Trucial States. This would in fact be the tip-off to him to take over Sharjah with our blessing which I have little doubt he would be ready to do. We have quite a lot of evidence that important elements in Sharjah would welcome this and I would not expect any real difficulty in the process.[162]

The advantage of this course of action, argued Luce, would be its 'salutary effect on any other possible back-sliders' since it would bring the other rulers who supported the plans of the Arab League back into

line.[163] Even though the scenario Luce had discussed remained theoretical, and although Shaikh Saqr was eventually ousted by his family and not by the Ruler of Dubai, the political resident's letter to Crawford proved his readiness to urge the British Government to interfere with the internal affairs of the Trucial States, and if necessary to support the removal of a local ruler.

Luce's view on this matter was shared by George Thomson, the minister of state in the Foreign Office. During Thomson's visit to the Persian Gulf in May 1965, he had discussed with Luce the danger that Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah posed to the British strategy against the Arab League. Thomson concluded from the political resident's reports about Shaikh Saqr's behaviour 'that the alternatives must be the withdrawal of our protection or to stimulate some sort of revolution'.[164] Luce on the other hand had suggested that the British 'ought to try to frighten Shaikh Saqr first', by reminding him of the Trucial States Council resolution he had supported and Britain's responsibility for Sharjah's foreign relations. If these measures failed, suggested Luce, the British should consult with Shaikh Rashid of Dubai about the replacement of Shaikh Saqr by another member of the Qawasim family.[165] In view of the events during the weeks following the meeting of Thomson and Luce in Bahrain on 9 May, the record of their conversation is most illuminating. This chapter has shown how the first of Luce's suggestions was carried out after this discussion when Thomson, and after him the political resident, did indeed try to pressurize Shaikh Saqr to end his cooperation with the Arab League. Both of them failed and in the weeks leading up to 24 June it became evident that sooner or later the Arab League would establish an office in Sharjah.

Convinced that Shaikh Saqr would not change his mind and suspecting that Britain could not hope to prevent Arab League officials from travelling to the Trucial States forever, both Luce and Balfour-Paul urged the British Government to restore the situation by deposing Shaikh Saqr.[166] Complaining about the insufficient authority given to him for using the Trucial Oman Scouts, Balfour-Paul informed the Foreign Office on 13 June that 'our friends here still think we could and should take direct and immediate action against dissident Rulers by arrest and removal'.[167] The political resident agreed with Balfour-Paul that the rulers of Qatar, Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai all expected the British Government to show strength in its dealings with Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah and Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah, whom he described as 'a couple of insignificant, self-seeking Sheikhs'.[168] In a very explicit telegram despatched on 21 June, Luce warned that the conflict with the

Arab League had developed into a test for Britain's reputation and prestige in the Persian Gulf. If the British Government wanted to pass this test and regain the confidence of its allies, the Arab League had to be prevented from establishing an office in Sharjah. Since it was impossible to keep Arab League personnel out of the Trucial States for much longer, the only option left for the British Government was to depose Shaikh Saqr as soon as possible:

> For years our position in the Gulf has been based on prestige and belief in our power and will to maintain our predominance. If this is proved after all to be a mere bubble by unwillingness or inability to restore the present situation we shall have nothing left with which to influence the future course of events. [...] The key to the problem is the removal of Saqr of Sharjah and if we are going to act at all to bring this about we must act within the next seven days at most.[169]

Three days after Luce sent this telegram to London, Shaikh Saqr left the Trucial States on an RAF plane. As the relevant documents remain classified in the National Archives, it is impossible to reconstruct the precise course of events on 23 and 24 June, and the actual involvement of the British in the overthrow, as well as the internal discussions within the Qawasim family, so the precise form of the cooperation between the ruling family of Sharjah and the political agency, remain unclear. So does the role of Shaikh Rashid of Dubai in the deposition process, if he ever had one. However, the timing of the events, and the fact that the political resident, supported by the minister of state, Thomson, had been advocating the overthrow of Shaikh Saqr for months, both strongly suggest that the British Government was working actively towards the deposition of the Ruler of Sharjah. There is one more source available in the National Archives to support this conclusion. A fortnight after Shaikh Saqr's removal, George Thomson sent a personal letter to Luce:

> I am sorry not to have written before. I was out of the country when the news of Saqr's departure from Sharjah came through. I would like to convey my warmest congratulations to you and Balfour-Paul and everyone else concerned for the way you have handled this. I know how great your anxieties and difficulties have been and you have every reason to feel satisfied with the degree of success you have had.
>
> We now have a good chance to push ahead with constructive developments in the Gulf, and to seek Saudi cooperation. I hope the 'oil'

> rulers have had a big enough fright from recent events to make them willing to keep their poor brethren on a fixed percentage basis – and to keep themselves by taking your advice on modernization etc.[170]

Although Thomson's formulations are vague, his letter to the political resident is highly illuminating, especially in the context of his discussion with Luce in Bahrain on 9 May, when the minister of state suggested solving the problems with Shaikh Saqr by stimulating a revolution in Sharjah. By regarding the replacement of the ruler by Shaikh Khalid as a personal success of the political resident and his staff, and by making no mention at all of the role of the Qawasim family, the minister of state implied in this letter that the deposition of Shaikh Saqr had been a British affair.

5.6 The consequences of replacing Shaikh Saqr

While the precise manner in which the British Government influenced the events leading up to the deposition of Shaikh Saqr will remain unclear as long as the relevant records remain closed in the National Archives, it can be stated with certainty that the replacement of the Ruler of Sharjah was equal to the solving of Britain's problems with the Arab League in the Trucial States. The new Ruler of Sharjah, Shaikh Khalid, managed to install himself on 24 June in the palace at Sharjah without a gun being fired. The only resistance he met came from Shaikh Abdullah, the brother of Shaikh Saqr, and Shaikh Khalid, the son of the Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, who happened to be in Sharjah at the time of the deposition. Both shut themselves in the palace with a number of armed guards but were prevailed upon by other members of the Qawasim family to emerge peacefully, and Shaikh Khalid subsequently returned to Ras al-Khaimah. As for the rulers of the other six Trucial States, no public protest against the replacement of Shaikh Saqr was forthcoming from any of them, apart from Shaikh Saqr of Ras-al Khaimah, who sent a message to the political residency stating that he would never cooperate with the British Government again until the deposed Ruler of Sharjah had returned to his shaikhdom.[171]

The British Government did not waste any time after the news of Shaikh Saqr's departure from the Trucial States had come through: their professed aim was to 'to build as speedily as possible on what has been achieved' – another statement hinting that the deposition of the Ruler of Sharjah had been the result of a British initiative.[172] In the days following Shaikh Saqr's replacement, the political resident and his staff

concentrated on bringing the other four rulers, who had welcomed the opening of an Arab League office, back into line. Luce's first visit was to the rulers of Umm al-Qaiwain and Ajman, who immediately agreed to come back into full agreement and cooperation with the British Government. They both sent telegrams to the secretary-general of the Arab League, welcoming aid from the organization but insisting that it had to be channelled through the Trucial States Development Fund. Luce then had a similar discussion with the new Ruler of Sharjah, who agreed to do the same.[173]

As for Fujairah, the political resident saw no need to pay the ruler a visit, due to the fact that Shaikh Muhammad had already changed his position regarding the opening of an Arab League office in the Trucial States, two days before Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah was deposed. He had called on Balfour Paul in Dubai on 22 June to reaffirm his solidarity with the British Government, claiming that his change of heart had been brought about by the success of the British in preventing Arab League personnel from entering the Trucial States.[174] He had also offered to spy on the other four dissident rulers and to report the content of their meetings to the political agent. In view of these assurances, Luce felt certain that Shaikh Muhammad would abstain from cooperating with the Arab League in the future.[175]

The most difficult encounter for Luce was his discussion with Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah. On 26 June the political resident called on the ruler, informing him that the British Government was willing to continue its longstanding friendship with him as before, provided that he would cooperate over the question of preventing Arab League offices in the Trucial States and immediately send a telegram to that effect to Hassouna. According to Luce's report of this visit, Shaikh Saqr did not repeat his protest against the replacement of the Ruler of Sharjah but instead complained that the Arab League would certainly withdraw its offer of assistance if forced to pay its contribution into the Trucial States Development Fund. This would leave him in a very difficult financial position, since he had already invested a lot of money in water, electricity, and telephone schemes in Ras al-Khaimah. The political resident responded by offering Shaikh Saqr an additional incentive to re-establish his allegiance to Britain, promising that the Trucial States Development Scheme would reimburse the ruler for the debts that he had already incurred to pay for development projects in his shaikhdom. Shaikh Saqr consented and sent off the requested telegram on 27 June. Luce therefore concluded from the meeting that Shaikh Saqr was now 'certainly a frightened man' who, despite his previous obliging behaviour towards

the Arab League, was likely to cooperate with the British Government in the future.[176] The remarkable speed with which the British Government managed to regain the allegiance of all the formerly dissident rulers following Shaikh Saqr's departure indicates that the rulers were alarmed by his removal and insecure about their own futures if they continued to cooperate with the Arab League.[177]

The effectiveness of the re-established cooperation between the Trucial States rulers and the British Government was tested almost immediately, when Shaikh Rashid of Dubai received a telegram on 26 June from a delegation of Arab League technicians, announcing their intended arrival in Dubai on 27 June. The three technicians – an Egyptian, an Iraqi, and a Kuwaiti citizen – had attempted to fly to Dubai, transiting via Doha, on 24 June, but, as a result of the British precautions at Dubai airport, their flight had not received the necessary clearance from Balfour-Paul to proceed from Doha to Dubai. Having attempted unsuccessfully to charter another aircraft in Doha, the delegations had instead flown to Bahrain, where the Egyptian and the Iraqi technicians were denied entry because they lacked visas. All three technicians had then returned to Kuwait and sent their telegram to Shaikh Rashid. However, Shaikh Rashid responded that it would not be appropriate for them to come to the Trucial States at all, since all the rulers were now in agreement that the execution of development projects should be carried out by their own development office. After that the technicians made no further attempt to enter the Trucial States.[178]

Having succeeded in persuading the rulers to insist on the Trucial States Council resolution of 1 March and to reject the opening of an Arab League office on their territories, the British Government now decided to abandon its policy of indirect communication with the Arab League and for the first time to broach the subject directly with the organization. The British embassies in the countries which had promised to contribute to the Arab League Fund – that is, Egypt, Iraq, and Kuwait – were therefore instructed to inform the local governments and, in the case of the embassy in Cairo, the secretariat of the Arab League about Britain's position. The official line was that the British Government, after seeing press reports about the establishment of an Arab League fund for the development of the Trucial States and having been informed about visits to the Trucial States by an Arab League delegation, had, as the authority responsible for the external affairs of the protected states, expected to be formally approached by the Arab League on this subject. Since the Arab League had abstained from consulting the British Government about its plans for the Trucial States,

the British Government now wished to make its position clear once and for all.

The British Government had no objections at all to contributions from the Arab League to the development of the Trucial States. However, in view of the rulers' decision of 1 March that development aid should be coordinated and administered in accordance with an overall plan covering all six of the states concerned, the British Government had to insist that aid from the Arab League was paid into the Trucial States Development Fund. The latter was not a British invention but had been set up by the rulers and was responsible to the Trucial States Council. The intention of the Arab League to give aid to individual Trucial States through bilateral programmes with administering offices in each state had to be discouraged because it would make coordination difficult and result in exacerbating the jealousies and divisions between the various shaikhdoms.[179] The British ambassadors in Cairo, Kuwait, and Baghdad were instructed to communicate this position before the coming meeting of the Arab League's Gulf Committee on 1 July.

The Arab League reacted to this statement as the British Government had expected. On 5 July, Hassouna called on the British ambassador in Cairo, informing him of the decisions that had been reached during the latest meeting of the league's Gulf Committee. The Arab League could not agree to having its contributions to Trucial State development channelled through the Trucial States Development Office. It deplored the deposition of Shaikh Saqr and hoped that an understanding could still be reached between him and the British Government. The Arab League also resented the fact that Arabs, including officials of the league, needed visas from British authorities to visit the Gulf States. Hassouna refused to accept the British position that the Arab League ought to have consulted the British Government about its plans because Britain was the protecting power of the Trucial States and was responsible for their external affairs. He argued that if the Arab League tried to raise the cultural and physical standards of 'brother Arabs', it had no reason for any prior consultation with a third power.[180] The British ambassador concluded from his meeting with Hassouna that even though the Arab League would certainly not drop its plans for the Persian Gulf in the long term, it would abstain for the time being from any further attempts to open an office in the Trucial States.[181]

Having averted the immediate danger of an Arab League office being opened in Sharjah, the British Government now wanted the Trucial

States Development Office to begin its work as soon as possible on some solid projects.[182] Its representatives on the ground believed that it was necessary to put the money that was now available in the Trucial States Development Fund to immediate use, to avoid accusations that Britain was perpetuating the underdevelopment of the poorer Trucial States by depriving them of essential aid. They also feared that failure to improve development levels in the Trucial States would result, in the long term, in renewed flirtations by the rulers with the Arab League and another opportunity for the league to open an office in the area.[183] A meeting of the Trucial States Council was therefore convened by Balfour-Paul in Dubai on 30 June, and was attended by every ruler except Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi, who sent his brother and deputy, Shaikh Zayed, instead, and Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah, who pleaded illness and was represented by his son.[184] Balfour-Paul reported afterwards to Luce that the atmosphere of the session could not have been more different from that of the previous Trucial States Council meeting on 9 June.

This time the rulers were ready for a constructive discussion, and decisions were reached on several important issues. Discussion centred on the way in which the resources at the disposal of the rulers (now amounting to nearly £2.5 million following the large contributions made by Britain and Saudi Arabia) should be spent, and the political agent distributed a list of suitable development projects. It was effectively the same list that he had circulated on 9 June, extended only by the projects in Ras al-Khaimah for which Luce had promised reimbursement to Shaikh Saqr. This time, none of the rulers refused to consider Balfour-Paul's list, and, following a lengthy yet constructive discussion, 15 projects were singled out for initial implementation.[185] It also became apparent during the meeting that the only subject on which the rulers' opinion differed from that of the British Government was the question of the appointment of an Arab director for the Trucial States Development Office. Balfour-Paul reintroduced the Lebanese Hazem al-Khalidi as a qualified candidate, but the rulers disagreed, maintaining that a northern Arab was unsuitable for the job and that a citizen of the Trucial States or at least of one of the Gulf States would be preferable. Expressing their conviction that it was very important to push ahead with the development projects, the rulers decided that the former British development secretary, Mr Kendall, should continue to run the Trucial States Development Office for the time being. In the meantime, one or two potential candidates could be recruited from the Gulf States and trained

for the job until one of them had obtained the necessary qualifications to occupy the post.[186] All in all, the Trucial States Council meeting on 30 June was a clear indication that the British Government had regained the loyalty and cooperation of the Trucial States rulers. For the time being, at least, Britain had reasserted its authority in the Trucial States.

6
An Obstacle to Modernization and Federation: Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi

6.1 Shaikh Shakhbut's resistance to modernization

When the minister of state, George Thomson, congratulated Luce in July 1965 on the removal of Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah, he expressed his hope that the recent events would have a salutary effect on the 'oil rulers' of the protected states.[1] He hoped that the deposition had both frightened and motivated the rulers of Bahrain, Qatar, and Abu Dhabi into accepting the advice of the British Government in the future, especially on the subject of modernization. Thomson's letter has to be put into the context of the difficulties that the British Government was experiencing in the protected states with the transfer of its jurisdictional privileges and the implementation of its modernization policy. The British Government could not improve the standards of administration, development, and justice in the protected states by itself. All that the men on the spot could do was to use their personal influence to persuade the rulers of the advantages of good government. Ultimately, the pace and the progress of modernization depended on them.

In this respect the 'oil ruler' about whom the British Government was most concerned was Shaikh Shakhbut bin Sultan Al-Nahyan of Abu Dhabi, who was the strongest opponent of modernization among the rulers of the protected states. He ruled over the largest and richest of the seven Trucial shaikhdoms, and the Abu Dhabi Marine Area Company (ADMA), which held the offshore concession for the shaikhdom, began to export oil in 1962.[2] The Abu Dhabi Petroleum Company (ADPC) made even greater findings of oil on the Abu Dhabi mainland in the same year, with exports starting from 1963 onwards.[3] The

findings were so substantial that the British Government expected Abu Dhabi would soon become the second-richest state in the Persian Gulf after Kuwait. However, initial hopes that Abu Dhabi's new oil wealth would lead to an economic boom in the shaikhdom on a level comparable to the one that followed the discovery of oil in Kuwait were soon frustrated.[4]

When oil was first discovered off the coast of Abu Dhabi in 1958, Shaikh Shakhbut had been ruling the shaikhdom for 30 years. His personal principles and his style of government had been shaped by the logic and rules of Abu Dhabi's pre-oil society.[5] He had come to power in 1928, following 20 years of political instability in Abu Dhabi that were marked by tribal fighting in the western and southern parts of the shaikhdom and the declining authority of the ruling family. None of Shaikh Shakhbut's four predecessors had ruled for more than a few years, and only one of them had died of natural causes, but Shaikh Shakhbut managed to re-establish internal security in the shaikhdom and to reassert his authority over Abu Dhabi's tribes.[6] He was very vigilant about keeping all aspects of Abu Dhabi's internal government under his personal control. Administrative authority was wielded by governors (*wali*) in the main population centres, Buraimi and the Liwa Oasis, and by religious judges (*qadis)* who were responsible for religious as well as criminal and civil matters. There was no centralized bureaucracy in Abu Dhabi, and Shaikh Shakhbut's decisions regarding the internal affairs of the shaikhdom were absolute.

Shaikh Shakhbut had been deeply influenced by the economic crisis in Abu Dhabi in the 1920s and 1930s. The worldwide recession and the introduction of the cheap Japanese cultured pearl had effectively destroyed the pearling industry in the Persian Gulf and thus deprived Abu Dhabi of its main source of income. The experience of poverty and economic crisis had turned Shaikh Shakhbut into a man with a reputation for being extremely reluctant to spend more money than was absolutely essential.[7] He was also known for his conservative nature and his general fear of economic progress that might lead to social change. In the early 1950s, he banned all new construction, including roads, in his sheikhdom unless the prospective builders had previously obtained his personal permission; obstructed the entry of foreign merchants into Abu Dhabi; and permitted only a limited number of businesses to open branches in his sheikhdom, charging them large entrance fees to do so.[8] The shaikh was very distrustful of banks and modern accounting, and the British Bank of the Middle East and the Ottoman Eastern Bank were not allowed to open in Abu Dhabi until

1959. Dubai and Sharjah, on the other hand, had been hosting foreign banks since the 1940s.[9]

Even when the economic circumstances of Abu Dhabi were radically transformed following the discovery of oil in 1958, Shaikh Shakhbut's characteristic thriftiness, his conservatism, and his desire to control every aspect of the internal affairs of his shaikhdom remained unchanged.[10] The increasing levels of oil production not only filled the pockets of the ruler but also resulted in an ever-growing influx of foreigners who worked for the oil companies in Abu Dhabi.[11] However, Shaikh Shakhbut's principles as well as his inflexibility led to increasing friction with the British Government, which expected that he would adapt his rule to the realities of the new, oil-rich Abu Dhabi while using his new wealth to modernize his state. These hopes were disappointed by the shaikh's general resistance to change and his determination to maintain absolute control over the internal affairs of his shaikhdom. His refusal to delegate authority was particularly extreme when it came to financial matters. The political agent in Abu Dhabi, Hugh Boustead, complained in January 1964:

> Here we have a small and hitherto poverty-striken [sic] state on the verge of unbelievable wealth which is governed by a man who so far shows little sign of being able or willing to adjust his thinking to the new circumstances of his country. It is clearly no easy task for a Ruler, after a lifetime of poverty, to accustom himself to the idea that his income will henceforward be counted not in hundreds of pounds but in millions, but Shaikh Shakhbut is finding the mental adjustment much more difficult than have any other Rulers of oil states and it is questionable whether he wishes to make the adjustment at all. He has now acquired for himself a world-wide reputation for his deviousness, his procrastination, his refusal to trust others, his unwillingness to delegate authority and above all his breathtaking meanness.[12]

The difficult relationship between the British Government and Shaikh Shakhbut did not result entirely from the fact that they had very different opinions about the right way to rule Abu Dhabi. It was made even more complicated by Shakhbut's unpredictable character. He sometimes agreed to a proposition made to him by the British officials on one day, only to change his mind on the next. This meant that more or less all attempts to persuade him of the advantages of modernization and good government were unsuccessful, and generally slowed the rate of progress in Abu Dhabi.

One major point on which the British Government and Shaikh Shakhbut disagreed was the matter of administrative reform. From 1962 onwards, Luce and Boustead tried to convince the ruler of the necessity of building up a modern administration and a functioning civil service in Abu Dhabi. They also offered to help him find suitable personnel for this purpose. After lengthy discussions, Shaikh Shakhbut finally agreed to hire a small group of educated foreigners, who had been recommended to him by Luce. This initial group consisted of a secretary from Britain, a state accountant and a director of customs from Jordan, and a town clerk from Sudan. However, due to Shaikh Shakhbut's unwillingness to delegate authority, the influence of these officials on the government of Abu Dhabi remained rudimentary, and most either were sacked after very short periods in office or resigned, having been either ignored or even publicly abused by the ruler. The remaining officials were only ever given jobs of a trivial nature. Boustead described the situation resulting from Shakhbut's refusal to delegate authority:

> The most urgent need in Abu Dhabi is for a small but experienced and competent group of officials who would form the nucleus of a civil service. [...] in a state whose income is already several millions [pounds] a year, there is no budget, there are virtually no government departments, and all decisions, particularly those involving the expenditure of sums of money, however small, have to be referred to the Ruler personally.[13]

The British strategy of finding personnel for the ruler from abroad did not produce the intended outcomes, even if the foreign experts did remain in Shaikh Shakhbut's employ for a longer period of time. This was due to the fact that they were ultimately hired and paid by him and not by the British Government. To keep their jobs they had to please the ruler, not the political agents or the Foreign Office. An example of this was Bill Clark, an Englishman who was recruited in 1962 as Shaikh Shakhbut's personal secretary. Clark had no influence on Shaikh Shakhbut's policies since his advice was never sought; often he was not even informed about the ruler's latest decision.[14] Boustead and Luce gained the impression that Clark did not even try to influence Shaikh Shakhbut to modernize his state or persuade him to listen to the advice of the political agent. Instead, he seemed intent on telling the shaikh whatever he wanted to hear, and completely disregarding the policies and wishes of the British Government. Luce wrote to Frank Brenchley in May 1964 that

> Clark is prepared to humble his pride and to sink his scruples to almost any extent in order to retain the £5,000 a year which Shakhbut pays him, however intermittently. I believe that Shakhbut for his part is ready to retain Clark because he now knows that he has a 'yes-man' who will not cause him any difficulty but at the same time give his 'administration' a certain air of respectability.[15]

Despite Boustead's and Luce's complaints about Clark, the Arabian Department decided that it was important to retain his post as secretary to Abu Dhabi's ruler. According to Frank Brenchley, any secretary of Shaikh Shakhbut's had to be a 'yes-man' because he would otherwise be sacked immediately. If the choice was between an inefficient British secretary and no secretary at all, the Arabian Department preferred the former.[16]

Another reason for British discontent with Shaikh Shakhbut's government was the ruler's reluctance to invest the revenues from Abu Dhabi's oil production into the physical development of his state. The British Government wanted the money to get into circulation, and to finance necessary infrastructural projects such as roads, hospitals, and schools. However, Shaikh Shakhbut was very slow to implement a structured development policy for Abu Dhabi. Even though he had hired a British consultancy firm in 1962 to help him establish a development plan, he refused to cooperate properly with the company. Instead he frequently ignored the consultants' advice, and often accused them of inefficiency while threatening to end their contracts.[17] In 1963, the shaikh concluded a contract with a German firm for development works that included a hospital, schools, and a freshwater pipeline from Abu Dhabi town to Buraimi. While negotiating the deal, he informed neither the political agency nor the British consultancy firm about his actions. As a result, Luce and Boustead were not only concerned about the lack of progress in the physical development of Abu Dhabi but also highly critical of Shakhbut's reluctance to take their advice on development issues and inform them about his latest decisions.[18]

Additional discord between the British Government and Shaikh Shakhbut arose from his refusal to sign a profit-sharing agreement with ADPC. Following the discovery of vast oil resources on the mainland, the company had in 1963 offered an agreement whereby the company and the ruler would obtain 50 per cent of ADPC's oil revenues. ADPC had held the onshore concession for Abu Dhabi since 1939, and under the existing agreements between the company and the ruler, the latter received less than 15 per cent of ADPC's oil

revenues. Therefore, Shaikh Shakhbut's signature on the 50:50 agreement would have meant a substantial increase in Abu Dhabi's annual income. However, Shaikh Shakhbut vacillated and repeatedly postponed signing the agreement, while attempts by Boustead and Luce to convince him of the need to sign remained futile until he eventually did so in September 1965,[19] by which time his refusal to sign had cost Abu Dhabi several million pounds that could have been invested in development projects and in improving the living conditions of the local population. To Luce, Shaikh Shakhbut's position over the 50:50 agreement was an excellent example of the irrational behaviour that made him unfit to rule Abu Dhabi. He commented in May 1964:

> One of the most serious aspects is Shakhbut's refusal so far to honour his agreement 'in principle' of last December to conclude a 50/50 agreement with A.D.P.C. This has meant that the first quarterly payment on April 1 was only about £ ¼of a million whereas, under a 50/50 agreement it would have been about £1½million; the same will happen on July 1, after which, even if they wished to, A.D.P.C. will almost certainly be unable, for taxation reasons, to pay up the difference. [...] He [Shakhbut] will thus, through sheer obstinacy and stupidity, have deprived his State of about £2½million in the first half of this year, to say nothing of the future.[20]

The only explanation that Luce could find for Shaikh Shakhbut's behaviour – other than sheer stupidity – was the Ruler's determination to prohibit drastic economic and social change in Abu Dhabi. The political resident suspected that Shaikh Shakbut was content with the £4 million that he already obtained annually from ADPC and ADMA under the old agreements. To a ruler who had been accustomed to great poverty before the discovery of oil, this was a lot of money, especially since he was keeping most of it for himself instead of reinvesting it for the benefit of his people. According to Luce, Shaikh Shakhbut worried that an even larger influx of wealth into Abu Dhabi would increase the pressure on him, exercised by the British Government, the ruling family, and the people of Abu Dhabi, to establish a proper budget for his state and to delegate some financial authority. Luce argued that Shakhbut's greatest fear was any loss of control:

> [...] I and others have often thought that one of Shakhbut's strongest characteristics is fear of change, mostly because change might, and

> probably would, bring a challenge to the absolute autocracy by which he has ruled Abu Dhabi for so long.[21]

It is interesting that Shaikh Shakhbut's failure to secure more revenue for his state by signing the 50:50 agreement with ADPC provoked so much British criticism. After all, while his decision meant a loss of revenue for Abu Dhabi, the gain it entailed for ADPC, a subsidiary of BP, benefited Britain's balance of payments.[22] However, British policy in Abu Dhabi was driven not by such short-term financial considerations but by the aim of preserving Britain's economic and strategic interests in the Persian Gulf in the long term. In the eyes of the British Government, Shaikh Shakhbut's failures to organize a modern administration, implement an effective development policy, and allow Abu Dhabi to benefit from a greater share of the oil revenues were harmful not simply for the people of Abu Dhabi.

