OMAN

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Oman Diplomats Present Credentials

During the summer months Omani diplomats in three continents have presented credentials to Heads of State in the country to which they have been accredited.

London

On Wednesday, July 18th, H.E. Mr. Nassir Seif El Bualy, First Omani Ambassador to be accredited to the Court of St. James, London, presented his credentials to Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, at Buckingham Palace. In the accompanying photograph he is shown leaving the Embassy escorted by Major-General the Hon. Sir Michael Fitzalan Howard, the Marshal of the Diplomatic Corps. He was also accompanied to the Palace by Sayyid Ghalib Al-Said, First Secretary at the London Embassy, who is seen in the background.

Washington

On Thursday, June 14th, H.E. Sayyid Faisal Al-Said, First Omani Ambassador to the United States, presented his credentials to President Nixon, at the White House. H.E. Sayyid Faisal Al-Said is also Ambassador and Head of the Permanent Mission from the Sultanate of Oman to the United Nations. The accompanying photograph shows the Ambassador with Mr. Richard Nixon.

Tunis

H.E. Sheikh Mohamed Alharithy presented his credentials to President Bourguiba on Monday, June 11th.

Beirut

On Tuesday, July 31st, H.E. Yousef Al-Alawi, First Ambassador from the Sultanate of Oman to the Republic of the Lebanon presented his credentials to Monsieur Suleiman Franjieh, President of that country, at the Presidential Palace. The accompanying photograph shows the Ambassador (right) being greeted by the President.

Overseas Visits by H.M. Sultan Qaboos

H.M. Sultan Qaboos bin Said, Sultan of Oman, has just completed a series of visits designed to explain to Heads of State his policies, the programme his Government has developed for combating the Communist-backed rebellion in Dhofar, and the intensive programme for the development of Oman generally.

In the course of an Official Visit to Tunisia, President Bourguiba told His Majesty that he would place expert Tunisian advice at the disposal of the Oman Government. The President indicated that he was prepared to contribute specialist personnel, particularly in the cultural, education and technical fields and generally to assist in the expansion of all types of development within Oman.

President Bourguiba accepted an invitation from His Majesty The Sultan to visit Oman at a date to be determined in the future.

The Government of Oman applied for membership of the Non-Aligned Conference being held in Algiers: this was proposed by the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Sayyid Fahad Al-Said, and, with strong support from the Arab World members of the Conference, was approved by the Conference. As a result, His Majesty The Sultan visited Algiers from Tunisia to lead his country's Delegation at the opening sessions.

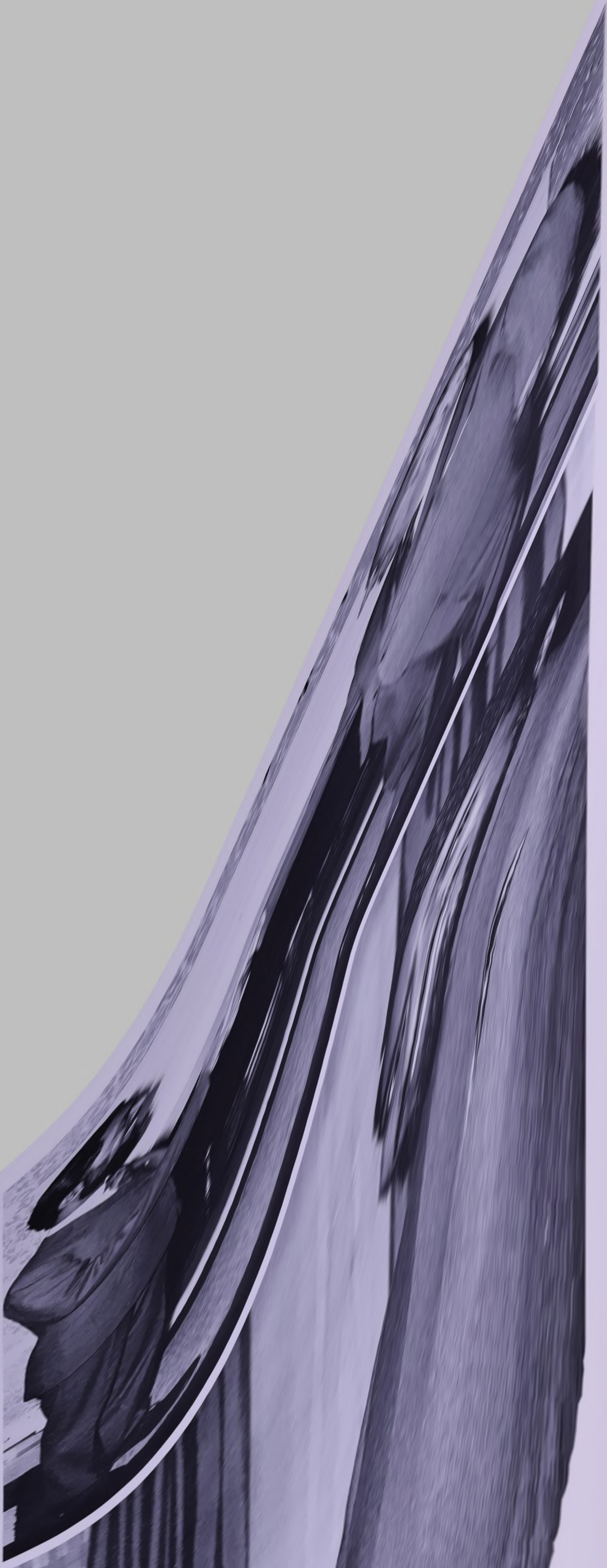
In the course of his visit His Majesty met individually President Boumedienne of Algeria, Col. Ghaddafi of Libya and President Sadat of Egypt, and discussed with them matters of concern to the Arab World in general and bi-lateral relations in particular. As an indication of his desire to support the Sultan, Col. Ghaddafi agreed to exchange Diplomatic Missions at an early date.

During the Conference of Heads of State and Government of the Non-Aligned countries, held at Algiers, the Government of His Majesty the Sultan of Oman made an official declaration recognizing the Cambodian Regime headed by Prince Norodom Sihanouk. The recognition was conveyed to the Conference by H.E. Sayyid Fahad Al-Said, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, and was received with enthusiasm and applause. Consequent upon this decision the Government of Oman will cease to have any official dealings with the Lon Nol Regime of Khmer Republic.

