

**The Government
and Politics
of the Middle East
and North Africa**

**edited by
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Eastern Arabian States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and Oman

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In December 1976, representatives of the member states of the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) convened in Doha, capital of Qatar, to set the world price of oil. A great deal of world attention was focused on the meeting at the time. The members failed to reach an agreement and for six months there were two world oil prices. Very little attention, however, was given to the country that played host to the meeting. Its relative anonymity, despite its growing importance as a major oil exporter, is symbolic of all the states of eastern Arabia.

Before the discovery of oil, the eastern Arabian states eked out a subsistence-level existence from pearling, fishing, seaborne commerce, and, among the nomads, animal husbandry. The sudden and dramatic change from relative austerity to oil-generated affluence characterizes nearly all of these states and lends a fairy-tale atmosphere to their capitals, each with its own new international airport and luxury hotels. Beneath the glitter, however, each state remains locked in an ongoing struggle with the awesome tasks of social, economic, and political transformation.

Historical Background

Little is known of eastern Arabia during prehistoric times. In the north, the ancient civilization of Mesopotamia extended along the shores of the Persian (Arabian) Gulf as far south as contemporary Saudi Arabia. From around 4000 to 2000 B.C., much of eastern Arabia was controlled by the ancient civilization of Dilmun, centered in the Bahrain ar-

chipelago. A later civilization, called Magan, arose in Oman.

Because most of the hinterland of eastern Arabia has always been ecologically inhospitable, the ancient inhabitants turned primarily to the sea for their livelihoods. The ancestors of the Phoenicians are believed by some to have first learned their maritime skills in the gulf. Inland, nomads began to develop animal husbandry, and at the large oases, irrigated farming was also developed. In Oman there was also farming in the Hajar Mountains. Moreover, despite the isolation of communities in the gulf, fairly regular intercourse has existed between the interior and the coastal towns since ancient times.

Indigenous gulf maritime trade reached its zenith during the reign of the Abbasid caliphs in Baghdad (A.D. 750–1258). Like spokes from the hub of the Abbasid Empire, routes followed by the gulf seafarers extended to India and Africa, supplying goods from the east and the south to the center of the Islamic world. With the fall of the Abbasid capital of Baghdad to the Mongols in 1258, the region's trade declined and politics became increasingly chaotic, producing a situation that changed very little until the first European penetration of the gulf two and one-half centuries later.

The first significant European incursion into the Persian (Arabian) Gulf was made by Vasco da Gama of Portugal in 1497. The Portuguese objectives and administrative practices in the gulf area were subsequently adopted by the Dutch and English who followed Portugal's prime objective—paramountcy in the trading of eastern luxury goods to which Europe had grown accustomed during the time of the Abbasid and Umayyad empires. Another concern was the security of the maritime routes to and from India.

As the Portuguese Empire faded so did its control over the gulf. A successful English-Persian attack on Portuguese-held Hormuz signaled the decline of Portuguese hegemony and the advent of the Dutch, who had begun to establish trade links to the east. By the middle of the eighteenth century, however, the Dutch began to yield to the British. With the abandonment of Kharg Island (offshore contemporary Iran) in 1765, the Dutch presence in the gulf was effectively ended.

The British, like the Portuguese and Dutch before them, became interested in the gulf for both strategic and commercial reasons and, like their predecessors, adopted an administrative policy based on indirect rule, with a minimum of interference in local affairs. British trade with the Orient was obstructed by piracy and civil war in the gulf and was threatened from outside the area by the French.

These impediments to British interests motivated the British government to enter into a number of special treaties with the littoral states. The first such treaty was concluded with Oman and coincided with the



French invasion of Egypt in 1798. The pact was designed to deny the gulf to the French and to improve the system for protecting Britain's lines of communication with its increasingly important Indian Empire.

