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Transcript of a Statement by Jaislat as Sultan

broadcast over Radio Oman

Sunday 9 August 1970

*Proclamation  
to the Omani*

In the name of God the compassionate and merciful!

My people! It is a great personal happiness, that this evening we are able to speak to you through our own Radio Oman. It will be our intention to ensure that you are kept closely informed of our government's plans for the future, and the steps which are to be taken to bring contentment and advancement to our people, and prosperity and security to our beloved country. You can therefore expect that our talk tonight will set the trend for the future, and will be followed by similar talks either by myself as your Sultan or by a senior member of our government.

As you have already heard over the radio, we have appointed our uncle Sayid Tariq bin Taimur to be our Prime Minister. His speed of return is greatly appreciated, and his presence, in company with his brother Sayid Faher is most welcome to us. They will be leaving us for a short time to arrange their private affairs but we have already established the vital fact that our views about the future of our country are very close indeed. We have instructed our Prime Minister to take immediate steps to form a government, basing the appointments on Omani nationals wherever suitable people inside or outside the country can be found. But our beloved country has for too long been deprived of the education, which is the foundation of administrative and technical competence. Therefore in the short term we must continue to supplement our Omani administration by expatriate personnel who must be loyal and diligent in training and preparing our Omani people for their future responsibilities. From this stems the truth that education of our own dear people must start as quickly as possible so that in the longer term our country may be governed for and by Omanis.

Of all the matters which we shall relate tonight perhaps the most important is to tell of our decision to change the name of our country. From henceforward our dear land shall be known as the Sultanate of Oman. We believe this change to be very proper at the beginning of a new and unlighted era, and symbolic of our determination that our people shall be unified in our march to progress. No longer shall we differentiate between the coast and the interior and both, with our Southern province. All shall be one people unified in the cause of our future bright destiny. Already we are considering designs for a new national flag whose colours and emblem will bear witness to our determination to unify our land. Let us stand together before God; be loyal, diligent and industrious, to help us and our government to achieve our aims. Be not led astray along the path of unbelief in God and reject the Godless creed of communism.

Our thoughts now turn to our Omani brothers now forced by past unhappy circumstances to dwell outside the borders of our homeland. For those of you who have remained in the past loyal to your country, but who by preference have dwelt abroad, we tell you that the time will shortly come when we shall be able to call you to the service of your homeland. We say to those of you who have been disloyal to my father in the past, you are forgiven, and we invite you that have lost your Omani citizenship to return to the unity of the Sultanate of Oman. To this end I have ordered an immediate review of the passport and immigration systems, and I have asked my Prime Minister to recommend how our estranged brothers can speedily be given back their citizenship. We hope therefore that quite soon you will be free to re-enter your homeland and visit your loved ones in peace and loyalty to our beloved country. We further tell you that the pace of development and organisation of government will exhaust the slender resources of qualified people within the country so that we shall soon call upon you to return in an orderly manner, to serve your country. We have instructed our Prime Minister to set up an agency in a place in the Gulf yet to be decided, where those seeking jobs in the Sultanate can obtain information about actual posts available. Meanwhile be patient and content for the time being that you are no longer estranged from your homeland.

In the proclamation which we issued on our accession as Sultan, we told you that under a strong and just government we would immediately start to lift unnecessary restrictions, and inform you of our immediate plans for the development of our country.

Of immediate interest to the inhabitants of our capital, we are now able to inform you of the important decision to make available a substantial area of land to my people to build better homes, and to set up commercial enterprises and light industry. It is therefore our intention in a three year plan to move our Armed Forces out of the Bait al Falaḥ valley to a new location which is more suitable to their strategic and tactical needs. This is likely to locate the Headquarters Sultan's Armed Forces, and its reserve and administrative units on the junction of the roads already under survey to Mizwa and the Batinah. Masabih will become our first civil airport and its facilities will also be shared by our airforce. A survey to achieve this has been ordered.

The effect of our decision will immediately make available unoccupied land for building and in due course the whole valley will become a great extension of Muttrah. Armed Forces buildings already existing will be turned to good civilian use. It is our intention that the Sultanate shall provide roads, water, and sewage schemes, thus immediately ensuring that those of my people who are required to dwell there will be better housed. It is our intention that the present urban area of Muttrah should predominantly contain the commercial buildings and facilities needed for the efficient operation of a busy port.