The Sultan left Algiers for Paris on Thursday, September 6th for a pre-arranged and semi-official meeting with President Pompidou at the Elysee Palace on Thursday afternoon.

In the course of a 75 minute private meeting the two Heads of State discussed Franco-Omani affairs. President Pompidou fully appreciated Oman's struggle against the revolt in Dhofar Province, showed great interest in Oman's plans for development, and gave the Sultan his assurances that France would make every effort to strengthen her relations with Oman. To this end the President announced that a French Ambassador would be resident in Muscat before the year's end.

Upon returning to London His Majesty had meetings with the Prime Minister, Mr. Edward Heath and the Minister of Defence, Lord Carrington. He also met the Foreign Secretary, Sir Alec Douglas-Home.



above top:
H.M. The Sultan of Oman with Arab Heads of Mission in London.

above:
H.M. Sultan Qaboos at a discussion with Lord Carrington, U.K. Minister of Defence.

above right:
H.M. Sultan Qaboos at a meeting with U.K. Prime Minister, Edward Heath, at 10 Downing Street.

right:
H.M. Sultan Qaboos greeting Sir Alec Douglas-Home, U.K. Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

above left:
H.M. Sultan Qaboos arrives at the Dorchester Hotel to meet leading representatives of the British press and Broadcasting Authorities.

left:
H.M. Sultan Qaboos with Heads of Arab Diplomatic Missions in London at a dinner given in his honour at the Dorchester Hotel, on Wednesday, September 12th, by the Ambassador of the Sultanate of Oman. Those present were (centre top) H.M. The Sultan (and continuing clockwise) the Omani Ambassador, the Egyptian Ambassador, the Bahraini Ambassador, the United Arab Emirates Ambassador, the Jordanian Ambassador, the Libyan Minister, the First Secretary, the Second Secretary Oman Embassy, the Syrian Charge d'Affaires, the Sudanese Ambassador, the Qatari Ambassador, the Moroccan Ambassador, the Kuwaiti Ambassador, the Saudi Arabian Ambassador.

Cement Industry for Oman

The first major industrial development in Oman—apart from oil—is to be a cement factory near Muscat which will not only cater for the domestic needs of the Sultanate but will also have an export capability.

H.M. Sultan Qaboos has signed a decree establishing the Oman Portland Cement Company, in which 51% of the share capital will be held by Omanis. Associated Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd., of London, and Cementia Holding A.G., of Zurich, will have an equal equity holding amounting to 49%.

The Oman Government invited international proposals for the establishment of a cement industry and the joint A.P.C.M. and Cementia studies were considered most appropriate. These were followed by a preliminary geological and market assessment made by the two firms from which came the plans for a cement manufacturing company now approved by His Majesty.

The first task for the new company will be to build a 200,000 tons per annum factory in the capital area at a cost of nearly £6 million. Construction is expected to start at the end of the year, following further detailed geological studies by A.P.C.M. and engineering design work by Cementia. A.P.C.M. and Cementia will subsequently have a technical and operating management agreement with the company.

A.P.C.M. and Cementia are already in partnership in East Africa and their activities in the Gulf area go back to 1960. More recently they established a silo station at Muttrah, the twin town of Muscat, in order to supply bulk cement for the construction of Port Qaboos and other major Government projects from their Bamburi factory in Kenya.

Geological Survey

A team from the Institute of Geological Sciences, financed by the Overseas Development Administration (F.C.O.), worked in Oman from November 1972 to mid-March 1973 at the invitation of the Government, and conducted a mineral exploration project covering a total of approximately 3,000 sq. km in the Wadi Jizi, Wadi Hawasinah, and Sayh Hatat areas. Geochemical sampling was systematically carried out and areas of mineralisation investigated; a number of sites of Islamic copper mining were also examined and samples taken for assessment. The survey revealed further occurrences of copper mineralisation and some chromite bodies. In addition to this economic mineral survey the team also studied some of the important aspects of the general geology of the country.

Oil Exploration

At the end of July 1973 the decision was taken to bring the Ghaba North, Qarn Alam and Saih Nihayda fields into production. A 135 km 20 in. diameter pipeline will be built to join the main pipeline at a point 75 km from Fahud.

The Ghaba development was made possible by the discovery of oil in both the Shuaiba and Haushi formations at Ghaba North in February 1972, which focussed the attention of the Exploration Department on the prospects of the Ghaba area.

This was an exciting discovery for it was the first time that oil had been found in the relatively old Haushi sandstone formation in S.E. Arabia.

Until now the Natih and Shuaiba limestones had been the principal objectives in Oman and adjacent areas and until this discovery at Ghaba North the Haushi sandstone had not been regarded as particularly prospective as it had been drilled several times without finding oil.

During the past year three more oilfields have been discovered—Qarn Alam, Saih Nihayda and Habur. At Qarn Alam and Habur the oil occurs in the Shuaiba formation, the horizon from which oil is produced at Yibal and al-Huwaisah. Unfortunately both at Qarn Alam and Habur the oil is rather heavy, viscous and sulphorous. Moreover the reservoirs are poor and it is not certain whether the field at Habur will ever be producible. On the other hand at Saih Nihayda, the Haushi sandstone contains high quality light oil while the Shuaiba limestone only contains gas.