As the French Revolution caused the challenge that France had represented to recede, another challenge presented itself in the form of Arab privateers. Sailing from such shaykhdoms as Sharjah and Ras al-Khaymah, gulf mariners would strike at European shipping. Even though a number of military expeditions were dispatched to the gulf from England's Indian dominions, the British were unable to halt such attacks until 1819 when, after heavy fighting, they successfully defeated the Arab fleet based in Ras al-Khaymah. A treaty signed the following year with the local shaykhs became the cornerstone of Britain's political, strategic, military, diplomatic, economic, commercial, and administrative presence in the gulf area for the next 150 years.

Although Arab harassment of British shipping in the gulf and Indian Ocean ceased thereafter, a major problem remained in the sense that the shaykhdoms had not been prohibited from engaging in war with one another on land. Hence, in 1835, the British prevailed upon all the ruling shaykhs to sign a second agreement. The latter treaty prohibited the tribes under the ruler's jurisdiction from raiding each other during the fishing and pearling seasons, which in time came to be called the "trucial period." Taken together, the two pacts marked the beginning of a long series of treaties between the British and what became known as the Trucial States, and were the principal means by which Britain legitimized its administration of the latter's defense and foreign affairs.

From the beginning, British authority in the gulf was exercised indirectly through the local rulers in the area. In fact, control of domestic affairs remained largely in the hands of indigenous, albeit traditional, leaders throughout the long period of British protection. By 1916 Britain was able to assume direct control over the shaykhdoms' external relations and indirect control over domestic affairs. Most rulers acceded to official British "advice"; those who refused or resisted risked almost certain exile, ouster, or British naval bombardment of their principalities. In this manner, Britain introduced an unprecedented degree of stability to the region.

After World War II, and especially following the independence of India and Pakistan in the late 1940s, British interests in the gulf area changed significantly. Although the strategic need to protect the Indian Empire had ceased, oil interests in Iran, Iraq, Kuwait, and other states had not only continued but increased. In the minds of U.K. policymakers, the extent of British involvement in the gulf's petroleum resources was sufficient to warrant the continued stationing of military

forces in Oman, Sharjah, and Bahrain. In time, however, the costs to British taxpayers of maintaining a military presence in the gulf became an issue of increasing controversy in British domestic politics. As but one indication of growing disenchantment at home with the country's imperial policies, the British decided three years after the 1958 coup in Iraq to grant full independence to Kuwait, a decision that would be repeated ten years hence when the last of the protected-state treaties with the nine remaining gulf shaykhdoms was terminated.

Britain's greatest impact on the gulf was to introduce and develop modern administrative and legal practices into the region, as exemplified by the establishment of municipal governments and the application of Western-style legal codes. A more pervasive consequence of British influence was the promotion of English as the area's language of international trade, defense, and diplomacy. Rooted in more than a century and a half of cooperation between individual British officials and the indigenous inhabitants, Great Britain's legacy in the gulf is deeply imbedded in the emirates and gives every indication of remaining a prominent feature of life in the area for some time to come.

