

Office of the Secretary of Defense

Chief, RDD, ESD, WHS

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Reason: 3.3(b)(6)

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**SECRET**

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April 8, 1983

DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
WASHINGTON

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MEMORANDUM FOR: THE PRESIDENT

FROM: Lawrence S. Eagleburger, Acting Secretary

SUBJECT: Visit of Qaboos bin Said, Sultan of Oman,  
April 12

I. THE SETTING

Oman is the only country in the Persian Gulf area which has granted American forces the right to stage from its bases in an emergency.

[REDACTED]

Our principal aim in the visit should be to promote an atmosphere conducive to further progress in security cooperation. We wish to reinforce Qaboos' feeling that bilateral cooperation in this area is in Oman's best interests and contributes to the security of the entire free world.

II. ISSUES

1. U.S./Oman Security Cooperation

A State/Defense team held very productive meetings in Oman in late February to discuss the access agreement.

[REDACTED]

We recommend that you tell Qaboos that you are very pleased that the talks went so well. You could continue that we hope to move forward rapidly on prepositioning, which will add greatly to our capabilities in the region and thus will deter further Soviet aggression. You might also wish to state that we remain very interested in Oman's security and hope to complete action soon on other aspects of our military relationship, such as a secure communications link.

2. Oman's Position on Your Middle East Peace Proposal

Almost alone in the Arab world, Oman has supported the Camp David Accords. Oman joined the Arab consensus at Fez, but has not taken a public position on your peace initiative. Qaboos met with King Hussein in late March and will likely express sympathy with Hussein's concerns about the peace process. I recommend that you urge active Omani support of your proposal in Arab councils and especially with Hussein.

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-2-

3. The Iran/Iraq War and the Iranian Threat to the Gulf States

Oman believes that continuation of the Iraq-Iran war, and particularly an Iranian victory, would directly threaten their own security. They and other Gulf Arab states ask that we "do something" to stop the war, believing that the United States, in concert with other permanent members of the UN Security Council, could impose an end to the war by voting sanctions against Iran. If Qaboos raises with you his concern at the continuation of the war, you could state that we would welcome suggestions the Sultan might offer for practical ways the United States could help bring about an end to the war. Meanwhile, the United States remains prepared to consult with those Gulf countries that feel threatened by the conflict on appropriate measures to support their security. You could conclude by stating that the United States is doing all that it can to encourage and support mediation efforts leading to a cease-fire.

4. U.S. Economic Aid to Oman

The Sultan may request an increase in annual Economic Support Fund assistance from the current \$5 million grant/\$10 million loan to \$10 million grant/\$30 million loan on the grounds that falling oil revenues are forcing cutbacks in development programs, which could result in political disruption. In fact, Oman has a relatively comfortable economic situation as an oil exporter with per capita GNP much higher than most aid recipients. I suggest you point out to the Sultan that the FY 84 budget has gone to the Congress, but that we will give Oman's requirements careful consideration in preparing our FY-85 budget request, which will be constrained by our own difficult fiscal circumstances.

5. Weapons Sales to Oman

We are providing \$30 million in FMS guarantees under the FY 83 continuing resolution which would be increased to \$40 million if the supplemental passes. If the Sultan requests additional assistance, you could point out that in the FY 84 budget proposal we have increased FMS guarantees for Oman to \$45 million, and would expect to request around this amount in FY 85 and beyond. The Sultan may also express an interest in purchasing advanced fighters, attack helicopters and AIM 9-L Sidewinder missiles. We are prepared to sell advanced fighters and attack helicopters to Oman, and would consider an Omani request to purchase the AIM 9L for use in an appropriate weapons system.

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-3-

6. Transmitter for VOA and RFE/RL in Oman

While ideally located for radio broadcasts to parts of the USSR currently not well covered by us, Oman has declined to allow us to put in overt transmission facilities, feeling that it would receive too much adverse publicity. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The Sultan will expect you to raise the transmitter issue. I suggest that you urge him to ask his officials to discuss with us alternate arrangements which would meet Omani concerns and allow us to undertake construction.

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE  
BRIEFING PAPER

JUL 03 2019

OMAN AND ARABIAN PENINSULA SECURITY

Oman is urgently concerned with the security threat posed by Iran, the Soviets and their regional allies, both through overt military means and internal subversion. Iran has changed abruptly from a military ally to a hostile revolutionary state while Soviet activity in the Yemens, Ethiopia and Afghanistan is seen as an attempt to encircle and dominate the Peninsula.

To counter these regional threats Oman looks to the promotion of greater regional security through its participation in the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) in addition to its bilateral security relationship with the U.S. Oman will participate in an exercise of the GCC's new Rapid Movement Force in the United Arab Emirates in the fall of 1983. Moreover, Oman has shown interest in acquiring a Saudi-financed command and control system which would represent an important step toward establishing a regional air defense system.

However, an effective GCC security system is a distant prospect and there have been strains with other members of the GCC in defining and reacting to regional threats. Kuwait regards the Palestinian question and the Iraq/Iran war as more serious threats than Soviet designs and fears that U.S.-Omani ties will provoke a Soviet reaction and bring superpower rivalry into the Gulf. The United Arab Emirates, partly sharing these perceptions, joined Kuwait in mediating a South Yemen-Oman reconciliation agreement last November that was intended to undercut the rationale for Oman's expanded military cooperation with the U.S. Meanwhile the GCC has voted to provide Oman nearly \$2 billion in grant military assistance over the next 12 years, hoping to reduce the level of U.S.-Omani ties. Oman has not yet received any of this GCC assistance and, with current Gulf Arab states' revenue shortfalls, is not counting on such aid. In any event, Oman has given no indication of an intention to lessen its ties with the U.S.

The agreement with South Yemen (Aden) has reduced tensions on Oman's western border, with the Aden government having checked the propaganda and subversive activities of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO). While it is likely there will be some further normalization of relations, so long as Aden projects a moderate image to attract GCC economic aid, Oman remains wary of its long-range intentions.

Oman has no major security concerns about either its small Shia minority or its few resident Palestinians. While there are unresolved border issues with Saudi Arabia and the UAE these are unlikely to provoke serious conflict.

March 22, 1983

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