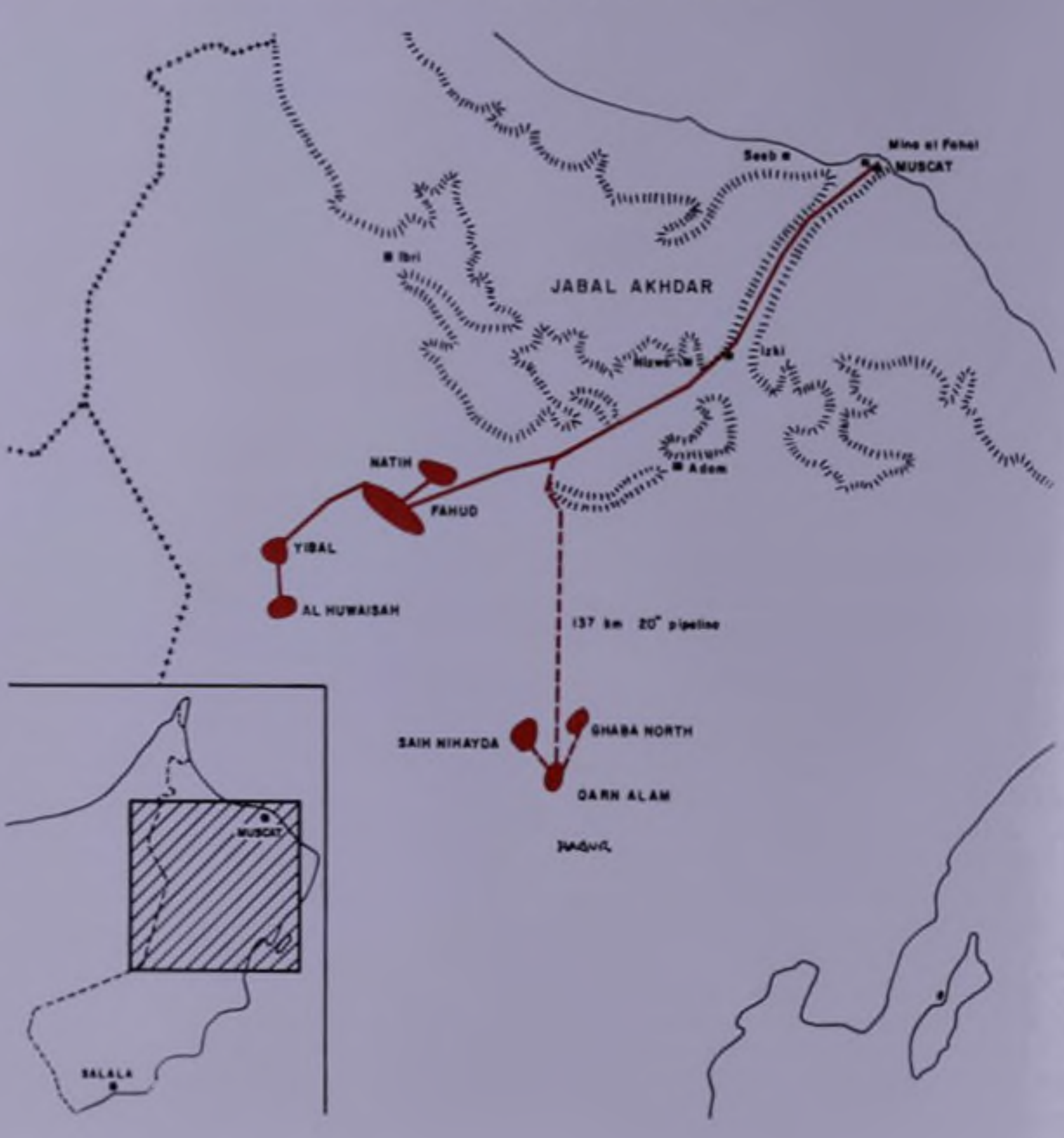
A six months' production test of one of the wells at Qarn Alam has shown that the heavy oil will in fact flow at an acceptable rate. This is due to the extensively fractured and fissured condition of the poor quality chalky limestone reservoir. Other tests have shown that the lighter low viscosity oils to be found in the Haushi formation will flow quite readily.

It is, therefore, planned to mix the heavy viscous oil from the Qarn Alam with the much lighter crudes from Ghaba North and Saih Nihayda. This blend will in turn be mixed with oil from the currently producing fields. This means that the quality of the export blend will be virtually unaffected and will remain at 35° API with a content of Sulphur of 0.9% when the oil arrives at Mina al-Fahal.

Appraisal drilling still continues in the new fields and production is planned to start in January, 1975, at a rate of at least 60,000 barrels a day.

Recent results at Saih Nihayda indicate that the field may be somewhat larger than was originally thought. In addition there is still a chance of finding more oilfields in the area in the months and years to come.

New and Existing Oil Fields



Oman's New Port Nears Completion

The largest single project yet undertaken in Oman—the construction of a £20-million deep-water port at Muttrah, the twin town of the capital, Muscat—is now nearing completion. Work is already several months ahead of schedule and the port is expected to be fully operational early next year.

With over 1,000 miles of coastline and many natural harbours, Oman in the past had a distinguished sea-faring history. In the early 19th century, in particular, the Omani mercantile fleet had a virtual monopoly of trade over a very wide area and sailing ships and dhows plied regularly between India, Arabia and East Africa, carrying ivory, precious metals, spices and textiles.

But with the advent of the steamship and the establishment of European colonial empires in Africa and Asia, Oman's commercial and naval power began to wane, and Omanis turned to agriculture and fishing as their main source of livelihood. The lack of international commerce no longer justified the modernisation of ports or the maintenance of large fleets.

In recent times the development of Oman has been severely hampered by obsolete and inefficient harbour facilities. In northern Oman cargo was discharged at two points—at Muscat for general merchandise and at nearby Mina-al-Fahal for cargo intended for the oil company, Petroleum Development (Oman) Ltd. In both places ships anchored off-shore while cargo was transferred to small jetties by barge. Exceptionally heavy goods were discharged over the beach at Muttrah.

A similar situation existed in Dhofar, the southern province of Oman, where all cargo was ferried ashore by lighters at Salalah.

The commercial production of oil in 1967 precipitated an increase in trade and imports which existing port facilities were never designed to handle. Loading and unloading of ships was often delayed, and as a result shipping companies imposed a levy of 10% on all consignments with additional surcharges according to the type of cargo carried. This, in turn, led to higher retail prices in Oman.

To meet this problem a British firm of consulting engineers, Sir William Halcrow & Partners, was appointed by the previous Sultan in 1968 to design a new harbour at Muttrah and a master plan was drawn up in conjunction with architects John R. Harris & Partners. This envisaged a slow development in four stages up to 1980, by which time a handling capacity of one million tons of cargo per annum would be reached.