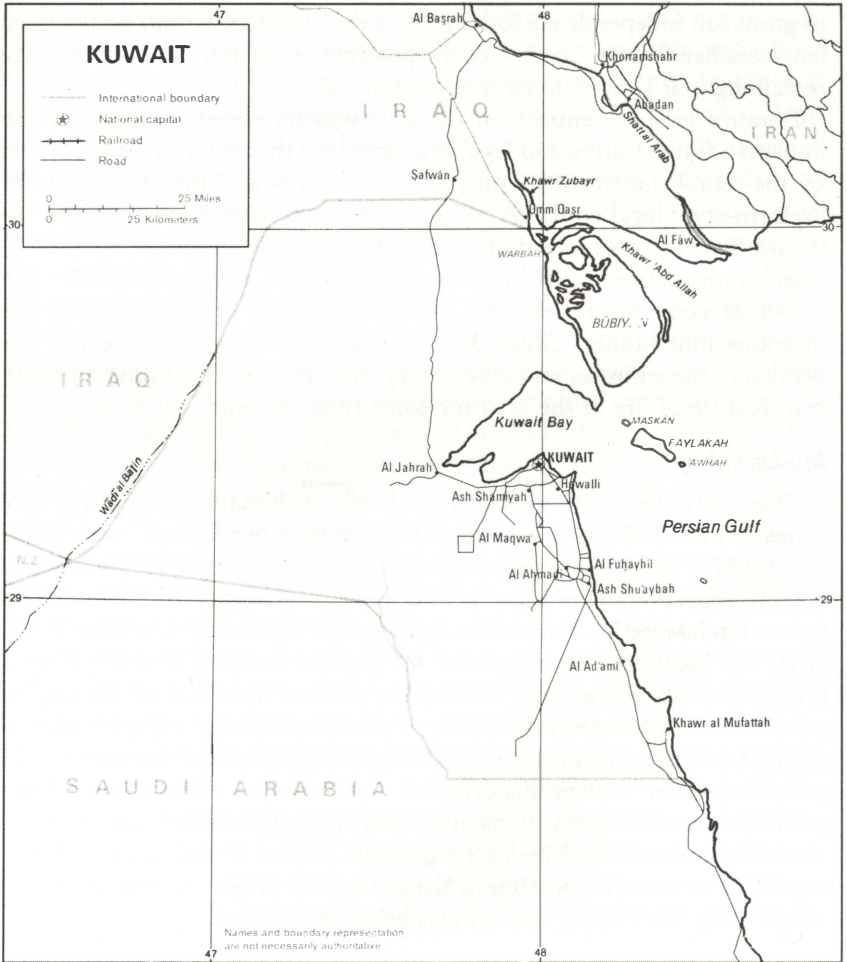
Modern Gulf States

There are ten gulf emirates and one sultanate comprising five states: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the seven-member United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Oman, respectively. The governments of these states are all conservative politically and each, save the UAE, which is a federation headed by a president, has a dynastic form of rule. Even in the UAE, the local administrations of the various dynastic emirates have a greater impact on the daily lives of the citizens than that of the federal government. The relatively stable political conditions that prevailed in the gulf throughout most of the 1970s stood in marked contrast to the previous, often violent histories of a number of these states. Their political and social institutions, if not always their economic and military institutions, have exhibited a remarkable degree of resiliency that few would have thought possible a decade earlier when the special treaty relationship with Great Britain was being terminated.

KUWAIT

Historical Background

The Kuwaitis trace their history back to the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries when several tribes of the great Unayzah tribal confederation emigrated from their famine-torn homeland in central Arabia.



Calling themselves the Bani Utub ("the people who wandered"), roughly half of the the emigrés settled in Bahrain. In 1716, the remainder founded present-day Kuwait.

Over the years, several leading clans of the original wave of emigrés—the Al Sabahs, the Al Ghanims, the Al Khalids, the Janaats and the Al Salihs among others—combined to create an oligarchical merchant principality presided over by the Al Sabahs.

In 1899, Mubarak Al Sabah, subsequently referred to as "Mubarak the Great" (r. 1896–1915), who had expanded Kuwaiti influence along with Al Sabah preeminence, allowed the principality over which he reigned to enter into a protected-state relationship with the British. Shaykh Mubarak's reason was his fear that the Ottomans, who claimed nominal suzerainty over the shaykhdom, might try to implement political control. At his death Mubarak had succeeded in expanding Kuwaiti rule to about twice its present size. In 1922, Kuwait's British protectors negotiated half of the principality's enlarged territory back to the Saudis and to Iraq in the Treaty of Uqayr. The treaty also created the Saudi-Kuwaiti Neutral Zone, the landward side of which was split equally between the two parties in 1970.

The British allowed the bulk of domestic administration to remain in Kuwaiti hands although in time they would provide advisors to help create and staff the beginnings of a modern bureaucracy. As would occur elsewhere in the gulf and especially throughout eastern Arabia, British interests in Kuwait underwent a dramatic transformation following the discovery of oil. The Kuwait Oil Company, jointly owned by Gulf Oil Company and British Petroleum (formerly the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company), received a concession in 1934 and discovered oil in 1938. The first commercial quantities, however, were not exported until after World War II.

