

SPEECH
OF H.M. SULTAN QABOOS
ON THE OCCASION OF NATIONAL DAY 1977
IN SALALAH.

18 NOV 77

press release

H.M.

His Majesty Sultan Qaboos spoke to the Omani people this morning on the occasion of Oman's National Day. His Majesty was speaking in the new sports stadium in Salalah, the capital of Dhofar Province. His speech was heard live by an audience of 80,000 people both inside and around the stadium. His audience included hundreds of Dhofari tribesmen who, in some cases, had walked for several days through the mountains from the remotest parts of the Province to hear the speech.

His Majesty said that it gave him particular pleasure to share the happiness of the day with his loyal Dhofari people. The whole of Oman was celebrating the anniversary as one united family.

His Majesty said that it was particularly appropriate that his first words should be addressed to the armed forces "close to the battlefields where you fought for the freedom of our people with such noble self-sacrifice and devotion until final victory was won". His Majesty said that their deeds had provided an example of courage and new hope "to those in other lands whose freedom is threatened in these dark times". He said that they had demonstrated that the armed forces of a free and united people had a vital role to play in peace as well as in war and praised them particularly for their "magnificent work" in helping the people, when Oman was struck by a hurricane earlier this year. He said that he has watched with pride the way in which the armed forces had maintained, and indeed excelled, their high standards of discipline and professional skill. The Sultan said that it was only necessary to look at the world scene to realise how vital it was that they should do so "since those who seek the enslavement of the free world have shown time and time again that they will use armed force in flagrant and contemptuous disregard of international law". In Africa the freedom of millions had been extinguished by the merciless employment of this force and even as he spoke "our Arab brothers there are fighting for their independence against forces directed and supplied by external power intent upon obtaining strategic control of the area".

The Sultan said that he was confident that the sacred duty with which the armed forces had been entrusted "the defence of our Holy Religion, the preservation of the freedom of our beloved Oman, and the protection of our people is safe in your hands". The Sultan warned that the threat to the free world does not manifest itself solely in the form of armed force. "The enemies of freedom utilise every avenue of human activity to achieve their aims". Under the guise of so-called liberalism and concern for the rights of men "these sinister forces" had set themselves to destroy civilised society. They were intent on the destruction of the rule of law and of decent human standards everywhere. In the name of so-called freedom

of expression and equality of men, they denied the existence of God and held the law in contempt. Their object was to reduce the countries of the free world to a state of moral and material disintegration, ripe to be taken over.

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Turning to the international scene, the Sultan said that Oman had continued to play a full part in international affairs during the past year in co-operation with all like-minded countries in the defence of freedom and dignity of mankind. Oman had continued to work in the closest co-operation with the Arab League for the advancement of the Arab cause: this "would always remain a cornerstone of our national policy". He said that it was vital that Oman and her brother states in the Gulf should recognise that they must assume responsibility for their own security. He said that the "loyal and unselfish mutual co-operation" which marked relations with Oman's brother states had "contributed significantly" to the progress of all their peoples. He said he wished particularly to acknowledge with gratitude those states who had assisted Oman.

F.A.
His Majesty said that it was "all the more regrettable to have to record that Oman's relations with South Yemen had shown no improvement during the past year". The untiring efforts of the Arab League and Oman's brother Arab countries to improve these relations - with which Oman had loyally co-operated - had all ended in failure. The Sultan said that it was to be hoped that "the time will come when the leaders of South Yemen will realise that their responsibilities to the Arab and Islamic family, to which they belong, transcend their commitment to serve the interests of the ambitions of this family's enemy.

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Turning to national development, the Sultan said that education had made "highly significant progress". In the past year, 54 new schools had been built, one thousand additional teachers had been engaged, these measures had enabled nearly 10,000 more children to commence education this year. The ultimate aim was that every child should receive a minimum of nine years' education.

The Sultan said that education must also concern itself with the formation of character. To this end, Oman's future religious leaders, who were now being trained, would receive instruction through the inclusion of secular subjects in the curricula, which would produce mature teachers of Islam familiar with the ways of modern society and well qualified

to provide the Omani people - and particularly the young - with the moral and spiritual guidance they must have.

MSALIL
Medical facilities had been considerably expanded. A 24 bed hospital had just been opened on Masirah Island, extensions were being completed to provide the most modern facilities at all major hospitals in the Sultanate, and ten million Riyals was to be spent on the construction of health centres and clinics in the interior. All this will provide medical cover for the whole of the Sultanate.

Emphasising the importance of cultural exchanges, H.M. the Sultan said that a programme of exchange visits between young people from foreign countries and the Sultanate had commenced. He was "convinced that such initiatives can produce a powerful impulse towards international understanding and world peace".

The national economy had made "sound progress" during the past year. Oil resources were still in course of development and Oman would be producing twenty thousand tons of refined high grade copper a year by 1980, deposits of ten million tons of chrome would be in production by 1980, and the Sultanate's reserves of natural gas were sufficient to provide it with a sound power base for the development of industry. The fishing industry was now exporting in increasing quantities and agriculture was also playing a developing role in the economy.

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In conclusion, His Majesty said that every Omani had reason to be proud of the national achievements, and to be thankful for the natural resources which were making it possible to build the strength of the country and provide the nation with the means to make the life of the people more prosperous. In maintaining its prosperity "we have to commit ourselves to serve Oman and its people and to serve our Arab family and all mankind". He said that "we must never forget that, to be deserving of these gifts, we must continue to devote ourselves with complete dedication to the service of Oman, our Arab family and mankind, conscious always of the humble duty we owe to God and to our Holy Religion".

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In a welcoming reference to H.M. King Hussain of Jordan who is attending the national celebrations in Oman, His Majesty said "on this glorious occasion, I must express my deep thanks to my brother, His Majesty King Hussain, for his participation in our 7th National Day anniversary celebrations. His participation has demonstrated the strong brotherly relations between the Sultanate of Oman and Jordan. I would like also to express the appreciation of us all for Jordan's assistance during our holy struggle against Oman's enemy and the enemies of the Arab Islamic nation."