The shaikh's inefficient and autocratic rule also damaged the image of Britain's presence in the area, a line of argument supported in particular by Luce and Boustead. In their opinion, Shaikh Shakhbut was an embarrassment for Her Majesty's Government, which was being regarded by the rest of the world as ultimately responsible for his deficiencies as a ruler.[23] Certainly his continued maladministration provoked international and, especially, Arab nationalist criticism of the British Government for protecting a ruler who was unfit to govern Abu Dhabi for the benefit of its people. Luce warned that 'in the eyes of the world, and particularly the Arab world, H.M.G. will be responsible for this hopeless state of affairs and nothing they may say will absolve them from this responsibility'.[24] Both Luce and Boustead felt certain that this problem would increase in the future, since the exploitation of Abu Dhabi's oil resources and the shaikhdom's growing wealth would increasingly draw international attention. Thus in a parallel development, international criticism of Abu Dhabi's ruler and the British Government that protected him was bound to increase.[25]

6.2 A ruler-in-waiting for Abu Dhabi: Shaikh Zayed

From 1962 onwards, while the men on the spot were becoming increasingly unhappy with Shaikh Shakhbut, they were also forming a very favourable opinion of his brother, Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan. Unlike Shaikh Shakhbut, Shaikh Zayed was known for his generosity, his diplomatic skills, his personal charisma, and his interest in progress and economic development in Abu Dhabi. From the age of 18 he had

served as his brother's personal envoy, being frequently despatched to different parts of Abu Dhabi to settle tribal disputes.[26] In 1946, when Shaikh Zayed was in his mid-30s, his brother appointed him as governor (*wali*) of Buraimi, the second largest town in Abu Dhabi territory, where Shaikh Zayed implemented an active and far-reaching development programme. His biggest project was the building up of an effective irrigation system. He also promoted trade, helped with the construction of small shops, and allowed merchants to trade in the market without paying him rent. He was also known for his interest in social affairs and his openness towards foreigners. The first school in Buraimi was completed in 1958 – three years before a similar institution opened in Abu Dhabi town – and was staffed with Jordanian teachers. Shaikh Zayed also invited Indian and American doctors to Buraimi so that the Buraimi Oasis hospital, the first of its kind in Abu Dhabi, could be opened in 1963. His generosity and his progressive policies were all the more impressive as he was not a rich man but depended financially entirely on his brother. For Shaikh Zayed, obtaining his brother's approval for his projects was a complicated and often frustrating business.[27]

The political resident and the political agent in Abu Dhabi maintained close relations with Shaikh Zayed, frequently visiting him in Buraimi where they discussed with him the state of affairs in Abu Dhabi and the ruler's latest decisions.[28] At times, when Shaikh Shakhbut's behaviour appeared to them to be completely irrational and incomprehensible, they consulted Shaikh Zayed and asked him to explain his brother's motives. During these discussions, Shaikh Zayed made no attempt to defend or excuse the actions of his elder brother to the British. On the contrary, he was openly critical of his character and style of government, warning Boustead that his sibling had no interest in a structured development programme for Abu Dhabi, and that he would never make a real effort to improve the infrastructure of his state.[29] He complained that discontent with Shaikh Shakhbut's rule was widespread in Abu Dhabi and that the ruler's actions were making the Al-Nahyan family increasingly unpopular among the population of the shaikhdom. He also confirmed Luce's suspicions about the reasons for Shaikh Shakhbut's refusal to conclude the profit-share agreement with ADPC. He told him that

> the real reason for Shakhbut's obstinacy was his fear that if he had more money than he was already receiving it would merely increase the pressures on him to do more than he was at present and would make it increasingly difficult for him to keep things in Abu Dhabi as

> much as possible in his own hands, which was really his basic aim. He [Shakhbut] had no liking for the people and was only concerned with his own power and position.[30]

Shaikh Zayed not only criticized Shaikh Shakhbut's political decisions but also went as far as questioning his sanity. He warned Boustead in the spring of 1964 that Shaikh Shakhbut's basic character would never change, and claimed that his brain was damaged, with the result that his actions were becoming less rational by the day.[31] In a conversation with Luce in July 1964, Shaikh Zayed stated that 'he was more convinced than ever that Shakhbut [was] basically mad'.[32]

During his discussions with Luce, Boustead, and later Archie Lamb (Boustead's successor from 1965 onwards), Shaikh Zayed did his best to present himself – both in character and in his political views – as the complete opposite of Shaikh Shakhbut. He informed the British officials in the Gulf about talks held with his brother, in which he had tried to convince him to improve his government and invest Abu Dhabi's oil wealth for the benefit of his people. From Shaikh Zayed's descriptions of these conversations, Shaikh Shakhbut seemed always to reject these constructive propositions. One example of the differences in opinion and character between them was the discussion they had in June 1964 about the growing public criticism of Shaikh Shakhbut's rule. Shaikh Zayed had warned his brother that the entire ruling family was becoming more and more unpopular among the people of Abu Dhabi:

> Shakhbut said 'Why?' and Zaid replied 'Do you think they [the people of Abu Dhabi] do not know what is happening in other states? Do you think they do not know that Issa [sic] of Bahrain and Rashid of Dubai (who incidentally has no oil) are building houses free for the people, so many each year, and are busy putting up schools and dispensaries. What have we done for them – nothing?' Shakhbut then merely said 'I know we are popular and I know they like me'. [33]

Following this discussion, Shaikh Zayed told Boustead that the ruler was in complete denial about his own unpopularity, both within and outside Abu Dhabi, and that attempts to warn Shaikh Shakhbut about the dangers that the growing criticisms of his government would cause for him were futile.[34]

As Christopher Davidson points out, Shaikh Zayed's discussions with Luce, Boustead, and Lamb between 1962 and 1966 were part of his 'low intensity campaign to undermine privately his brother's credibility'.[35]

Shaikh Zayed assured the British that in contrast to his brother, he was interested in modernization and development,[36] although his attempts to present himself as an ideal ruler-in-waiting for Abu Dhabi were not directed exclusively at Luce and the political agents since he also made sure that his opinions, hopes, and plans for Abu Dhabi were well known to people who were likely to inform the British Government of their discussions with him. For example, he told Mr Jarrar, Shaikh Shakhbut's Jordanian legal adviser, that if he was the ruler, he would make Abu Dhabi the 'flower of the Gulf'.[37]

Shaikh Zayed succeeded in his attempts to convince the British officials in the Gulf that he would be more suitable than his older brother to rule Abu Dhabi. The great difficulties with Shaikh Shakhbut led Luce and Boustead to conclude that Shaikh Zayed would be a much better leader, and from 1962 onwards they tried to convince the British Government to remove Shaikh Shakhbut from Abu Dhabi and install Shaikh Zayed as the new ruler.[38] Both Luce and Boustead agreed with Shaikh Zayed that Shaikh Shakhbut's character would never change,[39] and, although they continued their efforts to persuade the Shaikh to modernize his state, they became increasingly pessimistic about their chances of success. In May 1964, Luce informed the Foreign Office that it was unrealistic to expect that Shaikh Shakhbut would ever be ready to listen to the advice of the British Government. It had become increasingly obvious that he was insane, and his mood-swings and his behaviour had become so unpredictable that it was impossible to deal with him. Based on several conversations with representatives of the oil companies, members of the ruling family and the few foreigners who had been hired by Shaikh Shakhbut as officials or as development experts, the political resident concluded:

> We are dealing with a man who is mentally unstable for a considerable and increasing part of the time and we must not delude ourselves that there will be any improvement in his attitude to his responsibilities or his behaviour. He has made it abundantly clear that he is not only unwilling to listen to our advice but strongly resents it being given.[40]

On the other hand, according to Luce, Shaikh Zayed was a completely different character from Shaikh Shakhbut. He was ready to invest the oil revenues in the development of the shaikhdom and to build up a modern administration and civil service. Unlike Shaikh Shakhbut, he was willing to adapt to the new realities of the oil-rich Abu Dhabi and rule

the shaikhdom to the satisfaction of its people. He was kind, friendly and truly interested in the welfare of Abu Dhabi's population. Furthermore, Shaikh Zayed had a greater respect for the British Government than his brother, which would make it easy to deal with him and to influence his decisions on the internal governance of Abu Dhabi in directions that suited Britain's interests. Luce argued:

> I do not suggest that Zaid would be a paragon of all the virtues or that he would always do exactly what we ourselves thought was right. But those of us who know him have no doubt that he would be an immense improvement on Shakhbut as a Ruler. His nature is quite different from his brother's; he is a man of friendly disposition who is aware of the need for drastic changes in Abu Dhabi and is ready to listen to advice and to use people who can help him.[41]

One important reason for Boustead and Luce to regard Shaikh Zayed as a more suitable ruler for Abu Dhabi than his brother was their fear that the latter's behaviour would sooner or later provoke an Arab nationalist revolution in the shaikhdom. Boustead had warned in 1963 that Shaikh Shakhbut's bad administration and his continued reluctance to spend money had already led to the ruling family's popularity reaching an all-time low.[42] His failures to improve the living conditions in his state and to convince his people that they were benefiting as much from Abu Dhabi's new oil wealth as he was could eventually lead to a revolutionary situation. According to Luce, the potential for political unrest or even revolution in Abu Dhabi was further increased by the ever-growing influx of foreigners into the sheikhdom, since exploration of the oil resources and the shaikhdom's growing wealth had made Abu Dhabi attractive to workers and businessmen from other Arab countries who were more than likely to bring Arab nationalist and revolutionary ideas with them. Luce regarded Shaikh Shakhbut's anachronistic and autocratic rule as a perfect target for subversive and revolutionary activities. Shaikh Zayed, on the other hand, was very capable, and was willing to rule Abu Dhabi in a way that would make him much less susceptible to Arab nationalist criticism.[43]

The political resident also realized that a successful Arab nationalist revolution in Abu Dhabi presented great danger to Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf. Given the anti-colonial ethos of Arab nationalism, it was highly unlikely that a regime installed during a revolution in Abu Dhabi would tolerate a continuation of the special position of the British in the shaikhdom. In Luce's opinion, the British Government's best

chance of preventing the development of such a dangerous situation was to replace Shaikh Shakhbut with Shaikh Zayed because

> [...] we [the British Government] shall very probably be faced in the not distant future with the choice of physically supporting a completely discredited Shakhbut against the forces of reform and progress or of allowing him to be overthrown by Arab nationalists politically hostile to us, with all the dangers which would follow. The replacement of Shakhbut by Zaid offers the only real hope of peaceful evolution for Abu Dhabi in the difficult years which lie ahead; the continuation of Shakhbut's rule spells revolution, sooner or later.[44]

6.3 British plans for Shaikh Shakhbut's removal

The British Government made an initial stab at deposing Shaikh Shakhbut and installing Shaikh Zayed in his place as Ruler of Abu Dhabi in May 1963. However, there is not much detailed information available in the British National Archives about this first attempt. The only contemporary British source that mentions the plan is a letter written by Robert Walmsley, assistant head of the Arabian Department, on the occasion of his retirement, to Luce on 1 May 1963. Without going into any detail, he states that on his last day in office he had been trying to push one of the protected rulers off his throne.[45] However, there are other details available in the US National Archives about Britain's earliest efforts to replace Shaikh Shakhbut. John Horner, the US consul-general in Dharan in Saudi Arabia, reported to the State Department on 23 May 1963 that he had been informed by Luce that 'about ten days ago there was every indication that Shaikh Shakhbut would be deposed by his family. The British have been working carefully to this end'.[46] In addition to these contemporary British and US sources, there are a number of records dating from 1964 available in the British National Archives that prove that the ruler mentioned by Walsmley was Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi.[47] These refer to a plan for the deposition of the shaikh that was devised in the Foreign Office and endorsed by Alec Douglas-Home, the foreign secretary, in May 1963.[48]

The British Government concluded a secret agreement with Shaikh Zayed in the spring of 1963, according to which he consented to become the Ruler of Abu Dhabi following the deposition of Shaikh Shakhbut. The plan, in which the Al-Nahyan, Abu Dhabi's ruling family, played a

crucial role, was to remove the shaikh but only after the senior members of Al-Nahyan had promised to support Shaikh Zayed if he replaced his brother as ruler, and the procedure for deposition was briefly outlined:

> The plan provided for prior assurances from the leading members of the Abu Dhabi Ruling Family that they would appoint a new ruler (Shaikh Zaid, Shakhbut's brother) immediately after the withdrawal of Her Majesty's Government's recognition of Shakhbut and that they would not in future question our [the British Government's] public announcement that the recognition had been withdrawn at the request of the family.[49]

Shaikh Zayed promised to extract these assurances from the influential members of the ruling family, including, most importantly, his other brother, Shaikh Khalid bin Sultan, and his cousin, Shaikh Muhammad bin Khalifa, by making them swear not to contradict a statement that would be made by the British Government following the deposition; this statement would explain that the replacing of Shaikh Shakhbut had resulted from a decision of Abu Dhabi's ruling family. As soon as Shaikh Zayed had obtained these assurances, the political resident was to inform Shaikh Shakhbut of his family's decision to depose him. The British Government would then immediately recognize Shaikh Zayed as the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and, if necessary, would help him to remove his brother from the shaikhdom.[50]

From the British perspective, this plan had the advantage of replacing Shaikh Shakhbut without having to admit that the British Government had played an active role in his deposition and that it had thereby intervened in the internal affairs of Abu Dhabi for which it was formally not responsible. The deposition would be presented to the world as the result of an internal family quarrel and not as an act of British imperialism. The role of the political resident would have been reduced simply to that of the messenger who informed Shaikh Shakhbut of his family's decision, while the eventual removal of the shaikh from Abu Dhabi by the British would be presented to the world as being by the wish of the new ruler.[51] This plan also included a number of advantages for Shaikh Zayed, since the British Government had promised to provide him with the support and recognition that he needed to get rid of his older brother and to become the new ruler. At the same time, the presentation of the deposition as an affair of the Al-Nahyan family would be better for Shaikh Zayed's image, both within his shaikhdom and in the Arab world in general. To be seen as a British stooge who had

been installed as ruler by the British Government would have tainted his legitimacy.[52]

While the deposition plan of May 1963 involved a number of advantages both for the British Government and for Shaikh Zayed, it had one major flaw in that its successful implementation depended not only on Shaikh Zayed's consent but also on the cooperation of his brother, Shaikh Khalid, and his cousin, Shaikh Muhammad.[53] At the last minute, Shaikh Khalid, who had at first assured Shaikh Zayed of his willingness to support the deposition plan, changed his mind. According to John Horner in Dharan, his sudden change of heart was brought about by a bribery payment from Shaikh Shakhbut, who had heard rumours about his brothers' plans and paid Shaikh Khalid to transfer his loyalty.[54] Since Shaikh Zayed 'was not prepared to go it alone', the plan to replace Shaikh Shakhbut was left in abeyance during 1963.[55]

For the time being the British Government postponed its deposition plans. Even so, while the men on the spot continued to maintain close relations with Shaikh Zayed, they were also looking for a new opportunity to replace Shaikh Shakhbut with his brother. By November 1963, relations between the British Government and Shaikh Shakhbut had sunk to a new low. However, Luce's intention to recommend a return to the May plans was thwarted because Shaikh Shakhbut managed to rally the ruling family to his side against Shaikh Zayed. Since a successful implementation of the deposition plan depended on the family's cooperation, there seemed at the time to be no possibility of replacing Shaikh Shakhbut.[56]

In May 1964, Luce reintroduced the idea of deposing Shaikh Shakhbut. In a letter to Stewart Crawford, he argued that the case for replacing the ruler remained as strong as ever because no improvement in his government was to be expected. Apart from his continued bad government and refusal to modernize, there was now another reason for the British Government to initiate his overthrow: this was the Shaikh's aloofness towards the other six Trucial States.[57] The British Government was trying to promote cooperation among the states with the ultimate intention that the seven shaikhdoms would eventually form a federation, and Abu Dhabi was supposed to play a central role in the federation process. As the only producer of oil among the seven Trucial States, it was expected to share its substantial wealth with its six poorer neighbours and Luce wanted Shaikh Shakhbut to donate a fixed percentage of his oil revenues to development projects outside Abu Dhabi's territory. In the event of a federation eventually being created, it was expected that Abu Dhabi would supply it with the necessary funds. In the view of

the political resident, the formation of a federation of six Trucial States without the participation of Abu Dhabi made no sense.[58]

However, Shaikh Shakhbut was not interested in cooperating with his neighbours and refused to share Abu Dhabi's oil wealth with them. In January 1964, he boycotted a decision taken by the rulers of the other six states to set up a Deliberative Committee that was intended to advise the Trucial States Council on development in the area and other matters of mutual concern. Unimpressed by Boustead's advice to participate in the Deliberative Committee, Shaikh Shakhbut then refused to appoint a representative for Abu Dhabi at all.[59] Luce concluded from his behaviour that the

> Federation of the Trucial States is an important aim of H.M.G.'s policy but without the participation of Abu Dhabi and some share of its wealth a federation would serve very little useful purpose. [...] he [Shakhbut] continues to show that he has no intention of cooperating effectively with the other Trucial States or of helping them with any part of his wealth.[60]

Zayed, on the other hand, had frequently expressed his conviction that the future of the Persian Gulf lay in federation, and had assured the representatives of the British Government in the Persian Gulf of his readiness to share Abu Dhabi's wealth with his neighbours.

Luce warned the Foreign Office in May 1964 that the continuation of Shaikh Shakhbut's rule was damaging British prestige in the Persian Gulf and that his popularity was continuing to decline daily, not only in Abu Dhabi but in the Persian Gulf in general. Shaikh Zayed, on the other hand, had a good reputation. Several rulers of the Persian Gulf, including the Amir of Kuwait, had already expressed their disapproval of the situation in Abu Dhabi and their expectations were that the British Government had to do something to improve it. They had also made it clear that in their opinion, Shaikh Zayed would be a much better ruler than his brother. Luce interpreted these statements as an indication that '[the British] failure to act is counted as weakness or even as a mysterious desire to support Shakhbut, which can only harm our reputation and prestige'.[61] Therefore, in order to regain the confidence of the other rulers of the Persian Gulf, the British Government would need to replace Shaikh Shakhbut with Shaikh Zayed. The successful deposition would be a demonstration of strength, which could only increase the British Government's influence on the internal affairs of the other protected states. It would also motivate the other rulers to listen to British advice in the

future, especially on the subject of modernization. Luce argued that 'the removal of Shakhbut would show that there is a limit to our toleration of ineptitude and could be a salutary lesson to some other Rulers'.[62]

The political resident stressed in a letter to Crawford that the British Government had to get rid of Shaikh Shakhbut as soon as possible. It could no longer afford to wait for the agreement of all the leading members of Abu Dhabi's ruling family. Instead of waiting for a new opportunity to arise for the reactivation of the plan of May 1963, it had to be ready to play an active role in the deposition process:

> I recommend as strongly as possible that H.M.G. should be prepared, if necessary, to go to the last resort to achieve our purpose. By the last resort I mean withdrawal of recognition from Shakhbut and the recognition of Zaid as ruler without any prior assurances of support from other members of the family.[63]

Luce proposed to seek an absolute assurance by Shaikh Zayed that he would step in as ruler without hesitation if the British Government withdrew its recognition of Shaikh Shakhbut. Having received this promise, the political resident would then ask Shaikh Shakhbut to abdicate. If he refused, Luce would inform him that the British Government had decided to withdraw its recognition from him and regarded Shaikh Zayed as the new Ruler of Abu Dhabi. If necessary, the British agents on the ground would assist Shaikh Zayed in removing his brother from the shaikhdom by arranging for the Trucial Oman Scouts to escort him to Dubai or Sharjah. The British Government would then issue a public statement announcing that it had decided to withdraw its recognition of Shaikh Shakhbut as Ruler of Abu Dhabi and to recognize Shaikh Zayed in his place. The reason was the former's 'manifest inability to adapt his methods of government to the needs of Abu Dhabi today, with consequent grave detriment to the welfare of his people'.[64] In contrast with the plan of May 1963, this procedure implied that the British Government would publicly admit that it had installed a new ruler.

The Foreign Office did not approve Luce's suggestions. While the Arabian Department agreed that Shaikh Zayed would undoubtedly be a better ruler, it was not ready to recommend the political resident's new plan to the secretary of state. Steward Crawford explained in his reply to Luce that withdrawal of recognition from Shaikh Shakhbut without the prior agreement of the ruling family entailed some serious legal and political risks for the British Government.[65] It had so far been Britain's policy to present its role in the Persian Gulf to the world

as being restricted to the defence of the protected states and the carrying out of their external relations. By cultivating this image, the British Government tried to prevent its presence there from being regarded internationally as a form of colonial rule and the protected states as non-self-governing territories. This policy resulted from the British fear that the UN Committee of 24 could put Britain's position in the Persian Gulf on its agenda and launch a discussion about the protected states in the UN. The Arabian Department warned that it would be impossible to prevent this development if the British Government revealed its readiness and its ability to interfere in the internal affairs of one of the protected states by taking the initiative over Shakhbut's deposition.

The detrimental effect of such a move on international perceptions of Britain's role in the Persian Gulf would not be restricted to Abu Dhabi but would also extend to the other protected states:

> Open intervention in domestic affairs would destroy our case that we [the British Government] were not concerned with these. By analogy, the same would go for the 6 other Trucial States, and Bahrain and Qatar. The door now closed to the Committee of 24 would thus be opened.[66]

There was also a great risk that the implementation of Luce's new deposition plan would damage Britain's stance in the UN's discussions about Muscat and Oman. An active and public intervention in the internal affairs of a protected state would add additional fuel to allegations that Britain maintained a colonialist position in the neighbouring sultanate.[67] Therefore, Frank Brenchley, head of the Arabian Department, concluded that the only way to replace Shaikh Shakhbut with his brother without damaging the image of Britain's position in the Gulf was to do so along the lines of the previous plan of May 1963. The British Government could only take action after having secured a family consensus that the ruler should be deposed, because 'to be defensible internationally, deposition must be shown as consistent with local law or practice. The latter is election or removal by family decision'.[68]

The Arabian Department was also afraid that the implementation of Luce's new deposition plan would have adverse consequences for Britain's role in Abu Dhabi itself. Brenchley argued that to install Shaikh Zayed publicly as ruler would equal the acceptance by the British Government of ultimate responsibility for all his future actions. At the present time the British Government was in the advantageous situation of being able to disclaim any responsibility for Shaikh Shakhbut's

maladministration and bad government by insisting that its influence in Abu Dhabi was limited to the shaikhdom's defence and foreign relations. Once the British Government had publicly interfered in the shaikhdom's internal affairs by installing Shaikh Zayed as ruler, it would no longer be possible to maintain that it had no influence on the internal government of Abu Dhabi.[69] By actively and openly deposing Shaikh Shakhbut because of his bad government, the British Government would make itself too dependent on Shaikh Zayed's future success. At a meeting with Luce and Boustead in July 1964, Brenchley warned that, even though Shaikh Zayed promised to become a much better ruler than Shaikh Shakhbut, it was a very risky idea to put all the British eggs in his basket.[70] Failure by Shaikh Zayed to make significant improvements to the situation in Abu Dhabi would, in the long term, have considerable consequences for Britain's role in the shaikhdom. The Arabian Department feared that the British Government, having once openly interfered in Abu Dhabi's internal affairs, would be obliged to accept full responsibility for them in the future. There was a danger that '[o]nce into the domestic field we [the British Government] should be morally committed to follow through: virtually to administer, perhaps at cost and certainly with considerable trouble'.[71]

In the view of the Foreign Office, Britain's interest in the replacement of Shaikh Shakhbut was not big enough to justify the risks that were entailed in Luce's new deposition plan. It was accepted that Shaikh Shakhbut's opposition to Trucial States federation, his difficult character, and his bad government made his replacement desirable. However, none of these reasons was regarded as sufficiently substantial for the British Government to play an active and public role in his deposition. After all, the ruler was not endangering Britain's main economic interest in Abu Dhabi, which was the continued flow of the shaikhdom's oil to the West.[72] Shaikh Shakhbut's bad government was deplorable, but 'strictly speaking not our affair'.[73] It was even suggested in the Arabian Department that the insistence of Luce and Boustead on deposing him, with or without the support of Abu Dhabi's ruling family, resulted from their personal experiences as former members of the Sudan Political Service. Brenchley argued that as 'ex-administrators' instead of 'career diplomats', Luce and Boustead concentrated too much on Shaikh Shakhbut's mismanagement of Abu Dhabi's internal affairs and too little on the question of whether Britain's interests in the shaikhdom were really substantially endangered by his rule.[74] Luce's warning that a continuation of Shakhbut's rule would soon result in an Arab nationalist revolution in Abu Dhabi that could seriously endanger the British

presence in the Persian Gulf was considered by the Foreign Office to be alarmist.[75]

The resistance of the Foreign Office to Luce's active deposition plan was an example of the general British reluctance to assume more responsibility for the government of the protected states than was absolutely necessary to safeguard Britain's interests in the Persian Gulf. The British Government was unwilling to exchange the indirect and unofficial influence of its representatives in the area for full and official responsibility for the internal affairs of the protected states. The prevailing practice of exercising influence by indirect means while claiming publicly not to be involved enabled the British Government not only to protect its international image but also to reduce the cost and trouble that resulted from its presence in the Persian Gulf.

Unimpressed by the hesitation being displayed in the Foreign Office, Luce was determined to persuade the British Government to depose Shaikh Shakhbut. In October 1964, he resumed the initiative with another letter to Stewart Crawford, which included a long list of examples of the ruler's misbehaviour over the last few months.[76] Attached to his letter was a report of a recent visit to Buraimi, during which Luce had once again discussed the situation in Abu Dhabi with Shaikh Zayed, who took the opportunity to inform him that, in view of Shaikh Shakhbut's continued bad government and the growing criticism that his behaviour had provoked in the ruling family, he was determined to replace his brother as soon as possible. Shaikh Zayed told Luce that there had been enough talk about this problem and that the time had now come to act:

> If H.M.G. were prepared to remove Shakhbut from the country, he was prepared to assume the Rulership immediately. It would also be necessary to remove Shakhbut's second son, Sultan, at the same time as he was a worthless and unreliable person; the eldest son, Saud, could stay so long as he behaved himself.[77]

Shaikh Zayed even offered Luce a written statement confirming his readiness to play his part in the deposition process. Luce promised to inform the British Government of his position. He then discussed Abu Dhabi's future government with Shaikh Zayed and gave him a list of reforms that the British Government considered to be essential. It included the division of oil revenues between the ruler and the state, the employment of qualified personnel to build up a proper administration, and the planning and execution of development schemes for social services and public utilities. Shaikh Zayed fully accepted Luce's

view on these questions and even went as far as to say that 'if he was Ruler he would always be ready to listen to H.M.G.'s views and advice on all matters affecting the welfare of Abu Dhabi'.[78]

Another question raised by Luce during his discussions with Shaikh Zayed was the possibility of federation of the Trucial States. He informed Shaikh Zayed that the British Government believed that this offered great advantages to each one of them, but that attempts to persuade the seven rulers of the benefits of federation had so far been futile because they were too jealous of each other to cooperate, let alone federate. Luce also pointed out that such a federation of the Trucial States would require funds, which had largely to come from Abu Dhabi as the only oil producer among the seven. Shaikh Zayed agreed, being of the opinion that

> there was no real future for the Trucial States at present. They were small and weak and most of them were poor. It was obvious that they would be stronger if they were united in some way and that the whole area would develop and progress if the poorer parts benefitted from the richer. [...] He [Zayed] would like to see a federation in which the Rulers would work for the common good of the area, instead of each for himself as at present.[79]

As for the funds needed for the federation, Shaikh Zayed was more than ready to share Abu Dhabi's oil wealth with his neighbours.