In 1961, Kuwait regained full independence from the British. At the time, Iraq made threatening gestures, claiming sovereignty over the emirate based on old Ottoman claims. Britain, under treaty provisions, sent troops to Kuwait and the crisis subsided. In 1963, Kuwait became a member of the United Nations and later the same year Iraq recognized Kuwait's independence.

Even so, in 1973, Iraq laid claim to the Kuwaiti islands of Warbah and Bubiyan, which command the approaches to the Iraqi naval base at Umm Qasr. In May 1973, Iraq occupied the Kuwaiti border post of Samitah on the mainland and a military clash ensued. Although the Iraqis withdrew late in 1974, additional incidents subsequently occurred. Notwithstanding Iraqi overtures to improve relations in the late 1970s,

relations between the two states remain uneasy on territorial as well as ideological grounds.

Political Environment

Population and Social Conditions

Kuwait lies at the northeast end of the gulf and contains some 16,000 square kilometers (ca. 6,200 sq. mi.). The emirate's land borders Iraq to the north and Saudi Arabia to the south. In addition, Kuwait shares a de facto maritime boundary (as do all the emirates) with Iran. The terrain is mostly flat, sandy desert with occasional ridges and rock outcroppings, particularly to the west.

The population of Kuwait is roughly one million, most of whom live in the capital city which, as in most of the other gulf emirates, carries the same name as the state itself. Approximately 85 percent of the inhabitants are Arabs, the remaining 15 percent is comprised mainly of Iranians, Indians, Pakistanis, and Europeans. More than 90 percent of the native Kuwaiti population is Sunni Muslim, the remainder are Shi'ite. It is significant, however, that more than half the total population is comprised of aliens. This expatriate and immigrant population is almost entirely the result of requirements by the oil industry and ancillary enterprises for technical skills and services in excess of that which, despite its modernity, can be produced by the Kuwaiti educational system.

The largest nonindigenous group is the Palestinian community, which comprises approximately a quarter of the total population, or, according to unofficial estimates in the late 1970s, about 270,000. The Palestinians began arriving in Kuwait after the first Arab-Israeli War in 1948. Although many of them are well-educated and have lived and worked in Kuwait long enough to attain high positions in business and government, relatively few have attained full Kuwaiti citizenship. Like their compatriots in other countries, they have maintained strong ties to their homeland.

Other foreign groups have come to Kuwait to make their fortunes and then return to their native lands, a phenomenon that accounts for the disproportionate ratio of males to females. Except for Palestinians and Europeans, many workers leave their families behind while sending a high percentage of their earnings back home.

Kuwait's "cradle-to-grave" welfare system, supported by oil revenues, is one of the most unique in the world. In the day-to-day administration of the system there is little distinction made between resident aliens and native Kuwaitis. The government provides medical, educational, and

welfare services, and even domestic telephone calls are free. Kuwait's educational establishment is comprehensive, compulsory for all children, and modern. It includes a tuition-free university and numerous vocational schools, all of which are subsidized by the state. The generous welfare program has been credited with reducing substantially the basis for social and economic unrest in the emirates. Nonetheless, owing to the limited opportunities for Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis alike to participate in the governing process and, in the case of the latter to obtain citizenship, various forms of political dissatisfaction have been a recurring phenomenon.