Stage one of the project was limited to the construction of two lighter berths capable of handling 150,000 tons of cargo per year, with only two transit sheds, administration and passenger buildings, a Police and harbour office and ancillary services. A 1,500 ft. breakwater would also be built.

The contract for this stage, costing just over £2 million, was awarded to Messrs. Six Construct, a consortium of Belgian, Dutch, French and Spanish firms based in Brussels, and work commenced in April 1970—three months before the accession of H.M. Sultan Qaboos, on July 23rd the same year.

With the change of Government, however, and the new Sultan's determination to encourage the development of the Sultanate as rapidly as possible, instructions were given to proceed immediately with the full construction programme and to combine the remaining three stages into one project.

The whole plan was then revised, amended where necessary and a new contract worth over £17 million awarded to Six Construct and Messrs. Hochtief, of Essen, West Germany, as a joint venture. Work on this major phase commenced in February 1971 and with the installation of plant and other facilities the total cost of the whole project will amount to over £20 million.

When completed the harbour, to be known as Port Qaboos, will handle up to $1\frac{1}{2}$ million tons of cargo per annum, with deep-water berthing capacity for up to 10 ocean-going ships and a full range of modern cargo-handling and storage facilities. It is already in partial use, handling an estimated 300,000 tons of cargo per annum.

The construction of the new harbour has completely changed the appearance of the north-west side of Muttrah bay, where mountains formerly rose from the water's edge. Millions of tons of rock have been dynamited and excavated and the rubble used as a foundation for the 42-acre storage area, while a 2,300 ft. breakwater has been constructed, protected by 15-ton concrete "stabits" manufactured at a special casting yard nearby.

The deep-water berths, totalling 5,600 ft. in length, will vary in depth between 22 ft. and 45 ft., including a 750 ft. berth giving 33 ft. average draught. In the storage area, in addition to the buildings provided in the first stage of the development, six more transit sheds measuring 360 ft. by 100 ft. are being erected, together with a plant workshop, gear stores, ambulance station and a canteen.

Huge steel silos which were installed to receive cement shipped into Oman for the harbour project will be retained and their role reversed to enable cement manufactured at a proposed new factory in Oman to be pumped direct on to waiting vessels or packed in bags.

Local dhows and fishing boats have not been overlooked either. A small inner harbour, with berthing facilities for these smaller vessels, is being incorporated in the scheme and an area retained for possible development as a centre for a fisheries industry.

The Government is currently considering the establishment of a port authority to manage and promote Port Qaboos, with the object of ensuring efficient operation of the harbour facilities, the development of new business and to attract various service industries to the area.

At Raysut 13 miles west of Salah, in Dhofar province, work has just been completed on a small harbour with a 1,360 ft. breakwater and five berths, designed and built by the British firm of Taylor Woodrow International Ltd.

Total berthing space amounts to 923 ft. in depths varying from 8 ft. to 17 ft., and the new harbour, which is intended for small trading and fishing vessels, is connected to Salalah by a tarmac road.

Having completed the basic construction work, the company has now been awarded a contract to build various additional facilities, including administrative offices, covered storage area, a Police station, a customs, health and immigration block, and accommodation for port and customs officials, security forces and labourers. It will also be responsible for installing a water supply and building reservoirs.

The total cost of the project, including all ancillary buildings, will amount to over £4 million.

Plans are also in hand for providing berthing facilities for small coastal vessels at the ancient port of Sur, on the east coast of Oman, while in Musandam, in the extreme north, it is proposed to build a small breakwater and dhow berth at Khasab.

At Bukha, also in Musandam, a small breakwater was constructed last year, to provide a protected anchorage for local fishing craft.

Sea Communications

Two important announcements relating to the improvement of shipping facilities in Oman have recently been made.

50 ft. Tug/Workboat for Oman

Cheverton Workboats have recently launched their new vessel, a 50 ft. twin-screw workboat for service in Oman and the Middle East. This heralds the first of a range of 50 ft. boats in addition to the existing fleet of 18, 23, 27, and 40 ft. craft already used world-wide.

The boat is based on a new Cheverton heavy-duty commercial glassfibre hull, designed for local towing work and general, use e.g. immigration, customs and pilotage duties. The need for the launch arose following the expansion of port facilities in Raysut and Muscat, and requirements called for a boat capable of putting to sea in any conditions.

Additional Shipping Facilities at Muscat

Five Shipping Lines have advised Shippers that due to material improvement in port conditions at Muttrah, it has become possible to withdraw the 10% Congestion Surcharge on cargo for this port.

No Congestion Surcharge will, therefore, be levied on freight and additionals due on cargo shipped to Muscat by vessels loading or commencing to load in individual ports on and after Monday, August 27th, 1973.

The Lines are:

Strick & Ellerman Service
Koninklijke Nedlloyd N.V.
Iraqi Maritime Transport Co. Ltd.
Kuwait Shipping Company (S.A.K.)
Arya National Shipping Lines S.A.

OMAN GOVERNMENT

MINISTERS AND MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OF THE GOVERNMENT OF THE SULTANATE OF OMAN AS AT 1st OCTOBER, 1973

H.M. Sultan Qaboos
Head of State

H.E. Sayyid Thuwaini bin Shihab
Governor of Capital and Personal Adviser to His Majesty

H.E. Sayyid Hilal bin Hamed Al-Sammar
Minister of Interior and Justice

H.E. Dr. Assim Al-Jamaly
Minister of Health

H.E. Sayyid Fahad Al-Said
Minister of State for Foreign Affairs

H.E. Eng. Abdul Hafidh Salim Rajab
Minister of Communication and Public Services

H.E. Sheikh Alwalid bin Zaher
Minister of Awkaf and Islamic Affairs

H.E. Sayyid Mohammed bin Ahmed
Minister of Land Affairs

H.E. Sayyid Hamed Hamoud
Head of Diwan and Secretary to the Cabinet

H.E. Khalfan Nasser Al-Waheiby
Minister of Social Affairs and Labour and Acting Minister of Education

Private Sector Imports Oman

Private Sector imports during January—June 1973 in Oman have been of the order of 13.3 million omani rials against the import of 9.5 million rials during the corresponding period of 1972. Thus, there has been increases of 3.8 million omani rials or 40.5 per cent in the imports during the first six months of 1973 as compared to the similar period during 1972.