Luce concluded from his discussions in Buraimi with Shaikh Zayed that the British Government had to replace Shaikh Shakhbut with his brother as soon as possible. As the new Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Shaihk Zayed had promised to concentrate all his energies on the creation of a successful federation of the Trucial States; Shaikh Shakhbut, on the other hand, would never agree to cooperate efficiently with his neighbours, let alone share his wealth with them.[80] In December 1964, the political resident travelled to London to discuss the matter with the new foreign secretary, Patrick Gordon Walker, who shared the opinion of the Arabian Department that the British Government could not afford to withdraw recognition from Shaikh Shakhbut without prior assurances of support from the leading members of the Al Nahyan family. Therefore, Gordon Walker was only prepared to authorize a reactivation of the plan of May 1963. However, this option was now dismissed as impractical by the political resident.[81] Having discussed the matter with Shaikh Zayed in Buraimi in October 1964, Luce was convinced that it would be impossible to obtain the necessary assurances from Shaikh Khalid and

the other prominent family members without incurring the risk of a leak. The danger that one of the family members would inform Shaikh Shakhbut about the deposition plan was too great. Shaikh Zayed had made it clear at Buraimi that he was willing to replace his brother as ruler immediately but that he could not rely on the assistance of his family. He had informed Luce that he depended on active British help:

> [...] he [Zayed] could not rely on either his other brother Khalid or his senior cousin Mohammed bin Khalifa to give him any active support; they were often critical of Shakhbut but they were also afraid of him, and were weak and ineffective characters. On the other hand he could not act entirely alone; he had no force of his own with which to overcome Shakhbut's police and bodyguard or to compel him to leave the country. He could therefore act only with H.M.G.'s active assistance.[82]

Since Gordon Walker refused to withdraw recognition from Shaikh Shakhbut without prior assurances from Shaikh Khalid and Shaikh Muhammad, Luce proposed a new plan to get rid of him. He suggested that Shaikh Zayed should replace Shaikh Shakhbut as ruler while he was absent from Abu Dhabi. Since Shaikh Shakhbut had recently purchased an expensive yacht from Prince Rainier of Monaco, it was likely sooner or later that he would go away on a trip. Shaikh Zayed would then seize the opportunity to stage a coup d'état, install himself as Ruler of Abu Dhabi, and ask for immediate recognition by the British Government, which he would of course be accorded. To support Shaikh Zayed during his first days of rule, a squadron of the Trucial Oman Scouts that was normally stationed in Sharjah would be despatched to Abu Dhabi to safeguard internal security in the shaikhdom. At the same time, the Royal Navy was to ensure that, by escorting his yacht to Qatar or Bahrain, Shaikh Shakhbut would not be able to return hurriedly to Abu Dhabi. To prevent rumours that the British Government had played an active role in this coup, the Trucial Oman Scouts and the Royal Navy would only act after Shaikh Zayed had issued a formal request for their help.[83]

The advantage of this new plan, to which Shaikh Zayed had already agreed in principle, was that the replacing of Shaikh Shakhbu would be presented to the world as Shaikh Zayed's initiative. It was therefore defensible both internationally and in the House of Commons. The only disadvantage was that it depended on events outside the control of Shaikh Zayed and the British Government, who would have to wait

for Shaikh Shakhbut's decision to make a trip outside his territory. However, it was suggested that this difficulty might be overcome by staging an invitation to him to visit Iran or the USA.[84]

Gordon Walker approved of Luce's alternative plan and recommended it to the prime minister, Harold Wilson, and the defence secretary, Denis Healey.[85] In his note to the prime minister, Gordon Walker explained that the deposing of Shaikh Shakhbut was necessary in order to modernize the Persian Gulf States and Britain's own relationship with them. He argued:

> One essential part of the process of modernisation is the federation of the small Trucial Sheikhdoms. Here I am faced with a difficult problem: Shakhbut. [...] He is a permanent obstacle to the achievement of a federation of the Trucial States, the only logical form which their political and economic development can take.[86]

Both Wilson and Healey approved Gordon Walker's plan,[87] and, having obtained their consent, Gordon Walker authorized the political resident on 23 December 1964 to assure Shaikh Zayed of immediate recognition by the British Government in the event of a successful coup d'état against Shaikh Shakhbut. Luce was also instructed to promise Shaikh Zayed that in response to a formal request, the Trucial Oman Scouts would provide military support. To prevent any leaks, Gordon Walker insisted that knowledge of the plan was restricted as much as possible. In the Persian Gulf, only Shaikh Zayed, the local British Naval commander, and the commander of the Trucial Oman Scouts were to be informed about it. The information was also disclosed to the British ambassador in Washington, David Ormsby-Gore, and to the British permanent representative to the UN in New York, Lord Caradon.[88]

However, the planned coup d'état never took place, and Shaikh Shakhbut remained in power for another 20 months after the meeting between Luce and Gordon Walker in December 1964. Because the relevant documents in the National Archives remain classified, it is impossible to reconstruct the course of events after Luce had received instructions on 23 December to speak to Shaikh Zayed, and the only further reference to the plan that can be found in the available sources dates from August 1966: 'Previous attempts to remove him [Shakhbut] in 1963 and 1965 foundered when members of the Ruling Family lost their nerve at the last moment [...].'[89] This source proves that the ruler was not left in power because the British Government had changed its mind about him. The plan that had been authorized by Harold Wilson

in December 1964 was not implemented because Shaikh Zayed decided not to act upon it.

6.4 The replacement of Shakhbut by Zayed in August 1966

Shaikh Shakhbut was eventually replaced as ruler of Abu Dhabi by his brother, Shaikh Zayed on 6 August 1966. Several British Government documents related to this event remain classified in the National Archives,[90] but one of the few available official records on Shaikh Shakhbut's deposition is the guidance telegram that was despatched on the day of the deposition by the Foreign Office and Commonwealth Relations Office to Britain's diplomatic missions around the world, informing them that

> Shaikh Shakhbut the ruler of the Trucial State of Abu Dhabi has been deposed by the leading members of his family on the grounds of quote the lamentable condition of the country, his misrule and mental instability and his rejection of all advice unquote. The ruling family have appointed Shaikh Zaid bin Sultan, Shakhbut's brother, as ruler in his place.[91]

On the evening of 4 August, the acting political agent in Abu Dhabi, Mr Nuttall, had been presented with a letter signed by the senior members of the ruling family, informing the British Government that they had decided to depose Shaikh Shakhbut. In this letter, they had formally asked the British Government to help them avoid a disturbance of the peace in Abu Dhabi by permanently removing Shaikh Shakhbut, and temporarily removing his two sons, Said and Sultan, from the shaikhdom. As the British Government had decided to respect the decision of the ruling family, the acting political resident, Glencairn Balfour-Paul, had flown to Abu Dhabi from Bahrain in order to convey the information personally to Shaikh Shakhbut.[92] In response to a request from the ruling family, Balfour-Paul had also arranged for two squadrons of the Trucial Oman Scouts to be flown to Abu Dhabi on 6 August to maintain law and order there after he had spoken to Shaikh Shakhbut, who departed from Abu Dhabi on an RAF plane on the same day.

It was stressed in the guidance telegram that the deposition had to be presented to the world as an initiative of Abu Dhabi's ruling family. British diplomats abroad were instructed to 'say un-attributably that it is a straightforward case of the replacement of an unpopular ruler

in accordance with the normal practice in traditional Arab society'.[93] They were also told to avoid drawing attention in any discussion about the events in Abu Dhabi to the parallel developments in Sharjah a year earlier, when Shaikh Saqr had been deposed by his family.[94]

This presentation of the deposing of Shaikh Shakhbut resulted from the British Government's determination to maintain internationally that it did not interfere in the internal affairs of the protected states. In reality, however, Britain's role in the deposition process in Abu Dhabi was not reduced simply to carrying out the wishes of the ruling family but was the result of a deal concluded between Shaikh Zayed and the British Government during the shaikh's visit to Britain in June 1966, when he travelled to Britain for what was officially a private visit designed to seek medical treatment for one of his sons. During his visit, he met George Thomson, minister of state in the Foreign Office, for consultations on the current situation in his country.[95] The result of these meetings was conveyed to Britain's diplomatic missions abroad after Shaikh Shakhbut had been deposed:

> Strictly for your own information Shaikh Zaid spoke to us during his visit to Britain of the ruling family's concern at Shaikh Shakhbut's behaviour and of their determination to act against him. He asked for an assurance that in the event of their deposing Shakhbut and appointing him in his place we would accept him as ruler and provide him with assistance in the form of an aircraft to take Shakhbut away from Abu Dhabi following his deposition. This assurance was subsequently given to him.[96]

Having obtained an assurance of support from the British Government, Shaikh Zayed returned to the Gulf, where he paid a visit to Balfour-Paul to discuss with him the possible procedures for deposing his brother. From the British perspective, a necessary prerequisite for the ruler's replacement was a written request to this end, signed by the leading members of the ruling family. In his memoirs, Balfour-Paul recalled:

> Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi called on me at the suggestion of the Foreign Office, where he had just paid a visit. He asked for assistance in removing from the rulership of Abu Dhabi his notoriously awkward elder brother Shakhbut. Bill Luce had long wanted his removal but the family had not previously had the courage to request our intervention, and [...] we were constitutionally debarred from ousting a

> ruler without a written request from his family. None of Shakhbut's predecessors had died peacefully in their beds, and he would have reacted fiercely if he had got wind of a petition from the family for his removal. So plans had to be made in complete secrecy.[97]

On the evening of 4 August, a letter was eventually delivered to Nuttall in the political agency in Abu Dhabi, stating the desire of the 'Heads and lawful representatives of [the] Ruling family' to depose the ruler and asking the British Government for its help in removing him from the shaikhdom.[98] Nuttall reported to the Foreign Office that this request had been signed by 'both required persons', without specifying who they were.[99]

Due to the documents being classified, it remains unclear how the influential members of the ruling family were persuaded to cooperate with Shaikh Zayed and the British Government in deposing the ruler in August 1966. However, it is important to note that Shaikh Shakhbut's relationship with his own family had deteriorated badly during the first half of 1966, the main reason being his reluctance to allot a defined percentage of Abu Dhabi's oil revenues as allowances for the members of the ruling family.[100] The Al-Nahyan family was even more angered by Shaikh Shakhbut's avarice when he made a large financial donation to King Hussein of Jordan in the spring of 1966,[101] and they accused him of caring for the welfare of the people of Jordan but not about his own subjects. Apart from Shaikh Zayed, in the first half of 1966 the most prominent family member to criticize Shaikh Shakhbut openly was his other brother, Shaikh Khalid, who visited the political agent, Archie Lamb, in February 1966, complaining to him about Shaikh Shakhbut's deficiencies as a ruler. He warned Lamb that his brother would never change, or set up an administration, or implement successful development projects. Shaikh Khalid's criticism was so explicit that Lamb concluded from the meeting that it '[was] pretty obvious that Khalid wanted to convey that, as far as H.M.G. and Abu Dhabi are concerned, Shakhbut is a dead loss and that we should cut our losses'.[102] Given the fact that it had been Shaikh Khalid who, in 1963, had been the obstacle to the forming of a consensus in the ruling family in favour of deposing Shaikh Shakhbut, his change of position was a significant development. Because the British Government, from 1962 onwards, had regarded Shaikh Khalid as the most influential member of the ruling family apart from Shaikh Zayed, it seems likely that he was one of the two 'required persons' who signed the letter delivered to Nuttall on 4 August.[103]

As soon as Nuttall had received the letter, Balfour-Paul travelled to Abu Dhabi to inform Shaikh Shakhbut that his family had decided to depose him. In the meantime, because of the possibility that he would not accept his removal, military preparations were put in place, as Balfour-Paul recalled in his memoirs:

> When all was ready I flew to Abu Dhabi, ostensibly to pay a routine call on Shakhbut. Two companies of the Trucial Oman Scouts (the TOS) were privily positioned overnight on 'training manoeuvres', sufficiently near the palace to intervene forcibly when needed.'[104]

These preparations turned out to be necessary, as Shaikh Shakhbut refused to step down. Despite Balfour-Paul's attempts to persuade him to abdicate with dignity, the ruler was resolved to stay in his palace and if necessary to defend himself with the help of his palace guards. Eventually he had to be forced to leave his palace by the Trucial Oman Scouts, who closed in around the building, shouting at the guards to come out and lay down their guns. Once the palace guards had surrendered, Shaikh Shakhbut emerged and was escorted to the airport, from where he was flown to Bahrain.[105] Shaikh Zayed subsequently installed himself in the palace as the new ruler, without any further disturbances.

It can be concluded that Shaikh Shakhbut's eventual deposition in August 1966 was a joint enterprise between the British Government and Shaikh Zayed, who eventually managed to rally the support of his family. The British Government assured Shaikh Zayed of their support and provided him with the military backing by the Trucial Oman Scouts that he required in order to act against his brother. Shaikh Zayed, on the other hand, organized the formal request for Shaikh Shakhbut's replacement, which the British Government needed to be able to present the world with the deposition as an Al-Nahyan family affair. Similarly, for the British Government the procedure for identifying Shaikh Shakhbut's replacement involved the same advantages identified in the plan that had been devised but not implemented in the spring of 1963. Having obtained a letter from the leading members of the ruling family requesting that Shaikh Shakhbut should be replaced by his brother, the British Government was able to claim that it had had no active hand in the deposition but had merely served as a messenger by informing the former ruler of his family's decision. After three years of discussions between London and the political residency on the subject of

how to get rid of Shaikh Shakhbut, this, from the British perspective, was the most advantageous way of deposing him. He was replaced in 1966 without the British Government having to admit to active interference in the internal affairs of one of the protected states of the Persian Gulf.

7
The Prospect of Britain's Withdrawal

7.1 The decision to give up the Aden base

In November 1965 the British Government made a decision that significantly changed the military framework on which Britain's policy in the Persian Gulf was based, when it agreed to give up the military base in Aden by 1968.[1] This decision was taken in the context of the Defence Review that was being conducted by the Cabinet Defence and Oversea Policy Committee as a result of the Chequers conference of November 1964. During his election campaign, the new Labour prime minister, Harold Wilson, had stressed that a government under his leadership would maintain Britain's military presence East of Suez,[2] and, once elected, he assured the House of Commons that Britain could not afford to relinquish its world role.[3] However, it soon turned out that it would not be easy for him to keep this promise, given the grave financial difficulties that the Labour Cabinet had inherited from its Conservative predecessors. Faced with a balance of payments deficit of £800 million, Wilson scheduled a meeting with all senior ministers who were concerned with defence issues, and they gathered at Chequers on 21 and 22 November 1964 to discuss Britain's defence expenditure and commitments. During this conference, Wilson accepted the warnings of the Treasury and the newly created Department of Economic Affairs that because of the precarious financial situation, the British defence budget could not be allowed to continue increasing at the present rate. The ministers present agreed that Britain could not afford to spend more than £2000 million on defence by 1969, instead of the estimated £2400 million.[4] Wilson therefore instructed the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee to find ways to make the necessary savings.

While the aim of cutting defence expenditure was at the centre of the discussions in the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee, it is important to note that the decision to give up the Aden base was not dictated by economic necessity alone. Another very important reason was the deterioration of the security situation in Aden. In 1963 the former Crown colony of Aden Port and the protectorates of the Aden hinterland had been merged into the Federation of South Arabia. While the British Government had intended to grant this federation full independence by 1968 at the latest, it had been equally resolved to maintain its access to the Aden base even after that date. To that end, the British Government had concluded a defence treaty with the South Arabian federal government in 1964.[5] However, this British plan was rendered impossible by the continuously growing forces of Arab nationalism in South Arabia, and by the mid-1960s the British were faced with a violent campaign in both Aden and in the protectorates that was designed to drive them out of South Arabia altogether.[6] When Stewart Crawford, under-secretary in the Foreign Office, informed Luce in May 1965 about the ongoing Defence Review, he stressed that the increase in terrorism and violence in Aden had greatly diminished the value of the base to the British Government, and he warned that

> [...] the situation in Aden is developing in such a way that an increasing proportion of our forces are locked up in internal security duties there and the time may not be far off when Aden simply could not spare many troops for outside operations in the Gulf.[7]

Under these circumstances, continued access to the base after South Arabia's independence was no longer a realistic option.[8]

From the point of view of military planning, the withdrawal from Aden entailed considerable difficulties for the future British protection of the Persian Gulf in general and of Kuwait in particular. Most of Britain's troops and equipment that were earmarked for an intervention in Kuwait in case of an Iraqi attack were stationed in Aden, and the importance of the base had been increased in 1963 following the independence of Kenya, which had meant the loss of the Kenya base. The British Government had been forced to redeploy its strategic reserve for the protection of Kuwait to Aden.[9] Without the Aden base, Britain would be unable to defend Kuwait in accordance with the existing intervention plan, since the forces stationed in the Persian Gulf at Bahrain, Sharjah, Salalah, and on Masirah Island were not sufficient for that purpose.

Despite these difficulties, the British Government was resolved that the disengagement from Aden could not be allowed to lead to the end of Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf and its commitments towards the states of the area. It was agreed in the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee that 'a complete withdrawal from the Persian Gulf at the same time as we left Aden could lead to a serious breakdown in the area'.[10] Certainly Britain could not leave the Persian Gulf without incurring the risk of leaving behind a power vacuum that would lead to regional conflict and might even invite Soviet intervention. Another possible consequence of disengagement would be the interruption of oil supplies to the West, or the alteration of the existing and, from the British point of view, profitable conditions under which the oil was extracted and exported. The Persian Gulf was still regarded by the British Government as the least stable part of the Middle East.[11]

Another important reason for Britain to remain in the Gulf after the withdrawal from the Aden base was the need to satisfy the US Government, which was likely to be very concerned and angered if the British Government decided to give up its presence there altogether. Michael Stewart, the foreign secretary, warned the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee that Britain could not afford to disappoint the expectations of its American allies:

> The Anglo-American Alliance is fundamental to British policy and interests in all parts of the world. To preserve it and get best value from it, we must, within the limits imposed by our economic resources, retain our present unique position among the United States' allies as the only power able and willing to support the Western strategic posture and peace-keeping role on a global basis. [...] One area in which, for historical reasons, Britain has a unique ability to play a decisive political and military role is the Persian Gulf.[12]

The third British reason for staying in the Persian Gulf was the position of Iran. The Shah had repeatedly informed the British that he counted on Her Majesty's Government to preserve the stability and security of the Persian Gulf area.[13] There was a danger that a sudden British withdrawal would anger him and lead him to reconsider his allegiance to the Western bloc.[14]

The Defence and Oversea Policy Committee considered various military scenarios that would enable the British Government to stand by its commitments to the Persian Gulf States after withdrawal from

Aden. The foreign secretary suggested compensating for the loss of the Aden base by stationing sufficient forces in the Persian Gulf to defend Kuwait, the protected states, and Oman,[15] which meant increasing the total number of men stationed in the Gulf from 3700 to 11,000.[16] The largest part of this redeployment was required to maintain Britain's current commitment to come to Kuwait's defence within 36 hours in the event of an Iraqi attack. Stewart acknowledged that the danger of such an attack was constantly decreasing because Kuwait had become a respected independent and sovereign state and a member of the international community, which was not likely to tolerate an Iraqi attempt to annex it without protest. However, he argued that for political reasons it was unwise to abrogate the British defence commitment towards Kuwait unilaterally. Such a detrimental step could anger the Kuwaiti Government and lead it to change its friendly policies towards the West, while the confidence of the rulers of the protected states and the Sultan of Oman in Britain's readiness and ability to protect their territories might also be badly affected.[17]

In addition, there were significant financial reasons facing the proposed substantial redeployment from Aden to the Persian Gulf. The Defence and Oversea Policy Committee had calculated that the cost of the redeployment would amount to £22 million, an enormous sum in view of the fact that the Defence Review was supposed to find ways to save money on defence expenditure. There was also a logistical problem related to this redeployment, in that the construction of the necessary facilities for the British troops would have taken at least five years and could not under any circumstances have been completed by 1968. As a result 'there was therefore bound to be a period after our withdrawal from Aden during which we should not have the facilities in the Persian Gulf which would enable us to fulfil the Kuwait commitment'.[18] The financial and practical reservations against the planned redeployment were reinforced by a political argument supported by the political resident. When consulted by the Foreign Office about the planned redeployment to the Persian Gulf, Luce stressed that the stationing of so many troops would not be acceptable to the local rulers.[19] The existing British bases and staging posts at Bahrain, Sharjah, Salalah, and on Masirah Island were not big enough to accommodate the additional men, and the rulers were highly unlikely to agree to lease the necessary land to Britain for such a substantial redeployment. Luce had already warned the Foreign Office in 1964 that 'it would not be politically feasible to build up a military base in the Gulf area in any way comparable with the present base in Aden',[20] and he was convinced that while the

rulers of the protected states welcomed the British military presence in the area and wanted to remain under Britain's protection, they would fear the political consequences of a sudden and drastic increase in British soldiers stationed in their territories. There was a danger that the envisaged redeployment might trigger Arab nationalist attacks against the rulers, as well as local opposition against their regimes.

As a result of these financial, logistical, and political considerations, the British Government decided that it was not feasible to station all of the forces currently earmarked for the defence of Kuwait in the Persian Gulf.[21] It followed from this conclusion that after the withdrawal from Aden, Britain would be unable to maintain its military commitment towards Kuwait in its present form. Unwilling to abrogate the Exchange of Letters that provided for Britain's protection of Kuwait, the British Government decided instead on a compromise: namely, in the event of an attack, to limit its military commitment towards the emirate to the provision of air support only. British land forces would be deployed to Kuwait only if the amir gave adequate warning that he needed military help, so that reinforcements could then be sent in either from Britain or from the British bases in the Far East.[22]

The limitations imposed on Britain's defence commitment to Kuwait enabled the British Government to plan for a much smaller redeployment to the Gulf after the withdrawal from Aden. To meet the requirements for protecting Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, and the Trucial States, and providing Kuwait with air support, it would be necessary only to station a second infantry battalion and another RAF squadron of fighter planes in the Persian Gulf. Also, the cost of this redeployment was significantly smaller: it amounted to only £10 million.[23] Following extensive discussions between the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office, the British Government decided to station the additional infantry battalion at Sharjah and the RAF squadron, along with some headquarters personnel, at Bahrain.

The reasons for this choice of location were mainly political. The political resident had imposed a ceiling on the number of troops that could, in his opinion, be stationed alongside the existing British military presence in the Persian Gulf without incurring the risk of the rulers' disapproval; these numbers amounted to 600 for Bahrain and 2000 for Sharjah.[24] The defence minister, Denis Healey, devised a redeployment plan that respected these limitations, while stressing that although this new plan was the best possible compromise given the economic and political constraints facing the British Government, it was 'not an ideal military solution'.[25] Certainly it would have been better, from the

military viewpoint, to station more men in Bahrain and add several land and air units to create a more balanced force in the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, Healey warned that even with this smaller-scale redeployment, there was no guarantee that the construction of the necessary facilities would be completed by the time Britain lost the base in Aden. As a result, the forces that were to be redeployed from Aden to the Persian Gulf would have to prepare themselves to serve in very spartan conditions, at least for a limited period of time.[26] Despite these drawbacks, there seemed to be no better alternative plan to compensate for the loss of the Aden base, and the British Government therefore endorsed Healey's redeployment plan on 23 January 1966.[27]

7.2 Attempts to preserve British prestige in the Persian Gulf

The decision was announced in the Defence White Paper on 23 February 1966 that the Aden base would be given up as soon as the Federation of South Arabia became independent, and that additional forces would be deployed in the Persian Gulf.[28] In the weeks preceding this announcement, the British Government had been busy with political preparations for the planned redeployment. Luce was instructed to inform the rulers of Sharjah and Bahrain of the planned build-up of British forces in their territories and to obtain their agreement to this. The Foreign Office also regarded it as extremely important that these rulers consented, at least in principle, to the British Government leasing additional land for the construction of facilities for the British forces before the imminent withdrawal from Aden was made public.[29] It was feared that the disengagement from Aden would be celebrated by Arab nationalists as a triumph over British imperialism, and that the planned redeployment to the Gulf would trigger aggressive criticism. The Foreign Office wanted to avoid a situation in which pressure from the Arab nationalists might influence the rulers' decision as to whether or not to make additional land available, as requested by the British.

