

bers of the United Nations recognized the right of the people of Oman to self-determination and independence and called for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Oman. However, the people of Oman are still denied their right to freedom and independence. Such a situation can no longer be tolerated particularly since the adoption of the historic Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples. The United Nations, which has assumed a primary responsibility for the total liquidation of the colonial system, cannot be indifferent to the fate of a people who have,

for years, struggled for the attainment of their freedom and independence.

2. In view of the continued policy of repression pursued by the Government of the United Kingdom and its failure to take steps to end its colonial rule, and transfer all sovereign powers to the genuine representatives of the people in accordance with the provisions of the Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples, the General Assembly must, once again, consider the question of Oman, and deal with it as an essentially colonial problem.

## DOCUMENT A/5562

### Report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on his Visit to Oman

[Original text: English]  
[8 October 1963]

#### NOTE BY THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

1. On 11 December 1962, at the 1191st plenary meeting of the General Assembly, the representative of the United Kingdom transmitted to the Secretary-General an invitation from the Sultan of Muscat and Oman to send a representative on a personal basis "to visit the Sultanate during the coming year to obtain first-hand information as to the situation there".<sup>1</sup>

2. The Secretary-General accepted the invitation and appointed as his Special Representative Mr. Herbert de Ribbing. Mr. de Ribbing left New York on 18 May 1963, visited the Sultanate and returned to New York on 1 July 1963.

3. The report of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General is made available in view of the decision of the General Assembly to place the question of Oman on the agenda of its eighteenth session.

<sup>1</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Plenary Meetings, 1191st meeting, para. 45.*

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## LETTER OF TRANSMITTAL

21 August 1963

Sir,

I have the honour to transmit to you herewith the report on the question of Oman, with nine annexes, which I have prepared as a result of the mission undertaken on your behalf to the territory of Oman.

I have limited the report as much as possible to the terms of reference which were formulated in your letter to me of 30 April 1963, part of which I have quoted in chapter VII of the report. The mission, therefore, has concentrated on the fact-finding elements of this mandate. Other questions which have consistently come up during discussions in the General Assembly could not be ignored, however. I have tried to approach these questions with the utmost care, but a thorough evaluation of them would require much more time and experience than the mission had at its disposal.

While it would not be appropriate, bearing in mind the terms of reference of my mission, to include in the report the discussion I had with the Imam of Oman and his representatives, during which he reiterated, *inter alia*, the views contained in his letter to the Secretary-General dated 1 June 1963,<sup>2</sup> I wish to inform you, however, that I found in the Imam and his representatives a willingness to co-operate with efforts to bring the question of Oman to a peaceful conclusion.

I should like to take this opportunity to thank you for the confidence you have shown in me and for all the co-operation I have received from you and the officials in the Secretariat. I hope that the report will be of assistance to you in your efforts to find a solution to the question of Oman.

Accept, Sir, the assurances of my highest consideration.

(Signed) Herbert DE RIBBING  
Special Representative of the  
Secretary-General

His Excellency  
U Thant

Secretary-General of the United Nations  
New York

## I. INTRODUCTION

1. The name "Oman" has been used in different ways depending on who is referring to it and in which context it has been used. Generally speaking, "Oman" has been identified with the whole of the great bulge of the Arabian peninsula enclosed on three sides by the sea (on the north by the Persian Gulf, on the east by the Gulf of Oman and on the south by the Arabian Sea). As one of the notables stated during a discussion with the members of the mission: "It corresponds to the whole area from Zufar in the south to Qatar in the north, with the sea and the desert as ultimate frontiers". But the name has also been used for the interior of the bulge.

2. During the more recent past the area known as Trucial Oman or the Trucial Coast—roughly the southern shore of the Persian Gulf from Qatar to the promontory of Ru'us al Jibal—has had a separate political life.

3. Oman, as described above, can be subdivided into: a long stretch of a coastal plain called the Batinah (ten to twenty miles wide), the towns of Muscat and

Matrah, a northern peninsula (Ru'us al Jibal), the region of Zufar (in the far southern part) and a long area lying south-west of the Hajar Mountain Range. The latter part consists of a wide plain, the Zahirah, with the important town of Ibbi, Inner Oman or Central Oman around the Jabal al Akhdar (the Green Mountains) and to the east of it the Sharqiyah. Ja'lan lies south and east of the Sharqiyah and borders on Zufar.

4. The name of Oman during the last 100 years has been used also for the core of the region east of the Hajar Mountain Range; it is also known as Inner or Central Oman. This area has been the centre of the Imamate. It is a wild mountainous area which has been isolated by deserts and high ranges, peaks in the Jabal al Akhdar rising to 10,000 feet; it is inhabited by tough, individualistic tribesmen. Annex I shows the geographical location of this area and the surrounding territories.

5. The political forms in which these different territories have been cast have varied greatly during the long history of this part of the Arabian peninsula. The Imamate of Oman has had a long historical record, but the record is difficult to understand without a good deal of research. One gets the impression that at times the Imamate has been merely a loose association of tribes, and at other times it has become strong enough to impose its will on adjacent territories and expand its authority to the Batinah and Trucial Coast. The Imam is primarily a religious figure; he has often assumed secular power. To one familiar with the history of Islam this is not a surprise.

6. It appears that the boundaries of the Imamate cannot be determined with certainty. No treaties or agreements seem to exist between the Imamate and neighbouring territories. The active influence of an Imam has often been based on the strength of tribal support. In this respect, two paramount sheikhs, one of the Harthy tribe in the Sharqiyah and one of the Bani Riyam tribe in the Jabal al Akhdar region, have played an often decisive role.

7. During the last 200 years, the Sultan of Muscat has played a dominant role in the affairs of Oman. A significant date was the election of Imam Ahmed bin Said from the tribe of the Al bu Said. Around 1749, instead of a tribal sheikh as such, Ahmed was a merchant and shipowner. His grandson transferred the capital from Nazwa to Muscat. He and his successors used the title of Sayid (lord). Later the title of Sultan became familiar. The Al bu Said dynasty from then on ruled from Muscat and became more and more orientated towards the sea, commerce and the outer world. On the other hand, Imams, or in their absence tribes from the interior region, often had a different outlook on the political problems of the area.

8. The present problem can in a very general way be traced down to that basic conflict. Whenever the Sultan and his government were weak, the tribal forces from the interior region saw their chance and advanced their rule towards the plains. As a result of the very close ties that have existed between Great Britain and Muscat since the end of the nineteenth century, the Sultans were often supported and sometimes rescued by their British allies.

9. The present Sultan, who has ruled since 1932, calls himself Sultan of Muscat and Oman and considers himself the ruler of the entire territory including the interior region. The Imam who at this moment lives

<sup>2</sup> See annex VI below.

in Dammam in Saudi Arabia, claims to be the legitimate temporal ruler of the interior region.

10. Approximately seven-eighths of the population of the area for which the Sultan considers himself the legitimate ruler are Arabs, the rest being aborigines, Baluchis, remnants of Persian colonists, an African element and small communities of Indian merchants in a few cities.

11. No census has been held and estimates of the population vary from 500,000 to 750,000 people for the entire area, which covers approximately 28,000 square miles. There are at least 200 different tribes. The map appearing in annex II shows the location of some of the most important tribes in the area. Most of these tribes are settled, but there are still a few bedouin tribes. The mission did interview during its visit the sheikh of the important Duru tribe—a bedouin tribe—in the area around Ibri. If one attempted to guess the size of Inner or Central Oman, the best approximation would seem to be 6,000 square miles and the population would probably not amount to more than 100,000 people.

12. The tribal situation is further complicated because of a split between two factions, the Hinawi and the Ghafiri. The origin of the split is difficult to trace, but the eighteenth century saw a long struggle between these two factions. In addition, there are in the area orthodox Sunni Moslems and a majority of Ibadhis. The Ibadhis trace their history back to the time of the first Moslem period and an Imam is chosen from among them.

13. The people in the area live in clusters of grey mud and stone houses normally grouped together in villages and small towns. With the exception of Matrah, a town of 14,000 people, the towns never exceed a population of 8,000.

14. The economy, still of a very primitive nature, is centred around date palms. Towards the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, dates were exported to Europe and the United States but during the last twenty or thirty years, the export has been mainly towards India. This export provides the main source of revenue and foreign currency. In addition, the population earns a living from other forms of agriculture, breeding of livestock and certain skilled trades. In the coastal plains, fishing and shipbuilding are important.

15. Efforts to find oil started during the twenties. An interesting undertaking, dated 10 January 1923, by the father of the present Sultan can be found in U. Aitchison's *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*:

"We inform Your Honour in reply to your letter No. 1751, dated 16th December 1922, that we agree that we will not exploit any petroleum which may be found anywhere within our territories and will not grant permission for its exploitation without consulting the Political Agent at Muscat and without the approval of the High Government of India. What we heard about the existence of the mineral oil in our territory at Masirah is still not certain. We are beginning to enquire into the existence of this mine and after we know about it there will be a discussion between Your Honour and us regarding its exploitation, taking measures, arrangement of works and necessary conditions. It will of course be a monopoly. We believe in the complete assistance of the High

Government of India in this important matter as it has always assisted us for which we are grateful."<sup>3</sup>

16. The mission was informed by the British Government that, although there was no formal instrument of release, it does not consider the undertaking made with the present Sultan's father as binding on his successors.

17. The first concession to explore for petroleum, natural gas and other products was given some time afterwards to a subsidiary of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company: this, however, lapsed after a few years. The present Sultan granted a concession in 1937 to the Petroleum Development (Oman and Dhofar), Ltd., a subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company. Article 1 of the Agreement reads as follows:

"The area to which this Agreement applies is the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman including all Islands and Territorial Waters appertaining thereto, but excluding Dhofar and Gwador (hereinafter referred to as 'the Leased Area'), and being all that Territory within the boundaries of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman."

A few years ago, the Shell Oil Group took over the concessions.

19. Actual survey operations started only during the fifties in the Fuhud country bordering the desert and inhabited by the Duru tribe. The Imam protested around that time against the legality of these concessions on the basis of the autonomy which, according to him, was given in the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib (see chapter VIII).

20. Since 1953, two American companies have obtained a concession in Zufar (Dhofar), one of which is still operating.

21. As of the date of writing this report, no exploitation of oil had started.

## II. THE QUESTION OF OMAN IN THE UNITED NATIONS

22. The question of Oman has been before the United Nations since 1957 when the Permanent Representatives of eleven Arab States requested the President of the Security Council, in a letter dated 13 August 1957,<sup>4</sup> to convene, in accordance with Article 35 of the Charter, an urgent meeting of the Council to consider:

"The armed aggression by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland against the independence, sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of the Imamate of Oman."

In addition, the letter charged that the British Government had subjected the people of Oman to armed aggression which had taken the form of full-scale war, involving the use of modern destructive weapons and military operations. These acts of aggression were designed to destroy the sovereignty of Oman, a country of long-standing independence, and they would, if permitted to continue, lead to serious consequences. It was therefore imperative that immediate action be taken by the Security Council, entrusted with the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security.

<sup>3</sup> See *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, vol. XI, compiled by C. U. Aitchison (revised and continued up to the end of 1930 under the authority of the Government of India: Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1933), p. 319.

<sup>4</sup> *Official Records of the Security Council, Twelfth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1957*, documents S/3865 and Add.1.

23. The Sultan of Muscat and Oman addressed a cable on 17 August 1957<sup>5</sup> to the President of the Security Council protesting against this proposal on the ground that these matters fell exclusively within the internal jurisdiction of his Government. The representatives of Iraq and of the United Kingdom explained their respective points of view on this matter at the 783rd and 784th meetings of the Council.

24. The agenda was not adopted, having failed to obtain the affirmative votes of seven members.

25. The question of Oman was subsequently considered at three sessions of the General Assembly. During the fifteenth session the Permanent Representatives of ten Arab States requested the Secretary-General, in a letter dated 29 September 1960,<sup>6</sup> to place the question of Oman on the agenda. An explanatory memorandum was attached to the letter.<sup>7</sup> The Special Political Committee discussed the items at its 255th to 259th meetings held from 19 to 21 April 1961. At the 259th meeting the Committee decided to recommend to the Assembly that further consideration of this item be deferred and, at its 995th plenary meeting, the General Assembly took note of this recommendation.

26. At the sixteenth session the item was discussed during the 299th to 306th meetings of the Special Political Committee, held from 27 November to 4 December 1961. A draft resolution (A/SPC/L.78 and Add.1)<sup>8</sup> was submitted by eleven Arab Members and five other Members.

27. A request by eleven Arab representatives that the Special Political Committee hear an Omani delegation<sup>9</sup> was approved by the Special Political Committee at its 299th meeting.