The following table shows imports (first six months only) for 1972 and 1973 under S.I.T.C. Sections:

Features of the Private Sector Import Pattern

i) Under Section No. 0—Food and Live Animals, the increase is maximum (427%) for live animals, followed by fruits and vegetables (164%), dairy products and eggs (91%), cereal and cereal preparations (82%) and sugar and sugar preparations (82%). On the other hand the imports decreased under coffee, tea, etc., and miscellaneous food preparations.

ii) Under Section No. 1—Beverages and Tobacco, while there has been decline in import of beverages (—5%), there is increase in the import of tobacco and tobacco preparation (10.9%).

iii) Under Section No. 3—Mineral fuels and Lubricants, the increase is due to larger imports of petroleum and petroleum products (93.5%).

iv) Under Section No. 5—Chemicals, the increase in imports is on chemical elements and compounds (93%), dyeing, tanning and colouring materials (91%) and plastic materials (63%).

v) Under Section No. 6—Manufactured goods, the increase is more or less uniform on various items but there has been decline in the imports of leather and leather manufactures (—57%).

vi) Under Section No. 7—Machinery and Transport Equipment, the maximum percentage increase is for machinery other than electric (476%), and transport equipment (69%).

vii) Under Section No. 8—Miscellaneous manufactured goods, the increase is on sanitary, plumbing, heating and lighting fixtures (140%), miscellaneous manufactured articles (336%) and a number of other articles included under the Section.

The above figure and notes do not take into account any imports on which duties are not levied.

Private Sector Imports in Oman during the period January-June (1972 and 1973)

(In '000 Omani Rials)

S.I.T.C. Section Number	Description	1972 Jan.-June	1973 Jan.-June	absolute	per cent
0	Food and Live Animals	2,858	3,955	1,097	38.4
1	Beverages and Tobacco	385	405	20	5.2
2	Crude materials—inedible	151	216	65	43.1
3	Mineral fuels & lubricants	381	781	400	105.2
4	Animal & Vegetable oils & fats	—	51	51	—
5	Chemicals	413	633	220	53.3
6	Manufactured goods	1,863	2,506	643	34.5
7	Machinery & transport equipment	2,746	3,796	1,050	38.2
8	Miscellaneous manufactured goods	427	780	353	82.7
9	Non-classified items	238	170	(—)68	(—)28.5
	Total	9,462	13,293	3,831	40.4

The maximum percentage increase (105%) is in mineral fuels and lubricants and the minimum (5%) in beverages and tobacco.

Imports in Oman classified under countries of Origin

	Country	1970	1971	1972	1973 (Jan.-June)
1	U.K.	14.8	19.7	20.7	21.1
2	Gulf Countries U.A.E., Bahrain & Qatar	12.8	17.8	21.3	25.1
3	Japan	6.1	6.1	10.4	8.7
4	India	11.1	7.0	6.0	6.4
5	Australia	10.1	7.0	5.7	6.0
6	Netherlands	4.2	3.6	5.2	4.5
7	China	9.5	3.6	4.6	3.7
8	West Germany	2.0	3.3	3.5	3.3
9	Pakistan	3.1	3.3	3.3	4.3
10	Iran	2.4	5.8	2.6	2.5
11	Burma	5.2	8.0	1.9	0.8
12	South Africa	7.0	1.1	1.6	0.6
13	U.S.A.	0.8	1.0	1.5	2.0
14	Singapore	3.2	1.3	1.4	1.0
15	Italy	1.2	0.5	1.3	1.0
16	Denmark	0.4	0.6	1.0	0.7
17	France	0.3	0.4	0.8	0.6
18	Kenya	n.a.	1.2	0.8	0.2
19	Lebanon	0.4	0.2	0.7	0.6
20	Switzerland	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.8
21	Sweden	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.7
22	Thailand	n a.	0.8	0.4	0.1
23	Liberia	n.a.	0.8	0.3	0.2
24	U.S.S.R.	2.6	1.1	0.2	0.3
25	Brazil	n.a.	0.7	0.1	0.0
26	Spain	0.2	1.4	0.1	0.1
	Other Countries	2.2	2.9	3.3	4.7
	Total all Countries	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Trade shown as originating from Gulf Countries (U.A.E., Bahrain and Qatar) usually consists of goods imported to those countries. The significant feature is that while in 1970 only 12.8 per cent of total imports to Oman was from Gulf countries, this percentage has increased to 25.1 per cent during the first half of 1973. Direct imports from the U.K. show a steady rise, while imports from the Gulf include some of U.K. origin.

1,000 Homes Project for Oman

A new residential township is to be built at Qorum, near Muscat, largely by private enterprise with assistance from the Omani Government, under the overall management and administration of an association between the Taylor Woodrow Group of London and W. J. Towell and Company of Oman.

To be known as Medinat Qaboos, after His Majesty Sultan Qaboos bin Said, the £20 million development envisages over 1,000 homes initially together with shopping and communal facilities and will house people working in Muscat and Muttrah on a site overlooking the Arabian Sea.

Consultants to the Sultanate are Gibb Petermuller, architects and consulting engineers, of Athens and the design of commercial and administration buildings in the town centre is being carried out by Michael Brashier Associates, architects of London.

Details were finalised at a recent meeting in Athens and the first houses are expected to be ready for public viewing by mid-November.

Developers and owners of one part of the project are W. J. Towell, a well known merchant house trading throughout the Middle East from its headquarters in Oman, and of the other part by the recently formed Oman International Development Company Ltd., which is jointly owned by a subsidiary of the Taylor Woodrow Group, by W. J. Towell and by a group of Omani business men.

U.K. Tour for Sheikh Amor Ali Ameir

Sheikh Amor Ali Ameir, Director of Information and Tourism in the Sultanate of Oman, in July completed a 14 day visit to the United Kingdom as the guest of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Most of his programme, which was arranged by the Central Office of Information, was centred on London. He visited the House of Commons and had lunch with a number of Members of Parliament. He visited the Offices of the Press Council, Reuters, the Daily Telegraph, Visnews and also was received at the British Broadcasting Corporation and London Week-end Television.