Economic Conditions

Prior to the production of oil, most Kuwaitis were engaged in economic activities typical of many other areas in the gulf, such as pearling and fishing along the coast and pastoral nomadism in the interior. Before development of cultured pearls by the Japanese, Kuwait had a fleet of over eight hundred pearl boats and some thirty thousand divers. Kuwaiti trading dhows also sailed annually to Africa and India carrying cargoes laden with limes, dates, and other items exported from Iraq, and returning with timber, textiles, and many other essential items not readily available locally. Since World War II, however, Kuwait has become the world's sixth-largest oil producer. Oil revenues have allowed Kuwait to evolve an advanced welfare system and have provided job opportunities for well over a half-million expatriates. Under the "participation" policies first enunciated by Saudi Arabian Petroleum Minister Shaykh Ahmad Zaki Yamani in the late 1960s, Kuwait has bought 60 percent equity in the Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and ultimately plans to acquire total equity in both that company and in other foreign oil concessionaire operations. Like all gulf Arabs, the Kuwaitis are greatly concerned about the future of their emirate's economy "after the oil runs out." As but one expression of this widespread anxiety, conservation measures were adopted in 1972, which restricted maximum production to 3 million barrels per day. Subsequently, the Kuwaitis have increasingly adhered to the view that oil left in the ground is worth more than money in the bank, especially in view of inflation and, in the late 1970s, the rather bleak prospects for the discovery of alternate energy resources elsewhere in the world. In the positions they have adopted vis à vis these and other issues for which conventional economic wisdom has posed few answers, the Kuwaitis are not that much different in their thinking than many other gulf Arabs.

Concern about the depletion of oil reserves has resulted in accelerated attempts to modernize and diversify the economy, particularly in the

fields of petrochemicals, fertilizer production, and shrimping. Agriculture remains practically nonexistent because of a lack of suitable soil and sufficient quantities of potable water. Indeed, Kuwait's chronic water shortage was only resolved in the 1950s by the installation of costly desalinization plants. Before that, Kuwaiti divers used to collect fresh water in earthen jugs from various springs that bubbled up from the floor of the gulf.

The emirate's success to date in diversifying its economy has been limited owing to the paucity of nonpetroleum resources, the small size of the domestic market, and duplication of industries and projects by other gulf states. Thus far, most industrial enterprise is in state-owned corporations, with the private sector active mainly in retail marketing and investment banking. There is a privately owned fishing company, founded in 1972, and also an oil tanker company that has been in operation since 1958.

By the late 1970s an estimated one billion dollars annually was being accrued as a result of astute public and private investments made over the years since oil production began. The Kuwaitis, considering their experience in this area thus far, foresee returns from capital investments, handled through their own banks and investment firms, as a major source of their national income when oil runs out. Although they have been generous to most developing countries, most of their investments are in Europe and the United States. Much more than any of the other emirates Kuwait has exhibited a willingness to invest a proportion of its assets in foreign real estate holdings, as evidenced by its investment in a major resort island in South Carolina.

Political Structure

The constitution, inaugurated in 1962 under Amir Abdallah al-Salim Al Sabah, provides for the establishment of a legislature, an executive branch, and an independent judicial system.

The legislature, called the National Assembly, was granted significant powers including the right to petition the amir (ruler) concerning cabinet appointees and the prime minister. The electoral base has remained narrow and is limited to citizens of Kuwait who are male, literate, and over twenty-one years old. Although political parties have yet to become legal in the emirate, the National Assembly had become an increasingly vocal force in Kuwaiti politics by the time of its dissolution in August 1976 amidst government concern over the prospects for regional and domestic instability owing, at least in part, to tensions generated by the Lebanese civil war and an inability of the parties concerned to address the Pales-

tinian dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflict.

The executive branch is headed by the amir, who is usually designated by the preceding amir with the consent of the ruling Al Sabah family. The only formal constraints on the selection process are that the prospective ruler be of age and a descendant of Mubarak the Great. The amir rules through a prime minister, who usually holds the post of heir apparent simultaneously, and a council of ministers. In the absence of the National Assembly, the amir has added powers that he shares with the council of ministers. He also serves as commander-in-chief of the armed forces and, in addition, is empowered to select and remove cabinet ministers, members of the judiciary, and other government officials.

According to the constitution, the council of ministers, or cabinet, is responsible to the legislature. In the absence of the National Assembly, the cabinet, which numbered just under twenty portfolios in the late 1970s, carries out many of the legislative functions that would ordinarily be performed by the assembly.