28. On 29 November 1961 the Sultan of Muscat and Oman informed the Assembly of his protest against any debate about Oman because the matters involved fell "exclusively under the internal jurisdiction of the Sultanate".<sup>10</sup>

29. On 4 December 1961, the draft resolution was approved by the Committee by a roll-call vote of 38 to 21, with 29 abstentions. At its 1078th plenary meeting, on 14 December 1961, the General Assembly failed to adopt the draft resolution, the required two-thirds majority not having been obtained.

30. At the seventeenth session the question was again considered as a result of the request of eleven Arab States.<sup>11</sup> On 25 October 1962 the Sultan of Muscat and Oman cabled asking that the Assembly refuse to permit any further moves to intervene in matters which fell exclusively within the internal jurisdiction of the Sultanate.<sup>12</sup>

31. A request by eleven Arab representatives to hear a representative of Oman<sup>13</sup> was approved by the Special Political Committee at its 351st meeting.

32. The question was considered by the Special Political Committee at its 351st to 357th meetings, held between 19 and 28 November 1962. A draft resolution (A/SPC/L.88)<sup>14</sup> submitted by eleven Arab Members and seven others, the text of which was slightly different from that submitted at the sixteenth session, was adopted at the Committee's 357th meeting by a roll-call vote of 41 to 18, with 36 abstentions.

33. The General Assembly took up the question of Oman at its 1191st plenary meeting, on 11 December 1962. On that occasion the representative of the United Kingdom transmitted an invitation by the Sultan to the Secretary-General to send a representative on a personal basis to visit the Sultanate to obtain first-hand information (see chapter VI below). In a paragraph-by-paragraph vote, none of the paragraphs having obtained the required two-thirds majority, the draft resolution submitted by the Special Political Committee was not adopted.

### III. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS PRESENTED BY THE ARAB STATES IN SUPPORT OF THEIR DRAFT RESOLUTION

34. The Arab Members claimed that the Imamate of Oman, or the State of Oman, was an independent and sovereign political entity ruled by an Imam who was chosen by popular election. It thus constituted a democracy in the purest sense of the word—perhaps the oldest democracy still surviving as a State—as it dated back to the eighth century. It had been ruled for about 1,200 years in almost uninterrupted succession (some interregna have taken place because of a lack of a suitable candidate) by eighty-five elected Imams, including the present Imam Ghalib bin Ali. The Imamate had never been a mere vassal state but had consistently enjoyed full sovereignty, with all the attributes of statehood; it had played a major role in the history of Arab civilization. The Imam as a sovereign thus had levied taxes and enforced the law. He had also been responsible for defence and had kept military forces. As early as the ninth century the Imamate had established a powerful naval force to protect its coasts. In the seventeenth century its fleet had been strong enough to drive the Portuguese invaders from its territory and the surrounding area. By the mid-eighteenth century Oman had become the most powerful Arabian State, controlling part of the Zanzibar coast in East Africa, as well as parts of Persia and Baluchistan.

35. However, the strength of the Imamate, its strategic position on the route from Europe to the Orient and its flourishing trade had made it a target for British imperialism, which as a result of its victory over France in the Seven Years' War had acquired a free hand in the area. Under the pretext of combating slavery and piracy and by means of armed forces, intrigues and financial subsidies, Great Britain had finally, following the policy of *divide et impera*, achieved its imperialistic aims, by separating Zanzibar from the Sultanate of Muscat, including the coastline on both sides of it, which was within shooting distance of British gunboats. It had broken up greater Oman into nine States, the Imamate of Oman, the Sultanate of Muscat and the seven so-called Trucial States or Sheikdoms. Oman had not been dismembered because of religion, language, race or aspirations, for the people of Oman were one in all those respects; British imperialism was

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, document S/3866.

<sup>6</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 89, document A/4521.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* See also annex III below.

<sup>8</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 23, document A/5010, paras. 9-10. See also annex IV below.

<sup>9</sup> *Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 23, document A/SPC/59.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, document A/SPC/62.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, *Seventeenth Session, Annexes*, agenda item 79, document A/5149.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, document A/5284.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, document A/SPC/73.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, document A/5325, paras. 7-8. See also annex IV below.

responsible for it. The Sultanate of Muscat, created only some 200 years ago, was in reality not an independent State. It could, since 1891, be considered as a British protectorate or vassal—as distinguished from the sovereign State of Oman. The United Kingdom representative in the Persian Gulf was in effect solely responsible for the conduct of the foreign affairs of Muscat. Not less than twenty-seven times during the past two centuries the British had intervened in order to defend the city-state of Muscat—or rather the family of Al bu Said, to which the present ruler belonged.

36. Until 1954, when British prospecting of oil within the Imamate was about to begin, the United Kingdom had been content to control the puppet Sultanate of Muscat and the seven Trucial Sheikdoms, while the Imamate had continued to be fully independent and sovereign. This had been confirmed by the signing of the so-called Treaty of Sib in 1920 between the Sultan of Muscat (not the "Sultan of Muscat and Oman") and representatives for the Imamate. This Treaty was a result of British intervention and mediation in order to bring to an end seven years of warfare between the Omanis and the Sultanate. The Treaty demonstrated the independence of Oman and the existence of two separate political entities; it laid down mutual obligations binding the two States. It constituted a *de facto* recognition of Omani independence and it must be considered as an international legal instrument concluded by two equal and independent negotiators, with a third party, the United Kingdom, as witness. By that Treaty between two sovereign parties, the Sultan had undertaken, among other things, that all the people of Oman should enjoy security and freedom "in all the towns of the coast" (of the Sultanate). The Treaty also governed trade regulations, extradition, non-aggression and matters relating to residence and legal process, all of which were matters normally regulated by international instruments. It also bound the parties to refrain from any intervention in the other's domestic affairs.

37. When, in 1955, it became evident that Imam Ghalib bin Ali, who had been elected Imam in 1954, opposed and systematically refused to recognize the oil concession to a British company that the Sultan had, without the Imam's knowledge or acquiescence, granted in 1937 (contrary to the Treaty of Sib), the United Kingdom, being convinced that Oman had large oil-fields, had found it opportune to extend the Sultan's rule to the Imamate. The United Kingdom, in addition to this violation of the Treaty of Sib, had committed, the same year, in collaboration with the Sultan, an armed aggression, using machine guns, heavy mortars and jet aircraft against the defenceless people of Oman. They had thus violated Oman's political independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity. The United Kingdom pretended that it had been helping to defend the rights of the Sultan, but the Sultan was a mere puppet of a kind too familiar to people striving to throw off the yoke of imperialism. The United Kingdom had thus sought to gain possession of the oil-fields at all costs, namely by extending its rule, which had previously been confined to the small Sultanate of Muscat with its mere coastal territory, into the Oman interior and in that way providing an ostensible legal basis for the concessions and rights of exploitation in the hinterland. The British action was an anachronism and it was illegal. It constituted a colonial problem related to the policy of the United Kingdom in the Persian Gulf. It was inspired by greed

for Arab oil. The United Kingdom, helped by feudal sheikhs in its pay, gave these sheikhs a semblance of independence and kept them in possession of force of arms against the will of the people. It so it deprived the people of their exploitable rich natural resources which belonged to them. Moreover, the British action of naked aggression constituted a flagrant violation of Article 2, paragraph 4, of the Charter of the United Nations, as it was an infringement of the sovereignty of the Imamate and an interference in its internal affairs, likely to endanger international peace and security and to increase tensions in the Arabian Peninsula and in the Middle East. It was also inconsistent with General Assembly resolutions 1514 (XV) and 1654 (XVI) on the liquidation of colonialism, as well as with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the principles of self-determination set forth in Article 1, paragraph 2, of the Charter.

38. The United Kingdom aggression of 1955 had been repeated later with increased strength when the Omani leaders had reorganized their people and inflicted considerable losses on the Sultan's forces. Around that time the United Kingdom had again interfered militarily in order to secure Oman for British oil interests, but this time also in order to defend British prestige, which had suffered in the area as a result of the Suez failure in 1956. Important British oil interests in the Persian Gulf were at stake.

39. As the Omani people's fight against the British aggression was still going on, it was essential that the General Assembly should take effective measures to put an end to the armed aggression and to restore the *status quo ante* in Oman and, in the meantime, to bring about the withdrawal of British forces and the release of political prisoners.

40. With regard to British allegations that there was no sovereign State of Oman it ought to be declared that this State had existed for about 1,200 years, while the Sultanate had not been established until the eighteenth century. The fact that the reigning Sultan at certain periods had been elected to the office of Imam, by which act a temporary union of the Imamate and the Sultanate had been created, did not give the Muscat dynasty any right over Oman, because the Imamate was not hereditary but elective.

41. The allegation that the Imam had only religious, and not temporal or secular, authority was contradicted by the fact that in Islamic tradition there was no distinction between temporal and spiritual authority. The Imam, in particular, combined in his person the two kinds of authority. Furthermore, Oman had maintained a governmental system of its own, which was radically different from that prevailing in Muscat. Moreover, the Imamate had its own national flag (white), while Muscat had another flag (red).

42. The United Kingdom's contention that it had to intervene militarily to support the Sultan because the Imamate received foreign aid was futile because the question of Oman was a colonial question. The Arab brothers were, therefore, entitled to give the population of Oman every kind of help it needed in order to recover its liberty and independence. It was a tradition among Arabs to help their brothers to defend their sovereign rights and freedoms and it was their duty to go to the aid of the Imamate. But the United Kingdom had no right to intervene in conflicts arising between Arab brothers.

43. Furthermore, Sir Hartley Shawcross (now Lord Shawcross), the distinguished British international lawyer and former Attorney-General of the United Kingdom, had written:

"In international law intervention by a foreign power was inadmissible even if it took place at the request of a Government engaged in suppressing an armed insurrection or in pursuance of a treaty which was alleged to provide some justification".

44. With regard to the negotiations conducted in the winter of 1960-1961 between representatives of the Imam and the United Kingdom, it could be said that they had not succeeded because of British opposition. The Imam was, however, prepared to come to terms on the basis of the following principles: (a) the right of the people of Oman to independence and self-determination; (b) the withdrawal of British armed forces and the dismantling of military bases; (c) the release of political prisoners; and (d) indemnity for the damage and destruction caused by British military action.

#### IV. SUMMARY OF ARGUMENTS PRESENTED BY THE UNITED KINGDOM AGAINST THE DRAFT RESOLUTION

45. The United Kingdom representative declared that confusion existed regarding the present area of Oman and the State of Muscat and Oman. These terms had been used interchangeably. There had never been a separate state under an Imam independent of, and separate from, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

46. It was true that the first Imam had been elected in the eighth century and the Imam had thereafter acquired temporal significance at times and lost it at others, principally because it had been exploited in the struggle between the tribes. There had never been a dividing line between Oman and Muscat. The so-called Imamate was only an inland area within the Sultanate, in the mountainous country sometimes called the Jabal al Akhdar (the Green Mountains). While Arabs usually referred to Oman, foreigners whose contacts were almost entirely through the port of Muscat, referred to the country as Muscat. Finally the country was called by people of today Muscat and Oman.

47. In the middle of the eighteenth century the founder of the present Al bu Said dynasty, Ahmed bin Said, had been elected Imam and his son Said had followed him in this capacity in 1783. The following year, however, this new Imam, who had continued to hold the title until 1821, had been instrumental in making a definite separation between his spiritual or religious function and his temporal or secular power, the latter being transferred to his own son Hamad, who had become Sultan of Muscat and Oman, residing in Muscat. The successive members of the Al bu Said dynasty had been the sovereign rulers of Muscat and Oman. Contrary to what has been affirmed, namely, that a continuous series of Imams had ruled Oman from the eighth century until the recent so-called British aggression, there had been no Imam from 1821, when Imam Said died, until 1913, except for a few years in the middle of the nineteenth century (1868-1871). Thus the office of Imam was, or had been, a spiritual one and had not been in existence continuously.

48. There was in fact no indication of any desire on the part of the present generation of the people of Muscat and Oman ever to revive the religious office of Imam, still less an Imamate with secular powers, for the obvious reason that to do so would be an attempt

to put back the clock to the eighteenth century. It was the view not only of the Sultan but also of the vast majority of the present day Omanis that the Imamate was an archaic institution which had no constructive role to play in the evolution of Oman to a modern State.

49. In the closing years of the nineteenth century there had been a renewed struggle for power, combined with a deterioration in the relations between the interior region and the Sultan. The religious leaders of the interior had objected to the tolerance accorded by the ruling Sultan to other religions, to his engagement in foreign trade and to his modern outlook in general. They had been particularly incensed by his efforts, at the instigation of the British Government, to suppress the slave trade and the traffic in arms.