Outside London he visited Cambridge, where he saw the Pye factory; Oxford, where he visited the local radio station; Chelmsford, where he visited Marconi Ltd., and Harlow, where he visited Longmans, the publishers.

During his visit he was entertained to an official luncheon by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, at which Mr. Norman Reddaway was the host. On his final day after visiting the Thompson Foundation, he was entertained to lunch by Cable & Wireless Ltd., and in the evening Michael Rice and Company gave a reception in his honour.

above right:
A group at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Luncheon on board the Restaurant Ship "Hispaniola".
(Left to right)
Mr. Patrick McNair-Wilson, M.P. (New Forest)
Sheikh Amor Ali Ameir
Mr. David Watkins, M.P. (Durham, Consett)
The Hon. Martin Buckmaster (Foreign and Commonwealth Office)

Omani Officials Visit U.S. Canada and U.K.

Mr. Karim Ahmed Al-Haremi, President of the General Development Organisation and Mr. Abdulla Suleiman, Director of Agriculture, made an extended tour of the U.S.A. and Canada and held discussions with government officials and company executives about Oman's future economic development projects.

On their return from North America, they spent a few days in London and outlined some of the main developments stemming from their visit:

A new variety of palm tree was shortly to be introduced in Oman, following successful experiments in identical climatic conditions in California. Some 550 palm trees were to be freighted to Oman and nurtured in the Nizwa and Sohar areas.

Greater utilization of arable land would result from the cultivation of citrus fruit trees beneath palm trees in existing date groves in Oman.

Importation of a new breed of cattle (possibly Friesian or Jersey stock) was under serious consideration.

Wheat crops would be given a boost by the introduction of "dwarf wheat" which required little water, and prospered well in Yuma, Arizona, which had similar climatic conditions to parts of Oman such as the Wadi Quriat, where initial experiments with the new strain had proved successful. The Oman Fishing Industry was being expanded and eight Omanis had already embarked on an extensive training course with Mardella International, a division of the multi-million dollar Food Machinery Corporation in the U.S.A.

Secondary industries, such as canning, food processing and cement factories were on the drawing board and expected to be in full operation within the next few years.

Pictured in Washington, below:
(from left) Mr. Karim Ahmed Al-Haramy, President of the General Development Organisation.
Mr. Abdulla Suleiman, Director of Agriculture.
Oman Ambassador to Washington and Ambassador of the Permanent Mission of Oman to the United Nations, H.E. Sayyid Faisal Al-Said.

Visit to Dexion-Comino International

H.E. The Ambassador, Mr. Nassir Seif El Bualy, takes a very active interest in meeting British firms and companies who have business interests in Oman.

H.E. the Ambassador accompanied by the First Secretary to the Embassy has recently visited Dexion-Comino International Ltd., at Wembley, Middlesex. They are seen in the picture (Left to right at foot of page):

Mr. D. Comino, Chairman of the Company,
Sayyid Ghalib Al-Said, First Secretary at the Embassy,
H.E. Mr. Nassir Seif El Bualy,
Mr. D. J. Buckley, Director, Group Special Projects.

Oman's Expanding Health Service

Until 1970 Oman was a country where modern methods of medical treatment were completely unknown to the majority of the population. There was widespread poverty with many Omanis suffering from the effects of malnutrition and vitamin deficiency, and a high incidence of disease, caused mainly by primitive living conditions, non-existent sanitation and insufficient knowledge of personal hygiene. In many cases only the fittest survived.

There were only two hospitals in the capital area of Muscat—one run by the British Consulate as an out-patients' hospital and the other by an American Mission, which also had a separate maternity unit. A third hospital, owned by the oil company, Petroleum Development (Oman) Ltd., catered for company employees only.

In the rest of the country, covering an area of over 100,000 square miles, only nine health centres and seven dispensaries had been set up by the previous Regime and the number of doctors and health assistants was minimal.

The Oman Government thus had to start from scratch in building up a nation-wide health system where almost none existed and to devise an expansion programme which would meet the most immediate demands for a medical service whilst forming the basis of a viable, low-cost long-term plan. This formidable task was taken up by the newly-formed Ministry of Health on August 22nd, 1970, only a month after the accession of H.M. Sultan Qaboos.

Many obstacles and problems had to be overcome. In the first place there was little recorded information about population figures or the incidence of specific diseases, and officials of the Ministry had to explore the country and obtain the information for themselves, often spending long, tiring hours in vehicles and aircraft.

An acute shortage of accommodation caused considerable delay in the development programme, additional qualified staff had to be obtained, and an outbreak of cholera in the summer of 1971 necessitated a mass vaccination programme which further disrupted the progress of the Ministry and placed a heavy strain on its meagre resources.

In spite of these problems the Minister of Health, Dr. Assim Al-Jamaly, and his Under-Secretary, Mr. Said Salim Shaksy, pressed on vigorously with schemes for recruiting more staff, improving existing services, opening additional units where construction work was not necessary, and revising and completing the limited number of capital projects that had been initiated by the previous regime.

At the same time, detailed longer-term plans were drawn up and progressively implemented for the establishment of a network of hospitals, health centres and dispensaries to provide medical coverage for the country as a whole. Steps were also taken to back this up with the necessary administrative machinery and to create a supplies and maintenance service to cope with the rapid expansion.

Many diseases and medical problems can be more easily prevented than cured, and for this reason equally close attention was given to the setting up of a public health department to introduce programmes of preventative medicine and to attack these problems at their source.

Three years later, the progress that has been made and the changes that have taken place in introducing a free, modern health service to the people of Oman are spectacular by anyone's standards and are in striking contrast to the unsatisfactory conditions which prevailed prior to 1970.

Already eleven Government hospitals with a total of 650 beds are functioning in various parts of the country and an additional 50-bed hospital is about to open at Buraimi, a remote oasis on the north-west border of Oman.

The oil company's hospital at Mina al Fahal, near Muscat, is being taken over by the Ministry and virtually rebuilt to provide 114 beds, three operating theatres and various other facilities including a maternity wing, laboratory, casualty department and staff accommodation. The target date for completion is June next year.

At Salalah, in the south of Oman, plans are in hand to build a self-sufficient general hospital and a separate maternity hospital which together will provide comprehensive service for the entire province of Dhofar. The number of beds in the two hospitals has yet to be decided but will probably be between 250 and 300.