The Foreign Office also believed that as long as the rulers remained ignorant of the British withdrawal from Aden, the chances of their consenting to Britain leasing extra land would be greater. There was always the risk that the rulers' confidence in the continued determination of the British Government to maintain its presence in the Persian Gulf and to protect them against foreign aggression would be shaken by Britain's disengagement from the Aden base. One possible consequence was that the rulers would deny the build-up of British troops in their territories

because of their conviction that it was not worth enduring Arab nationalist criticism if the British were, in any case, likely to withdraw soon. Therefore Luce was instructed to 'avoid admitting that there is a connexion between the proposed transfers and any decision about the future of the Aden base'.[30]

The negotiations between Luce, Shaikh Khalid of Sharjah, and Shaikh Isa of Bahrain were successful, and both rulers immediately agreed to the planned build-up. Shaikh Khalid of Sharjah was especially forthcoming, telling Luce that he regarded the stationing of more British troops as a welcome source of income for his state and as beneficial for trade and business in Sharjah. Shaikh Isa of Bahrain also agreed to the leasing of the requested land by the British Government, but did express some worries concerning the reaction of the Arab League and Arab nationalist opinion in general.[31] Luce therefore requested that there should be no mention in the Defence White Paper of Bahrain and Sharjah as the locations for the future British build-up in the Persian Gulf: 'The two Rulers have responded in a most obliging and friendly manner and we should do all we can to avoid for as long as possible focussing on them the inevitable hostile propaganda.'[32] His proposition was accepted by the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign Office.[33]

While Luce concentrated on his negotiations with the rulers of Sharjah and Bahrain, it fell upon Noel Jackson, the British ambassador in Kuwait, to inform the amir about the consequences that the withdrawal from Aden would have for Britain's ability to defend the emirate against an Iraqi invasion. Jackson assured the amir of the British Government's conviction that the danger of an Iraqi attack had diminished greatly since 1961. Kuwait's independence and sovereignty was internationally respected, the emirate enjoyed sufficiently cordial relations with Iraq – as recently shown by the amir's visit to Baghdad – and Kuwait's own military forces had been built up since independence. Furthermore, the deployment of additional British troops and air forces in the Persian Gulf would act as a useful deterrent to any Iraqi plans to attack Kuwait, should the relationship between the two countries deteriorate. From the point of view of the British Government, there was no need to change the terms of the Exchange of Letters of 1961: 'We remain ready to come to Kuwait's assistance if required; the only change will be that the means at our <u>immediate</u> [underlining in the original] disposal will be limited to air support (and the means are not specified in the Exchange).'[34]

The amir accepted the British ambassador's explanations without protest. He stressed that air support was more important to him than

anything else and that he felt reassured by the deployment of an additional squadron of fighter planes in the Persian Gulf. He also informed Jackson that if he needed foreign ground forces for the defence of his state in the future, he would appeal to the Arab League, and to King Faisal of Saudi Arabia who had recently promised him his support.[35]

The refusal of the British Government formally to amend the Exchange of Letters or to put on record in any way the limits of its military support for Kuwait resulted from the desire to maintain Britain's prestige in the Persian Gulf despite the withdrawal from Aden. A public announcement of the changed agreement with the Amir of Kuwait would have reduced the deterrent value of the troops stationed in the Persian Gulf, and shaken the local rulers' confidence and trust in Britain, while the British Government certainly wished to avoid rumours that it was dismantling its entire military presence in the Middle East. In the planned doubling of Britain's forces in the Persian Gulf, there was also an important psychological element. In his redeployment plan, Denis Healey, the defence secretary, had stressed the need for stationing sufficient troops and aircraft in the Gulf 'to create the necessary confidence throughout the area that we do not intend early and complete military withdrawal from the Middle East'.[36]

The desire to avoid the impression that the withdrawal from Aden was the beginning of the end of Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf induced the British Government to inform its most important allies in the Middle East – the Shah of Iran and the King of Saudi Arabia – about its plans before the Defence White Paper was published.[37] Foreign secretary Michael Stewart sent two personal letters to King Faisal and Shah Reza Pahlavi, explaining the British decision and assuring them that Britain would remain in the Persian Gulf for the indefinite future.[38] Neither of them took the British news well: King Faisal accused the British Government of giving up on the Federation of South Arabia, leaving chaos and a great potential for Arab nationalist subversion behind.[39] The shah was also angered and dismayed by the British withdrawal, and only partly reassured by the redeployment plans for the Persian Gulf.[40]

The ally that the British Government was most anxious to convince of its continued intention to maintain Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf was the USA. The Foreign secretary, Michael Stewart, and the defence secretary, Denis Healey, therefore travelled with a delegation to Washington DC in February 1966 to inform the US Government of the content of the impending Defence White Paper. While it was important for them to secure the understanding and support of their US counterparts for Britain's plans in the Middle East, they were

determined not to be dissuaded from their decisions. Before leaving for Washington DC, Stewart told Harold Wilson that 'there is virtually no likelihood that the discussions with the Americans will cause us to alter our decision with regard to Aden or the need for additional facilities in the Gulf, and the reassurance of our friends in the area'.[41] During the Anglo-American discussions in Washington DC, the US Government welcomed Britain's decision to increase its military presence in the Persian Gulf to compensate for the loss of Aden. Dean Rusk, the US secretary of state, took the opportunity to stress the great importance that the US Government attributed to a continued world role for the British, commenting to the delegation that it would be disastrous if the American people gained the impression that they were to be left entirely alone in defending the 'Free World'.[42]

During the following two years, the British Government continued to do everything in its power to prevent rumours that Britain was planning to withdraw from the Persian Gulf. Both the US Government and some of the rulers of the protected states, such as Shaikh Isa of Bahrain, were becoming increasingly worried in this regard,[43] although the British Government tried to diminish the fears of its allies.[44] At the same time, however, the worsening state of the British economy and the need for further defence cuts led to a discussion in London on Britain's long-term policy in the Persian Gulf, and in June 1967 a paper on this subject was submitted to ministers by the Defence Review Working Party of the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee. This paper concluded that it was unrealistic to suppose that Britain would be able to maintain its special position in the Persian Gulf for the indefinite future, and that British withdrawal from the region, both militarily and politically, had to be expected by the mid-1970s. This did not mean that by then Britain's interests in the stability and security of the Persian Gulf and access on favourable terms to the oil of the area would have diminished. It was not the interests of the British Government in the Persian Gulf that were expected to change but Britain's ability to protect those interests with the help of an imperial presence in the area. This ability was diminished not only by the severe constraints on the British defence budget but also by the fact that Britain's continued presence in the Persian Gulf was likely to provoke both local Arab nationalist subversion and criticism in both the international and the domestic political arenas:

> By the mid-1970s we must expect a world where almost all colonial and quasi-colonial traces have disappeared and the overseas

> deployment of British power has contracted further than at present. If we have not gone from the Gulf, the pressures on us to go are likely to be very severe indeed. [...] we would be left far too exposed not only to local subversion but also to international criticism and British domestic impatience over our clinging to a position with anachronistically imperial overtones.[45]

While the Defence Review Working Party saw no future for Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf after the mid-1970s, it regarded it as 'politically disastrous' publically to announce the British Government's intention of disengaging from the area in the long term.[46] There was a danger that such news would shock the local rulers and completely destroy their confidence in the British Government, which, after all, had only recently promised them that the withdrawal from Aden would not lead to a similar development in the Persian Gulf. However, it was the confidence and the cooperation of the rulers of the protected states that the British Government needed in order to prepare the area for a time when Britain would no longer ensure its security and political stability. From the British perspective, much remained to be done in the Persian Gulf to prevent the eruption of chaos and regional conflict after Britain's eventual withdrawal. Territorial disputes, among both the protected states and with their larger neighbours, needed to be settled; the physical development of the states had to be brought forward; and the existing British modernization policy had to be intensified. Since the British Government formally had no right to interfere in the internal affairs of the protected states, it had to rely for this purpose on its powers of persuasion and the trust of the local rulers in its advice. Consequently, the British Government could not afford to lose the confidence and respect of the local rulers.[47]

As a result of these considerations, the British policy of denying any intention of withdrawal from the Persian Gulf remained unchanged until January 1968. The ministers of the Defence and Oversea Policy Committee had agreed in July 1967 that Britain would have to dismantle its military presence in the Persian Gulf by the mid-1970s, but this decision was kept completely secret and no specific date was set for its implementation.[48]

7.3 Planning for the area's long-term future

Even though Britain's continued presence in the Persian Gulf was not seriously questioned by the Defence Review until 1967, the Foreign

Office had, from 1965 onwards, begun to pursue a number of policies in the Persian Gulf that were designed to prepare the area for eventual British withdrawal. While this was not expected to occur before the mid-1970s, even staunch supporters of Britain's continued special position in the Persian Gulf, such as Luce, were aware of the fact that the British Government 'can obviously not hold it for ever'.[49] As early as February 1964, Luce sent a letter to Sir Geoffrey Harrison in the Foreign Office, in which he stressed the need to find alternative ways of preserving the stability and security of the Persian Gulf in the long term. The British Government had to find a method of containing the territorial ambitions of Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran, as well as the spread of Arab nationalism and Communism in the area, before it could afford to withdraw. In his opinion, the best solution was the concept of 'Arabian Peninsula solidarity'.[50]

Luce proposed that all the states of the Arabian Peninsula should be encouraged to acknowledge their common interest in peace and stability, respect each others' territorial integrity and independence, and form a loose association with each other. This did not mean that individual states should be urged to surrender parts of their sovereignty or merge in an extremely large political federation comprised of the entire Arabian Peninsula. Their solidarity and cooperation should be institutionalized following the model of the Organization of American States, which was a loose association that respected the full sovereignty of all of its members. According to Luce, the solidarity among the states of the Arabian Peninsula could be based on the geographical, political, and economic similarities between them:

> The Peninsula is a compact area comprising territories which share, broadly speaking, common social and political systems and which, with the exception of Yemen [...], have so far avoided the convulsions of revolution. Two major ingredients of solidarity therefore exist: geographical propinquity and political and social compatibility. The third favourable factor is the presence of large and expanding resources of oil which ensures financial means sufficient, if wisely used, to promote the development and prosperity of the whole Peninsula and thereby to strengthen the interdependence of its component states.[51]

To promote development and to prevent the danger of the eruption of another revolution, the oil-rich states of the peninsula were supposed to give financial support to the poorer ones.

The political resident acknowledged that the civil war in Yemen, and the military involvement of the Egyptians and Saudis, presented a major obstacle to the creation of Arabian Peninsula solidarity. However, he expected that the conflict would calm down within the next two years and that eventually a regime would emerge in Yemen that would not stand in the way of his proposed policy. As for Kuwait, Luce did not want it to associate itself too closely with a grouping of Arabian Peninsula states because this could provoke an aggressive Iraqi reaction. It was better if the emirate maintained a balance between its position vis-à-vis the Arab nationalist forces that were predominant in Egypt and Iraq, and the monarchical states of the Arabian Peninsula. In the long term, the best solution for Kuwait was to emerge 'as a sort of Switzerland of the Middle East and a financial centre of such importance that it will be in everybody's interests to preserve its independence'.[52] Luce also acknowledged that Arabian Peninsula solidarity as an alternative to Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf could not be brought about rapidly. He proposed a time-frame of ten years as the minimum required for creating all the necessary preconditions.

While Luce's suggestions as to how to undertake the active creation of Arabian Peninsula solidarity remained in general quite vague, he had expressed certainty on one point. Because of its size, wealth, and geographical location at the centre of the peninsula, Saudi Arabia would have to play a key role, and since the stability of Saudi Arabia was a necessary prerequisite for the stability and security of the entire Arabian Peninsula, it followed that the regime in Saudi Arabia had to take the lead in promoting social, political, and economic development in order to prevent the danger of an Arab nationalist or socialist revolution that might spread to the other states of the area. At the same time, Saudi Arabia had to improve its relations with its smaller neighbours. It needed to allay the fears of the rulers of the protected states, the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, and the shaikhs of the Aden hinterland that traditional Wahhabi expansionism, on which the rise and growth of the Saudi kingdom had been based for the last two centuries, still dominated Saudi Arabia's foreign policy. Therefore, Luce argued, Saudi Arabia had to stop pursuing its territorial claims in the Persian Gulf and give up any ambition to dominate the protected states after eventual British withdrawal:

> It therefore seems to me that the first requirement for solidarity is a real effort by the Saudis to establish friendly personal relations with

> the Rulers of their neighbouring territories based on respect for their sovereign rights within their existing boundaries.[53]

Luce's concept of Arabian Peninsula solidarity, which he promoted until his replacement by Stewart Crawford as political resident in the summer of 1966, had found only limited favour in the Foreign Office.[54] While Crawford agreed that the concept sounded extremely attractive in theory, he had serious doubts that it could be put into practice.[55] The idea of associating territories (such as Yemen and the not-yet-independent South Arabian Federation) in which Arab nationalism formed a very strong and influential political movement with the conservative states of Saudi Arabia and the Persian Gulf was regarded in the Foreign Office as unrealistic.[56] Equally unlikely was Saudi cooperation with the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, who was believed by the British to be very unpopular in Saudi Arabia.[57]

However, while the idea of promoting solidarity in the entire Arabian Peninsula and striving for an association of all its component states as a basis for stability and security was dismissed by the Foreign Office, one central element of Luce's concept was adopted as British Government policy: this was the notion of forging closer relations between Saudi Arabia and the nine protected states of the Persian Gulf as the best way to prepare the area for its long-term future and eventual British withdrawal. The social, economic, and political parallels between these countries appeared to be greater than the connections with the other states of the Arabian Peninsula.[58] The British ambassador in Jeddah, Sir Colin Crowe, summed up the advantages of encouraging the Saudis to play a greater role in the Persian Gulf:

> [...] if we are not going to be able to hold our position indefinitely by our own military strength, but wish to preserve as much as we can for the future, we must come to some kind of terms with some country in the area. The U.A.R. is out of the question and too far away; the Iraqis are too hostile; the Iranians would unite all the Arabs against us; there remain the Saudis. They are in the strongest position to make trouble for us, in the field, if not at the United Nations, but equally they could best protect our flank.[59]

Crowe pointed out that since the Saudi Arabian government was eager to be on good terms with its British counterparts, the chances of interesting it in a common policy in the Persian Gulf were quite promising.[60]

As a result of these considerations, the British Government concentrated its efforts on maintaining good relations with Saudi Arabia and encouraging the improvement of the latter's relations with the protected states. The first example of Anglo-Saudi cooperation in the Persian Gulf had been Saudi Arabia's support for Britain's position during the crisis that was provoked in the summer of 1965 by the Arab League's attempt to open an office in the Trucial States. However, the problems and inherent contradictions of a joint Anglo-Saudi policy in the Persian Gulf that had become apparent during this crisis continued to complicate the British aim of promoting solidarity between Saudi Arabia and the protected states until 1968. While the Saudi Arabian government maintained a strong interest in containing the spread of Arab nationalism and Nasser's influence to its territory, Saudi Arabia was nevertheless a member of the Arab League and could not afford to isolate itself in the Arab world by appearing to be planning the future of the protected states secretly with the British imperialists. The Saudi Arabian Government had to tread very carefully and balance its policy between cooperation with Britain and respect for Arab public opinion. As a result, King Faisal felt unable to keep his promise of May 1965 to contribute £1 million to the Trucial States Development Fund. While he was ready to spend this sum on development projects in the Trucial States, he changed his mind about paying it into the fund for fear of being attacked by Arab nationalist propagandists for supporting a British imperialist institution. A compromise was therefore reached, according to which Saudi Arabia contributed to the development of the Trucial States by directly paying for the construction of a road from Sharjah to Ras al-Khaimah.[61]

On the British side there were also several factors that limited active joint Anglo-Saudi planning for the long-term future of the Persian Gulf. Apart from the territorial dispute over the Buraimi Oasis, to which Saudi Arabia continued to lay claim, the biggest problem was the British Government's determination to avoid the impression that it was considering withdrawal from the area. When George Thomson travelled to Jeddah in September 1965 to meet King Faisal, he had been instructed to engage the latter in active cooperation in the Persian Gulf without openly acknowledging that the British Government wanted Saudi Arabia to fill the vacuum that its own departure from the area would create in the long term. The briefing paper that was prepared in the Foreign Office for Thomson's trip had stressed that

> We recognise in our own minds that Saudi Arabia, provided a stable regime survives, is our natural successor in much of the area, and the

> concept of 'Arabian Peninsula solidarity' is attractive as at any rate a medium term objective. [...] We shall not wish to mention explicitly to the Saudis the possibility of their succeeding to any of our positions in the peninsula, but we could hint at the idea that it is in their long-term interests to cultivate the goodwill of their neighbours, to dispel their suspicions of Saudi expansionism, and to co-operate with us in encouraging their peaceful development.[62]

This meant that the British Government, without admitting to its motives for this policy, had to work towards cooperation with its Saudi counterparts and towards better relations between the protected states and Saudi Arabia.

The British policy with regard to Saudi Arabia was all the more complicated by the fact that some of the rulers of the Trucial States were deeply suspicious of their larger neighbour. Their enthusiasm for cooperation with Saudi Arabia was very limited and they remained convinced that they needed British protection to prevent them from falling under Saudi Arabian domination. An example of this position was the conversation between Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah and Glencairn Balfour-Paul, in February 1966:

> [...] Saqr, after much fidgeting, said that people who read newspapers, had come to him, indeed a Persian had come to him, and reported that the British were about to do a deal with the Saudis and hand the Trucial States over to Faisal's mercy. Could we really be planning to sell out our friends in so shameless a manner?[63]

To calm these fears and to avoid rumours that it was leaving the Persian Gulf, Britain had to be careful not to push ahead too fast with its policy of engaging Saudi Arabia in the area.

As a result of these complicating factors, the relationship between Saudi Arabia and the protected states improved only slowly. The most important progress was the agreement of December 1967 that Saudi Arabia would open an office in Dubai to promote cultural and economic cooperation with the Trucial States.[64] The discussions about the office in Dubai were complicated by the classical dilemma of Britain's Persian Gulf policy between 1961 and 1968. On the one hand, the British Government wanted to engage its allies in the protected states and cooperate with them in the long-term planning for the future of the area. On the other hand, it was afraid that this policy could open the doors to the penetration of the Persian Gulf by other countries that it was desperately

trying to keep out. There was a risk that the opening of a Saudi Arabian office in Dubai could lead to requests by Iraq or the UAR for a similar representation.[65] The Foreign Office therefore insisted that the Saudi Arabian office in Dubai was not given powers that were too far-reaching. It was to concern itself with commerce and cultural matters only, and would be staffed only from the relevant Saudi Arabian ministries. It was also very important to the Foreign Office that no Saudi Foreign Ministry personnel were attached to the office, which could otherwise have been confused with a Saudi Arabian diplomatic representation.[66] The British Government would not risk the exclusive nature of its relationship with Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, even to pursue its overall policy of promoting closer relations between Saudi Arabia and the protected states of the Persian Gulf.

While the British Government wanted Saudi Arabia to become more involved in the protected states and tried, from 1965 onwards, to promote this development, it was less enthusiastic about the growing interest that was displayed by Kuwait in the affairs of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States. When the old amir, Shaikh Abdulla Salim al-Sabah, died on 24 November 1965 and was succeeded by his half-brother, Shaikh Sabah Salim al-Sabah,[67] this had significant consequences for Kuwait's policy towards the protected states. The new amir took a greater interest in Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States than his predecessor had done, and wanted Kuwait to become more involved in their affairs and play an important role in their development. In order to get to know the rulers, Shaikh Sabah travelled to the protected states in May 1966, and subsequently invited them all to pay a return visit to Kuwait during the following year. Those rulers who accepted the invitation, such as Shaikh Rashid of Dubai, were welcomed with great respect and the full protocol for a formal state visit by a foreign head of state.[68] However, Kuwaiti attempts to intensify relations with the protected states were not limited to exchanging courtesies with the rulers. The amir envisaged a far-reaching programme of cooperation in political, economic, and security matters, and, in the spring of 1967, Shaikh Jabir al-Ahmad, the prime minister of Kuwait, informed the British ambassador, Noel Jackson, that his government intended to offer the rulers of the protected states the use of Kuwait's embassies abroad. This meant that Kuwait would replace the British Government in conducting the consular affairs of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States. Shaikh Jabir also suggested that the emirate's currency, the Kuwaiti dinar, should be adopted as their main currency by as many Persian Gulf States as possible.[69]

Jackson regarded the amir's great interest in the affairs of the protected states and the offer of far-reaching cooperation with them as proof of a Kuwaiti 'grand design', aimed at extending Kuwait's influence in the Persian Gulf and its domination after the eventual end of Britain's special position in the region.[70] He believed that the announcement of British withdrawal from the Aden base had led to rumours that Britain would give up its presence in the Persian Gulf as well, and that this had induced the amir to think about the future of the area and of the important role that Kuwait should play in it: 'The Amir, as Ruler of the largest and richest of our former protected states in the Gulf, may see himself as the natural heir to the leadership of the group.'[71] According to Jackson, Kuwait's long-term ambitions in Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States were very similar to those of Saudi Arabia.

The British Government found itself in a difficult situation over this question. On the one hand, it did not want to harm its relations with Kuwait by disappointing the amir. Jackson warned the Foreign Office repeatedly that the future of the Persian Gulf was a matter of great importance to Shaikh Sabah, and that the British Government could not afford to affront him in this matter.[72] Furthermore, cordial and cooperative relations between Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States were very much in the interests of the British. If Britain was to leave the Persian Gulf in the long term, the stability and security of the area depended on the protected states having as many allies as possible who would respect their independence and sovereignty.[73] While Kuwait was too small and too weak to guarantee the security of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States after an eventual British withdrawal, its great oil wealth nevertheless enabled it to play an important role in their development.[74] The British Government therefore welcomed indications that the Kuwaiti Government intended to set up a fund of 5 million Kuwaiti dinars, in addition to its existing aid programme for the protected states, to finance more development projects in the Persian Gulf and the 'Arab South'.[75] On the other hand, there were a number of problems complicating the British position towards Kuwait's new policy in the protected states, which prevented the British Government from offering its full support.

The British Government's biggest concern about a greater involvement of Kuwait in the protected states was that it might turn into a 'Trojan horse', bringing Arab nationalist and Nasserist propaganda and even subversion to Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States. In contrast with all of the other Persian Gulf States, Kuwait maintained cordial relations with the UAR and, as a member of the Arab League, did not

openly oppose Nasser's policy of spreading Arab nationalism in the Arabian Peninsula. Shaikh Jabir explained the position of the Kuwaiti Government to Noel Jackson:

> The policy that Kuwait was following was one of friendship towards all its neighbours as well as towards the U.A.R. Kuwait could not justifiably be accused of favouring either the U.A.R. or King Faisal. They aimed to achieve a balance between them so that no one could fairly accuse them of favouring the other. This was, his Government were convinced, the best, and indeed the only viable policy for Kuwait to follow.[76]

While the amir continued to depend on Britain's military protection in the case of an Iraqi attack and wanted to maintain good relations with the British Government, he could not afford to isolate Kuwait in the Arab world and expose himself to violent Arab nationalist criticism. He had therefore to keep a balance between cooperating with Nasser and the Arab League and sustaining good relations with Britain. Shaikh Jabir assured Jackson that Kuwait had no intention of opening the way into the protected states to Nasser, but claimed, on the contrary, to have made a deal with the president of the UAR that Nasser would leave Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States alone and regard them as an exclusively Kuwaiti sphere of influence.[77]

The British Government accepted Kuwait's policy of non-alignment in the Arab world in principle, appreciating the difficult position in which it found itself as a very small and very rich independent state. As Jackson pointed out, the situation of the amir was complicated by the fact that, unlike the rulers of the protected states – the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, and the King of Saudi Arabia – he did not rule absolutely and had therefore to pay more attention in his policies to public opinion and the popularity in the emirate of Arab nationalist ideas.[78] The British agents in the protected states, on the other hand, believed that the amir was taking his policy of making himself agreeable to Nasser too far. The political resident, Stewart Crawford, was not convinced by the amir's assurances,[79] and wondered

> [...] what steps have they [the al-Sabah family] taken to reassure the Rulers [of the protected states] even in confidence that, whatever line the Kuwaitis may be obliged to take in the Arab League, their hearts are on the side of peaceful evolution and opposed to the penetration of the Gulf by revolutionary influences?[80]

A major reason for Crawford's criticism was Kuwait's position with regard to the Trucial States Development Office. While the emirate contributed financially to the physical development of the Trucial States, it distributed its aid with the help of its own office in Dubai. British attempts to convince the amir to channel the money through the Trucial States Development Office, or at least to enable the Kuwait State Office to cooperate fully with the Trucial States Council, were futile. This was because when the Arab League had tried to open its own office in the Trucial States in 1965, the Kuwaiti Government had committed itself never to pay any money into the Trucial States Development Fund, and the amir felt unable to break this promise afterwards.[81]

The Kuwait State Office in Dubai was also becoming a growing reason for British concern since it employed non-Kuwaiti personnel to implement its development and educational projects in the Trucial States. These employees included a significant number of Egyptian school teachers who abused their positions through Arab nationalist political activism in the Kuwaiti-sponsored schools in the area.[82] In the political resident's view, the Kuwaiti Government needed to put a stop to these activities if it wanted its assurances that Nasser would leave the Persian Gulf alone to be taken seriously:

> The Kuwait Office in Dubai and the Kuwait corps of education inspectors know perfectly well what goes on in every school they administer. If the Kuwait Government seriously wished to weed out the worst peddlers of revolutionary doctrines they do not need to turn to the Rulers or to us for chapter and verse. So long as they close their eyes to the danger, and insist that the Kuwait Office must be allowed to carry out its mission undisturbed by 'any particular quarter', distrust will prevail.[83]

The British reservations about Kuwait's new policy in the protected states were shared by several of the local rulers, among whom the Al Sabah family in general and the amir in particular were quite unpopular. This was why only the rulers of Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ajman had accepted the amir's invitation to visit Kuwait. Shaikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi, Shaikh Isa of Bahrain, and Shaikh Ahmad of Qatar who, as the rulers of the bigger and richer protected states, had been the first three on the amir's list of priorities all found an excuse to stay away.[84] They regarded Kuwait's ruling family as arrogant and they resented Kuwait's good relations with the UAR. An example of this suspicious

attitude was given by the Ruler of Qatar during a conversation with Mr Boyle, the political agent in Doha:

> He [Shaikh Ahmad of Qatar] then went on to say that he very much resented Kuwait's patronizing attitude to the southern Gulf states, and said that he was convinced that Kuwait was doing her best to extend her influence in the southern Gulf under some secret arrangement with the U.A.R. We would see, he added, that if it happened, no good would come out of it. On the contrary, it was Nasser's latest tactics in infiltration and should be resisted at all costs.[85]

Because of Kuwait's unpopularity in the protected states and as a result of its own reservations, the Foreign Office gave only very limited active support to Kuwait's policy of extending its influence in the Persian Gulf. Noel Jackson called on Shaikh Jabir on 5 April 1967 and informed him that Kuwait's desire to forge a closer relationship with the protected states was, in the eyes of the British Government, a very desirable and promising policy in principle. However, the offer to use Kuwait's embassies abroad for the consular affairs of Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States had to be declined. Jackson stressed that as long as Britain was committed by treaty to doing so, it would not shed any part of its responsibility for conducting the foreign affairs of the protected states. As for the idea of adopting the Kuwaiti dinar as the main currency in the entire Persian Gulf and intensifying the cooperation between the emirate and the protected states in development and security matters, these were internal questions that had to be decided by the local rulers themselves. The British Government, whose responsibilities towards Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States were limited to the conduct of their external relations, could not force the rulers to cooperate with Kuwait if they did not want to.[86]

This argument reflected the reluctance of the men on the spot in the protected states to use their influence on the rulers to bring about an intensification of the latter's relations with Kuwait. Crawford and his colleagues believed that it was the Kuwaiti Government which had to change its policies towards the UAR to regain the trust of the rulers of the protected states and lay the foundations for a closer relationship with them. Britain could welcome a closer relationship between the Persian Gulf States, but only the amir could convince the rulers of the protected states of the sincerity of his motives.[87]

Attempts to improve the relations of the protected states with their neighbours in general and Saudi Arabia in particular formed only one

part of Britain's policy of preparing the Persian Gulf for its long-term future and for its own eventual withdrawal from the area. The other part concerned the encouragement of greater cooperation among the protected states themselves. On 7 and 8 July 1965, the rulers of Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Ajman, Ras al-Khaimah, and Fujairah met in Dubai.[88] The British officials stationed in the area hoped that this meeting, which was the first of its kind in a generation, would become an important first step towards greater cooperation between the protected states. In preparation for the gathering, Luce had visited the rulers of the 'Big Four' – Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai – and encouraged them to consider the possibility of all nine protected states forming a loose association: a 'League of Gulf States'.[89] Luce had also proposed that the rulers of the three oil-producing protected states – Abu Dhabi, Qatar, and Bahrain – should promise to contribute a fixed percentage of their annual oil revenues to the Trucial States Development Fund.