50. The main factions of the interior had combined in 1913 to revive the Imamate, but troubles had continued between the tribes, and following the murder of the Imam in 1920 and the election of a new one, his principal supporter had asked the British Political Agent and Consul in Muscat, Mr. Ronald Wingate (now Sir Ronald Wingate), to mediate. As a result the Agreement of Sib had been concluded in 1920 with a number of the sheikhs in the interior. The preamble of the Agreement reads: "Between the Government of the Sultan Taimur bin Faisal and Sheikh Isa bin Salih on behalf of the Omanis who signed their name here". The Agreement amounted to this: in return for a large measure of provincial or local autonomy accorded to the tribes of the interior—as was inevitable in view of the primitive state of the country and the lack of communications—and for an undertaking made by the Sultan not to interfere in certain of their internal or domestic affairs, the tribes for their part had contracted to remain in peace and amity with the Sultan's Government. Thus the tribes had in effect been acknowledging the Sultan's sovereignty. It was however true that during the negotiations the sheikhs had requested independence, but there had been no historical justification for the request, which had been categorically refused and had been abandoned. The Agreement had been a purely internal arrangement, of a not uncommon nature, between the Sultan and certain of his tribal leaders and was in no way an international instrument, in no way a treaty. It did not recognize Oman as an independent State.

51. Furthermore, the Agreement of Sib nowhere stated that the parties to it were two foreign States, but should be considered as concluded between the Government of the Sultan, and the one hand, and a number of tribal leaders in the interior of Oman, on the other. It spoke of only one Government, not of two, and did not convey any territorial definition. It mentioned only the sultan and not the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, which lent force to the argument that the agreement was not an international treaty. That title on the contrary was spelled out in treaties with the United States of America in 1958 and with India in 1953, as in the Treaty of Friendship, Commerce and Navigation with the United Kingdom of 1891. The reference to the Political Agent and Consul for Great Britain was not made because the United Kingdom should have been a party to the Agreement of Sib, only that the parties agreed to the mediation of the British Consul.

52. The Agreement of Sib had worked well for more than thirty years and the country was at peace.

The Sultan's Government had retained charge of all external affairs and his over-all sovereignty had been recognized by the Imam in a number of practical ways. Correspondence with foreign administrations over the status and lawsuits of individuals had been carried out through the Sultan's Government. The decisions of Muscat's appellate courts had been sought and accepted by the interior. A number of the principal remaining supporters of the ex-Imam Ghalib bin Ali had been amongst those who applied for the Sultanate's passports—Sheikh Talib, his brother, for instance, on 19 June 1946 and also on 6 March 1954; in these applications made before the Agreement of Sib had been broken in 1954 by the ex-Imam, they had described themselves as subjects of the Government of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. During the Saudi-Arabian intrusion into the Buraymi Oasis in 1952, the then Imam had sought in writing the Sultan's advice in dealing with various approaches which had been made to him by the Saudi authorities and had also responded to the Sultan's requirement as his overlord for men to help him expel the intruder by sending a substantial contingent of his own tribesmen.

53. Shortly before the death in May 1954 of Imam Mohammed bin Abdullah, certain sheikhs, among them Suleiman bin Himyar and Salih bin Isa, conscious of the very considerable benefits which oil revenues had brought to some of the rulers in neighbouring territories, had decided that the exploitation of oil would provide them with an opportunity to promote their own personal ambitions. Therefore, they had wanted to capture for themselves the benefits of future oil revenues which should have gone to the Sultanate as a whole. They had secured the appointment of a new Imam, Ghalib bin Ali, whose election had taken place in an atmosphere of intrigue, with considerable doubt expressed in Oman as to its conformity with Ibadhi customs. Ghalib had at once claimed to be an independent ruler and purported to annul the oil concession of 1937 which had been granted to a British company by the Sultan, who alone had the right to grant such concessions.

54. Ghalib's action was treasonable enough. But he had not stopped there. In 1954 he had started to issue his own passports and had applied for membership in the League of Arab States. Significantly his application for membership had not been accepted at the time, which suggested that the Governments of the Arab countries had some doubts about the qualification of Oman as an independent Arab State. Far from wishing to maintain the peaceful relationship based on the Agreement of Sib, he and his friends were thus intent on establishing a new State in part of the Sultanate. As soon as he had learnt that a party of geologists was to enter the Duru area, which is outside the area covered by the Agreement of Sib, Ghalib, encouraged by certain foreign powers, had sent his forces against the Duru and seized 'Ibri, their principal marketing town. The Sultan had riposted by sending his Field Forces to suppress the insurrection, a move which had apparently been welcomed by the tribesmen and most of the sheikhs. Ghalib's garrison at 'Ibri had at once surrendered. The Sultan had allowed Ghalib to retire to his village, but his treasonable activities had continued in his tribal area.

55. The cause of the trouble in 1954, therefore, had not been the United Kingdom's desire for oil, but Ghalib's conspiracy and flagrant treason, based on the

greed of certain people to seize any oil revenues for themselves instead of allowing them to be used for the benefit of the country as a whole.

56. In 1955 it had become clear that foreign Powers were abetting this rebellious movement by smuggling arms and ammunition into the country to Ghalib's conspiracy. The Sultan had then decided to reassert his authority and in December 1955 had moved his forces into Oman. Not only had there been no opposition from the local tribes, but they and the majority of their sheikhs had given every appearance of welcoming his move.

57. There had then followed an extensive propaganda campaign in certain Arab countries and a so-called Oman Liberation Army, trained and equipped in Saudi Arabia, had arrived in Oman in the summer of 1957 under the command of Talib, the real leader of the rebellion, who had fled the country after the suppression of the 1955 rebellion. He had been joined once more by his brother Ghalib and by Sheikh Suleiman bin Himyar. The rebels had raised a new revolt and seized a part of Oman. In view of the foreign-inspired nature of this insurrection the Sultan had requested, by letter, aid from the United Kingdom,<sup>15</sup> which aid had been granted just for that reason.

58. The revolt had been quickly suppressed and the ringleaders had fled to the mountain area of Jabal al Akhdar together with a few hardcore rebels and mountain tribesmen and had from there continued a guerrilla warfare campaign with the assistance of arms and money from abroad. During 1958 the Sultan's forces had carried out limited operations against the rebels with small-scale assistance from British forces and in January 1959, together with less than 300 British troops, had occupied Jabal al Akhdar. The rebel leaders had then fled to Saudi Arabia and there had been no rebellion since. The rebels abroad were unable to foment further serious trouble in the Sultanate. They had, however, occasionally sent individual infiltrators to lay mines on roads in an attempt to provoke a few individual incidents of terrorism and to justify stories of continued fighting. Such casualties as had occurred had been inflicted, not on the British Army, but on civilians, and the murderous activities had alienated the population, who assisted the Sultanate's authorities in frustrating the mine-laying campaign; eight out of ten mines were recovered unexploded and, for example, in the first half of 1961, forty of them had been handed in by the people ordered to lay them.

59. Claims of continuing aggression by British combatant troop units permanently staying in the area and of military bases had no foundation. Only a small num-

<sup>15</sup> The text of this letter from the Sultan addressed to the British Consul-General in Muscat of 16 July 1957 was read by the British representative in the Security Council at the 783rd meeting, on 20 August 1957, and reads as follows:

"You have full knowledge of the situation which has now developed at Nizwa and I feel the time has now come when I must request the maximum military and air support which our friend Her Britannic Majesty's Government can give in these circumstances, as on those past occasions which have so cemented our friendship and for which I bear lasting gratitude. I shall be most deeply grateful if such assistance can be given again to restore the position and to prevent further loss of ground and loss of confidence.

"Events are now moving so fast that I need hardly add that the speed with which support can be given will be vital to its value, and I shall be very grateful if you will take up the matter with Her Britannic Majesty's Government accordingly". (S/PV.783, para. 48.)

ber of British personnel were seconded to the Sultan's army and air force, and small British units sometimes went to Oman for training exercises of short duration.

60. Oman had been for several years at peace and for the first time in its history the tribes were no longer at war amongst themselves. Law and order reigned, allowing the people of an impoverished and underdeveloped country to improve their own welfare, prosperity and happiness. The authority of the Sultan was recognized everywhere and the ambitions of the former leaders were thoroughly discredited and received no support from the people of the area while the way was open for them to return home if they wished, according to the Sultan's offer to grant amnesty to the rebel leaders and their followers subject to satisfactory guarantees of keeping the peace. Impressive numbers of Omanis, formerly misled by the dissident chieftains, had taken advantage of this amnesty and returned. Many political prisoners had been released and the sentences of others were being reviewed. Only people such as proven mine-layers remained in custody in the Sultanate.

61. Since the collapse of the rebellion the Sultan had, with the active co-operation of the people, set in train a commendably ambitious civil development programme—health centres, agricultural stations, schools and roads.

62. At the request of the Sultan the United Kingdom Government had, in 1960-1961, lent its good offices in negotiations with the rebels. The statements of the ex-rebel leaders at a meeting in January 1961 had afforded some hope that a settlement satisfactory both to the Sultan and to those leaders could be achieved, although patient negotiations had seemed still to be necessary. At a further meeting in February 1961, however, the ex-rebel leaders had completely reversed their previous attitude and demanded the recognition of sovereign status for a part of the Sultan's territory. This went even beyond the interpretation previously placed by the rebel leaders upon the 1920 Agreement of Sib, which they had in effect repudiated by their earlier actions but to which they now appealed. Still more did it go beyond the interpretation placed on that agreement by the Imam Mohammed bin Abdullah and the other sheikhs who had signed it.

63. As regards the reversal of the ex-rebel leaders' position between the January and February meetings it was perhaps not without significance that these people had in the meantime had conversations with some of the Arab politicians present at the Arab League Foreign Ministers' Conference in Baghdad in February 1961. At the subsequent meeting with the British representative, Talib bin Ali had been accompanied by an Egyptian official of the Arab League secretariat who had provided him with a written brief.

64. With regard to Lord Shawcross' condemnation of the right of a foreign Power to intervene in the internal affairs of another State, even if it took place at the request of a Government in suppressing an armed insurrection, which condemnation had been referred to by certain representatives of the Arab Members, it ought to be said that this thesis was not universally accepted as such. The putting down of a rebellion by a lawful authority was no violation of human rights. To deny a lawful Government recourse to such assistance as it needed for this purpose would be to deprive it of the means of ruling. The legitimacy of the United Kingdom assistance to the Sultan was

the right of a Government to seek foreign assistance in asserting the lawful authority against rebellion, especially when the rebellion was encouraged and armed by a third State. In Oppenheim's *International Law*, furthermore, it was said that intervention was unlawful only when it involved some dictatorial interference with the external independence or the sovereignty of the State concerned. There had been no such interference in the present case. The action of the United Kingdom in introducing troops into the Sultanate had been taken at the express request of the Sultan, in order to assist him in suppressing a rebellion fomented from outside the Sultanate. It was therefore action taken in complete accord and co-operation between two sovereign States. It was not contrary to the Charter of the United Nations or to the general rules of international law. Indeed, far from being a threat or use of force against territorial integrity or political independence, contrary to Article 2, paragraph 4, of the United Nations Charter, the introduction of United Kingdom troops was a step taken for the purpose of helping the lawful authorities of the Sultanate to preserve its political independence and territorial integrity. In training and equipping the "Oman Liberation Army" and continuing to provide arms and money for the rebels after the main revolt had been crushed, Saudi Arabia and other countries had been in breach of various General Assembly resolutions.

65. With regard to the allegation that the question of Oman constituted a "colonial" problem it should be said that Muscat and Oman was a sovereign and independent State in its own right, acknowledged as such by international treaties concluded with Great Britain in 1891 and 1951, with the United States in 1833 and 1958, with France in 1846 and with India in 1953.

66. Generally, for the United Nations to debate the so-called question of Oman constituted a gross interference in the internal affairs of a sovereign independent nation and a violation of Article 2, paragraph 7, of the Charter. There was nothing in the present situation in Oman which could possibly be a matter of concern for the United Nations. There had been no aggression. The area was at peace. There were no foreign troops stationed there and there were no foreign bases. The rebellion which had taken place there had ended several years ago. There was no "ceaseless struggle" and "massive fighting" going on. There had never been a State of Oman independent and distinct from the Sultanate. The Sultanate of Muscat and Oman was not a colony. The United Kingdom troops had intervened in 1957 at the request of the Sultan and in conformity with international law to assist the Sultan in putting down a revolt fomented from abroad, and those troops had since been withdrawn. Peace reigned in Oman and there was no "situation" which justified intervention by the United Nations in the internal affairs of a sovereign independent State. A steadily mounting number of rank-and-file rebels had accepted the amnesty and returned. Strong evidence of disaffection among the rebellion's leaders was at hand. The former rebel cause was not kept alive by a common purpose among the leaders or by the strength of their adherents. The so-called Omani independence movement was a façade maintained for propaganda purposes by parties whose interest was not the ensuring of peace and stability in the area but the fomenting of trouble from which they hoped to benefit. The rebel leaders claimed to be defenders of "Arab Unity" but



were in practice attempting to break up the unity that already existed in the area and to dismember an independent sovereign Arab State, the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman.