The largest project envisaged by the Ministry, however, is a general referral hospital in the capital area of Muscat, where facilities for highly specialised medical investigation and treatment will be available for patients who might otherwise have to be sent to hospitals abroad.

Health centres have also figured prominently in Oman's plans for a comprehensive country-wide health service.

Eight of these "mini hospitals", each staffed by resident doctors and with facilities for 24 in-patients, are in the final stages of construction. Two are already in operation and the rest should be open before the end of the year. All these centres will have facilities for X-ray, laboratory testing, minor surgery and maternity confinements.

Consideration is also being given to the construction of a 24-bed health centre near Quryat, on the coast of Oman south of Muscat, and it is hoped that work will commence there very soon.

Four other centres are currently operating, also with resident doctors, but offering treatment for out-patients only.

In the less populated areas 27 dispensaries are now open, staffed by trained health assistants whose task is to diagnose illnesses, treat simple ailments, fix appointments with visiting doctors or arrange admittance to hospital if necessary.

In the field of preventive medicine progress has been equally impressive. Initially the Ministry's policy was to place greater emphasis on curative medicine because of the need to cope with the immediate health problems of individuals. It was also felt that securing the confidence of the people in modern healing methods would prepare them for education later in personal hygiene and other preventive medical techniques.

The success of this policy became abundantly clear when it was found that women, who have always been more susceptible to traditional medical suspicions in the past, were outpacing the men in attendance at the newly-established hospitals, health centres and dispensaries.

A Department of Public Health was therefore formed early in 1972 to promote various preventive measures and it is now actively engaged in setting up public health compounds in various parts of the Sultanate. These compounds are field units run by experienced doctors whose responsibilities include mother and child health—including home deliveries—health education for schoolchildren and adults, environmental sanitation inoculation and vaccination, control of infectious diseases and pest control.

Two such compounds have already opened, another is due to start functioning later this year and two more will be open early in 1974. A further three units are currently in the planning stage and it is also proposed to build a large centralised compound near the capital area equipped with laboratory facilities for dealing with food control, water analysis and general sanitation matters, in addition to other preventative measures.

Overall control of the compounds is exercised by the Public Health Department, which also co-operates with other Government and municipal departments in ensuring the potability of drinking water in various towns and rural areas and in giving advice on the provision of safe and adequate water supplies and of sewage and other waste disposal systems.

In this way the department is actively fighting, and hopes eventually to eradicate, various communicable diseases such as trachoma—a contagious eye affliction resulting in blindness—malaria, tuberculosis and dysentery, all of which have been endemic in Oman for centuries. The elimination of malnutrition and vitamin deficiency is also high on the department's list of priorities.

The rapid growth of Oman's medical services brought with it another problem—a serious shortage of doctors and other trained personnel. Recruiting campaigns have been organised abroad, aimed particularly at Omanis who have yet to return to work for

their country, and assistance has been given by seconded and volunteer staff from various other countries.

Pending the opening of a proposed new training institute, with courses for assistant nurses and midwives, sanitary assistants and laboratory technicians, a temporary school of nursing has been operating at the hospital at Muscat's twin town of Muttrah and has already produced its first graduates. A three-month course for sanitary assistants has also been introduced.

A number of Omani students, both male and female, have gone abroad for further studies in medicine and affiliated subjects, with financial assistance provided by the Government of Oman, the World Health Organisation or the British Council. These studies are being actively encouraged by the Ministry, particularly amongst its own employees, and there are hopes of providing more assistance in this field in the future.

When compared with the figures of August 1970, the number of staff now directly employed by the Health Ministry provides startling proof of the tremendous expansion in the Sultanate's medical services.

When the Ministry was first established its staff consisted of the Minister and the Under-Secretary sharing one room, with only three assistants and eight unskilled personnel. On the medical side the staff totalled 99, with only 10 doctors and 33 nursing and other professional employees.

In the space of three years the staff of the Ministerial headquarters has increased to 133, of whom 24 are in administrative and professional ranks, while the total number in the medical and public health services has soared to 1,133. Of this number 77 are doctors, dentists and specialists, 461 are nursing and other professional staff, and 50 are employed in clerical and administrative capacities. The remainder are serving as junior subordinate staff.

Oman has received considerable help in the technical and administrative fields from the World Health Organisation, which the Sultanate joined in May 1971, and other aid in various forms has been given by the Gulf states of Abu Dhabi, Bahrain and Kuwait, by U.N.I.C.E.F. and by the Governments of the United Kingdom, India, Pakistan and Egypt.

Erroneous P.F.L.O.A.G. Reports

During the last few months certain newspapers in the United Kingdom have carried erroneous reports alleging that British soldiers on contract and secondment have been killed and wounded in the Sultanate of Oman.

On August 14th, 1973, eight daily newspapers asserted that "three British officers in Oman were killed when guerrillas belonging to the Oman Liberation Front set fire to tents at the British Air Base in Salalah and at Bas Airport—the Front said".

This statement typifies the increasing number of fictitious communiques circulated to world news agencies by the Front, known as the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arabian Gulf. (P.F.L.O.A.G.)

Every week 'news' filters through, of massive P.F.L.O.A.G. victories over the 'enemy'—the legitimate Government of the Sultanate of Oman; every week the reports become more preposterous, e.g. references to the complete destruction of 37 defence posts and killing of 11 British officers and mercenaries in Oman. (P.F.L.O.A.G. Communique dated July 30th, 1973.)

Considered in isolation each P.F.L.O.A.G. report may seem reasonable and, therefore, newsworthy. However, when taken together, it becomes apparent that the P.F.L.O.A.G. communiques are nothing but malicious propaganda, designed to undermine confidence in the Oman Government by ruthlessly distorting the facts and fabricating impossible 'statistics' in an effort to convey a veneer of credibility. 'Impossible' because it must become increasingly clear (even to people only vaguely aware of the situation in Oman) that the P.F.L.O.A.G. figures could not by any stretch of the imagination, be true.