Neither of Luce's suggestions was accepted by the rulers. The idea of a League of Gulf States was dismissed as premature, and while the rulers of the oil-producing states used the opportunity of the gathering in Dubai to make a vague promise of contributing more to the development of their neighbours in the future, they rejected the idea of committing themselves to giving away a fixed percentage of their income.[90] Despite these drawbacks, the Gulf residency regarded the meeting as a promising sign that indicated a greater readiness among the rulers to remove old animosities and cooperate on matters of mutual interest. During the following months, Luce and the political agents concentrated on engineering another gathering of all nine rulers in the spring of 1966, which they hoped would result in 'something a little more solid' than vague statements of goodwill.[91] Furthermore, Luce wanted to use the occasion of a second meeting to push ahead with Britain's policy of forging closer relations between Saudi Arabia and the protected states:

> [...] we should discreetly inject into the minds of the Rulers of Bahrain, Qatar and Dubai the idea of inviting King Faisal to send a member of his family to meet the assembled Rulers and to join them in their festivities. [...] While the main purpose behind this idea is an important and public gesture of goodwill by the Gulf Rulers towards King Faisal, we would naturally hope that it would lay the foundations for continuing and more substantial co-operation in the future.[92]

The political resident's suggestions found great favour in the British embassy in Jeddah.[93] However, the second meeting of the nine rulers did not in the end materialize, due to Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi who, even though he had attended the 1965 meeting, now refused to come to another one and declared that cooperation with his neighbours was not in his interests.[94]

As discussed above, Shaikh Shakhbut's position presented a great problem for Britain's Persian Gulf policy.[95] The creation of a federation in the area was a central British aim, and the only questions were the form that it should take and how it could be brought about. Bahrain and Qatar were both considered big enough and possessed of sufficient sources of income to survive on their own, especially as they enjoyed close and friendly relations with Saudi Arabia.[96] The same could not, however, be said of the seven Trucial States, which were too small and, apart from Dubai and Abu Dhabi, too poor ever to become viable independent countries that could survive without foreign protection. On account of their small size and poverty, a federation among them was considered necessary, not only by the British Government but also by the Foreign Office and the British officials on the ground, who regarded the creation of a federation as an essential prerequisite to establishing solidarity and close cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the Trucial States after Britain's eventual withdrawal from the region. According to Luce, nobody could expect that 'Saudi Arabia or indeed any other Arabian State would deal on equal terms with such petty units as Fujairah, Ajman and Umm al-Qaiwain'.[97]

When Shaikh Zayed replaced his brother Shaikh Shakhbut as Ruler of Abu Dhabi in August 1966, the British Government had expected to witness substantial progress in the cooperation between the seven Trucial States. Very soon after taking power, Shaikh Zayed, who had frequently expressed his sympathy towards the idea of a Trucial States federation, agreed to contribute £500,000 to the Trucial States Development Fund, and he also promised to help his neighbours individually with financial donations.[98] However, there was now a new obstacle to the creation of a federation of the seven Trucial States, which was the problematic relationship between the new Ruler of Abu Dhabi and Shaikh Rashid of Dubai, who had been very upset by the deposition of Shaikh Shakhbut, even though he had never had a close or friendly relationship with him. Shaikh Rashid was in London when he was informed by the Foreign Office that Shaikh Zayed had taken power. He promptly accused the British Government of having engineered the deposition, thereby departing from its traditional policy of non-intervention in the

internal affairs of the protected states, and insisted that his confidence in the British Government had been greatly shaken by the events in Abu Dhabi: 'He said that like all the Rulers he had disaffected relatives and asked whether some of them only had to sign a letter to get him deposed.'[99]

The reasons given by Shaikh Rashid for his anger were not believed by the Foreign Office, which agreed with Balfour-Paul that Shaikh Rashid was upset only because he regarded Shaikh Zayed as a rival who would try to thwart his own ambitions of dominating the five poorer Trucial States. The Ruler of Dubai feared that Shaikh Zayed would try to promote a federation and emerge as its leader, and therefore, according to Balfour-Paul, tried to discredit Shaikh Zayed to prevent the other Trucial States from falling under the latter's influence.[100] The rivalry between Shaikh Zayed and Shaikh Rashid led the British Government to conclude that there was no hope of merging all seven Trucial States into one federation, and in its paper of June 1967 the Defence Review Working Party also agreed that Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Fujairah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Ajman would themselves have to choose whether they wanted to associate themselves with Abu Dhabi or Dubai. Since Britain would have to withdraw from the Persian Gulf by the mid-1970s, the British Government was obliged to encourage the nine protected states to consider cooperation or even federation among themselves. However,

> It seems clear that reduction of the nine units to [effectively] four is the most we can hope for; either by a Dubai-led federation [or union] of the NTS [Northern Trucial States] or alternatively by a division of the five small states, with some uniting or federating under Dubai's leadership and others under Abu Dhabi's.[101]

The political resident in the protected states was even more sceptical than the Defence Review Working Party. In November 1967, Crawford sent the Foreign Office a detailed analysis of whether or not the seven Trucial States were likely to form two different federations in the foreseeable future, arguing that to the present day the rulers of the five smaller Trucial States were all very proud of the fact that their shaikhdoms had preserved their existence as separate international entities. While they depended on Britain's military protection and on foreign aid for the development of their states, they were all very vigilant about preserving their independence in internal matters, and Crawford felt certain that 'none of them would willingly subordinate himself to one of his

fellows'.[102] However, if the rulers of the five smaller states refused to agree to associate, and eventually merge, with Dubai or Abu Dhabi, the British Government had no way of obliging them to do so. The treaty relationship between Britain and the protected states gave the British Government no right to force any of them into a federation with its neighbours. On the contrary, the British Government was committed to protecting the integrity of every Trucial State and to interfere if a bigger one tried to take a smaller one by force.

Crawford was completely opposed to the idea of ignoring or overstretching Britain's formal rights and responsibilities in this matter. He warned the Foreign Office that any attempt to mediatize the smaller states by force would not only endanger local security but also attract international attention, which would bring the British Government into a situation similar to the one that it had faced during the 1965 crisis with the Arab League. The political resident concluded that while the British Government should continue to support cooperation and cordial relations among the Trucial States, it should not expect or try to bring about a federation. He was convinced that 'the smaller States will not merge themselves voluntarily in the immediate future and [...] there is no action open to us now, within the framework of our general policy, to compel or encourage them to do so'.[103]

7.4 The decision to withdraw

The gradualist and careful approach of the Foreign Office and the men on the spot with regard to the future of the Persian Gulf was torpedoed in January 1968 by the sudden decision of the Cabinet to withdraw from the region by the end of 1971. Following the severe economic crisis of November 1967, during which the pound sterling had been devalued from US$2.80 to US$2.40, the decision was taken on 4 January 1968 as part of a larger plan to give up Britain's entire military presence East of Suez.[104] During this important Cabinet meeting, Roy Jenkins, the chancellor of the exchequer, stressed the urgent need for a drastic cut in public expenditure in order to abolish Britain's huge balance of payments deficit and restore international confidence in sterling. An essential part of the reductions envisaged in public expenditure were further cuts in defence spending. Britain's long-term defence policy had to adapt to the realities of the British economy.[105]

The other ministers agreed with Jenkins that, from the financial point of view, Britain's East of Suez position had become untenable.

A memorandum by the foreign secretary, George Brown, and the secretary of state for commonwealth affairs, George Thomson, stated:

> We accept also that the stage has been reached where there can be no further cuts in defence expenditure unless the overseas commitments on which much of it is based are themselves reduced. We agree with the Secretary of State for Defence that to attempt to cut defence expenditure any further without reducing our overseas commitments would be to endanger the morale of the armed forces.[106]

However, Brown and Thomson warned that a complete withdrawal from East of Suez would 'inevitably damage' Britain's interests overseas. They reminded the Cabinet of the crucial difference between reductions in domestic and overseas spending. Domestic cuts could be restored once the economic situation had been stabilized. A reduction in Britain's overseas commitments, on the other hand, would lead to an irretrievable loss of international influence. This was especially true with regard to the Persian Gulf. Brown and Thomson's memorandum stressed that the British military presence in the area and its special treaty relationships with the local governments were indivisible. Disengagement from the former would inevitably precipitate the end of the latter. This was very dangerous in view of Britain's economic interests in the Persian Gulf:

> We have a duty to leave our colleagues in no doubt about the nature of the risks to British interests that are involved here. 40 percent of Britain's (and even 50 percent of Western Europe) oil supplies come from the Gulf and 40 percent of Gulf oil is in British ownership and make a significant contribution to our foreign exchange earnings. [...] An immediate withdrawal would carry with it the certainty of friction and the probability of hostilities, particularly between Iran and Saudi Arabia. Repercussions over this could put at risk not only our own, but all Western oil interests in the area.[107]

To reduce the danger of regional conflict or even Soviet intervention, Brown suggested during the Cabinet meeting on 4 January that the British decision to leave the Persian Gulf by 1971 should not be made public, believing that such an announcement would result in a situation comparable to that in Aden, where the British Government's declared intention to give up the base by 1968 had led to an intensification of anti-British propaganda and terrorism, eventually forcing it to leave in

November 1967, which was sooner than had been intended.[108] While Brown accepted the necessity of giving up Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf by 1971, he preferred to keep this decision secret for as long as possible. However, he was overruled by the Cabinet. The other ministers argued that it was better to make an early announcement of Britain's disengagement from the Persian Gulf to remove any uncertainty in the region about the future. Rumours and speculation about Britain's intentions were expected to grow locally, once the British Government had made public its decision to withdraw from the Far East. Another argument put forward during the Cabinet discussion was that Britain could not start to phase out its expensive aircraft carrier programme before the plan to give up its military presence in the Persian Gulf had been announced, since the carriers were needed to cover the military withdrawal from the Gulf. The Cabinet concluded that an immediate announcement of Britain's intentions in the area was inevitable.[109]

A few days later, Brown travelled to the USA to inform the US Government about the British disengagement plans. The reaction of Dean Rusk, US secretary of state, was representative of the feeling of anger and betrayal that was provoked in US Government circles by the British decision: 'Be British George, be British, how can you betray us?' was Rusk's reported comment.[110] Both Rusk and the US secretary of state for defence, Robert McNamara, were more worried about the intended end of Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf than about the planned disengagement from the Far East. They felt certain that the British withdrawal would leave a dangerous power vacuum behind in the Persian Gulf that the US Government – with its military forces tied up in the Vietnam War – would not be able to fill. In their opinion, at least another five years of political evolution and economic development were needed to create an indigenous base for stability and security in the Persian Gulf. Rusk therefore urged the British Government to reconsider its intention to withdraw completely from the Gulf in favour of a reduction in its military presence there.[111] However, the British foreign secretary was obliged to disappoint him, and he informed Rusk that it would be too expensive for the British Government to maintain its military presence in the Persian Gulf after the withdrawal from the Far East.

When Brown reported on his discussions with the US Government to the British Cabinet on 12 January, he stressed that US confidence in Britain had been severely shaken. President Johnson resented having been presented with a *fait accompli* instead of having been consulted about Britain's future policy East of Suez. Rusk had also made it clear to

Brown that the decision to give up Britain's position East of Suez signalled the end of an era, not only for British foreign and defence policy but also for Anglo-American cooperation. Brown warned the Cabinet that 'irreparable damage had already been done to our relations with the United States merely by communicating our decisions to them'.[112]

While Brown was in the USA, Goronwy Roberts, minister of state in the Foreign Office, had been sent to the Middle East to inform the governments of Iran and Saudi Arabia and the rulers of the Persian Gulf of the British Government's decision.[113] King Faisal and especially Shah Reza Pahlavi took the news surprisingly well, and both indicated their willingness to cooperate with their small neighbours in the Persian Gulf in the future.[114] On the other hand, Roberts' visit to the Gulf was less pleasant; indeed it was a particularly embarrassing task for the minister of state since only two months earlier he had toured the area to assure the rulers that Britain's early withdrawal from Aden did not have any consequences for British policy towards the Persian Gulf States, and had told the rulers that they could rely on Britain to maintain its special position in the Persian Gulf as long as its presence was needed to preserve regional stability and security.[115]

The British officials in the area, too, were shocked and dismayed by the British Government's intention to break its word to the rulers. Sir Stewart Crawford sent a personal telegram to the foreign secretary, urging him to reconsider.[116] Anthony Parsons, the political agent in Bahrain, described in his memoirs the personal conflict which the second visit by Roberts caused him:

> On Mr Roberts' first visit in November, the whole island [of Bahrain] had expected that his purpose was to announce a date for British military withdrawal and the termination of the treaties. I had made this clear to the Minister and had received unequivocal confirmation that we were all wrong. [...] Between November and January I had frequently reassured the Bahrain government that the decision to stay was final and that they should put all other thoughts out of their minds. How could I now confront this volte-face and retain my own honour?[117]

As Britain's representatives in the Gulf had expected, the rulers of the protected states and the Amir of Kuwait reacted with anger and great surprise at the British Government's decision. The amir was not only concerned about the fact that he would in future have to dispense with Britain's military protection but was also worried about the possibility

of Iran attacking Bahrain,[118] while the rulers of Fujairah, Ajman, Ras al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain and Sharjah were left in 'a state of panic' at the announcement made by Roberts.[119] Speaking on behalf of them all, Shaikh Saqr of Ras al-Khaimah reminded Roberts that the five northern Trucial States were too poor and too small to arrange their affairs by themselves.[120] The rulers of the 'Big Four' protected states were equally shocked. Shaikh Isa of Bahrain expressed his fear that the dismantling of the British base and staging post on the island would severely damage Bahrain's economy; Shaikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi criticized the British Government for leaving the Persian Gulf before it had helped to create a viable system of cooperation between the rulers; and Shaikh Rashid of Dubai threatened to withdraw his sterling balances from London and in the future invest his money with whatever power would assume Britain's role as protector of the Gulf. He warned the political agent in Dubai that the other rulers would probably do the same.[121] Shaikh Ahmad of Qatar was most vehement in his reaction. He accused the British Government of neglecting its responsibilities in the Persian Gulf and called its decision to withdraw 'dishonourable' because it had not consulted the local rulers before taking it.[122] Shaikh Ahmad then urged the British Government not to announce a date for its intended withdrawal from the Persian Gulf. Britain's disengagement from the area was bad enough, but publically to set a date for it was 'lunacy'.[123] It would open the door for Arab nationalist and Communist subversion and Saudi Arabian aggression against the Gulf States.

The rulers of Bahrain, Qatar, Dubai, and Abu Dhabi made a collective attempt to pressurize the British Government to reconsider its withdrawal from the Persian Gulf. Faced with the explanation that economic necessity made the British disengagement inevitable, they offered to assume the costs of Britain's military deployment in the area.[124] A lengthy list of reasons for this offer was given by Shaikh Zayed to the political agent in Abu Dhabi, Archie Lamb:

> long friendship between H.M.G., Abu Dhabi and [the] other Gulf States; his [Zayed's] own deep affection for Britain; his appreciation that from no other country could he obtain the sincere and disinterested advice and assistance he received from H.M.G.; the absolute importance of his continuing to receive this advice and introduce a new system for political organisation and defence of [the] Trucial States; and (because of this last factor) importance of H.M.G. not being forced by economic pressures to announce a firm date for withdrawal of British forces from the Gulf.[125]

Neither the complaints of the US Government, nor the shock and dismay of the rulers of the Persian Gulf States, could persuade the British Government to change its mind. On 16 January 1968 the prime minister, Harold Wilson, announced in the House of Commons Britain's withdrawal from all of its military commitments East of Suez by 1971. On 22 January the defence secretary, Denis Healey, gave a TV interview to the BBC, during which he rejected the offer of the rulers of the larger protected states to pay for a continued British military presence in the Persian Gulf. He famously remarked that he did not care for the idea of Britain 'being a sort of white slaver for Arab shaikhs',[126] nor would the British Government consent to its troops becoming 'mercenaries' in the Persian Gulf.[127] While Healey later apologized for some of his offensive formulations, this did not change the essence of his message: the decision to give up Britain's special position of military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf was final.

Conclusion

British policy in the Persian Gulf from 1961 to 1968 cannot be understood unless it is placed in the context of what was regarded by the decision-makers in authority as Britain's role in the area. To the Foreign Office and the men on the spot, Britain's informal empire in the Gulf was upheld through an interdependent system of military power, formal treaty rights, and political influence, and it was based on the trust and confidence of the local rulers. This system was not confined to the nine treaty-bound protected states. The British decision-makers were convinced that Britain's policy towards Qatar, Bahrain, and the Trucial States could not be separated or seen in isolation from British relations with, and interests in, Kuwait and Oman. It was this conception of informal empire that characterized Britain's political strategies in the Persian Gulf from 1961 to 1968.

During that period, the situation in the Persian Gulf was defined in British eyes by the region's wealth in natural resources and its vulnerability to the territorial ambitions of the larger Middle Eastern powers. Britain's most significant interests in the Persian Gulf were oil and stability. The British Government not only wanted to ensure the continued access of the West to the vast oil reserves of the Persian Gulf but was also anxious to preserve the existing terms under which the oil was extracted and exported. In this context, Kuwait played a crucial role. Exploration of the emirate's oil reserves and the enormous profits made by BP were of significant benefit to Britain's balance of payments, while Kuwait's membership of the Sterling Area contributed to the stability of the British currency.

The second important British interest in the Persian Gulf between 1961 and 1968 resulted from the first. The area's political stability and military security had to be preserved to ensure that local

oil production was not disrupted or brought under the control of governments unfriendly to Britain. In the eyes of the relevant policy-makers, Britain's role in the area was not confined to exercising the rights that the British Government had been granted by treaty, and they had no scruples about intervening in the internal affairs of the protected states for which they were formally not responsible. Even so, this did not mean that their power to protect British interests in the Persian Gulf was unlimited, since it was fully realized in the Foreign Office and by the men on the spot that their influence in the area depended on the confidence and cooperation of the local rulers. The British Government's ability to maintain an independent policy on the Persian Gulf was also impaired by its concern for the international image of Britain's presence in the area.

The independence of Kuwait in June 1961 marked the beginning of a new phase for British policy in the Persian Gulf. The Exchange of Letters between the Amir of Kuwait and the British Government signalled the end of the emirate's constitutional subordination to Britain, which acknowledged Kuwait as a fully independent and sovereign country and a member of the international community. Britain's imperial position in the Persian Gulf was from now on officially confined to the nine protected states: Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Ras al-Khaimah, Umm al-Qaiwain, and Fujairah. However, while Kuwait's independence changed the relationship between Britain and the emirate, it did not reduce British involvement in the Persian Gulf area as a whole.

The aggressive reaction of the Iraqi president, Abd-al Karim Qasim, to the new Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement convinced the British Government that an Iraqi invasion of Kuwait was imminent. To prevent it, Operation Vantage, Britain's largest military intervention in the Middle East since the Suez Crisis, was launched on 1 July 1961. When the expected attack did not occur, the British Government did not conclude that it had been wrong about the Iraqi threat to Kuwait but remained convinced of Qasim's intention to invade and annex the emirate at the earliest opportunity. It was this fear of Iraqi aggression that motivated the British Government to maintain its commitment to defend Kuwait in the future and substantially to increase its military presence in the Persian Gulf. The Kuwait Crisis convinced the Foreign Office and Britain's men on the spot that the Persian Gulf remained an inherently unstable and insecure area where Britain's continued presence was essential to prevent the development of a dangerous power vacuum that might lead to regional conflict and Soviet intervention.

After the Kuwait Crisis and following a suggestion by Sir William Luce, the political resident, the Foreign Office tried to enlist US support for Britain's policies in the Persian Gulf. While the Foreign Office neither wanted nor expected the US Government to establish its own military presence there, it did hope to engage the State Department in open and frank discussions about joint Anglo-American interests in the area. The aim of these was to convince the US Government that Britain's special position in the Persian Gulf ensured the flow of the area's oil to the West and was therefore protecting a very important US interest during the Cold War. The Foreign Office believed that a greater understanding of British problems and policies in the Persian Gulf would induce the US Government to come to Britain's support in future crisis situations. However, the discussions that were eventually held in London in April 1963 by representatives of the Foreign Office and the US State Department did not lead to an increase in active Anglo-American cooperation in the Persian Gulf. The US Government, sharing the opinion of its British counterpart that the region was inherently unstable, appreciated Britain's presence there and wanted to see it continue, but it had no intention of getting embroiled in its affairs. The preservation of peace and stability in the Persian Gulf and the protection of the continued supply of its oil to the West was a British responsibility in which the US Government did not want to get involved.

The only exception to this general principle was the idea of the State Department's Policy Planning Council to have US diplomatic representation in the protected states. While Britain hoped to encourage US interest in the Persian Gulf and gain US support for British policy in the area, the British Government vehemently refused to consider the diplomacy idea, since the Foreign Office and the British officials on the ground were afraid that the opening of a US consulate or embassy in any of the protected states would lead to requests for diplomatic representation by countries they were trying to keep out of the area, such as Iraq and Egypt. Until 1968 the British Government remained determined to maintain the exclusivity of its relations with the protected states.

While the Kuwait Crisis convinced British policy-makers that Britain's military presence and political influence in the Persian Gulf was without alternative, they realized that the maintenance of this special position had considerable negative side-effects. As the 1960s progressed, the Foreign Office became increasingly worried about the negative international image of Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf. Both the British Government and the rulers of the protected states were exposed to

heavy Arab nationalist criticism, with Gamal Abdel Nasser, the president of Egypt and leader of the Arab Nationalist movement, accusing the British Government of denying the protected states their independence, and controlling every aspect of their internal and external affairs. He also attacked the rulers of the protected states as autocratic British stooges, unwilling and unable to govern their territories for the benefit of their peoples.

The greatest fear of the Foreign Office was that the Arab nationalist propaganda directed against Britain's presence in the Persian Gulf would eventually result in interference by the United Nations Committee of 24, which supervised the progress of the decolonization of the European colonial empires. To prevent this, a strategy was designed to improve the image both of the British presence in the Persian Gulf and the local rulers. The British Government denied every allegation that its political role in the protected states went beyond the exercise of those rights it had been granted by treaty. At the same time, however, the political resident and the political agents used their personal influence with the rulers of the protected states to persuade them of the advantages of good government. This strategy was taken to a new level with the modernization policy, which was endorsed by the new Labour Government in April 1965. Designed to develop both the protected states and their relationship with Britain, its aim was not to reduce the latter's influence in the Persian Gulf but to strengthen Britain's position in the area by reducing Arab nationalist criticism against it.

The determination to keep Arab nationalism out of the Persian Gulf was put to the test in 1965, when the British Government was faced with a plan by the Arab League to open an office in the Trucial States. Sir William Luce and his colleagues in the Foreign Office regarded this plan as a major threat to Britain's position in the Persian Gulf, believing that the office, on the instructions of Nasser, would support subversive activities designed to drive Britain from the region. The British Government initially employed an indirect strategy to prevent the opening of an Arab League office there by using the influence of the British agents in the Gulf on the local rulers in order to establish the Trucial States Development Office. This was an institution through which all foreign development aid was to be channelled and which made an Arab League office unnecessary. The British Government then tried to pre-empt Arab League aid for the Trucial States from other sources by persuading Saudi Arabia and the richer protected states (Bahrain, Qatar, Abu Dhabi, and Dubai) to make large financial contributions to the development of the Trucial States.

Britain's development aid was increased in May 1965 for the same purpose. The problem with the British plan was that its success depended on the cooperation of the Trucial States rulers and their refusal to allow the opening of an Arab League office in their territories. When five of the rulers, most prominently Shaikh Saqr of Sharjah, refused to play the British game, the British Government was forced to abandon its indirect strategy. It now resorted to desperate measures, trying to prevent any Arab League personnel from entering the Trucial States. However, Britain's men on the spot realized that this was not an effective long-term measure. The British problem was solved by the deposition of Shaikh Saqr on 24 June 1965. Due to the continued closure of relevant documents in the National Archives, it remains impossible to reconstruct the precise form and degree of Britain's involvement in the removal of Shaikh Saqr, but the available sources suggest strongly that the deposition of the ruler was not exclusively the doing of his own family. What can be stated with certainty is that the deposition of Shaikh Saqr solved Britain's greatest problem in the Persian Gulf, because it ended the danger of an Arab League office being opened in the Trucial States.

Another ruler who stood in the way of British objectives in the Persian Gulf was Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi. After significant oil resources had been discovered off the coast of Abu Dhabi in 1958 and on its mainland in 1962, he ruled what promised to become the richest state in the Persian Gulf after Kuwait.[1] The British Government wanted him to invest his new wealth in the physical development of Abu Dhabi and in the creation of a modern administration. Shaikh Shakhbut, however, was extremely reluctant to spend more money than was absolutely necessary and was unwilling to delegate authority. He insisted on maintaining absolute control over the internal affairs of his shaikhdom and remained impervious to British advice. Apart from obstructing the modernization of his own shaikhdom, he also stood in the way of another central British aim in the Persian Gulf: the federation of the seven Trucial States.

Convinced that each of the seven shaikhdoms was too small to survive on its own after Britain's eventual withdrawal from the area, the Foreign Office regarded a federation between them as the only possible way to prepare them for their long-term future. Abu Dhabi, as the only oil-producing Trucial State, was supposed to play a crucial role in the federation process, providing the other six shaikhdoms with financial resources. As a result of Shaikh Shakhbut's uncompromising attitude towards modernization and federation, the Foreign Office and the men

on the spot tried from 1963 onwards to find a way of replacing him with his brother, Shaikh Zayed, who was known for his sympathies towards Britain's policies in the Persian Gulf. Following three years of discussions and planning, Shaikh Shakhbut was eventually deposed in August 1966 as a result of an agreement between Shaikh Zayed and the British Government.

Britain's policy in the Persian Gulf after the British general elections of October 1964 was overshadowed by the series of Defence Reviews conducted by the new Labour Government. Faced with the large balance of payments deficit he had inherited from his Tory predecessors, the prime minister, Harold Wilson, decided to reconsider Britain's military commitments and deployment overseas. The discussions by the Defence Review working party about possible ways of cutting Britain's defence expenditure left the Persian Gulf untouched until July 1967, but it was realized by the officials in the Foreign Office and the diplomats stationed in the area that Britain would not be able to maintain its informal empire there forever. From 1965 onwards they began to discuss the most suitable policies for preparing the Persian Gulf for its long-term future. While they did not expect Britain's presence in the area to end before the mid-1970s, they felt certain that significant changes had to be brought about in the protected states before they could be released into full independence. In their opinion, the biggest problem was that great wealth, in combination with the very small size of some of the protected states, made them an easy and attractive prey for their large neighbours: Iraq, Iran, and Saudi Arabia. Without British protection, the only way to ensure their continued independence and integrity seemed to be to organize a rapprochement between the protected states and Saudi Arabia, the only large Arab power that was not hostile to Britain.