67. As to the operative paragraphs of the draft resolution approved by the Special Political Committee (see annex IV below), the following could be said.

68. With regard to operative paragraph 1, concerning the right of the people of Oman to self-determination, the principle of self-determination was not applicable to any section of a homogeneous population such as that of Muscat and Oman. The people of Oman were part of the Sultanate no less than other peoples of that State. The rebellion had collapsed and the leaders were discredited. For the United Nations to endorse the idea of an independent state of Oman was irrelevant because it did not bear a shadow of relation to the facts of the case or the wishes of the Omanis. It was also irresponsible that a handful of discredited exiles could with impunity induce the world Organization to recommend the fragmentation of a sovereign State. What the representative of India had said in the debate in the General Assembly in October 1962 should be recalled: self-determination cannot be merely a process of disintegration or fragmentation.<sup>16</sup>

69. With regard to operative paragraph 2 calling for the withdrawal of foreign troops, the foreign troops consisted solely of small detachments of British forces which occasionally conducted exercises in the area. Whether they were allowed to be there or not was something for the Sultan to decide, not the United Nations.

70. With regard to operative paragraph 3, which was an invitation to the parties concerned to settle peacefully their differences with a view to restoring normal conditions in Oman, it should be noted that conditions were normal in Oman and had been for a long time. The only occasion in recent years in which conditions had been abnormal had been during the abortive rebellion. The only differences were those between the Sultan and the ex-rebel leaders. The Sultan's offer of an amnesty still stood and indeed numbers of Omanis formerly misled by the dissident chieftains had returned. The adoption of the draft resolution would make it more difficult for a reconciliation between the Sultan and the ex-rebel leaders. The United Kingdom Government was ready to use its good offices—as in 1960-1961—as soon as there were any prospects of reconciliation between the ex-rebels and the Sultan. Such reconciliation depended primarily on the ex-rebels.

#### V. ATTITUDE OF SOME MEMBERS OF THE UNITED NATIONS

71. During the seventeenth session, especially at the 355th and 357th meetings of the Special Political Committee, on 26 and 28 November 1962, and also during the 1191st plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 11 December 1962, a number of representatives of Member States expressed their doubts and uncertainties as to the contradictory statements made during the discussion on the question of Oman. The representative of France pointed out that although the question of Oman had appeared on the agenda before, its true nature was not clear and it seemed

to be magnified out of all proportion. The representative of Togo wondered whether, instead of adopting a draft resolution, the better course might not be to prepare the ground for a re-examination of the question on the basis of more objective information and thus enable the General Assembly to come to a decision in full knowledge of the facts. The representative of Ecuador stated that none of the doubts and hesitations referred to by his delegation at the sixteenth session of the General Assembly had been removed, and indeed they were more apparent than ever. The representative of Greece observed that the debate had not succeeded in clarifying many obscure points; for example, there was still a difference of opinion regarding legal aspects of the matter and the status of the territory. He added that the same uncertainties existed in relation to other points and it was therefore difficult for any delegation to take an impartial stand. The representative of Uruguay explained that his abstentions from voting were due in the main to a lack of clarity with regard to facts.

72. The representative of Dahomey, during the 1191st plenary meeting of the General Assembly, expressed his perplexity, concern and apprehension. The representative of Greece speaking again in the plenary session of the General Assembly asked for impartial information obtained *in situ*. The representative of Chile stressed the fact that there remained many points of uncertainty and he requested information.

73. The representative of Chile, speaking at the 355th meeting of the Special Political Committee, formulated eight specific questions, which remained unanswered. Firstly, why did the Sultan of Muscat and Oman not send a representative to the Assembly to defend his case? Was it because he was not independent or because he wished to give complete freedom of action to his "very capable and efficient defenders"? Secondly, was Talib bin Ali, who pleaded the case of Oman before the Special Political Committee, a representative of Oman or a rebel? Thirdly, did Oman and Muscat constitute a single state or two separate entities? Fourthly, was the principle of self-determination at issue or was it a matter of the dismemberment of a sovereign State? Fifthly, was the Treaty of Sib an international treaty between two sovereign independent States or was it only an agreement between the Government of the Sultan and Omani tribal chiefs concerning certain internal matters? Sixthly, what had happened during 1957 in Oman? Had there been intervention in the domestic affairs of Oman prior to the introduction of United Kingdom troops? Seventhly, were United Kingdom troops still there? Finally, what was the present situation in Oman? Was there oppression and were the inhabitants fighting foreign troops or did peace exist?

74. To these the representative of Peru, at the 355th meeting, added the following questions: Firstly, were United Kingdom troops in the Sultanate at the request of that State? Secondly, what was the extent of the rebel movement in Oman; did rebel forces control any part of the territory? If they did, they would automatically acquire a status of their own.

75. The representative of India, during the sixteenth session, at the 305th meeting of the Special Political Committee, referred to the difficulty that many of the historical facts seemed to be capable of interpretation in different ways. He expressed the

<sup>16</sup> See *Official Records of the General Assembly, Seventeenth Session, Plenary Meetings*, 1141st meeting, para. 229.

hope that in any case foreign intervention would cease. The relevance of the principle of self-determination was not clear, he said, because that principle would apply if Oman were under colonial rule—but it was not. The problem seemed to be whether one part of the area was independent of the other, and which was the sovereign authority for the parts or for the whole. All the people of Muscat and Oman were Arabs. His delegation believed, therefore, that there was a case for peaceful negotiations without any interference from outside.

#### VI. INVITATION OF THE SULTAN TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL TO SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO OMAN

76. The United Kingdom representative, speaking at the 1191st plenary meeting of the General Assembly, on 11 December 1962, referred to the representatives who had expressed the need for facts or information from an independent source so that they would be able to form a balanced judgement on the subject. The United Kingdom Government had conveyed the views expressed in the debate to the Government of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman. The United Kingdom representative said he was now authorized to state on behalf of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman that the Sultan, while preserving his position, which had already been conveyed to the President of the General Assembly,<sup>17</sup> did "not recognize the right of the General Assembly to discuss the internal affairs of his country" and, "on the understanding that the Assembly does not take any formal action at this stage", he was "prepared to invite on a personal basis a representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to visit the Sultanate during the coming year to obtain first-hand information as to the situation there".<sup>18</sup> In view of this offer the United Kingdom representative trusted that the Assembly would not seek to prejudge the issue at that stage by adopting the draft resolution then before it. The draft resolution was rejected, having failed to obtain the required two-thirds majority.

#### VII. TERMS OF REFERENCE

77. The Permanent Representative of the United Kingdom confirmed by letter to the Secretary-General on 4 January 1963 the invitation submitted on behalf of the Sultan of Muscat and Oman during the 1191st plenary meeting of the General Assembly.

78. The Secretary-General of the Arab League and the brother of the Imam, his representative during the discussions in the Special Political Committee at the sixteenth and seventeenth sessions, proposed to the Secretary-General, by cable dated 14 January 1963, that a representative of the Imam accompany a United Nations mission to Oman. Subsequently a letter dated 7 March 1963 sent from the Head of the Office of the Imamate of Oman in Cairo was received by the Secretary-General (see annex V below); this letter reported "horrible massacres committed by the colonial forces against the innocent citizens" and requested the Secretary-General to place these facts before the Members of the United Nations.

79. Discussions with the United Kingdom representative about the *modalités* of a visit to Oman

resulted in an assurance on the part of the Sultan that the representative of the Secretary-General would be free to move around in the area and visit any place of importance. The Secretary-General accepted the invitation which had been submitted officially by the representative of the United Kingdom at the 1191st plenary meeting. He did so in the hope that an objective report on the actual situation in Oman would contribute to peaceful developments in the Middle East.

80. On 30 April 1963 he requested the Swedish Ambassador to Spain, Mr. Herbert de Ribbing, to undertake the assignment as his Special Representative on the question of Oman. The Swedish Government agreed to make the services of Mr. de Ribbing available for a limited period. Mr. de Ribbing accepted, and arrived in New York for consultations on 10 May 1963. Two members of the Secretariat were selected to serve as political officer and interpreter, respectively.

81. The Secretary-General instructed Mr. de Ribbing to use as his main terms of reference the description of the invitation by the Sultan: "a representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to visit the Sultanate during the coming year to obtain first-hand information as to the situation there". He requested Mr. de Ribbing to look into the matters reported by the Head of the Office of the Imamate of Oman in Cairo in his letter of 7 March 1963.

82. The primary task of the mission would be a fact-finding one. The mission would visit the area some time during May and would report on such questions as the presence of foreign troops in Oman, any evidence of oppression, instances of sabotage and fighting, the existence of a "rebel movement", the existence of any "rebel forces" actually in control of a particular area, etc. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General would discuss with the Sultan, with Government officials, and with British authorities the necessary details for the visit to Oman.

83. The Special Representative, accompanied by the two United Nations officials, left New York on 18 May.

#### VIII. VISIT TO OMAN

84. The mission arrived in Bahrain on 20 May 1963 for consultations with the British authorities. Upon its arrival in Salalah on 23 May a meeting was arranged with the Sultan of Muscat and Oman for the following day. A general programme for the visit to Oman was discussed and agreed upon and a number of specific questions were reviewed. From 25 May to 9 June the mission was in Muscat for discussions of the programme and in Oman for its fact-finding assignment.

85. The mission then called again on the Sultan in Salalah (9 June) where it discussed with him in general terms its findings and raised a number of additional questions. After staying a few days in Bahrain for additional discussions with the British authorities (11 to 13 June), the mission proceeded to Beirut. From there it informed the Secretary-General in summary form of its findings and, upon his instructions, proceeded to Jidda, in Saudi Arabia, where it called on the Prime Minister of that country (19 to 23 June) and met the Imam Ghalib bin Ali, now living in Dammam, and his brother Talib bin Ali, who had represented the Imam in the General Assembly. The mission then had discussions with senior Foreign Of-

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 79, document A/5284.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, Plenary Meetings, 1191st meeting, para. 45.

vice officials in London and returned to New York on 1 July. A detailed itinerary is given in annex VII.

86. The mission discussed the programme of its visit to Oman with British authorities in Bahrain and later in general terms with the Sultan in Salalah. The detailed itinerary was worked out in Muscat with the Sultanate's authorities a few days before the departure for the interior region. The mission requested and obtained complete freedom of movement and was able to indicate the specific places and areas it wanted to visit. As a result of the terrain—there are no asphalt roads—travelling was confined to Landrovers. From time to time light five-passenger carrying planes were used in order to save time and reach particularly inaccessible places. In spite of the extreme heat and the distances involved, the mission was able, in the short time at its disposal, to visit the main populated places in "Oman", including one of the few towns in the higher part of the Jabal al Akhdar region. It also went to the Sharqiyah and saw a part of the Batinah coast.

87. It was decided to interview Government officials, reach as many people as possible through meetings during which the mission would explain its purpose and question in private a number of representative people—sheikhs and notables.

88. The mission travelled some 900 miles during its visit to the interior, stopped in some twenty towns and villages, where it was welcomed by a considerable part of the population. The mission met with about twenty Government officials, interviewed eighty-six representative individuals and explained the purpose of its visit to approximately 1,200 people assembled at meetings. It received complete co-operation from all concerned and raised numerous questions which were readily answered. Many meetings with individuals or groups of prominent persons were held where no Government official was present.

89. The mission was impressed by the natural courtesy and dignity of the people with which it came into contact during its visit. On many occasions the mission received expressions of gratitude to United Nations its Secretary-General and his Special Representative for the efforts to find out what was happening in Oman. All hoped that this would contribute to finding a solution to the question of Oman.

90. The mission is well aware that in spite of all assistance and co-operation it received, its observation could not be fully comprehensive. It has tried to make the maximum use of the time at its disposal in order to concentrate on its fact-finding responsibilities. It has touched on a number of broader questions, which have come up again and again in the General Assembly. It does not pretend, however, to produce definite answers on all these items, some of which are so complex and difficult to assess that they require specific study and research by competent specialists. Furthermore, in order to ascertain beyond doubt the true wishes of the population, a much broader and more complete consultation of the people would be required.

91. During its discussions, interviews and talks, the mission, with slight variations, asked the basic questions which are listed below. It also tried to obtain from other available sources additional material on these questions.

92. The questions most frequently asked were:

- (a) Is there any fighting going on in Oman?
- (b) Has there been sabotage and what specific incidents have occurred recently?
- (c) Are there any "rebels" and, if so, do they dominate a specific area? Are there cases of infiltration into Oman?
- (d) Are there foreign troops in Oman?
- (e) What is the evidence of oppression?
- (f) What is the extent of the control of the area by the Sultan?