For example, reports circulated by the P.F.L.O.A.G. from July 3rd, 1973 to the end of August, 1973, allege that a total of 141 British officers and mercenaries were killed in Oman and 109 defensive positions were destroyed. In the latter half of June 81 British officers and soldiers were reported killed by the P.F.L.O.A.G.—no mean feat if one considers that this figure added to the July-August total amounts to an alleged grand total of 222 British officers and soldiers killed in Oman in just over three months. This figure for British casualties actually exceeds the total of British personnel on secondment and contract to the Sultan of Oman's armed forces. (S.A.F.).

These P.F.L.O.A.G. communiques, which appear to issue periodically from Aden, are usually carried either by the Iraq News Agency or by western news agencies with correspondents in Aden.

The real fact is that in the last three months the Oman Government has intensified its efforts to eliminate Communist activity in Dhofar and has carried out successful military operations in most areas.

Terrorists are known to be short of essential supplies especially throughout the Jebel and eastern areas where food, ammunition and medical supplies are particularly scarce.

Government patrol and blocking operations have resulted in almost stalemate conditions for the guerrillas, who are unable to hire camels or purchase food.

An Oman communique (August 21st, 1973) states that after fierce fighting in the Wadi Guiper, in which small arms ground fire and spasmodic rockets, were met by Government mortars and machine guns an increasing number of P.F.L.O.A.G. 'freedom fighters' changed sides to join the Sultan's Armed Forces. The communique adds that 19 ex-P.F.L.O.A.G. members had joined S.A.F. between August 1st and August 20th, 1973.

This brings the overall total of former P.F.L.O.A.G. members joining the S.A.F. to 694 since His Majesty Sultan Qaboos took over the governing of the country on July 23rd, 1970.

Their chief reason for deserting the rebel forces is a desire to experience real freedom under the new Omani regime.

Diplomatic Initiatives

Tunisian Foreign Minister visits Oman

H.E. Mr. Mohammed Almasmoodi, Tunisian Foreign Minister, arrived in Oman for a short visit on June 17th, during which he met H.M. the Sultan at Salalah.

Algerian Visitor to Oman

H.E. Mr. Abdul Azazi Hussain, Algerian Ambassador in the Sudan, permanent representative of Algeria to the Organisation of African Unity and personal representative of President Boumedienne visited Oman from June 17th-19th. He had an audience with Sultan Qaboos at Salalah.

Oman and Turkey establish diplomatic relations

A joint communique was issued on June 18th announcing the establishment of diplomatic relations between Oman and Turkey.

Educational Discussions in Jordan

An Omani delegation headed by H.E. Mr. Khalfan Nasser Al-Waheiby, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour and acting Minister of Education, visited Jordan as guests of the Jordanian Ministry of Education, from June 30th to July 3rd.

Guest of U.S.

The Minister of Communications and Public Services, H.E. Eng. Abdul Hafidh Salim Rajab, left Oman on July 3rd for Washington. He spent two months in the United States as a guest of the U.S. Government.

Sultan Qaboos sends messages to Saudi Arabia and North Yemen

H.E. Sayyid Thuwaini bin Shihab, personal adviser to the Sultan and Governor of the Capital, went to Jeddah, Saudi Arabia on July 7th to deliver a special message from H.M. Sultan Qaboos to H.M. King Faisal.

Oman's Ambassador in Jeddah, H.E. Sheikh Hilal Ali Alkhalili, returned from Sanaa, North Yemen on July 18th after delivering a letter from Sultan Qaboos to Qadhi Aliryani, President of North Yemen. The letter was in reply to an earlier communication sent by the President to the Sultan.

Official Visits to Syria and Morocco

A delegation led by H.E. Sayyid Fahad Al-Said, Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, made official visits to Syria and Morocco from July 18th-22nd and from July 27th-31st.

In Damascus the delegation met the Syrian Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Abdul Halim Khaddam, and various other officials and discussed matters of mutual interest, including bi-lateral relations and Middle East and Arabian Gulf affairs.

The Syrian Foreign Minister stressed the brotherly policy of his Government towards the people of the Gulf region and also his understanding of the Omani position. In reply, the Oman Minister expressed his satisfaction with the meeting, which was the first of its kind to take place between the two countries, and said that it symbolised the good relations which now existed on both sides.

The delegation also met the Syrian Prime Minister, Mr. Mahmoud Alayoubi.

In Rabat, Morocco, the Omani party had official talks with the Moroccan Foreign Minister, H.E. Mr. Ahmed Altaibi bin Haimah, and discussed bi-lateral relations and current Arab and international affairs. Sayyid Fahad also had an audience with the Prime Minister, Mr. Ahmed Osman, who was representing the King of Morocco.

South Korean visit to Oman

H.E. Mr. Yung Choo Kim, South Korean Ambassador in West Germany, visited Oman from July 25th-27th to advise the Foreign Ministry of his country's external policies, with particular reference to a recent statement made by the President of the Republic of Korea about foreign policy and reunification of North and South Korea. It was his second visit to Oman.

Telecommunications Conference

During the second week of September a delegation from Oman attended the Conference organised by the International Telecommunications Union, which was held near Malaga in Spain. The delegation was headed by H.E. Eng. Abdul Hafidh Salim Rajab, Minister of Communication and Public Services. It included Mr. Hamdan Abdula Said, Director of Posts and Telegraphs and Telephones, Mrs. Nashia Saud Al-Kharousi, Assistant Director of Posts and Telegraphs, and Sayyid Ghalib Khalid Al-Said, First Secretary, Oman Embassy, London.

Meeting with Amir of Qatar

During their recent visits to London, H.H. Shaikh Khalifa bin Hamed Al-Thani, Amir of Qatar called on H.M. Sultan Qaboos at Claridges Hotel.

The photograph above shows the two Heads of State.

United Nations Team to Visit Oman

A special team of statisticians from the United Nations will shortly begin a Population Census in Oman.

President of the General Development Organisation, Mr. Karim Al-Haramy, on a recent visit to London stressed the need for reliable population statistics. "At present Oman's population is variously placed at 500,000; 750,000 and 1.2 million" he said, "and it is essential that for future economic planning and development that we have the true figure so that our National Statistics Department can project future population growth".

He added that the U.N. team would begin its census in Muscat and Muttrah, then tackle smaller centres such as Nizwa, Sur, Sohar and Rostaq.

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