This political aim was not easy to achieve since the British Government could not risk provoking rumours that it had any intention of leaving the Persian Gulf in the foreseeable future. The situation was especially delicate after the publication of the Defence White Paper in February 1966, which announced Britain's intended withdrawal from Aden. Afraid to lose the confidence of the rulers of the Persian Gulf and upset the American allies, the British Government was determined to keep up its prestige in the area. These attempts, however, were rendered futile by the sudden decision of the British Cabinet in January 1968 to bring a complete end to Britain's military presence East of Suez, as early as 1971. This plan greatly surprised and angered Britain's men on the spot in the Gulf, who felt ashamed that the British Government intended to renege on its promise that it would continue to protect the

Persian Gulf States against foreign aggression. Their dismay was shared by the local rulers, who indeed felt betrayed by the British Government.

As this study has shown, British policy in the Persian Gulf until 1968 was based on the firm conviction that Britain would remain in the area at least until the mid-1970s. The relative costs and benefits of a continued presence there were debated in British Government circles during the 1960s, especially in the Treasury, but these discussions did not have an immediate effect on the decision-makers in the Foreign Office and the men on the spot who were running the day-to-day affairs while shaping Britain's relationship with the Persian Gulf States. They felt certain that Britain's informal empire in the area would be upheld for the foreseeable future and saw no alternative to this. The political strategies they had developed and implemented in the Gulf were not defined by thoughts of a fast-approaching retreat but by the strong resolve to protect Britain's very substantial economic and strategic interests there. Therefore, the years between the formal independence of Kuwait in 1961 and the sudden decision to withdraw from East of Suez in 1968 must be seen as a period of intensified British imperialism in, rather than gradual retreat from, the Persian Gulf.

Appendix: List of Important Personalities

1. The British Men on the Spot in the Persian Gulf

Balfour-Paul, Glencairn (1917–2008)
Political agent in Dubai, 1964–1966; deputy political resident in Bahrain, 1966–1968

Boustead, Hugh (1895–1980)
Development secretary in Oman, 1959–1962; political agent in Abu Dhabi, 1962–1965

Boyle, Ranald (1921–1999)
Political agent in Qatar, 1965–1969

Craig, James (born 1924)
Political agent in Dubai, 1961–1964

Crawford, Stewart (1913–2002)
KCMG 1966; assistant under-secretary in the Foreign Office, 1961–1965; political resident in the Persian Gulf, 1966–1970

Duncan, John (1921–2006)
Consul-general in Muscat, 1963–1965

Lamb, Albert (Archie) (born 1921)
Political agent in Abu Dhabi, 1965–1968

Luce, William (1907–1977)
KCMG 1957; political resident in the Persian Gulf, 1961–1966

McKearney, Philip (born 1926)
Political agent in Qatar, 1962–1965

Parsons, Anthony (1922–1996)
Political agent in Bahrain, 1965–1969

Richmond, John (1909–1990)
KCMG 1963; political agent in Kuwait, 1959–1961; ambassador to Kuwait, 1961–1963

Roberts, David (1924–1987)
Political agent in Dubai, 1966–1968

Tripp, Peter (born 1921)
Political agent in Bahrain, 1963–1965

2. The Rulers of the Persian Gulf States

Al-Khalifah, Shaikh Salman bin Hamad (1894–1961)
Ruler of Bahrain, 1942–1961

Al-Khalifah, Shaikh Isa bin Salman (1933–1999)
Ruler of Bahrain, 1961–1999

Al-Maktoum, Shaikh Rashid bin Said (1912–1990)
Ruler of Dubai, 1958–1990

Al-Mualla, Shaikh Ahmad bin Rashid (1904–1981)
Ruler of Umm al-Qaiwain, 1929–1981

Al-Nahyan, Shaikh Shakhbut bin Sultan (1905–1989)
Ruler of Abu Dhabi, 1928–1966

Al-Nahyan, Shaikh Zayed bin Sultan (1918–2004)
Ruler of Abu Dhabi, 1966–2004

Al-Nuaimi, Shaikh Rashid bin Humaid (1904–1981)
Ruler of Ajman, 1928–1981

Al-Qasimi, Shaikh Saqr bin Sultan (1925–1993)
Ruler of Sharjah, 1951–1965

Al-Qasimi, Shaikh Khalid bin Muhammad (1931–1972)
Ruler of Sharjah, 1965–1972

Al-Qasimi, Shaikh Saqr bin Muhammad (1918–2010)
Ruler of Ras al-Khaimah, 1948–2010

Al-Sabah, Shaikh Abdullah al-Salim (1895–1965)
Amir of Kuwait, 1950–1965

Al-Sabah, Shaikh Sabah al-Salim (1913–1977)
Amir of Kuwait, 1965–1977

Al-Said, Said bin Taimur (1910–1972)
Sultan of Muscat and Oman, 1932–1970

Al-Sharqi, Shaikh Muhammad bin Hamad (1909–1975)
Ruler of Fujairah, 1952–1975

Al-Thani, Shaikh Ahmad bin Ali (1917–1977)
Ruler of Qatar, 1960–1972

3. British Politicians, Diplomats and Officials

Brenchley, Frank (1918–2011)
Head of the Arabian Department, FO, 1963–1967; assistant under-secretary of state, FO, 1967–1968

Brown, George (1914–1985)
Secretary of state for foreign affairs, 1966–1968

Butler, Richard Austen (1902–1982)
Secretary of state for foreign affairs, 1963–1964

Dean, Patrick (1909–1994)
GCMG; permanent representative to the UN, 1960–1964; ambassador to the USA, 1965–1969

Douglas-Home, Alexander Frederick (1903–1995)
14th Earl of Home, 1951–1963; secretary of state for foreign affairs, 1960–1963; prime minister, 1963–1964

Healey, Denis (born 1917)
Secretary of state for defence, 1964–1970

Jenkins, Roy (1920–2003)
Chancellor of the exchequer, 1967–1970

Macmillan, Harold (1894–1986)
Prime minister, 1957–1963

Stevens, Roger (1906–1980)
KCMG; deputy under-secretary in the Foreign Office, 1958–1963

Stewart, Robert Michael (1906–1990)
Secretary of state for foreign affairs, 1965–1966

Thomson, George (1921–2008)
Minister of state in the Foreign Office, 1964–1966; secretary of state for commonwealth affairs, 1966–1968

Trevelyan, Humphrey (1905–1985)
Ambassador to Iraq, 1958–1961

Roberts, Goronwy (1913–1981)
Minister of state in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 1967–1969

Walker, Patrick Gordon (1907–1980)
Secretary of state for foreign affairs, 1964–1965

Watkinson, Harold (1910–1995)
Minister of defence, 1962

Weir, Michael (1925–2006)
Head of Arabian department at the Foreign Office, 1967–1968

Wilson, Harold (1916–1995)
Prime minister, 1964–1970

4. US Politicians and Officials

Johnson, Lyndon B. (1908–1973)
President, 1963–1969

Kennedy, John F. (1917–1963)
President, 1961–1963

McNamara, Robert (1916–2009)
Secretary of defence, 1961–1968

Nixon, Richard (1913–1994)
President, 1969–1974

Rusk, Dean (1909–1994)
Secretary of state, 1961–1969

Talbot, Philips (1915–2010)
Assistant secretary for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs at the State Department (1961–1965)

5. Middle Eastern Politicians and Heads of State

Al Saud, Faisal ibn Abdul Aziz (1904–1975)
King of Saudi Arabia, 1964–1975

Al Saud, Saud ibn Abdul Aziz (1902–1969)
King of Saudi Arabia, 1953–1964

Hassouna, Abdul Khalek (1898–1992)
Secretary-general of the Arab League, 1952–1972

Nasser, Gamal Abdel (1918–1970)
President of Egypt, 1954–1970

Pahlavi, Mohammad Reza (1919–1980)
Shah of Iran, 1941–1979

Qasim, Abd al-Karim (1914–1963)
Prime minister of Iraq, 1958–1963

Notes

Introduction

1. A note on terminology: since the 1950s the name of the Gulf has been the subject of a politicized dispute. While 'Persian Gulf' is the more commonly used term in most international treaties, document, and maps, the name 'Arabian Gulf' is widespread in many Arab countries. This study adopts the usage of the British Government records upon which it is based, and employs the name 'Persian Gulf' to describe the area comprised of Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Bahrain, and the seven Trucial States (today's United Arab Emirates), which include Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ras al-Khaimah, Umm-al-Quwain, Ajman, and Fujairah.
2. See John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate*, Oxford/Cambridge, MA 1991, p. 3.
3. John Darwin, *The Empire Project. The Rise and Fall of the British World-System, 1830–1970*, Cambridge University Press/Cambridge 2009.
4. Peter Cain and Antony Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688–1914*, Longman/London 1993, p. 43.
5. Kuwait was a protected state until June 1961, when it became independent.
6. See James Onley, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf, 1820–1971', *Journal of Social Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 87, Fall 2005, pp. 29–45, especially pp. 30–31. The constitutional relationship between Britain and the protected states is explained in detail in Chapter 1 of this study.
7. On Kuwait's path to independence, see Simon C. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965. Britain, the Al Sabah, and Oil*, Oxford/New York 1999, pp. 100–114. For Britain's role in Oman, see Uzi Rabi, *The Emergence of State in a Tribal Society. Oman under Said bin Taymur, 1932–1970*, Sussex Academic Press/Brighton 2006, p. 42 et seq.; also Francis Owtram, *A Modern History of Oman: Formation of the State since 1920*, I. B. Tauris/London 2004, pp. 98–112.
8. For more details on Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf, see chapters 2 and 7 of this study.
9. See Darwin, *The End of the British Empire*, p. 4.
10. See Stephen R. Ashton and William Roger Louis (eds.), *British Documents on the End of Empire*, Series 5, *East of Suez and the Commonwealth 1964–1971*, Vol. 1: *East of Suez*, The Stationary Office/London 2004, p. xxxi.
11. Unless otherwise indicated, all archival references in the footnotes of this study are to documents from the National Archives in London.
12. Documents from the US National Archives are indicated in the footnotes of this study by 'NARA'.
13. Galpern examines the roles that oil and sterling played for the British Government in the formulation of its policies in the Middle East: see Steven G. Galpern, *Money, Oil and Empire in the Middle East: Sterling and Postwar Imperialism, 1944–1971*, Cambridge University Press/Cambridge 2009. Ashton

and Petersen both analyse Britain's policy in the region in the context of the Anglo-American relationship: see Nigel J. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War. The Irony of Interdependence*, Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke 2002; and Tore T. Petersen, *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East, 1961–1969: A Willing Retreat*, Sussex Academic Press/Brighton 2006. Mawby and Jones describe in their books Britain's involvement in Aden and the Yemen: see Spencer Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates 1955–67*, Routledge/London 2005, pp. 75–81; also Clive Jones, ' "Among Ministers, Mavericks and Mandarins": Britain, Covert Action and the Yemen Civil War, 1962–64', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No.1, 2004, pp.99–126.

14. Glencairn Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in her Last Three Arab Dependencies*, Cambridge University Press/Cambridge 1991.
15. Miriam Joyce, 'Preserving the Shaikhdom: London, Washington, Iraq and Kuwait, 1958–61', *Middle Eastern Studies,* Vol. 31, No. 2, 1995, pp. 281–292; see also William Taylor Fain, 'John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan: Managing the "Special Relationship" in the Persian Gulf Region, 1961–63', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4, 2002, pp. 95–122. See N. J. Ashton, 'A Microcosm of Decline: British Loss of Nerve and Military Intervention in Jordan and Kuwait, 1958 and 1961', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 1997, pp. 1069–1083; and N. J. Ashton, 'Britain and the Kuwaiti crisis, 1961', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1998, pp. 163–181; also Rosemarie Said Zahlan, 'Shades of the Past: The Iraq-Kuwait Dispute, 1961', *Journal of Social Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 87, 2005, pp. 47–80.
16. Miriam Joyce, *Ruling Shaikhs and Her Majesty's Government, 1960–1969*, Frank Cass/Portland 2003.
17. Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez: The Choice between Europe and the World?* Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke 2002; and Simon C. Smith, *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf. Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950–71*, Routledge-Curzon/London 2004.
18. William Roger Louis, 'The British Withdrawal from the Gulf, 1967–71', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 31, No. 1, 2003, pp. 83–108.
19. Jeffrey Pickering, *Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez. The Politics of Retrenchment*, St Martin's Press/Basingstoke 1998; also Shohei Sato, 'Britain's Decision to Withdraw from the Persian Gulf, 1964–68: A Pattern and A Puzzle', *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History,* Vol. 37, No. 1, 2009, pp. 99–117.

1 Structural Foundations

1. James Onley, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf, 1820–1971', *Journal of Social Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 87, 2005, pp. 29–45, esp. p. 34.
2. James Onley, 'The Raj Reconsidered: British India's Informal Empire and Spheres of Influence in Asia and Africa', *Asian Affairs,* Vol. 40, No. 1, 2009, pp.44–62, see p. 55.
3. E. F. Given to A. M. Mackintosh, 'Formal Relations between the United Kingdom and the Persian Gulf States (excluding Kuwait)', 12 January 1962, FO 371/162792.

4. Glencairn Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in Her Last Three Arab Dependencies*, Cambridge University Press/Cambridge 1991, p. 101; also Husain M. Al-Baharna, 'The Consequences of Britain's Exclusive Treaties: A Gulf View', in B. R. Pridham (ed.), *The Arab Gulf and the West*, Croom Helm/London 1985, pp. 15–37, esp. p. 29.
5. Charles II's Charter of 1661 empowered the East India Company to make peace and war with any non-Christian ruler or king, and to conclude treaties in the name of the British Crown. In 1858, the company's powers were formally brought to an end and transferred to the British Government of India. See Husain M. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status of the Arabian Gulf States. A Study of Their Treaty Relations and Their International Problems,* Manchester University Press/Manchester 1968, p. 8; Onley, 'The Raj Reconsidered', p. 11.
6. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 8.
7. See John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate*, Basil Blackwell/Oxford 1991, p. 3.
8. Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 102.
9. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
10. See Onley, 'The Politics of Protection in the Gulf: The Arab Rulers and the British Resident in the Nineteenth Century', *New Arabian Studies* Vol. 6, 2004, pp. 30–92, esp. p. 31. The company's perception of these practices as acts of piracy and extortion is reflected by the name given by the British owners to the Eastern Arabian shore of the Gulf: the 'Pirate Coast'. The view that piracy was the reason for the East India Company's intervention in the area has been upheld by Western historians such as J. G. Lorimer and J. B. Kelly, but has recently been contested by Shaikh Muhammad Al Qasimi, who claims that the accusation of piracy was merely a British attempt to add legitimacy to an imperialistic intrusion in the Gulf. See J. G. Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia, Vol. I: Historical*, Calcutta 1915, new edition, Cambridge University Press/Cambridge 1986; J. B. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795–1880*, The Clarendon Press/Oxford 1968; Shaikh Muhammad Al Qasimi, *The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf*, Croom Helm/London 1986.
11. Onley, 'A Gulf View', p. 31; Al-Baharna, 'The Consequences of Britain's Exclusive Treaties', p. 23.
12. William Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke 2008, p. 14.
13. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
14. See Onley, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf', pp. 31–32.
15. See Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', p. 24.
16. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
17. See David Roberts, 'The Consequences of the Exclusive Treaties: A British View', in: B. R. Pridham (ed.), *The Arab Gulf and the West*, Croom Helm, London 1985, pp. 1–14, p. 2; also see Onley, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf', p. 31.

18. 'Formal Relations between the United Kingdom and the Persian Gulf States (excluding Kuwait)', Appendix to a letter from E. F. Given to A.M. Mackintosh, 12 January 1962, FO 371/162792.
19. Roberts, 'A British View', p. 2.
20. See James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf*, Oxford: Oxford University Press 2007, p. 36.
21. The term 'Exclusive Agreement' was first used in the text of the treaties and then in the historical literature about them. However, it is important to note that this is 'by no means a term of art with definitive jural meaning and significance'. See Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', p. 16.
22. 'Exclusive Agreement of the Chief of Abu Dhabi with the British Government', 6 March 1892, in Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, Appendix III, p. 314.
23. See Uzi Rabi, 'Britain's "Special Position" in the Gulf: Its Origins, Dynamics and Legacy', in: *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 42, 2006, pp. 351–364, esp. p. 354.
24. A statement to this effect was made by Britain's foreign secretary, Selwyn Lloyd in the House of Commons on 29 July 1957. See 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
25. See Roberts, 'A British View', p. 2.
26. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', FO 371/156674.
27. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, pp. 31–32.
28. 'Exclusive Agreement of the Shaikh of Bahrain with the British Government', 13 March 1892, in Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, Appendix I, pp. 313–314.
29. See Joyce, *Ruling Shaikhs and Her Majesty's Government, 1960–1969*, Frank Cass/London 2003, p. 36; Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 36; Kelly, 'The Legal and Historical Basis of the British Position in the Persian Gulf', *St Anthony's Papers No. 4* in *Middle Eastern Affairs I*, ed. Albert Hourani, Chatto and Windus/London 1958, p. 131
30. See Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', p. 18.
31. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
32. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 41; Kelly, 'The Legal and Historical Basis', p. 135.
33. See Simon C. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965. Britain, the Al-Sabah, and Oil*, Oxford University Press/Oxford 1999, p. 4.
34. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
35. See Kelly, 'The Legal and Historical Basis', p. 136.
36. Britain maintained its commitment to defend Kuwait during the following decades, and after the Second World War restated it twice in the form of unilateral declarations, in 1958 and again in 1959. See 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.

37. 'Exchange of Notes between Her Majesty's Government and the Ruler of Kuwait', 19 June 1961, FO 93/137/15. See also Chapter 2 below.
38. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965*, p. 100.
39. 'Exchange of Notes between Her Majesty's Government and the Ruler of Kuwait', 19 June 1961, FO 937/137/15.
40. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 47.
41. Kelly, 'The Legal and Historical Basis', pp. 128–129.
42. See Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', pp. 18–19; also Kelly, 'The Legal and Historical Basis', p. 135; and Uzi Rabi, *The Emergence of States in a Tribal Society. Oman under Sa'id Bin Taymur, 1932–1970*, Sussex Academic Press/Brighton 2006, p. 44.
43. See Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, pp. 57–59.
44. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
45. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 47.
46. 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Rulers of the Persian Gulf States. List of Principal Agreements', August 1961, FO 371/156674.
47. See Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 54.
48. Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, p. 37.
49. See Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 106.
50. Husain M. Al-Baharna, *British Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction in the Gulf, 1913–1971: An Analysis of the System of British Courts in the Territories of the British Protected States of the Gulf during the Pre-Independence Era*, Archive Editions/Slough 1998, p. 27.
51. Ibid., p. 24.
52. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, pp. 52–53.
53. Al-Baharna, *British Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction*, p. 25.
54. Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', p. 20.
55. Sir Rupert Hay, *The Persian Gulf States*, Middle East Institute/Washington 1959, p. 19.
56. See Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 107.
57. Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', pp. 20–21.
58. Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890, quoted in Al-Baharna, *British Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction*, p. 27.
59. The first order was issued for Oman in 1869, for Bahrain in 1913, for Kuwait in 1925, for Qatar in 1939 and for the Trucial States in 1949. The original orders were replaced and amended several times. Relevant to the period from 1961 to 1968 were the Orders in Council in their 1959 version. See Al-Baharna, *British Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction*, pp. 35–36.
60. Ibid., pp. 38–41.
61. Ibid., pp. 41–43.
62. Ibid., p. 43.
63. Ibid., p. 61.
64. Ibid., pp. 62–65.
65. Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', p. 27.
66. Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 107.
67. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 45.
68. Ibid., p. 35.

69. Undertaking by the Shaikh of Dubai, regarding oil – 1922, in Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, Appendix VII, p. 317.
70. Al-Baharna, 'A Gulf View', p. 26.
71. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 49.
72. Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 107.
73. Ibid.
74. Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 9.
75. The company had adopted the title of 'resident' in the early eighteenth century to describe one of their levels of office. A resident was responsible for one of the company's commercial districts. See Onley, 'The Raj Reconsidered', pp. 5–6.
76. Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 108.
77. Ibid., pp. 108–109.
78. Frank Brenchley, 'Call on the Secretary of State by Sir Stewart Crawford', 20 September 1966, FO 371/168675.
79. See Jonathan Walker, *Aden Insurgency. The Savage War in South Arabia, 1962–67*, Spellmount/Staplehurst 2005, p. 31.
80. For more details of Britain's military presence in the Persian Gulf between 1961 and 1968, see chapters 2 and 7 of this study.
81. 'Minutes of the 53rd Meeting of the Military Co-ordination Committee Persian Gulf', 6 March 1963, FO 371/168651.
82. Balfour-Paul, *Bagpipes in Babylon: A Lifetime in the Arab World and Beyond*, I B Tauris/London 2006, p. 203.
83. Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 110.
84. Tom Walcott, 'The Trucial Oman Scouts 1955 to 1971: An Overview', *Asian Affairs*, Vol. 37, No. 1, 2006, pp. 17–30, esp. p. 19.
85. Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire*, p. 110.
86. 'Record of a Meeting Held in the Foreign Office at 4.30 p.m. on Friday, August 18, 1961', FO 371/156709.
87. Ibid.
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. See Al-Baharna, *The Legal Status*, p. 9.
91. Lord Home to Sir William Luce, Despatch No. 77, 25 May 1961, T 317/114.
92. The desk diaries of Sir William Luce, British political resident in the Gulf between 1961 and 1966, show the frequency of his visits to the different Persian Gulf States, including Kuwait and Oman. See Sir William Luce, 'Diaries 1961–1966', University of Exeter, Old Library, EULMS 146.
93. 'Middle East Oil'. Report prepared by a working party of officials from the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Ministry of Power, October 1962, FO 371/164599.
94. See Christian Lekon, 'Die anglo-amerikanische Politik und die Ölfirmen im Mittleren Osten, 1901–2004', *Zeitschrift für Weltgeschichte*, Vol. 5, No. 2, Autumn 2004, pp. 79–99, esp. p. 81.
95. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.

96. 'Middle East Oil Developments'. Current Intelligence Weekly Summary, Secret, 2 February 1961, NARA: CREST, CIA-RDP79-00927A003000120001-7, Part III.
97. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.
98. Steven G. Galpern, *Money, Oil and Empire in the Middle East: Sterling and Postwar Imperialism, 1944–1971*, Cambridge University Press/Cambridge 2009, p. 81.
99. Lekon, 'Die anglo-amerikanische Politik und die Ölfirmern im Mittleren Osten', p. 89.
100. See Miriam Joyce, *Kuwait, 1945–1996. An Anglo-American Perspective*, London/Frank Cass, p. 2.
101. 'Middle East Oil Developments'. Current Intelligence Weekly Summary, Secret, 2 February 1961, NARA: CREST, CIA-RDP79-00927A003000120001-7, Part III.
102. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.
103. Ibid.
104. Galpern, *Money, Oil and Empire*, pp. 199–201.
105. The Persian Gulf as defined here includes Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Oman and the seven Trucial States, but excludes Iraq, Iran and Saudi Arabia.
106. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.
107. Despatch from Sir William Luce to Lord Home, No. 4 Confidential, 15 January 1963, FO 371/168618.
108. 'Seven Sisters' was originally a dismissive term created by Enrico Mattei, the president of the Italian oil company Ente Nazionali Idrocarburi, to discredit the cooperation of the seven companies whom he accused of forming a cartel in the Middle East. See Daniel Yergin, *The Prize. The Epic Quest for Oil, Money and Power*, paperback edition, Simon and Schuster/New York 2009, pp. 483–485.
109. Lekon, 'Die anglo-amerikanische Politik und die Ölfirmern im Mittleren Osten', pp. 90–91.
110. 'Middle East Oil'. Report prepared by a working party of officials from the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Ministry of Power, October 1962, FO 371/164599.
111. Ibid.
112. Yergin, *The Prize*, pp. 137–146.
113. Ibid., pp. 263.
114. Ibid., pp. 263–265.
115. 'Oil Companies of the Persian Gulf'. Note prepared in the FO and attached to a letter from C. H. Edwards to Derek Eagers in the Ministry of Power, Confidential, 15 June 1961, FO 371/156700.
116. Yergin, *The Prize*, pp. 275–280.
117. 'Oil Companies of the Persian Gulf'. Note prepared in the FO and attached to a letter from C.H. Edwards to Derek Eagers in the Ministry of Power, Confidential, 15 June 1961, FO 371/156700.

118. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.
119. See Chapter 6 below.
120. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.
121. 'Middle East Oil'. Report prepared by a working party of officials from the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Ministry of Power, October 1962, FO 371/164599.
122. Lekon, 'Die anglo-amerikanische Politik und die Ölfirmern im Mittleren Osten', p. 90.
123. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.
124. Quoted in Yergin, *The Prize*, p. 501.
125. 'Middle East Oil'. Report prepared by a working party of officials from the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Ministry of Power, October 1962, FO 371/164599.
126. Ibid.
127. 'Oil in the Middle East and North Africa'. Pamphlet prepared by the Reference Division of the Central Office of Information, London, for the British Information Services, November 1961, FO 371/164599.
128. 'Middle East Oil'. Report prepared by a working party of officials from the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Ministry of Power, October 1962, FO 371/164599.
129. Yergin, *The Prize*, pp. 504–507.
130. 'Middle East Oil'. Report prepared by a working party of officials from the Foreign Office, the Treasury and the Ministry of Power, October 1962, FO 371/164599.

2 The Kuwait Crisis and Its Consequences

1. Portions of this chapter were originally published as the article entitled 'The Kuwait Crisis of 1961 and Its Consequences for Great Britain's Persian Gulf Policy', in: *British Scholar Journal* II, No. 1 (2009).
2. Margaret Luce, *From Aden to the Gulf. Personal Diaries, 1956–1966*, Michael Russell/ Salisbury 1987, p. 1.
3. Home to Luce, Despatch No. 77, 25 May 1961, T 317/144.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. On the importance of Kuwait's sterling balances to the British Government see Steven G. Galpern, *Money, Oil and Empire in the Middle East. Sterling and Postwar Imperialism, 1944–1971*, Cambridge University Press/Cambridge 2009, pp. 218–228.
11. Home to Luce, Despatch No. 77, 25 May 1961, T 317/144.