93. In addition, the mission reviewed other aspects of the question of Oman, such as:

- (a) The attitude towards the Imam, his brother Talib and Sheikh Suleiman bin Himyar;
- (b) The status of the Imamate, and the significance of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib of 1920;
- (c) The existence of development programmes for the area;
- (d) Relations between the Sultanate and the United Kingdom Government;
- (e) Efforts towards negotiations;
- (f) Special questions.

94. The findings of the mission on these questions can be summarized as follows:

(a) *Fighting in Oman*

95. Although there are different opinions on which party started the fighting in Oman and what the motives were, there seems to be agreement on the following sequence of events:

(i) The death of Imam Mohammed bin Abdullah in 1954 represented the end of the *modus vivendi* which resulted from the signing of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib.

(ii) The new Imam, Ghalib bin Ali, established an office of the Imamate in Cairo during 1954, applied for membership in the Arab League and started to issue Imamate passports. He also placed small garrisons in key centres of the interior region, among them Nazwa.

(iii) Nazwa was occupied in December 1955 by forces of the Sultan. Another force attacked the Imam's brother, Talib, at that time the *Wali* of Ar Rustaq. Ar Rustaq was occupied shortly afterwards.

(iv) The Imam went to his own village in the interior where he remained for a long time, whereas Talib escaped to Saudi Arabia.

(v) The real fighting started during the summer of 1957. A revolt broke out in May in the Sharqiyah which did not meet with success. Sheikh Ibrahim bin Isa al Harthy, who started the revolt, went to Muscat and was imprisoned.

(vi) Talib landed during June 1957 on the Batinah coast and his armed men reached the Jabal al Akhdar area. Soon after this the Imam and Sheikh Suleiman joined the revolt.

(vii) The Sultan's armed forces could not cope with the revolt in the first instance and lost the important town of Nazwa.

(viii) Around the middle of July 1957, the Sultan called on the United Kingdom Government for help. One company of Cameroonians, two troops of Ferret scout cars, one regiment of the Sultan's armed forces,

and two squadrons of Trucial Oman Scouts supported by Royal Air Force planes, reoccupied Nazwa and a number of other towns in the neighbourhood.

(ix) The leaders of the revolt withdrew into the higher regions of the Jabal al Akhdar. There followed a guerrilla type of campaign against the Sultan's forces.

(x) During the latter months of 1958 and the first weeks of 1959, increased use was made of the Royal Air Force. Two squadrons of special air service troops were flown in from Malaya and a squadron of the Life Guards joined the operation. The final assault during January 1959 represented the end of the military campaign. The leaders managed to leave Oman. Senior Government officials in Muscat, the *walis* (governors) in the interior, or, in their absence, the *cadis* (judges), and in some cases the senior sheikhs in sixteen different towns and villages were asked about fighting during the more recent past. In addition eighty-six individuals were interrogated on this point. Without an exception the answer was that there had been no fighting recently and that no active warfare had been going on since January when the Jabal al Akhdar region was taken by assault. The mission was unable to observe any evidence of active fighting in the area.

#### (b) Incidents, sabotage

96. During the discussions in the General Assembly many references were made to incidents and sabotage in Oman. The mission itself did not encounter any incident, nor did it notice any act of sabotage during its visit. It inquired in every place it visited about these matters.

97. In most instances testimony was given to the effect that recently—during the last six months—the area had been quiet. The mission passed the ruins of a small hospital in Bahlah, which had been blown up about a year ago. During the questioning the mission was told that it was not known who was responsible, that nobody had been caught, and that the people were unhappy about this act. The mission heard also from one of the sheikhs in the Nazwa area that some six months ago "somebody travelling through" had been caught. It heard in the Jabal al Akhdar region about an incident that had taken place a year ago. But in general the people testified that it had been quiet recently and that peace, order and security prevailed. Many also referred to the fact that traditional strife between the tribes seemed to have ended. A considerable number of the persons interviewed commented that there was no truth in the reports of incidents and disorders in the area. One of the prominent sheikhs exclaimed: "Believe what you see, not what you hear. For when the sun is up, you need not look for Venus!"

98. The Sultan and the Minister of the Interior also informed the mission that the situation recently had been quiet and peaceful. The mission questioned senior officers of the Sultan's armed forces and British officials in Bahrain about data on incidents and sabotage. It received a breakdown of incidents that had taken place during the last four years:

Incidents:	1960	1961	1962	1963
Mine explosions .....	7	26	17	1
Mine recovery .....	132	97	101 <sup>a</sup>	—
Shooting .....	—	5	17	1
Sabotage .....	2	4	3	1

Casualties:	1960	1961	1962	1963
Sultan's Armed Forces .....	1	—	1	—
British Military Forces .....	—	1	—	—
Sultan's retainers .....	—	3	2	1
Others .....	16	236 <sup>b</sup>	—	—

<sup>a</sup> Forty mines in one dhow.

<sup>b</sup> All in one boat in the open sea.

The mission has taken note of this information but it was not in a position to have these particular data evaluated.

99. The mission was aware of many statements regarding incidents, sabotage, etc., which were made during broadcasts from Cairo, Damascus, Mecca and Baghdad. It did not have the time, nor the facilities, to verify the accuracy of these statements. It brought up these statements during the interviews in the area and asked if there were any comments. In general the reply was that there was much exaggeration in the claims advanced during the broadcasts; many commented that they were living in the area and therefore should know if the incidents actually had occurred. The mission received from officials of the Sultanate and from the British officials material which showed a comparison between broadcast incidents and actual incidents recorded by the local authorities. The comparison made for the period 1 July 1961 to 1 June 1963 and applicable to incidents in the area shows that against a total claim of 203 persons killed and 171 wounded, mostly described as "British", casualties to the Sultan's Armed Forces amounted to one killed and twelve wounded, to which should be added civilian casualties—four killed and twelve wounded.

#### (c) "Rebels"

100. The mission used every opportunity to find out about this matter. Again all those interviewed stated that there were no "rebels" and that nowhere in Oman was there an area actively controlled by "rebels". During its travels through Oman, the mission saw no signs of "rebel" activity, nor was it able to find any evidence of areas not under the active control of the Sultan or his Government. Inquiring about the existence of infiltrators produced no information on specific facts. According to Government officials improved security arrangements have made it increasingly difficult for infiltrators to reach Oman.

101. According to the British authorities in Bahrain now only a handful of "rebels" are involved. A detailed estimate was provided by one senior officer of the Sultan's armed forces, who claimed that some 400 Omanis had been trained outside Oman; of these up to 200 had returned to Oman under the terms of the amnesty declared by the Sultan about two years ago.

102. The regular routes taken by infiltrators appear to be by dhow landing either at the Trucial coast or at the Batinah coast and from there on by off-the-track land routes to Oman. This officer estimated that not more than forty individuals are actively involved in these activities; they normally come, harass and leave again. They operate mostly in groups of two's and three's without support from the local people.

#### (d) Foreign troops

103. All the persons interviewed by the mission stated that the troops present in Oman were formally

and technically the Sultan's armed forces, wearing the uniform and the insignia of the Sultanate, with British officers in senior positions. The mission had ample opportunity to observe the existence of these troops. It actually spent the night in their camp during its journey, except on one occasion. The camps, many newly established, are well displayed throughout the area. At the mission's request the Secretary for Defence, Brigadier Waterfield, and one senior officer furnished details about the strength of the armed forces and the composition thereof. This information appears in annex VIII. According to this information the present strength of these forces amounts to 2,333 men, of which 304 belong to the *gendarmerie* mainly engaged in anti-smuggling activities. The plans now in hand call for a future strength of 2,480 men.

104. Of the total strength of the force approximately 50 per cent are Baluchis recruited from Gwadar (a territory originally belonging to the Sultan but sold in 1958 to Pakistan) and the rest recruited from among the tribes in the coastal and interior regions, the majority from the interior.

105. There are at the moment sixteen local officers; the highest in rank is second lieutenant. There are twenty-six seconded British army officers in the Sultan's armed forces; these officers retain their status and rights in the British armed forces and serve for a specific period, normally eighteen months. During this period they are on the payroll of the Sultan's armed forces. Plans call for an increase to thirty. There are also thirty-five officers on contract, of which thirty are British and five are Pakistani nationals. These officers have terminated their national service and have contracts with the Sultan's Government. In addition there are six foreign non-commissioned officers (mostly British); they are made available for periods of four months in connexion with a training programme.

106. The above information does not include the Sultan's air force which consists of eight planes and ten seconded Royal Air Force personnel.

107. The mission questioned the Sultan about the British influence in the Sultan's armed forces. The Sultan emphatically declared that "even if there are British officers, everything is in my hands". He pointed out that ever since 1921 British officers had been used ("they know the problems of the country"). Later the Sultan, commenting on the accusation that the Sultanate was a British puppet state, said: "We make all the decisions ourselves". He added that British officers had nothing to do with policy-making.

108. The mission also looked into the question of the financing of the Sultan's armed forces and was informed that, early in 1958, the United Kingdom Government had agreed to give the Sultan financial and material assistance to help train and build up the forces. Senior officials of the Sultan's armed forces and the Sultan confirmed the existence of financial help. The Sultan, during the discussions with the mission, remarked that his Government was paying a part of the costs of these forces and that the British had agreed to contribute to the great increase in cost resulting from the events in 1957. The mission received no answer when it asked exactly how much the United Kingdom Government contributed. The Sultan concluded that "accepting aid does not mean surrender of sovereignty, conduct of foreign relations and financial decisions; all these decisions remain in our hands".

109. Finally, the mission must draw attention to the existence of arrangements whereby airfields in the southern part of the Sultanate, namely Salalah (the capital of Zufar) and Masirah Island, have been made available to the Royal Air Force.

(e) *Evidence of oppression*

110. According to Government officials, the main prison in the area is situated in Muscat in the old Fort Jalali, which was built by the Portuguese. The prison holds all the political prisoners of the country as well as the more serious offenders against common law. The Sultan did not permit the mission to visit the prison, nor did it receive official information on the number of political prisoners being kept there. But the Sultan did allow the mission to discuss the medical conditions in the prison with the senior medical officer of the Sultan's armed forces, and Indian doctor who is also responsible for the health conditions in the prison. There are approximately eighty persons in the prison corresponding to its capacity—of which it is estimated that some thirty to forty are detained for political motives.

111. The doctor visits the prison twice a week and whenever there is an urgent case. There is a cell in the prison for sick persons (two prisoners at the time of the mission's visit) but the more serious cases are cared for in the small hospital at the camp of the Sultan's armed forces in Muscat (one prisoner at the time of the visit).

112. The doctor stated that the diet of the political prisoners is better than that of the other prisoners. It amounts to approximately 2,000 calories per day and consists of coffee, rice, fish, potatoes and dates. The prisoners are allowed out in the fresh air every day for one or one and a half hours. They live in barracks, some of them containing five, some seven, and some twenty men. Prisoners can bathe once a week and there are primitive toilet facilities.

113. The doctor assured the members of the mission that there were no signs of malnutrition or torture. He did, however, admit that there was not enough for the prisoners to do. There is a copy of the Koran in the prison.

114. The doctor commented that he had noticed a considerable improvement during the last six years since regular medical attendance had started. Sanitation, water supply and food had improved greatly.

115. During its visit to the interior the mission brought up the question of oppression at every meeting and every interview. All the *walis* and the sheikhs as well as the great majority of the other persons interviewed denied that there was political oppression. They referred to those in prison in Muscat as mostly individuals who had been there since the troubles started in Oman. Here and there, however, there were indications, mostly carefully and cautiously expressed, of a certain amount of discontent and criticism.

116. The most outspoken sign of unhappiness with the present situation was encountered during the visit to Sayq, a mountain village in the Jabal al Akhdar area. This area was the stronghold of Sheikh Suleiman, often called the Ruler of the Green Mountains, to whom the dominant tribe of the Bani Riyam paid allegiance. The tribe has always played a predominant role in the affairs of the Imamate.

117. Upon its arrival in Sayq, the mission was welcomed by practically the whole tribe. It noticed that

the men did not wear the guns which normally are worn by the Omanis as status symbols. In addition, the questioning of nine of the more important tribal persons produced other signs of a conquered tribe. They all admitted that the situation in the area had been quiet since the end of the military campaign in January 1959. However, they told the mission that the damage, as a result of the military events, had not yet been repaired. They complained of poverty and difficulty in living conditions. They did admit that the Sultan was ruling in accordance with the *Shari'a*, but they stated that they could not travel outside Oman and that they could not go on pilgrimage.

118. These particular matters were subsequently discussed with the Sultan. His comment on the fact that the tribesmen had no guns was: "It is good for them to have no guns if anything happens." He denied that there was a general ban on pilgrimage because that would be against his religion. He stated, however, that according to the Koran there was no compelling need to go on pilgrimage more than once in a lifetime. He admitted the possibility that specific individuals might have been prevented from going abroad for security reasons.

119. In one of the more important places the mission received a request for pardon for one of the sheikhs and his son who had been in prison for a long time. The mission transmitted this request to the Sultan at its last meeting with him.