The judiciary is based on the Egyptian model and is an amalgam of Islamic law, English common law, and the Ottoman civil code. The highest court is the Supreme Court of Appeal, although the amir himself can act as the final court of appeal. There are also permanent courts of appeal and a number of courts of first instance that hear such cases as those involving divorce or inheritance. More recently, a State Security Court was established in 1975, to handle political cases deemed to be in violation of specific Kuwaiti laws.

Kuwait is divided administratively into three districts (Kuwait City, Al Ahmadi, and Hawalli), each of which is headed by a governor, appointed by the amir. The governor (*wali*) is charged with maintaining and supervising the work of the municipalities, and he himself is responsible to the ministry of interior.

Members of the military have been prohibited from participating in the governing process per se and, for the most part, have remained depoliticized. The Kuwaiti army is relatively small, consisting of some ten thousand men, but is relatively well trained, equipped, and paid. There is also a National Guard and a National Security Force under the direction of the ministries of defense and interior, respectively.

Political Dynamics

Kuwait is a constitutional monarchy whose rulers have traditionally been chosen from the Al Sabah family. In recent years, the rulership has alternated between two branches of the dynasty that include the descendants of two sons of Mubarak the Great; "the Salims" and "the Jabirs."

This sequence was broken by Shaykh Sabah al-Salim Al Sabah, a Salim who became amir in 1965, succeeding a Salim.

The sequence was restored on January 1, 1978, when Shaykh Sabah, in turn, was succeeded by Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad Al Sabah, a Jabir. The new ruler maintained the tradition by choosing a Salim, Shaykh Sa'd bin Abdallah, as heir apparent.

Despite the monarchical structure of government, Kuwait is actually an oligarchy. The power of the amirs is shared both with the rest of the Al Sabah family and with the other old, established families of the Bani Utub tribe. With such a small population base, Kuwait, like all other emirates, has had to rely heavily on the services of expatriates to aid in the administration of government. Many key positions have been filled by able Palestinians who have been resident in Kuwait for decades. In some instances, they and other long-time residents have been granted citizenship. Even so, the number involved is very limited, and assimilation of long-time resident aliens remains a major problem confronting the regime.

Foreign Policy

Because of insufficient military and population capabilities to defend itself against such countries as Iraq, Kuwait has long used its oil revenues as its principal foreign-policy instrument. Kuwait has attempted to utilize systematic foreign-assistance programs to neutralize potential opposition. With this and other purposes in mind, the Kuwait Fund for Arab Economic Development was established in 1967. In the aftermath of the June 1967 war, moreover, Kuwait, along with Saudi Arabia and Libya, became a major contributor of financial aid to Jordan and Egypt. The emirate has also significantly aided the Palestinians through financial contributions. In addition, when Jordan expelled the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) from its territory in September 1970, Kuwait briefly cut off all economic aid to Jordan. Although it subsequently resumed such assistance, this pragmatic policy won Kuwait a great deal of support among various Palestinian groups and helped to mollify the resentment toward Jordan then expressed by many Palestinians living in Kuwait.

BAHRAIN

The state of Bahrain consists of an archipelago of some thirty islands, located between Saudi Arabia and the Qatar peninsula. The largest

island, Bahrain (al-Bahrayn), is 48 kilometers (30 mi.) long and 15.5 kilometers (9.6 mi.) wide, and contains the capital, Manamah (population 90,000). The second largest island is Muharraq, which is nearby and accessible by a four-mile causeway. It contains the state's second largest town, also called Muharraq, and the international airport. The total land area of the emirate is about 662 square kilometers (ca. 256 sq. mi.) and the population is about 250,000.