12. Ibid.
13. Arab nationalism as a political ideology originated early in the twentieth century, when the Western idea of nationalism gained support among the Arab subjects of the faltering Ottoman Empire. The main aim of Arab nationalism was the unification of all Arabic-speaking states and the freedom of the Arab world from foreign domination. Arab nationalism turned into a political mass movement in the Arab world after the Second World War. From the British perspective, Arab nationalism's anti-colonial ethos was dangerous. See Bahgat Korany, 'Arab Nationalism', in John L. Esposito (ed.), *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, Oxford University Press/Oxford 1995, Vol. I, pp. 132–134.
14. Home to Luce, Despatch No. 77, 25 May 1961, T 317/144.
15. Ibid.
16. See Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965. Britain, the Al-Sabah, and Oil*, Oxford University Press/Oxford 1999, pp. 100–114.
17. Rosemarie Said Zahlan, 'Shades of the Past: The Iraq-Kuwait Dispute, 1961', *Journal of Social Affairs*, Vol. 22, No. 87, *Fall*, p. 56.
18. Ibid., p. 56–57.
19. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965*, 117.
20. The reasoning was that historically Kuwait was part of the Basra province of the Ottoman Empire and that the Ruler of Kuwait had carried the Ottoman title of *qaimmaqam*. When the British defeated the Ottomans in the First World War, Basra province was joined with the Mosul and Baghdad provinces to form the new state of Iraq. The Iraqi Government concluded from this that Kuwait was part of Iraq and refused to accept the validity of the Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement of 1899, or the delineation of the border between Iraq and Kuwait issued by the British in 1922. The Kuwaiti Government had always repudiated this claim because the Ottomans had never actually exercised control over Kuwait. See Zahlan, Shades of the Past, p. 51; also Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965*, p. 117.
21. Mills to Harold Macmillan, 'Iraq and Middle East Oil', 15 July 1958, PREM 11/3451.
22. See Nigel John Ashton, 'Britain and the Kuwait Crisis, 1961', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1998, p. 166.
23. William Taylor Fain, 'John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan: Managing the "Special Relationship" in the Persian Gulf Region, 1961–63', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No. 4, October 2002, pp. 95–122, see pp. 102–103.
24. Ibid., p. 103.
25. Ashton, 'Britain and the Kuwait Crisis, 1961', p. 167.
26. In his article 'Kuwait Crisis' (in *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 1998, pp. 163–181), Nigel Ashton described the decision-making process in detail. However, his analysis was based on an incomplete collection of sources, since he did not have access to the record of the first meeting of the Defence Committee on 29 June 1961 at 4 pm, which was still withheld in the National Archives. This record has recently been declassified and is available as: Defence Committee Meetings (61) 11, 29 June 1961, 4 pm, CAB 131/25. The other meetings of the Defence Committee were held on 29 June at 7 pm, on 30 June at 3 pm and on 30 June on 9.15 pm (see Defence Committee Papers (61) 41–43, CAB 131/26).

27. Defence Committee Meetings (61) 11, 29 June 1961, 4 pm, CAB 131/25.
28. 'Nothing in these conclusions shall affect the readiness of Her Majesty's Government to assist the Government of Kuwait if the latter requests such assistance.' Exchange of Letters between Her Majesty's Government and His Highness the Ruler of Kuwait, Art. 4, 19 June 1961, FO 93/137/15.
29. Defence Committee Meetings (61) 11, 29 June 1961, 4 p.m., CAB 131/25.
30. Ibid.
31. Defence Committee Papers (61) 44, 1 July 1961, CAB 131/26.
32. Cabinet Conclusions (61) 36, 29 June 1961, CAB 128/35.
33. Ashton, 'Britain and the Kuwait Crisis, 1961', p. 170; Fain, 'John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan', p. 104.
34. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965*, p. 120.
35. Ibid.
36. Defence Committee Papers (61) 44, 1 July 1961, CAB 131/26.
37. Defence Committee Papers (61) 45, 3 July 1961, CAB 131/26.
38. See Zahlan, 'Shades of the Past', pp. 72–73; also Ashton, 'A Microcosm of Decline: British Loss of Nerve and Military Intervention in Jordan and Kuwait, 1958 and 1961', *The Historical Journal*, Vol. 40, No. 4, 1997, pp. 1073–1074.
39. Tore Petersen, *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East, 1961–1969: A Willing Retreat*, Sussex Academic Press/Brighton 2006, p. 29.
40. Ashton, 'Britain and the Kuwait Crisis, 1961', p. 173; Zahlan, 'Shades of the Past', pp. 66–67.
41. See Fain, 'John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan', p. 105; and Ashton, 'Britain and the Kuwait Crisis, 1961', p. 172.
42. Defence Committee Papers (61) 48, 18 July 1961, CAB 131/26.
43. Ibid.
44. Zahlan, 'Shades of the Past', pp. 73–74.
45. Ashton, 'Britain and the Kuwait Crisis, 1961', p. 174.
46. Defence Committee Papers (61) 48, 18 July 1961, CAB 131/26.
47. See Miriam Joyce, *Kuwait 1945–1996; an Anglo-American Perspective*, Taylor and Francis/London , p. 5.
48. Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965*, p. 122.
49. Zahlan, 'Shades of the Past', p. 75.
50. Joyce, *Kuwait 1945–1996*, p. 106.
51. 'Current Position in Kuwait'. Annex to Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda (61) 366, 4 October 1961, DEFE 5/118.
52. 'Operation Vantage. Report by the Working Party'. Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda (61) 271, 16 October 1961, DEFE 5/116.
53. 'Operation Vantage. Report by the Working Party'. Annex to Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda (61) 309, 8 September 1961, DEFE 5/116.
54. 'Redeployment of British Forces after Withdrawal from Kuwait'. Annex to Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda (61) 291, 28 September 1961, DEFE 5/116.
55. Ibid.
56. 'Kuwait. Memorandum by the Minister of Defence'. Cabinet Memoranda (61) 133, 1 September 1961, CAB 129/106.
57. Annex A and Annex B to ibid.

58. 'Kuwait. Memorandum by the Minister of Defence'. Cabinet Memoranda (61) 133, 1 September 1961, CAB 129/106.
59. Ibid. For the details of the planned RAF deployment, see Annex B.
60. Annex A to ibid.
61. 'Kuwait. Memorandum by the Minister of Defence'. Cabinet Memoranda (61) 133, 1 September 1961, CAB 129/106.
62. Ibid.
63. Cabinet Conclusions (61) 49, 5 September 1961, CAB 128/35.
64. Cabinet Memoranda (61) 140, 2 October 1961, CAB 129/106.
65. 'Kuwait'. Annex to Cabinet Memoranda (61) 140, 2 October 1961, CAB 129/160.
66. Ibid.
67. Ibid.
68. Cabinet Conclusions (61) 53, 5 October 1961, CAB 128/35.
69. Cabinet Memoranda (61) 145, 2 October 1961, CAB 129/160. The action that the Commander-in-Chief was authorized to take before he received official instructions from London was limited to offensive air engagement against Iraqi ground and air forces in and over Kuwait, activation of the British weapons stockpile in the emirate and all necessary preparatory measures for intervention, short of actually moving British land forces into Kuwait.
70. Cabinet Conclusions (61) 53, 5 October 1961, CAB 128/35.
71. Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda (61) 413, 31 October 1961, DEFE 5/119.
72. The defence plan relied on the use of almost all British land forces stationed in the Middle East Command area, except for one infantry battalion in Kenya and one battalion in Aden. See 'Intervention in Kuwait'. Annex to Chiefs of Staff Committee Memoranda (61) 413, 31 October 1961, DEFE 5/119.
73. Ibid.
74. David G. Crawford to H. B. Walker, 'Status of British Forces in Bahrain', 30 September 1961, FO 371/156726.
75. Walker, 'Status of British Forces in Bahrain', FO 371/156726.
76. Ibid.
77. Luce to Shaikh Salman, 25 October 1961, FO 371/156726.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Shaikh Salman to Luce, 1 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
81. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 780A, 10 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
82. Shaikh Salman to Luce, 1 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
83. Since 1949 the Saudi Arabian Government's claim to the Buraimi Oasis, which belonged partly to Abu Dhabi and partly to Oman, had already resulted in an armed conflict. Saudi Arabia's claim was based on the influence that had intermittently been exercised in Buraimi by Wahhabi tribes between 1800 and 1870. In 1952, an armed Saudi Arabian force arrived in the village of Hamasa in Buraimi with the aim of winning the allegiance of the local tribes. The British Government, representing the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and the Sultan of Oman, reacted with a formal protest. After three years of fruitless negotiations between the British and Saudi governments, the British-officered Trucial Oman Levies expelled the Saudis from Buraimi

by force in October 1955. See Donald Hawley, *The Trucial States*, Allen and Unwin/London 1971, pp. 188–191.
84. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 780A, 10 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
85. Robert Walmsley, 'British Troops in Bahrain', 14 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
86. Commander-in-Chief Middle East to the Ministry of Defence, 8 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
87. Walmsley, 'British Troops in Bahrain', 14 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
88. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 780A, 10 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
89. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 1961, 8 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
90. Ibid.
91. J.P. Waterfield to Mr Given, 'Operation SODABREAD: Negotiations with the Ruler of Bahrain about the building of the new barrack accommodation', 6 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
92. Commander-in-Chief Middle East to the Ministry of Defence, 8 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
93. Shaikh Salman to Luce, 1 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
94. Walmsley, 'British Troops in Bahrain', 14 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
95. Waterfield to Given, 'Operation SODABREAD: Negotiations with the Ruler of Bahrain about the building of the new barrack accommodation', 6 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
96. Ibid.; FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 1961, 8 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
97. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 780A, 10 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
98. Ibid.
99. Ibid.
100. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 766, 3 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
101. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 780A, 10 November 1961, FO 371/156726.
102. Luce to Shaikh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifah, 20 November 1961, FO 371/156726. Shaikh Salman had died on 2 November 1961, so the letter was addressed to his son Isa, Salman's successor as Ruler of Bahrain,.
103. Luce to Home, Despatch No. 98, 22 November 1961, FO 371/156670.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. Ibid.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Ibid.
111. Ibid.
112. Walker, Minute, 9 January 1962, FO 371/156670; E.F.G. Maynard, Minute, 12 January 1962, FO 371/156670.
113. Given, Minute, January 1962, FO 371/156670.
114. Luce to Home, Despatch No. 98, 22 November 1961, FO 371/156670.

3 The Limits to Anglo-American Cooperation

1. Greenhill to Stevens, 2 January 1962, FO 371/162812.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.

4. Stevens to Sir David Ormsby-Gore, 12 January 1962, FO 371/162812. See Simon Smith, *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950–71*, Routledge-Curzon/London 2004, p. 123.
5. S. Crawford, 'Anglo-American Discussions on Kuwait', 8 January 1962, FO 371/162812.
6. P. A. Wilkinson, 'Anglo-American Discussions on Kuwait', 9 January 1962, FO 371/162812.
7. Stevens to Ormsby-Gore, 12 January 1962, FO 371/162812.
8. Ibid.
9. 'Discussions with the State Department on British Policy'. Draft Brief, January 1962, FO 371/162812.
10. Walmsley to Denis Speares, 15 January 1962, FO 371/162783.
11. 'Discussions with the State Department on British Policy'. Draft Brief, January 1962, FO 371/162812.
12. Walmsley to Speares, 15 January 1962, FO 371/162783.
13. Greenhill to Walmsley, 23 January 1962, FO 371/162783.
14. Ibid.
15. Ibid.
16. 'Discussions with the State Department on British Policy'. Draft Brief, January 1962, FO 371/162812.
17. Walmsley to Alistair Mackay, 5 February 1962, FO 371/162783.
18. Barry Powell to Walmsley, 9 February 1962, FO 371/162783.
19. Mackay to Stuart Milner-Barry, 'Proposed Discussion with the State Department on British Policy in the Gulf', 2 March 1962, T 317/42.
20. 'Discussions with the State Department on British Policy'. Draft Brief, January 1962, FO 371/162812.
21. Mackay to Milner-Barry, 'Proposed Discussion with the State Department on British Policy in the Gulf', 2 March 1962, T 317/42.
22. Mackay to Milner-Barry, 'Proposed Discussion with the U.S. State Department on British Policy in the Persian Gulf', 21 March 1962, T 317/114.
23. Mackay to Walmsley, 22 March 1962, FO 371/162783.
24. Speares to Walmsley, 2 May 1962, FO 371/162783.
25. Francis Brown to Given, 21 June 1962, FO 371/162783.
26. The diplomatic relations between Britain and Saudi Arabia were resumed on 16 January 1963. See Nigel John Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War; the Irony of Interdependence*, Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke 2002, p. 100.
27. Brown to Given, 21 June 1962, FO 371/162783.
28. Luce to Walmsley, 16 May 1962, FO 371/162783; Walmsley to Luce, 30 May 1962, FO 371/162783.
29. Ibid.
30. Luce to Walmsley, 16 May 1962, FO 371/162783.
31. Hugh Boustead to Brown, 5 June 1962, FO 371/16783.
32. J. F. S. Phillips to Brown, 2 July 1962, FO 371/162783.
33. James Craig to Brown, 25 June 1962, FO 371/162783.
34. D. C. F. Gracie to Brown, 27 June 1962, FO 371/162783.
35. Craig to Brown, 25 June 1962, FO 371/162783.

36. Brown to Given, 4 July 1962, FO 371/162783.
37. Given, Minute, 25 July 1962, FO 371/162783.
38. Speares to Walmsley, 18 June 1962, FO 371/162783.
39. Speares to Walmsley, 4 December 1962, FO 371/162783.
40. See William Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke 2008, p. 134.
41. 'BNSP Planning Task Number III-H: Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', enclosed with a letter from Speares to Walmsley, 4 December 1962, FO 371/162783.
42. Home to Luce, Despatch No. 77, 25 May 1961, T 317/144; Luce to Home, Despatch No. 98, 22 November 1961, FO 371/156670.
43. 'BNSP Planning Task Number III-H: Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', enclosed with a letter from Speares to Walmsley, 4 December 1962, FO 371/162783.
44. Ibid. These figures included the oil from Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, and Iran.
45. Ibid.
46. Ibid.
47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Named after its founder, the reformer Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), Wahhabism was a politico-religious movement that originated from the interior of the Arabian Peninsula and was aimed at the purification of Islam. Its most important principles were a strict interpretation of *shari'a* (the divine law handed down by God), denunciation of all forms of mediation between God and believers, insistence on the payment of *zakat* (Islamic tax), and the obligation to wage *jihad* (holy struggle) against those who do not follow these principles – Muslims and non-Muslims alike. See Madawi Al-Rasheed, *A History of Saudi Arabia,* Cambridge University/Cambridge 2002, pp. 16–18; Art. 'Wahhabiten' in *Lexikon der islamischen Kultur*, ed. Yves Thoraval, Darmstadt 1999.
50. 'BNSP Planning Task Number III-H: Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', enclosed with a letter from Speares to Walmsley, 4 December 1962, FO 371/162783.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Ibid.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. In October a delegation from Kuwait had visited the UAR, Sudan, Libya, Tunisia, Lebanon, Jordan, and Morocco in order to identify suitable development projects in which Kuwaiti money might be invested. The KFAED was subsequently established with a capital sum amounting to US$140 million. See Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965. Britain, the Al-Sabah, and Oil*, Oxford University Press/Oxford 1999, pp. 125–126.

60. 'BNSP Planning Task Number III-H: Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East', enclosed with a letter from Speares to Walmsley, 4 December 1962, FO 371/162783; see Fain, *American Ascendance*, p. 134.
61. D. G. Crawford, 'State Department Planning Paper "Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East" '. Handwritten Minute, 1 March 1963, FO 371/162783.
62. Ibid.; Walmsley to Sir John Richmond, 5 February 1963, FO 371/162783.
63. Walmsley, 'Comments on State Department Planning Paper "Oil and Interdependence in the Middle East" '. Draft Brief, 22 April 1963, FO 371/162783.
64. 'U.S. Paper on the Persian Gulf'. Handwritten Minute, signature illegible, 22 January 1963, FO 371/162783.
65. Luce to Stevens, 17 January 1963, FO 371/168632.
66. D. F. Hubback, 'Middle East Oil: Is it worth the money we spend on defence?', 6 March 1963, T 317/42.
67. Luce to Stevens, 17 January 1963, FO 371/168632.
68. Ibid.
69. Ibid.
70. Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War*, pp. 93–99.
71. On Britain's interests and policies in Yemen in the context of securing the Aden base, see Spencer Mawby, 'The Clandestine Defence of Empire: British Special Operations in Yemen, 1951–64', *Intelligence and National Security*, Vol. 17, No. 3, Autumn 2002, pp. 105–130; also Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates 1955–67*, Routledge/London 2005; and Clive Jones, " 'Among Ministers, Mavericks and Mandarins": Britain, Covert Action and the Yemen Civil War, 1962–64', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 40, No. 1, January, pp. 99–126.
72. Luce to Stevens, 17 January 1963, FO 371/168632.
73. See Tore T. Petersen, *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East, 1961–1969: a Willing Retreat*, Sussex Academic Press/Brighton 2006, pp. 32–33.
74. Fain has discussed the respective reactions to the Yemen revolution by the British and US governments in two different articles: see 'John F. Kennedy and Harold Macmillan: Managing the "Special Relationship" in the Persian Gulf Region, 1961–63', *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 38, No.4, October 2002, pp. 108–112; and ' "Unfortunate Arabia": The United States, Great Britain and Yemen, 1955–63', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, Vol. 12, No. 2, June 2001, pp. 125–152, especially pp. 132–144.
75. Luce to Stevens, 17 January 1963, FO 371/168632.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. The diplomatic relations between Britain and Saudi Arabia were formally renewed on 16 January 1963. See Ashton, *Kennedy, Macmillan and the Cold War*, p. 100.
80. Stevens to Luce, 8 February 1963, FO 371/168632.
81. Given, Minute, 30 January 1963, FO 371/168632.
82. Stevens to Luce, 8 February 1963, FO 371/168632.
83. John Killick to S. Crawford, Secret, 13 February 1963, FO 371/168632.

84. S. Crawford, 'Sir Willian Luce's letter on M.E. policy', 4 February 1963, FO 371/168632.
85. Stevens to Luce, 8 February 1963, FO 371/168632.
86. Killick to Crawford, 13 February 1963, FO 371/168632.
87. Ibid.
88. Walmsley, 'Anglo-U.S. talks on Persian Gulf policy', 5 March 1963, FO 371/168632.
89. Defence Committee Meetings (63) 3, 9 February 1963, CAB 131/28.
90. Phebe Marr, *The Modern History of Iraq*, 2nd ed., Westview Press/Boulder, CO 2004, pp. 116–17.
91. Walmsley, 'Anglo-U.S. talks on Persian Gulf policy', 5 March 1963, FO 371/168632.
92. Walmsley, 'Anglo-U.S. talks on Persian Gulf', 22 March 1963, FO 371/168632.
93. Walmsley, 'Anglo-U.S. talks. Lunch to be given by Sir R. Stevens', 18 April 1963, FO 371/168633.
94. Walmsley, 'Anglo-U.S. talks on Persian Gulf', 22 March 1963, FO 371/168632.
95. Walmsley, 'Anglo-U.S. talks on Persian Gulf policy', 5 March 1963, FO 371/168632.
96. Walmsley, 'Anglo-U.S. talks on Persian Gulf', 22 March 1963, FO 371/168632.
97. 'Anglo-U.S. Talks April 23/24 1963: Persian Gulf Policy'. Briefing Paper by the Arabian Department, 22 March 1963, FO 371/168633.
98. Ibid.; 'Anglo/United States Talks on Persian Gulf Policy. British Record of Meetings held on April 23 and 24, 1963 in Sir Roger Stevens' room at the Foreign Office', FO 371/168634.
99. 'Anglo/United States Talks on Persian Gulf Policy. British Record of Meetings held on April 23 and 24, 1963 in Sir Roger Stevens' room at the Foreign Office', FO 371/168634.
100. 'Anglo-U.S. Talks April 23/24 1963: Persian Gulf Policy'. Briefing Paper by the Arabian Department, 22 March 1963, FO 371/168633. See also Fain, *American Ascendance*, p. 136.
101. 'Anglo/United States Talks on Persian Gulf Policy. British Record of Meetings held on April 23 and 24, 1963 in Sir Roger Stevens' room at the Foreign Office', FO 371/168634.
102. S. Crawford, Minute, 29 March 1963, FO 371/168632.
103. 'Anglo/United States Talks on Persian Gulf Policy. British Record of Meetings held on April 23 and 24, 1963 in Sir Roger Stevens' room at the Foreign Office', FO 371/168634.
104. Ibid.
105. Ibid.
106. 'Anglo/United States Talks on Persian Gulf Policy. British Record of Meetings held on April 23 and 24, 1963 in Sir Roger Stevens' room at the Foreign Office', FO 371/168634.
107. Ibid.
108. Ibid.
109. Ibid.
110. Fain, *American Ascendance*, p. 136.

4 Improving Britain's Image: The Modernization Policy

1. E. F. G. Maynard, Minute, 12 January 1962, FO 371/156670.
2. P. A. R. Blaker, Minute, 17 January 1962, FO 371/156670.
3. Luce to Home, Despatch No. 98, 22 November 1961, FO 371/156670.
4. 'Anglo-U.S. Talks April 23/24 1963: Persian Gulf Policy'. Briefing Paper by the Arabian Department, 22 March 1963, FO 371/168633.
5. Laura James has described Nasser as 'the ultimate symbol of Arab revolution' during the period from the Suez Crisis of 1956 to the Six-Day War of 1967. See Laura James, *Nasser at War. Arab Images of the Enemy*, Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke, 2006, p. ix.
6. Blaker, Minute, 17 January 1961, FO 156670.
7. Ibid.
8. See James, *Nasser at War*, p. ix.
9. 'Anglo-U.S. Talks April 23/24 1963: Persian Gulf Policy'. Briefing Paper by the Arabian Department, 22 March 1963, FO 371/168633.
10. Following its foundation in 1961, the Committee of 24 soon became famous for its violent attacks against the Western colonial powers. Even though Britain was represented in the committee, the British Government greatly feared its intervention in areas where Britain still maintained a position of imperial power. See William Roger Louis, 'Public Enemy Number One: The British Empire in the dock at the United Nations, 1957–71', in: Martin Lynn (ed.), *The British Empire in the 1950s. Retreat or Revival*, Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke 2006, pp. 186–213.
11. Alan Campbell to Frank Brenchley, 23 December 1963, FO 371/174491.
12. See Francis Owtram, *A Modern History of Oman: Formation of State since 1920*, I. B. Tauris/ London: 2004, p. 116.
13. D. J. McCarthy, 'The United Nations, Muscat and Oman, and the Persian Gulf States', 6 January 1964, FO 371/174491.
14. Sir Patrick Dean to Sir Geoffrey Harrison, 27 December 1963, FO 371/174491.
15. Dean to Harrison, 17 January 1964, FO 371/174491.
16. Allen to Harrison, 1 February 1962, FO 371/174488.
17. Ibid.
18. Dean to Harrison, 27 December 1963, FO 371/174491.
19. McCarthy, 'The United Nations, Muscat and Oman, and the Gulf States', 6 January 1964, FO 371/174491.
20. Campbell to Brenchley, 23 December 1963, FO 371/174491.
21. Campbell to Brenchley, 23 December 1963, FO 371/174491.
22. Ibid.
23. Ibid.
24. Dean to Harrison, 27 December 1963, FO 371/174491.
25. 'Measures designed to palliate the side-effects of present Persian Gulf policy or to alleviate the burden on the United Kingdom'. Confidential Annex to a Minute by Walmsley, 26 February 1962, FO 371/162793.
26. Ibid.
27. Ibid.
28. Luce to Home, Despatch No. 98, 22 November 1961, FO 371/156670.
29. Home to Luce, Despatch No. 77, 25 May 1961, T 317/144.

30. 'Measures designed to palliate the side-effects of present Persian Gulf policy or to alleviate the burden on the United Kingdom'. Confidential Annex to a Minute by Walmsley, 26 February 1962, FO 371/162793.
31. Luce to Stevens, 17 January 1963, FO 371/168632.
32. 'Report by Sir John Whyatt, Judge of the Chief Court for the Persian Gulf', 17 July 1963, FO 371/168660. See Miriam Joyce, *Ruling Shaikhs and Her Majesty's Government, 1960–1969*, Frank Cass/London and Portland OR 2003, pp. 7, 36.
33. Luce to R.A. Butler, 'Persian Gulf: Annual Review for 1963', 29 January 1964, FO 371/174478.
34. McCarthy, 'The United Nations, Muscat and Oman, and the Persian Gulf', 6 January 1964, FO 371/174491.
35. 'Political Agents Conference 4–6 December 1963. Summary Record of Discussion', FO 371/174488.
36. Ibid.; Luce to Stevens, 17 January 1963, FO 371/168632.
37. 'Record of Discussion of Muscat and Oman, the Persian Gulf States and the U.N., on January 8, 1964', FO 371/174488. The discussion was held at the Foreign Office, chaired by Harrison and attended, among others, by Dean, Luce and S. Crawford.
38. 'Political Agents Conference 4–6 December 1963. Summary Record of Discussion', FO 371/174488.
39. 'Report by Sir John Whyatt, Judge of the Chief Court for the Persian Gulf', 17 July 1963, FO 371/168660.
40. Boustead to Luce, 'Annual Review of Affairs in Abu Dhabi in 1963', 20 January 1964, FO 371/174697.
41. 'Record of Discussion of Muscat and Oman, the Persian Gulf States and the U.N., on January 8, 1964', FO 371/174488.
42. Ibid.
43. Dean to S. Crawford, 29 January 1964, FO 371/174491.
44. 'Record of Discussion of Muscat and Oman, the Persian Gulf States and the U.N., on January 8, 1964', FO 371/174488.
45. Brenchley, 'The Nomenclature of British Representatives in the Persian Gulf', 25 May 1964, FO 371/174491.
46. 'Possible Palliatives to deflect Iraqi and other Arab criticism of our position in the Southern Gulf'. Annex to a letter from Allen to Harrison, Secret, 1 February 1964, FO 371/ 174488.
47. 'Record of a Meeting held in the Foreign Office at 4.30 p.m. on Friday, August 18, 1961', FO 371/156709.
48. Home to Luce, Despatch No. 77, 25 May 1961, T 317/144.
49. 'Record of Discussion of Muscat and Oman, the Persian Gulf States and the U.N., on January 8, 1964', FO 371/174488.
50. Ibid.
51. Dean to S. Crawford, 29 January 1964, FO 371/174491.
52. Brenchley to Luce, 9 June 1964, FO 371/174491.
53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Brenchley, 'The Nomenclature of British Representatives in the Persian Gulf', 25 May 1964, FO 371/174491.
56. Luce to Brenchley, 11 November 1964, FO 371/174491.

57. Ibid.
58. Brenchley, 'The Nomenclature of British Representatives in the Persian Gulf', 25 May 1964, FO 371/174491.
59. S. Crawford to Luce, 9 June 1964, FO 371/174491.
60. Ibid.
61. Ibid.; Luce to Brenchley, 11 November 1964, FO 371/174491.
62. Brenchley to Luce, 9 June 1964, FO 371/174491.
63. 'Record of a Meeting in the Secretary of State's Office on 3 December 1964 at 2.45 p.m.', FO 371/174489.
64. 'Political Agents' Conference 20–23 January 1965. Summary Record of Discussions. Part 2: Modernisation of H.M.G.'s Relations with the Gulf States', FO 371/179749.
65. Ibid.
66. Dean to S. Crawford, 30 November 1964, FO 371/174491.
67. Brenchley to Luce, 20 October 1964, FO 371/1774488.
68. Peter Tripp to Luce, 8 January 1964, FO 371/174488.
69. The interview was quoted in a letter from Horace Philipps to S. Crawford, 3 October 1964, FO 371/174488.
70. Luce to Gordon Walker, 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Persian Gulf States', 12 November 1964, FO 371/174489.
71. Ibid.
72. Ibid.
73. Ibid.
74. Ibid.
75. Ibid.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Ibid.
81. Ibid.
82. Luce to Gordon Walker, 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Persian Gulf States', 12 November 1964, FO 371/174489.
83. Ibid.
84. See Anthony Parsons, *They Say the Lion: Britain's Legacy to the Arabs: A Personal Memoir*, Cape/London1986, pp. 110–111.
85. Luce to Gordon Walker, 'Relations between Her Majesty's Government and the Persian Gulf States', 12 November 1964, FO 371/174489.
86. 'Record of a Meeting in the Secretary of State's Office on 3 December 1964 at 2.45 p.m.', FO 371/174489; See Simon Smith, *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950–71*, Routledge-Curzon/London: 2004, p. 21.
87. 'Record of a Meeting in the Secretary of State's Office on 3 December 1964 at 2.45 p.m.', FO 371/174489
88. Ibid.
89. Ibid.
90. Ibid.
91. Ibid.
92. Stewart to Luce, 'Modernisation in the Persian Gulf', 1 April 1965, FO 371/179749.