120. The mission inquired in a number of places if there were persons held in local prisons. The answer was that there were small prisons here and there, but that there were no political prisoners and seldom any others. The mission was informed, however, that recently one of Talib's retainers had been caught during an attempt to abduct members of the Iman's family.

#### (f) *Control of the area by the Sultan*

121. The mission discussed this subject with Government officials, with the Sultan himself, and with the persons interviewed during the meetings.

122. The area visited by the mission is still very much ruled in the traditional way. Political power has been, and to a great extent still is, in the hands of tribal chiefs, territorial notables and religious leaders, but some of that political power is in the process of being transferred from this traditional ruling group to the central Government.

123. Since 1957 the Sultan has made increasing use of *walis*, especially in the towns and those areas where no single tribe dominates. There are now more than thirty *walis* functioning in the Sultanate. Wherever there are areas where a particular tribe is in a dominating position—for instance, the Sharqiyah, the Duru area, the territory of Ja'lan—the sheikhs retain their authority.

124. The Sultan himself emphasized that his Government is still very much based on the tribal system and that each sheikh was and remains responsible for a large range of problems affecting the tribe. At the same time the *wali* as the government representative for a specific area acts as much as possible through the sheikh.

125. The *walis* and in certain cases important sheikhs have direct access to the Minister of Interior. In exceptional cases, especially involving disputes between the *walis* and the sheikhs, the Sultan himself intervenes. The Sultan stressed, however, that in gen-

eral the Government does not interfere in tribal matters unless there are serious difficulties which require Government action and decision. The Government respects the authority of the sheikhs.

126. Ever since 1957 when serious troubles broke out in the area requiring the Sultan to ask for British assistance, the Sultan has built up his own military forces, which are now in the process of being consolidated. At the same time he is relying in an increasing way on the *walis* to get his decisions implemented. In addition, the *walis* have their own armed retainers (not in uniform).

127. In almost all the towns and villages the mission was received by the *wali*, who acted as spokesman for the Government, or on some occasions by the *qadi*. In some cases sheikhs officially welcomed the mission.

128. The collection of taxes (*sakat*) was also a subject of special inquiry. In all cases it was found that the *sakat* was collected by employees in the service of the Government. The distribution was also in the hands of Government officials.

129. Even in places where, in a cautious manner, discontent and reservations were expressed, it was frankly admitted that the present power is concentrated in the hands of the Sultan. Often the theme was repeated: "There is security and safety now." Another comment was: "Before, people were at each other's throats. Now, there is peace." In a number of places the Sultan's rule was praised as it provided tranquillity and was in accordance with the principles of the *Shari'a*.

130. The possibilities of expressing political opposition are limited in the present circumstances.

131. It was clear to the mission that the security situation was well under control; the Sultan now has at his disposal a small but mobile military force which is displayed at strategic points throughout the area.

#### (g) *The attitude towards the Imam, his brother and Sheikh Suleiman bin Himyar*

132. The Sultan has protested several times against holding any debate in the United Nations because he considers that the matters involved fall exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Sultanate. He repeated during his discussions that the Imam, his brother and Sheikh Suleiman are subjects of the Sultanate and because they revolted against the rule during the events in 1957 they are "rebels". He handed to the mission photostat copies of passport applications, one of which was submitted by Talib, the brother of the Imam, dated 1954. This was to him a proof that Talib, and also others who had submitted passport applications before, considered themselves "subjects of the Government of Muscat and Oman".

133. During the meetings which the mission had with the Minister of Interior in Muscat, the Minister stated that the Imam was mainly a religious leader. He had no state powers, which belonged, the Minister remarked, to the Sultan only.

134. The mission asked every *wali*, every sheikh and every participant in the meetings it conducted about their attitudes towards these persons. The answers varied. The *walis* in general replied that the present rule—the Sultan's authority—was enough; they did not want any of the three notables back. One of the prominent persons whom the mission interviewed, a respected judge, differentiated between the Imam and the other two individuals by stating that the Imam

held an important office and that, therefore, the present conflict placed a heavy strain on the Omanis; it troubled the people. He himself hoped that the conflict would be solved. In any case the present Imam would not automatically resume his office because he had been absent from Oman for such a long period. He would have to be re-elected.

135. As far as the other persons interviewed were concerned, many stated that they would not like to see the Imam, his brother or Sheikh Suleiman return because "they were trouble-makers". Others, however, commented that they would not object to a return of these people, provided that they "made their peace with the Sultan".

(h) *Status of the Imamate; significance of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib*

136. The mission did not have the time, nor did it consider itself to be competent, to evaluate the territorial, historical and political issues involved. It tried to grasp the most significant elements of the conflict which had been brought before the United Nations. The representative of India had already observed, during the discussions in the Special Political Committee, that the historical facts had been interpreted in different ways.<sup>19</sup>

137. It seems to be generally agreed that in earlier times the country of Oman, which was the name used to describe the whole of the area between the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf, was a sovereign State governed by an Imam, elected by notables of the tribes and acclaimed by the members of the tribe. This was often a loose confederation of tribes. In practice, leaders of two important tribes, the Bani Riyam (Jabal al Akhdar) and the Harthy (Sharqiyah) were often arbitrators during the process of election.

138. Oman consisted centuries ago of a large territory which has since been broken up. The population of this area was and still is organized on a tribal basis. An additional complication has been the split between the Hinawi and the Ghafri factions, which has led to conflicts about the designation of an Imam.

139. "Oman" in the more recent past has often become synonymous with "Inner Oman" or "Central Oman"; it consists generally of the area around the Jabal al Akhdar. This, roughly, has been the territory of the Imamate proper.

140. As explained in chapter I, the centre of power moved some two hundred years ago from the interior to the town of Muscat, situated on the sea. The rulers who have since reigned from this sea basis were often at odds with those who exercised spiritual and often temporal power in the interior region.

141. Whenever the Sultans were in trouble or were weak they were helped by their British allies. Such a period of weakness started during the more recent past in 1913 when the tribes of the interior expelled the Sultan's troops from Nazwa, Izki and Sumail. At one moment Muscat itself was threatened. It appears that only British military help rescued the Sultan.

142. At long last, in 1920, a settlement was reached through the mediation and good offices of the British Political Agent and Consul at Muscat. This settlement is known as the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib. It has been the subject of completely opposing interpretations.

143. According to one version the settlement represents nothing but an agreement between the Government of the Sultan and a number of tribal leaders in Oman. According to another version, the settlement represents in fact a treaty with international status between two independent States. According to others, the treaty is no longer valid or is a diplomatic act subject to international law and constitutes important evidence of Oman as an independent State.

144. The mission did its utmost to obtain factual information which could at least disentangle some of the confusion resulting from the opposing views. It approached the Sultan and the Minister of Interior in order to obtain their views in this matter. The Sultan admitted that as a result of the weakness of his father's Government around 1920 a certain autonomy had been given to the sheikhs of the tribes in the interior region, but at no point had the Imam ever been recognized as a kind of government. The Minister of Interior went even further, stating that there was nothing in the treaty which referred in any way to the Imamate.

145. The remarkable fact was that although many delegations offered interpretations of this agreement no authentic text was available. The mission therefore, at its first meeting with the Sultan, requested him to provide an authentic text. The Sultan was not willing to make this text available, stating that he did not recognize the agreement, which had been signed by a representative of his father and eighteen tribal sheikhs, of whom at this moment only Sheikh Suleiman bin Himyar, now in Cairo, was alive. When, at its second meeting with the Sultan and after it had visited the interior region, the mission asked again if a text could be made available, the Sultan replied that he did not recognize the agreement and that it was only a personal arrangement between his father and the sheikhs. "It is a dead issue," he said. If he handed out the text, it could be interpreted that he gave importance to it.

146. In the absence of an authoritative text an unofficial version, published in *The New York Times* of 13 August 1957, which is claimed to be close to the original, has been set forth in annex IX. In addition the mission considers illuminating the account of the actual negotiations made by the main architect of the Agreement of Sib, Sir Ronald Wingate, in his memoirs, *Not in the Limelight*. Wingate was, during 1919-1920, Political Agent and British Consul in Muscat and acted as mediator between the Sultan and the sheikhs in the interior.

147. Sir Ronald describes the difficulties which occurred during the initial discussions when the sheikhs insisted that the agreement should be between the Sultan on the one side and the Imam on the other:

"This was fatal, and I knew that I could not possibly agree to it on behalf of the Sultan, for this would mean that the Sultan acknowledged another ruler, and a ruler who was already an elected spiritual leader and an admitted temporal representative of the tribes. From such an acknowledgement it was only one step farther for the spiritual leadership and temporal representation of the tribes to develop into a claim for the spiritual and temporal leadership of all Oman."<sup>20</sup> He adds: "The word Imam was omitted from the body of the document, which simply read as conditions arranged between the Sultan's Govern-

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, Sixteenth Session, Special Political Committee, 305th meeting.

<sup>20</sup> Sir Ronald Wingate, *Not in the Limelight* (Hutchinson of London, 1959), p. 89.

ment and Isa bin Salih as representing the Omani tribes"<sup>21</sup>

148. Wingate concluded the account by giving the following details of the signing of the Agreement:

"It was signed by me on behalf of the Sultan, with his full authority, and granted to the tribal leaders of Oman, all of whom signed individually, the right of self-government, or non-interference by the Sultan in their internal affairs in return for peace, and for the payment of the customary dues at the ports in the territory controlled by the Sultan. The question of sovereignty was never mentioned. Had it been, there would have been no agreement. It recognized the facts of the situation, a situation which was not a new one, but had been a source of controversy and conflict for three quarters of a century. For in Arabia allegiance is tribal, and the tribe has no defined boundaries. Yet the existence of a Coastal Sultanate, a tribal confederation, and a religious leader, who could claim through election the temporal allegiance of the tribes, had, up till then, made impossible a *modus vivendi* where, by agreement, the coast and the interior each looked after its own affairs, while remaining in friendly contact."<sup>22</sup>

149. A judgement on the question of which interpretation of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib is correct falls outside the specific terms of reference of the mission. In any case, an authentic text should be the basis for a careful study, which is essential before any evaluation on this point can be made.

150. This *modus vivendi*, as Wingate describes the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib, lasted for thirty-five years. The arrangement appears to have functioned satisfactorily.

151. The mission took up the question of the status of the Imamate with every official, sheikh and notable it met. According to the Sultan, the Imam is mainly a religious leader. He also remarked that it would be impossible to have at the same time a Sultan and an Imam. The Minister of Interior called to the attention of the mission the fact that during the thirty-five years of the *modus vivendi* the Sultan had had no need to interfere in the affairs of the Imamate but that the Sultan had had to act in 1955 as a result of foreign intervention. One of the prominent and learned notables pointed out that the Imamate was a moral institution with many values, concepts and conditions. When a person failed to fulfil his functions he could no longer be considered an Imam. There was therefore a body of opinion which considered that an Imam by his absence from the country was not in a position to discharge his obligations as a high official. He also told the mission that the present conflict put a strain on the Omanis and that many of the people were perplexed by that situation.

152. Although the majority of the people interviewed indicated that they either were not interested in the return of the Imam or would be willing to see him return on condition that "he would make his peace with the Sultan", there was a minority among them which gave the impression that the idea of an Imamate was not dead.

#### (i) Development programmes

153. The mission was interested to observe what was being done for the population in the area. The

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*

normal revenue—mostly taxes on import and export of goods—is totally inadequate to permit the allocation of substantial funds for development purposes. In July 1958 the United Kingdom Government agreed to help the Sultan to carry out a development programme. Financial assistance for this purpose has greatly increased since August 1960, and the tentative budget for it, for 1963-1964, amounted to approximately 190,000 pounds sterling, chiefly financed by the United Kingdom Government.

154. The mission had an interview with the Development Secretary at Muscat. It also visited the Agricultural Research Station at Nazwa, which has operated since 1959. In addition there was an opportunity to see the health centre at Ar Rustag.

155. The economy is still a pastoral one in the process of transition into an agricultural economy. Instead of relying on the cultivation of dates—the main source of foreign currency and revenue—the Department tries to stimulate interest in other crops. Two experimental farms, in Suhar and Nazwa, carry out research on irrigation and fertilization techniques. Advice is given to the farmers on the cultivation of improved varieties of wheat, fruit, vegetables, sorghum, as well as on animal husbandry. Particular emphasis is laid on help in installing Diesel pumps to supplement the existing century-old network of underground irrigation channels. The Development Secretary estimated that at Nazwa approximately 300 pumps had been installed. Annual farmer days have been organized for the last three years. The attendance increased from 500 the first year to 1,100 the last year.

156. In addition to major assistance in the field of agriculture, a medical service has been organized. There are now nine health centres, each with a doctor in charge; four of these centres are established in the interior. In addition there are now fourteen dispensaries with a medical assistant in attendance. An anti-malaria unit has recently started periodic house-to-house spraying. During its visit to the centre at Ar Rustaq, the mission was impressed with what was being achieved with modest means.