The following are the first list of restrictions which we decree shall be lifted :-

It is my wish that citizens of our great country and members of their families should, in future, be free to travel both inside and outside the country without any restriction. All restrictions on travel are hereby lifted. Of course, travellers must continue to comply with normal passport and health regulations and specific restrictions may be required from time to time for security reasons. This lifting of restrictions allows everybody freedom of movement within the country and within individual towns by day and by night. It is, however, necessary to continue the restriction on vehicle traffic between Sur and Jaalen and also the existing controls and regulations in regard to movement in the Bursimi area and across the frontier there, until such time as a customs organisation is established. The regulations in regard to movement within the walls of Muscat will continue in force but I have instructed that the present procedure must be made more convenient. The carrying of hurricane lanterns is no longer required.

Agriculture is of basic importance to the future of our country and one of the main priorities of my Government will be to encourage and assist in its expansion. With immediate effect, restrictions on the import and ownership of all types of agricultural machinery are lifted and I have given instructions that the agricultural farms at Sohar and Nizwa be reactivated as quickly as possible so that they can play their full part in speeding the advance of agriculture. I have also given instructions that an experimental farm shall be started in Salalah. Other developments in Salalah will include a survey of the water resources of the plain, from which in turn will follow an irrigation plan and a considerable expansion in the cultivated acreage. To serve the military and civil requirements in Dhofar a small harbour will be built as quickly as possible.

I know that there is a shortage of water in parts of our beloved country and I have issued instructions that equipment be hired immediately for well drilling. In addition to covering immediate needs, the well drilling programme will be extended to undertake a complete survey of the water resources of our country.

You have already heard of the change in the system of levying customs duty on imports into the country. This measure, as well as encouraging trade, will have the effect of reducing prices of all types of goods throughout the Sultanate.

I have also given instructions for the review of the system of collection of Zakat.

I fully recognise the responsibility of the Tribal Sheikhs of our country for the welfare, security and good behaviour of their people and it is my intention that they should receive stipends for those duties and responsibilities they bear. I have therefore given instructions that this matter be urgently reviewed by my Government.

I have also instructed that the salaries paid to all civil employees of the Sultanate should be reviewed.

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In the field of development the needs of our beloved country are great. Health, education, communications, roads all require urgent attention and all will receive it. In particular, I have given instructions for the immediate improvement of the existing health service and for an urgent review of plans for education.

The survey of the Kizwa and Sohar roads will continue and I have ordered a review of the Mutrah harbour project with a view to its immediate expansion.

If our country is truly to be united, we must have modern system of communications and I have given instructions that a survey be carried out for a country-wide net work of telecommunications.

It is also my intention to establish a public transport system as soon as possible in order to improve road and mail communications throughout the country. In view of the present state of the roads in the Sultanate, however, it will be necessary in the interests of public safety and to avoid traffic congestion, to control in the short term the granting of vehicle licenses. From 1st Rajib, applications for vehicle licenses will be referred through the Wali of each area to the Vehicle Licensing Section of the police authority. In the interests of public safety it will also be necessary to ensure that vehicles are properly serviced maintained and periodically inspected by a Vehicle Inspectorate which will be established under the civil police. The Road Traffic Police organisation will also be enlarged in order that transportation throughout the country can be properly supervised. Regulations regarding vehicle registration and taxation will be reviewed.

We already have a Sultanate radio station from which I am speaking to you tonight. I have instructed my Government to arrange a survey of both the radio and television requirements of our country, not only to meet justifiable recreational needs, but perhaps more important to be able to bring before my people the benefits of public education.

Electricity is a vital requirement for so much of the development programme that we consider it unacceptable that control of the Power Company should lie outside the country. Therefore we have instructed that the entire financial basis of the Muscat Power Company be reviewed so that control in future passes to the Sultanate.

These are the first of our plans. There are many aspects still to be considered and as important decisions are taken, we will ensure that you are kept properly informed.

Let me remind you of the words which I spoke on my arrival in Muscat - the government and the people are one body and if one part fails the whole is affected.

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Let me remind you of the words which I spoke on my arrival in Muscat - the government and the people are one body and if one part fails so will fail the whole body. Therefore my brothers I call upon you to work with us for the future of our country and with God's help we will succeed.

Finally, I must tell you of my gratitude, to my brother rulers and heads of state of the Arab nation, who have already encouraged me by their messages of greeting and good wishes. In particular I must mention His Majesty King Faisal of Saudi Arabia, His Majesty King Hussein of Jordan and my brother rulers of the Arabian Gulf.

I thank them all in the name of my country and people for their good wishes, and I promise them that it is our intention that our government and country will work alongside of them for the future of the whole Arab nation.

May God's blessing be upon us and on our endeavours!