93. Ibid.
94. Ibid.
95. Ibid.
96. Ibid.

5 Excluding the Arab League: The Development Policy

1. M.S. Berthoud, 'The Iranians, the Arabs and the Persian Gulf', 13 July 1964, FO 371/174492.
2. Cairo 'Voice of the Arab' broadcast, 'Arab Gulf' programme, 21 June 1964, 12.30 GMT, in: 'Summary of World Broadcasts. Part IV. The Middle East and Africa', 23 June 1964, FO 371/174492.
3. Berthoud, 'The Iranians, the Arabs and the Persian Gulf', 13 July 1964, FO 371/174492.
4. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 305, 21 June 1964, FO 371/174492.
5. Luce to Brenchley, 23 June 1964, FO 371/174492.
6. Tripp to Luce, 22 June 1964, FO 371/174492.
7. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 305, 21 June 1964, FO 371/174492.
8. Berthoud, 'The Iranians, the Arabs and the Persian Gulf', 13 June 1964, FO 371/174492.
9. Abu Dhabi to FO, Tel. No. 108, 24 October 1964, FO 371/174492.
10. Brenchley, 'Relations between the Southern Gulf States and the Arab League', 14 October 1964, FO 371/174492.
11. 'The Arab League Visit to the Persian Gulf (October 20-November 4)'. Annex to a letter from Berthoud to the Chancery of the British Embassy in Teheran, 27 October 1964, FO 371/174492.
12. Doha to FO, Tel. No. 77, 26 October 1964, FO 371/174492.
13. M.A. Marshall to Luce, 2 October 1964, FO 371/174492.
14. Political Agency, Doha (signature illegible) to Brown 31 October 1964, FO 371/174492; Boustead to Luce, 29 October 1964, FO 371/174492; Tripp to William Luce, 27 October 1964, FO 371/173392.
15. Marshall to Luce, 10 October 1964, FO 371/174492.
16. Abu Dhabi to FO, Tel. No. 108, 24 October 1964, FO 371/174492.
17. Marshall to Luce, 2 November 1964, FO 371/174492.
18. Ibid.
19. The British Embassy in Cairo obtained the Arabic version of this report from the US Embassy and translated it before sending it to the Foreign Office. Walker to R. M. Posnott, 2 December 1964, FO 371/174492.
20. 'Report of the Mission of the League of Arab States on its visit to the Shaikhdoms of the Arabian Gulf. November 10, 1964', FO 371/174492.
21. The Trucial States Council, which had been founded following a British initiative in 1952, was a regular meeting of all seven rulers of the Trucial States, chaired by the political agent in Dubai. Even though it was merely a consultative body with no executive powers, the rulers could issue joint decisions in the form of resolutions. See Fatma Al-Sayegh, 'International Relations and the Formation of the UAE', *Journal of Social Affairs*, Vol. 21, No. 84, Winter 2004, pp. 43–60, esp. p. 47.

22. Balfour-Paul to Luce, 19 December 1964, FO 371/179754.
23. Balfour-Paul to Luce, 29 December 1964, FO 371/179754.
24. Michael Weir to R. J. Owen, 15 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
25. Kuwait to FO, Tel. No. 56, 24 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
26. Kuwait to FO, Tel. No. 65, 3 March 1965, FO 371/179755; Walker to J.A. Snellgrove, 10 March 1965, FO 371/179755.
27. Kuwait to FO, Tel. No. 105, 25 March 1965, FO 371/179755.
28. Brenchley, 'Arab League Aid to the Trucial States', 12 January 1965, FO 371/1179754.
29. Luce to S. Crawford, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
30. Ibid.
31. Ibid.
32. Cairo to FO, Tel. No. 104, 5 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
33. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 122, 3 February 1961, FO 371/179754.
34. Luce to Crawford, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
35. Fatma Al-Sayegh has aptly described the creation of the Trucial States Development Office as 'a reactionary move by Britain' to counter the plans of the Arab League in the Persian Gulf. See Al-Sayegh, 'International Relations and the Formation of the UAE', p. 47.
36. Cairo to FO, Tel. No. 104, FO 371/179754.
37. Luce to S. Crawford, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
38. Ibid.
39. From 1956 to 1963, Britain had contributed £100,000 annually to development programmes for the Trucial States. In 1964, annual aid was increased to £200,000. See R. C. Simpson to J. Lucas, 'Development Aid to the Trucial States', 5 April 1965, T 317/666.
40. Lucas, 'Development Aid to the Trucial States', 26 February 1965, T 31/666.
41. Brenchley to R. L. Sharp, 23 February 1965, T 317/666.
42. Luce to S. Crawford, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
43. Kuwait to FO, Tel. No. 56, FO 371/179754.
44. Brenchley to Sharp, 23 February 1965, T 317/666.
45. Ibid.
46. Luce to Brenchley, 1 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
47. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 74, 4 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
48. Luce to Brenchley, 11 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
49. Balfour-Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 4, 3 March 1965, FO 371/179902.
50. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 122, 3 February 1965, FO 371/179754; Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 77, 5 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
51. Balfour-Paul to Luce, 27 January 1965, FO 371/179902.
52. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 109, 15 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
53. Balfour-Paul to H. Philipps, 20 February 1965, FO 371/179916.
54. 'Minutes of the twenty-first meeting of the Trucial States Council held at the Political Agency, Dubai, on 1 March, 1965', FO 371/179902.
55. Balfour-Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 4, 3 March 1965, FO 371/179902.
56. Ibid.; 'Minutes of the twenty-first meeting of the Trucial States Council held at the Political Agency, Dubai, on 1 March, 1965', FO 371/179902.
57. Balfour-Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 4, 3 March 1965, FO 371/179902.
58. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 75, 4 February 1965, FO 371/179916.

59. Luce to S. Crawford, 8 February 1965, FO 371/179743.
60. Luce to Brenchley, 11 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
61. Luce to S. Crawford, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
62. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 51, 26 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
63. Tripp to Luce, 30 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
64. P. McKearney to Philipps, 30 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
65. Abu Dhabi to FO, Tel. No. 14, 31 January 1965, FO 371/179754. A copy of Shaikh Shakhbut's letter to Hassouna was enclosed with a letter from Boustead to Luce, 6 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
66. Boustead to Luce, 22 December 1964, FO 371/179754.
67. Ibid.
68. Luce to Brenchley, 11 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
69. Brenchley, 'Arab League Aid to the Trucial States', 4 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
70. Luce to S. Crawford, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
71. Ibid.
72. In a conversation with the British ambassador to Kuwait on 8 February, the amir stated that 'the Egyptians and Iraqis had no legitimate interest in the Gulf'. Kuwait to FO, Tel. No. 45, 8 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
73. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 74, 4 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
74. Kuwait to FO, Tel. No. 56, 24 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
75. Tripp to Luce, 7 July 1964, FO 371/174492.
76. McKearney to Brown, 26 July 1964, FO 371/174492.
77. Doha to FO, Tel. No. 7, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
78. Jedda to FO, Tel. No. 73, 7 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
79. Donald Maitland to Snellgrove, 12 February 1965, FO 371/179755.
80. Jedda to FO, Tel. No. 73, 7 February 1965, FO 371/179754.
81. Balfour-Paul to Luce, 6 March 1965, FO 371/179755.
82. Bahrain to FO, Tel. 9 March 1965, FO 371/179755.
83. Luce to S. Crawford, 25 January 1965, FO 371/179754.
84. 'Minutes of a meeting of Treasury, Foreign Office and Ministry of Overseas Development officials held in Mr. Sharp's room in the Treasury on 30 April 1965 at 11.30 a.m.', T 31/666.
85. Ibid.
86. C. R. A. Rae to Sharp, 30 March 1965, T 317/666.
87. Sharp to Rae, 8 April 1965, T 317/666.
88. Lucas, 'Development Aid to the Trucial States', 29 April 1965, T 317/666.
89. Lucas to R. L. Sharp, 4 May 1965, T 317/666.
90. Sharp to Rae, 8 April 1965, T 317/666.
91. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 476, 30 April 1965, FO 371/179754. The Treasury offered to contribute an additional annual sum of £50,000 to the capital costs of new development projects on condition that Britain was not committed to paying any new recurrent costs.
92. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 318, 3 May 1965, FO 371/179754.
93. Balfour-Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 5, 15 May 1965, FO 371/179916.
94. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 354, 16 May 1965, PREM 13/3326.
95. 'Qawasim' is the Arabic plural of 'Qasimi'.
96. The text of the five letters is quoted in the appendix to the report submitted by Sayed Nofal on 20 May 1965 to the secretary-general of the Arab League

on his visit to the Trucial States. A translation of this report was obtained by the Foreign Office. See FO 371/179917.
97. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 354, 16 May 1965, PREM 13/3326.
98. Balfour-Paul to Luce, Tel. No. 5, 15 May 1965, FO 371/179916.
99. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 355, 16 May 1965, FO 371/179916.
100. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 354, 16 May 1965, PREM 13/3326.
101. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 355, 16 May 1965, FO 371/179916.
102. Ibid.
103. Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Meetings (65) 27, 26 May 1965, CAB 148/18.
104. Brenchley, 'Aid to the Trucial States', 20 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
105. 'Trucial States. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs'. Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Papers (65) 85, 24 May 1965, CAB 148/21.
106. Ibid.
107. Stewart to Barbara Castle, 21 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
108. Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Meetings (65) 27, 26 May 1965, CAB 148/18.
109. Ibid.
110. Luce to Brenchley, 17 May, 1965, FO 371/179917.
111. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 401, 26 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
112. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 354, 16 May 1965, PREM 13/3326.
113. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 401, 26 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
114. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 354, 16 May 1965, PREM 13/3326.
115. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 376, 21 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
116. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 382, 21 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
117. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 103, 26 May 1965, FO 371/179917; Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 382, 21 May 1965, ibid.
118. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 382, 21 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
119. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 103, 26 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
120. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 108, 30 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
121. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 428, 31 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
122. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 131, 6 June 1965, FO 371/179917.
123. Ibid.
124. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 402, 26 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
125. FO to Jedda, Tel. No. 554, 27 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
126. FO to Jedda, Tel. No. 522, 24 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
127. Jedda to FO, Tel. No. 258, 29 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
128. Jedda to FO, Tel. No. 268, 8 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
129. Balfour Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 6, 13 June 1965, FO 371/179903.
130. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 146, 14 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
131. Ibid.
132. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 590, 24 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
133. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 411, 28 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
134. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 494, 12 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
135. Bahrain to FO and to Cairo, Damascus, Bahgdad, Amman, Jedda, Beirut, Jerusalem, Tehran, Kuwait, Basra and Doha, Tel. No. 396, 25 May 1965, FO 371/179917.
136. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 639, 28 May 1965, FO 371/179917.

137. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 494, 12 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
138. Ibid.
139. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 501, 13 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
140. Tom Bridges to D. Nairne, 2 June 1965, FO 371/179917.
141. Ibid.
142. Ibid.
143. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 411, 28 May 1965, FO 371/179917. Britain's extra-territorial jurisdiction in the Trucial States had been defined by the 1959 Trucial States Order in Council.
144. Bridges to Nairne, 2 June 1965, FO 371/179917
145. Nairne to Bridges, 'Trucial States', 9 June 1965, FO 371/179917.
146. Cairo to FO, Tel. No. 391, 26 May 1965, FO 371/179917; Cairo to FO, Tel. No. 383, 25 May 1965, FO 371/179917; Lord Caradon (United Kingdom Mission to the United Nations in New York) to FO, Tel. No. 1291, 29 May 1965, FO 371/179917; Cairo to FO, Tel. No. 451, 12 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
147. Nairne to Bridges, Secret, 'Trucial States', 9 June 1965, FO 371/179917.
148. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 734, 12 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
149. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 142, 13 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
150. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 501, 13 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
151. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 515, 16 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
152. Ibid.
153. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 519, 17 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
154. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 524, 19 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
155. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 536, 22 June 1965, FO 371/179918. It is unclear from where Luce received this information. Only a copy of his telegram to London is available in the National Archives, while the original is still being withheld. In this copy, the first few lines have been deleted.
156. FO and CRO to certain missions, Guidance Tel. No. 266, 24 June 1965, PREM 13/3326.
157. In the guidance telegram it is reported that the letter was presented to the political agent, Balfour-Paul. However, an internal report written by him in July about these events, as well as his memoirs, show that he was ill and had had to be replaced by the deputy political resident from Bahrain. Balfour-Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 8, 14 July 1965, FO 371/179920. See also Glencairn Balfour-Paul, *Bagpipes in Babylon: A Lifetime in the Arab World and Beyond*, I B Tauris/London 2006, pp. 198–199.
158. FO and CRO to Certain Missions, Guidance Telegram No. 266, 24 June 1965, PREM 13/3326.
159. Balfour-Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 8, 14 July 1965, FO 371/179920.
160. Ibid.
161. Ibid.
162. Luce to S. Crawford, 8 February 1965, FO 371/179943.
163. Ibid.
164. 'Record of a Meeting held at the Political Residency in Bahrain, on Sunday, 9 May 1965', FO 371/179740.
165. Ibid.
166. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 501, 13 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
167. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 142, 13 June 1965, FO 371/179918.

168. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 528, 21 June 1965, PREM 13/3326.
169. Ibid.
170. Thomson to Luce, Personal and Top Secret, 7 July 1965, FO 371/179739.
171. Dubai to Bahrain, Tel. No. 162, 24 June 1965, FO 371/179903.
172. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 809, 25 June 1965, FO 371/179903.
173. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 166, 25 June 1965, FO 371/179919.
174. Dubai to FO, Tel. No. 156, 22 June 1965, FO 371/179918.
175. Telegram from Bahrain to FO, No. 555 Confidential, 28 June, FO 371/179919.
176. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 553, 28 June 1965, FO 371/179919.
177. This conclusion is also supported by Rosemarie Said Zahlan: 'the rulers succumbed to British pressure and rejected the Arab League offer, realizing that otherwise they would have shared the fate of their former colleague in Sharjah'. See *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman*, rev. and updated ed., Ithaca Press/Reading 1998, p. 117.
178. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 554, 28 June 1965, FO 371/179919.
179. FO to Cairo, Tel. No. 1289, 29 June 1965, FO 371/179919.
180. Cairo to FO, Tel. No. 536, 6 July 1965, FO 371/179919.
181. Ibid.
182. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 555, 28 June 1965, FO 371/179919.
183. Balfour Paul to Luce, Tel. No. 8, 14 July 1965, FO 371/179920.
184. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 574, 2 July 1965, FO 371/179919.
185. Balfour Paul to Luce, Despatch No. 7, 1 July 1965, FO 371/179919.
186. Ibid.

6 An Obstacle to Modernization and Federation: Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi

1. Thomson to Luce, Personal and Top Secret, 7 July 1965, FO 371/179739.
2. Luce to Home, Despatch No. 4, 15 January 1963, FO 371/168618.
3. Luce to Rab Butler, Despatch No. 6, 29 January 1964, FO 371/174478.
4. On the social and economic transformation in Kuwait after the discovery of oil, see Miriam Joyce, *Kuwait 1945–1996; an Anglo-American Perspective*, Taylor and Francis/London 1998, pp. 3–35; and Smith, *Kuwait, 1950–1965. Britain, the Al-Sabah, and Oil*, Oxford University Press/Oxford 1999, pp. 15–35.
5. See Uzi Rabi, 'Oil Politics and Tribal Rulers in Eastern Arabia: The Reign of Shakhbut (1928–1966)', *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 1, May 2006c, pp. 37–50, see pp. 40–43.
6. See Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman*, rev. and updated ed., Ithaca Press/Reading 1998, pp. 109–110.
7. See Rabi, 'Oil Politics and Tribal Rulers in Eastern Arabia ', pp. 40–43.
8. See Christopher Davidson, *Abu Dhabi: Oil and Beyond*, Hurst and Columbia University/London 2009, pp. 30–41.
9. Ibid., pp. 33–34; Miriam Joyce, *Ruling Shaikhs and Her Majesty's Government, 1960–1969*, Frank Cass/London 2003, p. 11.

10. See Majid Khadduri, *Arab Personalities in Politics*, The Middle East Institute/Washington, 1981, pp. 297; also Rabi, 'Oil Politics and Tribal Rulers in Eastern Arabia', pp. 43–50.
11. See Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, p. 34.
12. Boustead to Brenchley, 'Annual Review of Affairs in Abu Dhabi in 1963', 20 January 1964, FO 371/174697.
13. Ibid.
14. Luce to Boustead, 13 February 1964, FO 371/174701; Boustead to Luce, 15 March 1964, FO 371/174701.
15. Luce to Brenchley, 26 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
16. Brenchley, Handwritten Minute, 9 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
17. Boustead to Luce, 30 March 1964, FO 371/174701.
18. Boustead to Brenchley, 'Annual Review of Affairs in Abu Dhabi in 1963', 20 January 1964, FO 371/174697.
19. The agreement was eventually signed by Shaikh Shakhbut on 19 September 1965, and a copy was sent by S. Road of ADPC to T. Gent of the FO's Arabian Department on 12 October 1965. See FO 371/179935.
20. Luce to S. Crawford, 27 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
21. Ibid.
22. McCarthy, 'Factors in policy towards Shaikh Shakhbut', 22 July 1964, FO 371/174702.
23. Boustead to Luce, 30 March 1964, FO 371/174701.
24. 'Shaikh Shakhbut'. Annex to the record of a meeting held in the secretary of state's room on 3 December 1964, FO 371/174702.
25. Ibid.
26. See Khadduri, *Arab Personalities*, pp. 304–305.
27. See Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, pp. 45–47.
28. Boustead to Luce, 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701; Luce to S. Crawford, 7 July 1964, ibid.
29. See Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, p. 42.
30. Luce to S. Crawford, 7 July 1964, FO 371/174701.
31. Boustead to Luce, 15 March 1964, FO 371/174701.
32. Luce to S. Crawford, 7 July 1964, FO 371/174701.
33. Boustead to Luce, 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
34. Ibid.
35. See Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, p. 41.
36. Luce, 27 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
37. Ibid.
38. Brenchley, 'The possible deposition of Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi', 5 August 1964, FO 371/174702.
39. Luce to Brenchley, 25 March 1964, FO 371/174701.
40. Luce to S. Crawford, 27 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
41. Ibid.
42. Boustead to Luce, 15 March 1964, FO 371/174701.
43. Luce to S. Crawford, 27 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
44. Luce to S. Crawford, 27 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
45. Walmsley to Luce, 1 May 1963, FO 371/168634
46. 'Shaykh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi'. Memorandum for the record by John E. Horner, Secret, 23 May 1963, NARA: RG 59, Lot Files: Bureau of Near

Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Records of the Arabian Peninsula Affairs Desk, 1958–1963, Box 4.

47. D. G. Crawford, Minute commenting on Boustead's report on events in Abu Dhabi in 1963, 4 February 1964, FO 371/174679; Brenchley, 'The Ruler of Abu Dhabi', 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701; Brenchley, 'The possible deposition of Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi', 5 August 1964, FO 371/174702.
48. Brenchley, 'The Ruler of Abu Dhabi', 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
49. Ibid.
50. Brenchley, 'The possible deposition of Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi', 5 August 1964, FO 371/174702.
51. Brenchley, 'The Ruler of Abu Dhabi', 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
52. See Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, p. 47.
53. Brenchley, 'The possible deposition of Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi', 5 August 1964, FO 371/174702.
54. 'Shaykh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi'. Memorandum for the record by John E. Horner, Secret, 23 May 1963, NARA: RG 59, Lot Files: Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Records of the Arabian Peninsula Affairs Desk, 1958–1963, Box 4.
55. Brenchley, 'The Ruler of Abu Dhabi', 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
56. Luce to S. Crawford, 27 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
57. Ibid.
58. 'Shaykh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi'. Memorandum for the record by John E. Horner, Secret, 23 May 1963, NARA: RG 59, Lot Files: Bureau of Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs, Office of Near Eastern Affairs, Records of the Arabian Peninsula Affairs Desk, 1958–1963, Box 4.
59. Luce to Gordon Walker, 'Persian Gulf: Annual Review for 1964', 21 January 1965, FO 371/179783.
60. Luce to S. Crawford, 27 May 1964, FO 371/174701.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Ibid.
65. S. Crawford to Luce, 23 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
66. McCarthy, 'Factors in policy towards Shaikh Shakhbut', 22 July 1964, FO 371/174702.
67. Ibid.
68. Brenchley, 'The Ruler of Abu Dhabi', 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
69. Ibid.
70. 'Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi'. Draft record of a meeting held in the FO on 14 July 1964, FO 371/174702.
71. McCarthy, 'Factors in policy towards Shaikh Shakhbut', 22 July 1964, FO 371/174702.
72. Ibid.
73. Brenchley, Handwritten Minute commenting on Boustead's annual review of events in Abu Dhabi in 1963, 26 February 1964, FO 371/174697.
74. Brenchley, 'The Ruler of Abu Dhabi', 10 June 1964, FO 371/174701.
75. 'Shaikh Shakhbut of Abu Dhabi'. Draft record of a meeting held in the FO on 14 July 1964, FO 371/174702.

76. Luce to S. Crawford, 28 October 1964, FO 371/174702.
77. 'Main Points of Discussion with Shaikh Zaid at Buraimi, October 22–23'. The report was enclosed with the letter from Luce to S. Crawford, 28 October 1964, FO 371/174702.
78. Ibid.
79. Ibid.
80. Luce to S. Crawford, 28 October 1964, FO 371/174702.
81. 'Shaikh Shakhbut'. Annex to the record of a meeting held in the secretary of state's room on 3 December 1964, FO 371/174702.
82. 'Main Points of Discussion with Shaikh Zaid at Buraimi, October 22–23'. The report was enclosed with a letter from Luce to S. Crawford, 28 October 1964, FO 371/174702.
83. 'Shaikh Shakhbut'. Annex to the record of a meeting held in the secretary of state's room on 3 December 1964, Secret, FO 371/174702.
84. Ibid.
85. Gordon Walker to Harold Wilson, 'The Rulership of Abu Dhabi', 18 December 1964, FO 371/174702. A copy of Gordon Walker's minute to the prime minister was sent to the defence secretary, Denis Healey. See letter from Arthur Hockaday to J. Henderson, Top Secret, 23 December 1964, FO 371/174702.
86. Gordon Walker to Harold Wilson, 'The Rulership of Abu Dhabi', 18 December 1964, FO 371/174702.
87. On 21 December, the FO was informed that Wilson had consented. See letter from Downing Street (signature illegible) to Henderson, Top Secret, 21 December 1964, FO 371/174702.
88. S. Crawford to Luce, 23 December 1964, FO 371/174702.
89. 'Shaikh Shakhbut'. Speaking note by Michael Weir for the foreign secretary to use in the Cabinet, 9 August 1966, FO 371/185527.
90. The following files remain closed in the National Archives as exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act of 2000: FO 371/185526/1, FO 371/185527/1 and FO 371/185528/1. According to the National Archives Catalogue, these files contain information on 'discussions with and overthrow of [the] Ruler of Abu Dhabi'. Also closed is file FO 1016/738 on the 'deposition of Sheikh Shakbut bin Sultan of Abu Dhabi by family conclave'. In 2008, my request to review the status of the documents and to release the information contained in them was denied by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.
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92. Balfour-Paul, who was posted to Bahrain as deputy political resident in June 1966, was acting political resident during the two-month gap between Luce's retirement in July 1966 and the arrival of his successor, Sir Stewart Crawford, in September 1966. See Glencairn Balfour-Paul, *Bagpipes in Babylon: A Lifetime in the Arab World and Beyond*, I B Tauris/London 2006, p. 203.
93. FO and CRO to certain missions, Guidance Tel. No. 241, 6 August 1966, FO 371/185578.
94. Ibid.

95. Weir to Thomson, 'Shaikh Zaid bin Sultan al Nahayyan. Head of the Abu Dhabi Department of Finance. Talking Points', 29 June 1966, FO 371/185578.
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97. Balfour-Paul, *Bagpipes in Babylon*, p. 203.
98. Abu Dhabi to FO, Tel. No. 103, Top Secret, 5 August 1966, FO 371/185527.
99. Ibid.
100. Archie Lamb to Luce, 21 May 1966, FO 371/185578; Parsons to Luce, 1 June 1966, FO 1016/737.
101. Roderick Parkes to Stewart, Despatch No. 8, 4 May 1966, FO 1016/737. See Davidson, *Abu Dhabi*, p. 36.
102. Lamb to Luce, 13 February 1966, FO 1016/737.
103. Abu Dhabi to FO, Tel. No. 103, Top Secret, 5 August 1966, FO 371/185527.
104. Balfour-Paul, *Bagpipes in Babylon*, p. 203.
105. Ibid.

7 The Prospect of Britain's Withdrawal

1. Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Meetings (65) 52, 24 November 1965, CAB 148/18.
2. See Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez: the Choice between Europe and the World?* Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke 2002, p. 44.
3. See William Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, Palgrave Macmillan/Basingstoke, p. 143.
4. See Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez*, pp. 55–57.
5. On the constitutional development of the Federation of South Arabia and the defence treaty with Britain, see Spencer Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates 1955–67*, Routledge/London 2005, pp. 95–98.
6. On the origins and development of Arab nationalism in Aden, see Walker, *Aden Insurgency: the Savage War in South Arabia, 1962–1967*, Spellmount Publishing/Staplehurst Kent 2005, pp. 11–16 and p. 25. On the escalation of violence in the mid-1960s, see Mawby, *British Policy in Aden*, pp. 90–119.
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20. Luce to S. Crawford, 17 June 1964, FO 371/174488.
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23. Ibid.
24. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 106, 28 January 1966, FO 371/185196.
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26. Ibid.
27. Defence and Oversea Policy Committee Meetings (66) 8, 23 January 1966, CAB 148/25.
28. See Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez*, p. 138.
29. FO to Bahrain, Tel. No. 106, 28 January 1966, FO 371/185196.
30. Ibid.
31. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 64, 2 February 1966, FO 371/185196.
32. Bahrain to FO, Tel. No. 69, 3 February 1966, FO 371/185196.
33. Brenchley to Luce, 16 February 1966, FO 371/185196.
34. Rose to Jackson, 5 February 1966, FO 371/185197.
35. Kuwait to FO, Tel. No. 82, 16 February 1966, FO 371/185197.
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48. See Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez*, pp. 193–194; also Shohei Sato, 'Britain's Decision to Withdraw from the Persian Gulf, 1964–68: a Pattern and a Puzzle', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, Vol. 37, No. 1, March, , pp. 99–117 , esp. pp. 104–106.
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Conclusion

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