157. Communications are important; they will be even more so when the agricultural production permits the export of surplus food. The Department is responsible for 400 miles of track. Constant work is needed to keep the track in its present minimum condition.

158. A formidable task confronts the Government with its long-term problems in the field of education. The present status of education is inadequate especially when progress is made in other aspects of the development programme which will require certain minimum standards of training. In addition to the existing schools, mainly Koranic school and two primary schools at Muscat and Matrah, three primary schools are planned. The first group of students for teacher training are in a college in the Hadhramaut.

159. An analysis of the budget for the Department showed that approximately 46 per cent is allocated to its programmes in the field of health, 15 per cent to the maintenance of tracks and about 15 per cent to agricultural projects.

#### (j) Relations between the United Kingdom and the Sultanate

160. Political relations between Great Britain and Muscat go back to 1798, the year of Napoleon's landing in Egypt, when a treaty was signed with the Sultan



in which a formal promise was made to exclude the French from his territory for the duration of the war which then was raging between England and France. Subsequently moral support from British India was given to the Sultan in order to help him against the seafaring tribes from the Trucial Coast and the Wahhabis who operated from what is now Saudi Arabia.

161. Although in general, after intervening in southern Oman in 1820-1821, Great Britain tried to stay out of direct military involvement in the politics of the Persian Gulf area, it always had an interest in the stability and integrity of the Sultanate. It never extended its protectorate over Muscat as it had done in the case of the Trucial sheikhdoms, but it went rather far when, by the Agreement of 20 March 1891, the Sultan agreed "... never to cede ... or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government, the dominions of Muscat or Oman or any of their dependencies ...".<sup>28</sup> A year earlier the Sultan had undertaken to be "guided" in all matters of policy by the advice of the British Government. The United Kingdom Government informed the mission, however, that it did not consider the 1891 agreement as binding on the Sultan.

162. The Treaty of Friendship Commerce and Navigation was concluded with the United Kingdom on 20 December 1951.

163. British military support during 1915 prevented the capture of Muscat and probably the overthrow of the Sultan by the tribes from the interior.

164. British interests have changed in emphasis. In the past they were centred around suppression of piracy, slave trade, protection of the sea routes; now they are geared to protect oil investments in the region of the Persian Gulf. The appearance of a naval vessel, sometimes the operation of it, could bring the desired result in the old days. This is no longer possible. The present-day relationships between the Sultan and the United Kingdom are different. The Sultan emphasized during the discussions with the mission that the major policy-making decisions were his and his alone. British Government officials made it equally clear that they would only act upon concurrence by the Sultan. Time and time again the mission was reminded that particular questions had to be referred to and decided by the Sultan.

165. More recent relations have centred around the difficulties in 1955 and 1957. Military assistance was given in 1957. An agreement with the United Kingdom Government concluded in 1958 resulted in material and financial assistance to the armed forces of the Sultan and financial help for the development programme. In return the Sultan extended the existing arrangements regarding civil aviation and allowed the Royal Air Force to continue using the airfields at Masirah Island and at Salalah in Zufar.

#### (k) *Efforts towards negotiations*

166. The mission inquired about the discussions which had taken place during 1960 and 1961 in Lebanon between representatives of the United Kingdom Government on behalf of the Sultan, and the Imam. Those discussions were arranged in order to ascertain the possibility of ending the conflict. No agreement was reached.

167. The representative of the Imam stated the terms under which they could return to Oman, namely:

(a) Their relationship with the Sultan should be based on continuing recognition of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib;

(b) The Sultan should respect the provisions of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib and the British should guarantee his good faith;

(c) The spiritual and temporal authority and the material rights of the rebel leaders should be restored "as before" with no more interference by the Sultan than before;

(d) Her Majesty's Government should guarantee the safety of the rebel leaders (against the Sultan);

(e) Her Majesty's Government should provide economic help in developing the country as a whole and Oman in particular;

(f) Omanis who had been imprisoned as a result of the war and subsequent guerrilla activities should be released; Her Majesty's Government should consider sympathetically the financial and material sufferings of the prisoners and of the people of the Jabal al Akhdar, with a view to offering them help.

168. The discussions on these terms did not result in any agreement. During the last meeting, in February 1961, the representative of the Imam presented a set of four basic conditions which must be accepted if negotiations were not to be broken off. These conditions were:

(a) A return to the situation as it had existed before the revolt;

(b) Sovereignty for Oman;

(c) Compensation for war damage;

(d) Release of prisoners.

The discussions were broken off and were never resumed.

#### (1) *Specific question*

169. The mission brought up a specific question raised by the representative of Chile during the seventeenth session of the General Assembly, at the 355th meeting of the Special Political Committee, namely, why did the Sultan of Muscat and Oman not send a representative to the Assembly to defend his case? Was it because he was not independent, or because he wished to give complete freedom of action to his very capable and efficient defenders?

170. The Sultan, during the discussion on 24 May 1963, in general emphasized his sovereignty and more specifically stated, firstly, that his country was not a Member of the United Nations; secondly, that he had informed the Secretary-General that the discussion by the General Assembly of the question of Oman represented interference in the affairs of his country; and thirdly, that he saw no reason why he should go to court, sit on the "bench for the accused" and be confronted with his own subjects on an equal footing.

#### IX. CONCLUDING REMARKS

171. The mission wishes to stress the point that, because of the complex nature of the problems involved, it approached its task with great caution and with a special effort to examine and review facts and conditions in the most careful manner.

<sup>28</sup> See *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads*, vol. XI, compiled by C. W. Aitchison (revised and continued up to the end of 1930 under the authority of the Government of India: Delhi, Manager of Publications, 1933), p. 318.

172. The body of the report contains the findings of the mission. In addition, the mission wishes to make the following general observations:

(a) All the people in "Oman" are, ethnically speaking, of the same racial stock, use the same language and practice the same religion;

(b) During long periods in the history of "Oman", for instance from 1821 to 1913, no Imam functioned, except from 1868-1871;

(c) "Oman" has witnessed, during the last two centuries, a struggle for power and domination between various tribes of the interior and the Sultans of Muscat. In that struggle the United Kingdom has, on a number of occasions, given support to the Sultan of Muscat;

(d) A *modus vivendi* existed for some thirty-five years between the Sultan and Imam Mohammed bin

Abdullah al-Khalili following the conclusion of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib in 1920.

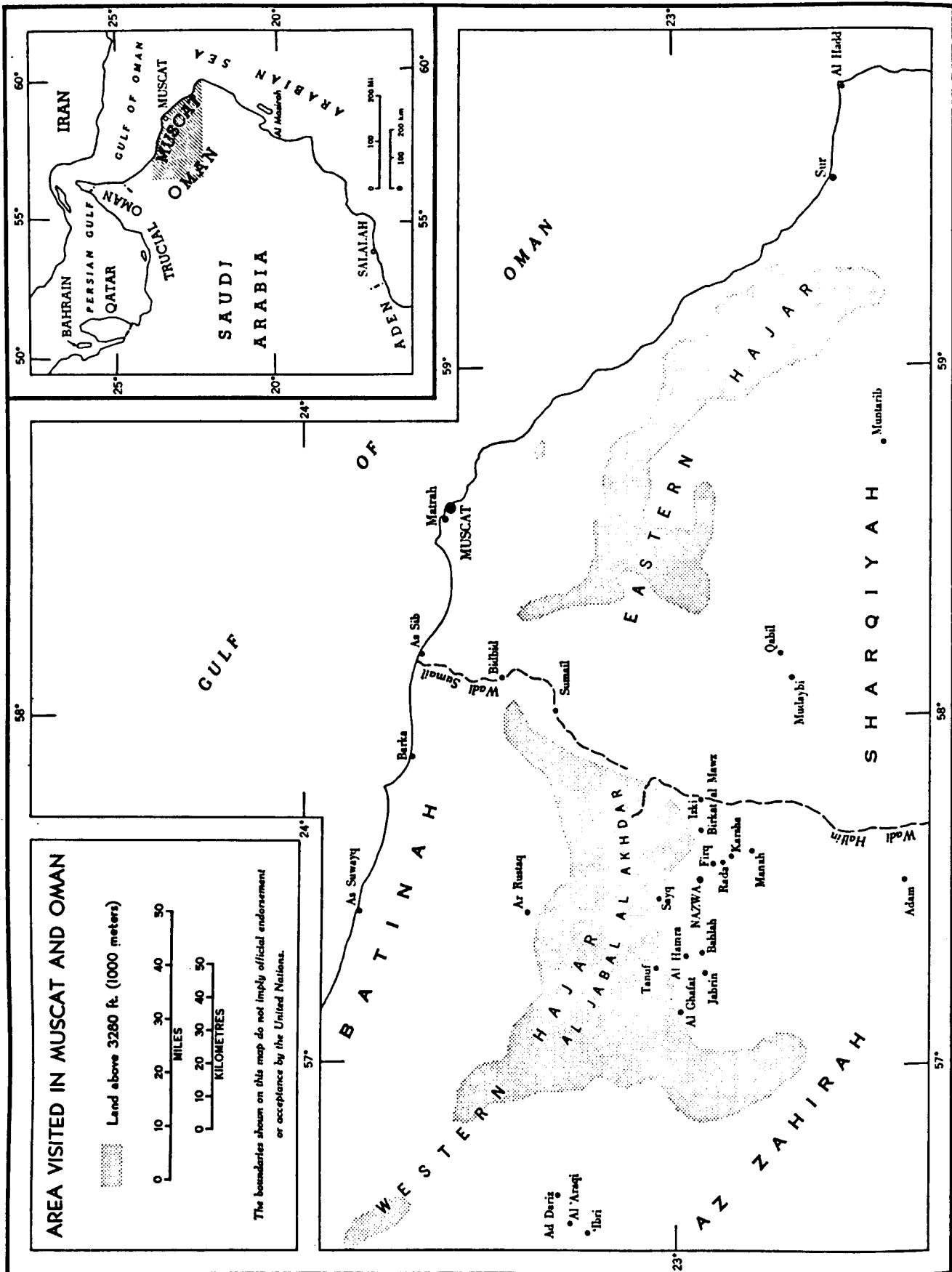
173. The mission expresses the hope that an amicable and peaceful solution between the parties concerned may be found through conciliation and negotiation. A start may be made by an undertaking to refrain from any action which might further aggravate the situation, so that an atmosphere conducive to mutual understanding may prevail.

174. In the meantime, the mission wishes to point out that additional efforts to improve the health and social conditions of the population are needed; perhaps the facilities of the United Nations and its family of organizations could be utilized in that connexion.

*(Annex I follows overleaf)*

ANNEX I

Area visited in Muscat and Oman





## ANNEX III

**Explanatory memorandum attached to the letter dated 29 September 1960 from ten Arab States, addressed to the Secretary-General<sup>a</sup>**

1. The Imamate of Oman lies at the south-eastern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. It is the hinterland of what is erroneously called the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman; in population and area the Imamate of Oman forms the greater part of that territory. As early as 1650, Omani troops succeeded in compelling the Portuguese, who had occupied Muscat in 1507, to evacuate the Imamate, thereby consolidating the independence and sovereignty of Oman.

2. Since the latter part of the eighteenth century when Britain sought to extend its influence over the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula to protect its imperial communications, it faced constant opposition from the people of Oman. This fact was manifested by the refusal of the people of Oman to accept as Imam, Said bin Sultan, whose rule was imposed by Britain over Muscat during the nineteenth century. Muscat maintained a hereditary Sultanate, while the people of Oman have continued for the past 1,200 years to elect their Imam. At the end of World War I, when the independence of Oman was threatened, a conflict ensued between Muscat and Oman, and led the Omani forces to lay siege to Muscat. When Muscat was about to surrender, the British intervened to settle the dispute and the Treaty of Sib was concluded between Muscat and Oman on 25 September 1920. This Treaty confirms without ambiguity the independence of Oman.

3. As is well known, the present conflict arose as a result of the constant refusal of the Imams of Oman to grant oil concessions to British companies in their territory. This led to the invasion of Oman by British-led forces resulting in the occupation of Nazwa, the capital of Oman, on 17 December 1955. Since then, the people of Oman have continued their resistance to the military aggression directed against their independence.

4. The armed aggression by the United Kingdom against the independence, sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of the Imamate of Oman was brought to the attention of the Security Council on 15 August 1957.<sup>b</sup> It is regretted that in spite of the gravity of the situation, the Security Council failed to deal with this problem. Since then, the situation has further deteriorated and British military intervention continues unabated, causing great suffering and wide-spread loss of life and property in violation of the fundamental principles of human rights. On 15 April 1959, the Imam of Oman appealed to the moral conscience of the world to put an end to these acts of repression. In June of the same year the Imam reiterated the firm determination of his people to defend their independence against United Kingdom aggression.

5. The tragic situation in Oman, where a relentless war continues, is of great concern to our Governments. The aggression against the people of Oman threatens peace and security in the Middle East, and constitutes a breach of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of international law.

## ANNEX IV

**Draft resolutions recommended by the Special Political Committee**

**(a) DRAFT RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED BY THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE AT THE SIXTEENTH SESSION<sup>c</sup>**

*The General Assembly,  
Having discussed the question of Oman,  
Deeply concerned with the situation in Oman,*

<sup>a</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Fifteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 89, document A/4521.

<sup>b</sup> Official Records of the Security Council, Twelfth Year, Supplement for July, August and September 1957, documents S/3865 and Add.1.

<sup>c</sup> Official Records of the General Assembly, Sixteenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 23, document A/5010, para. 10.

*Recalling its resolution 1514 (XV) "Declaration on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples",*

1. *Recognises* the right of the people of Oman to self-determination and independence;

2. *Calls* for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Oman;

3. *Invites* the parties concerned to settle peacefully their differences with a view to restoring normal conditions in Oman.

**(b) DRAFT RESOLUTION RECOMMENDED BY THE SPECIAL POLITICAL COMMITTEE AT THE SEVENTEENTH SESSION<sup>d</sup>**

*The General Assembly,*

*Having discussed the question of Oman,*

*Deeply concerned with the situation in Oman,*

*Convinced that a speedy restoration of independence to Oman is necessary for the peace and stability in the area,*

1. *Recognises* the right of the people of Oman to self-determination and independence;

2. *Calls* for the withdrawal of foreign forces from Oman;

3. *Invites* the parties concerned to settle peacefully their differences in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations with a view to restoring normal conditions in Oman.

## ANNEX V

**Letter dated 7 March 1963 from the Head of the Office of the Imamate of Oman in Cairo, addressed to the Secretary-General**

I am directed by the Imam of Oman to convey to Your Excellency his thanks for the opportunity given to the Omani Delegation to put the question of Oman before the bar of the United Nations.

However, in the meantime, it is our duty to keep the Secretariat of the United Nations informed of developments of national struggle against the forces of aggression. The situation in Oman has considerably worsened since the debate of the issue in the last session of the United Nations. The United Kingdom still holds to its policy of imposing their colonial régime on our people. And the latest reports received from Oman tell of horrible massacres committed by the colonial forces against the innocent citizens.

Apart from daily military operations, the colonial forces resort to savage acts of terrorism and unlawfulness against the rank and file of our people. The colonial authorities make no secret of their tyrannical activities. People are innocently put to death, imprisoned, arrested and tortured. Illegal confiscation of properties and imposition of collective fines are common occurrence in Oman.

Up to this day the forces of occupation refuse to allow press agents and correspondents to visit Oman, in order to study the situation and report to the world public opinion. Even the Red Cross mission's appeal has been rejected. This signifies the highest degree of irresponsibility on the part of the colonial Power, to keep the whole world in darkness as what they commit in Oman.

The moral help of the United Nations has never been so essential as it is today with regard to the state of affairs in Oman.

In the circumstances, we appeal to Your Excellency to place these facts before the Members of the United Nations. The United Kingdom Government stands in Oman guilty of an act of aggression of violation of the United Nations Charter, and last but not least of all acts contradicting with the principles of international law and human value.

<sup>d</sup> *Ibid.*, Seventeenth Session, Annexes, agenda item 79, document A/5325, para. 8.

We hope further that this information will contribute in enlightening the Members of the United Nations with the present conditions in Oman, and enlist their support in solving this problem in a way commensurate with the Charter of the United Nations.

Himyer SULEIMAN  
*Head of the Office of the Imamate  
of Oman in Cairo*

**ANNEX VI**

**Letter dated 1 June 1963 from the Imam of Oman to the Secretary-General**

The Office of Imam Ghalib Bin Ali, Imam of Oman, presents its compliments to His Excellency, the Secretary-General of the United Nations, and has the pleasure in conveying to His Excellency the views of the Government of Oman concerning the visit of a United Nations mission to Oman.

The Office of the Imam of Oman has now learnt that the proposed mission has already reached Muscat with a view to making on-the-spot study of the situation in Oman, but unfortunately the Government of Oman were not made aware of this arrangement nor have they been informed of the nature of the mission, and the date of its departure, and the forms of the mission and the contacts it was going to make.

As we should have been informed in advance of this measure, and the legal authority in Oman should have been represented in this mission and their agreement obtained, we are of the opinion that the visit of the United Nations Mission to Oman without being accompanied by an official representative on behalf of the State of Oman, is a futile attempt, and unacceptable to the Government and the people of Oman.

It is evident that the mission is going to stay as guest of the colonial authorities in Muscat, and draw all their views and information from the colonial sources, a matter which would cause the mission to form mistaken views as to the actual conditions in Oman, and the rule of oppression and terrorism upon the people.

In the circumstances we feel constrained to express our strongest protest against United Nations action, and to state that we do not regard ourselves bound by the views and judgement of the United Nations mission, if such views and judgements fail to recognize the legal rights of the people of Oman.

Your Excellency will probably recall that when the idea of sending a United Nations mission to Oman was first proposed, the representatives of the Imamate of Oman in the United Nations insisted that an official representative on behalf of Oman should be included in the mission. In this view we were fully supported by the representatives of the Arab States in the United Nations.

It has, however, been felt at the time that no good could be served unless the legal Government of Oman have been given the opportunity to participate in the mission, and place their own views on the matter.

Last but not least, the people of Oman feel that they have been let down by the United Nations, and the United Nations Mission in its present form could serve no purpose other than that of the colonial authority who rule with the bullet and the gun.

We therefore appeal to Your Excellency to reconsider the matter in the light of this letter, and suspend the work of the United Nations Mission until the matter has been taken up with the representatives of the Arab States.

We look forward to hearing from Your Excellency immediately, and hope that Your Excellency's decisions in this matter will fully correspond with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

IMAM OF OMAN  
(Ghalib bin ALI)

**ANNEX VII**

**Schedule of meetings and discussions held by the mission  
(18 May-1 June 1963)**

- 21-23 May Bahrain
- 24 May Salalah
- 25-27 May Muscat
- 28 May Qabil, Mudaybi, Bidbid
- 29 May Sumail, Izki
- 30 May Nazwa, Manah, Karsha, Rada, Firq
- 31 May Bahlah, Al Hamra', Al Ghafat
- 1 June Visit to Government Experimental Agriculture Station at Nazwa
- 2 June Ibrī, Ad Dariz, Al 'Araqi
- 3 June Sayq
- 4 June Muscat
- 5 June As Suwayq
- 6 June Ar Rustaq, 'Awabi, and visit to Hospital at ar Rustaq
- 7-8 June Muscat
- 9 June Salalah
- 11-12 June Bahrain
- 13-19 June Beirut
- 20-21 June Jidda
- 22-23 June Dammam
- 24-25 June Beirut
- 27 June London

**ANNEX VIII**

**Information on the Sultan's armed forces, submitted to the mission**

**I. STRENGTH OF THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES**

	<i>All ranks</i>	
	<i>Present strength</i>	<i>Proposed future strength</i>
HQ and HQ troops.....	464	510
Two battalions .....	1,320	1,306
<i>Gendarmerie</i> .....	304	441
Recruit and tactical training centre .....	245	223
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>2,333</b>	<b>2,480</b>

We are recommending that thirty British army officers be seconded in future—an increase of five. They are needed as:

- Battalion Signal Officers..... 2
- Force MT Officer..... 1
- Training Centre Instructors..... 2

We are not recommending any increase in Contract Officers of which we have at present:

- British..... 30
- Pakistani..... 5

The main object of our proposed reorganization is to increase the *gendarmerie* and the training facilities for locally commissioned and enlisted personnel.

## II. HISTORY OF THE SULTAN'S ARMED FORCES

(1) Around 1921 the Muscat Infantry was formed with about 230 men recruited among local people, including Gwadar (Gwadar was sold to Pakistan by the Sultan a few years ago). This was a garrison force. It never went outside Muscat. It provides for guards and escorts, etc. One British ex-army officer (on contract) was in charge. There were some Indian army officers.

(2) Around 1952 an all-Arab force (mainly from the Batinah) of some 100 men was organized along British army lines. They were stationed at Sohar, were known as the Batinah Force, and later renamed Northern Frontier Regiment. During 1954-1955 this force increased to 200.

(3) During 1953 another force was organized, the Oman Field Force. The main purpose was to support the oil company in its exploration work. It was approximately 300 men strong and was led by British officers under contract. This force was defeated by Talib's men; they ran out of ammunition, landmines demoralized them, they withdrew, were broken up and the Force was disbanded. The oil company paid towards the costs of this Force, because it was mainly responsible for ensuring the security of the company operations.

(4) Around 1958 everything was merged in agreement with the British Government, which provided military aid; RAF pilots and army officers were seconded. Second lieutenants and sergeants (not more than six for periods of four months) were made available for training purposes.

(5) The Sultan's armed forces now consist of: the Muscat Regiment; the Northern Frontier Regiment; and the Oman *gendarmerie*. The local officers amount to sixteen (maximum strength will be twenty). Lieutenant is the highest rank. A beginning has been made to train young boys of thirteen to fifteen years of age, who ultimately will replace the Pakistanis.

### ANNEX IX

Unofficial version of the Treaty (Agreement) of Sib of 25 September 1920, as quoted in *The New York Times* of 13 August 1957

In the name of God, the Compassionate, the Merciful

This is the peace agreed upon between the Government of the Sultan, Taimur ibn Faisal, and Sheikh Iso ibn Salih ibn Ali on behalf of the people of Oman whose names are signed hereto, through the mediation of Mr. Wingate, I.C.S., political agent and consul for Great Britain in Muscat, who is empowered by his Government in this respect and to be an intermediary between them. Of the conditions set forth below, four pertain to the Government of the Sultan and four pertain to the people of Oman.

Those pertaining to the people of Oman are:

1. Not more than 5 per cent shall be taken from anyone, no matter what his race, coming from Oman to Muscat or Matrah or Sur or the rest of the towns of the coast.

2. All the people of Oman shall enjoy security and freedom in all the towns of the coast.

3. All restrictions upon everyone entering and leaving Muscat and Mutrah and all the towns shall be removed.

4. The Government of the Sultan shall not grant asylum to any criminal fleeing from the justice of the people of Oman. It shall return him to them if they request it to do so. It shall not interfere in their internal affairs.

The four conditions pertaining to the Government of the Sultan are:

1. All the tribes and sheikhs shall be of peace with the Sultan. They shall not attack the towns of the coast and shall not interfere in his Government.

2. All those going to Oman on lawful business and for commercial affairs shall be free. There shall be no restrictions on commerce, and they shall enjoy security.

3. They shall expel and grant no asylum to any wrongdoer or criminal fleeing to them.

4. The claims of merchants and others against the people of Oman shall be heard and decided on the basis of justice according to the law of Islam.

WRITTEN on 11 Muharram 1339, corresponding to 25 September 1920.

## DOCUMENT A/5657

### Report of the Fourth Committee

[Original text: English]  
[10 December 1963]

1. In a letter dated 9 September 1963 addressed to the Secretary-General (A/5492), Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Libya, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, Tunisia, United Arab Republic and Yemen requested the inclusion in the agenda of the eighteenth session of the General Assembly of an item entitled "The question of Oman". On 16 September the sponsors submitted an explanatory memorandum (A/5492/Add.1).

2. The General Committee, in its first report dated 19 September 1963 (A/5530), recommended the inclusion of the item in the agenda and its allocation to the Fourth Committee. At its 1210th plenary meeting, on 20 September, the General Assembly approved the recommendations of the General Committee and thereby allocated the item "Question of Oman" to the Fourth Committee for its consideration.

3. In connexion with the consideration of this item, the Committee granted the following requests for hearings:

Petitioner	Meeting at which the request was granted
Representative of the Committee for the Rights of Oman (A/C.4/604).....	1436th
Sheikh Talib bin Ali al-Hani, "Representative of Omani delegation" (A/C.4/604/Add.2)....	1494th

4. At the 1495th meeting, on 29 November, the Committee began the hearing of petitioners with a statement by Sheikh Talib bin Ali al-Hani. Mr. Faris Glubb, representing the Committee for the Rights of Oman, made a statement at the 1496th meeting, on 2 December. At the 1496th, 1497th and 1498th meetings, on 2 and 3 December, the two petitioners answered questions put to them by members of the Committee. Mr. Faris Glubb made a further statement to the Committee at the 1505th meeting, on 6 December.

5. At the 1436th meeting, on 3 October, the Committee decided to circulate as a document a memorandum on "The legal and historical aspects of the Oman question" submitted by Mr. Robert Edwards,