Historical Background

In the mid-eighteenth century a branch of the Bani Utub tribe, which had settled Kuwait, moved to the northern tip of the Qatar peninsula and established a fishing and pearling ministate at Subarah. In 1782, the Al Khalifah and other families crossed over from Qatar to the nearby Bahrain archipelago, where they formed a ruling merchant oligarchy over the local oasis farmers, fishermen, pearl divers, and seafarers. The Al Khalifahs have remained the ruling family to this day. Initially, Persians contested Al Khalifah rule but had little choice but to acquiesce to the de facto state of affairs when Bahrain came under British protection in the early nineteenth century. The claim was reviewed periodically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and especially during the reign of the Pahlevi dynasty in Iran, which used the occasion to advance the claim once more in 1968 when the British announced their intention to withdraw by the end of 1971. In 1970, however, Iran acceded to the findings of a special UN fact-providing mission sent to Bahrain and formally recognized Bahrain's right to independence. This was granted in August of the following year.

The British exercised indirect control in Bahrain and the lower gulf shaykhdoms (the terms *shaykhdom* and *emirate* are synonymous) through political agents serving under a single British "Resident." From 1763 to 1946 these Residents had their headquarters in Bushire (Iran), after which the Residency was moved to Bahrain. Until they received independence in 1971, Bahrain, Qatar, and the seven Trucial States (now the UAE) all came under the purview of the Resident.

Political Environment

Population and Social Conditions

The population of Bahrain is primarily Arab, although a great many of the local inhabitants are of Persian descent. The proportion of natives to resident aliens is much greater than in the other gulf states like Kuwait

or the UAE. The vast majority of the population is Muslim—half Shi'ite and half Sunni. The Al Khalifahs and other Bani Utub families are Sunnis, whereas the older indigenous population has a large proportion of Shi'ites, many of whom have centuries-old ties to Iran. Persian is often spoken alongside other tongues in the markets, although Arabic is the official language.

Some Bahrainis with Iranian ties hail from the south Iranian coastal town of Lingeh, and are called Lingawis. Others, claiming to be the descendants of Arabian migrants to Persia who later returned to the southwest side of the gulf, are called *muhawwalahs*. Still others are Persians from the north, sometimes called Red Iranians.

By gulf standards, Bahrain has a sophisticated society, with one of the oldest oil industries in the gulf. Bahrain has an articulate labor force and in the past has experienced labor unrest, although no unions are permitted. The country is also noted for its intellectual tradition and boasts some of the region's leading poets, artists, and authors.

The Bahraini school system is over fifty years old, the oldest in the gulf. School attendance is compulsory for children between the ages of six and sixteen. This has made possible a highly technical work force of native Bahrainis. There are also free health and social services.

Economic Conditions

Once the center of the pearling industry in the gulf, Bahrain's pearl industry, like that of all the other emirates, suffered heavily from the introduction of Japanese cultured pearls several decades ago. The emirate's agricultural and fishing sectors have fared better; but future prospects for farming are bleak owing to heavy Bahraini and Saudi industrial use of the underground water (Bahrain and Saudi Arabia's Qatif Oasis are connected) that has lowered the water table. Excessive and unregulated exploitation of the region's marine biology resources, especially by the gulf's lucrative shrimping industry, could also threaten fishing.

Bahrain's present economy is oil-based. Petroleum production began in 1932—the operating company, Bahrain Petroleum Company (BAPCO) was originally owned by Standard Oil of California (SOCAL) and the Texas Company (TEXACO)—and has been declining for some years. Nowadays 85 percent of the production at BAPCO's refinery on Bahrain is based on Saudi crude, which arrives through an underwater pipeline.

The emirate has also been and remains a leading entrepôt center. The overall volume of trade passing through the archipelago has been enhanced by the new port, Mina Salman, and the new Bahrain International Airport, which is heavily used because of its central location in the gulf and on the route from Europe to the Far East and Australia. There is

also a successful aluminum smelter, Aluminum Bahrain, Ltd. (ALBA), which uses natural gas resources, and a large drydock under the Organization of Arab Oil Producing Countries (OAPEC) sponsorship known as the Arab Shipping and Repair Yard (ASRY). The emirate is also the headquarters of Gulf Air, the flag carrier of the Arab states of the lower gulf. Finally, the emirate has become the nucleus of a burgeoning offshore banking system that hosted more than forty foreign banks in the early 1980s.

Political Structure

Bahrain has developed a constitutional form of government that administers the emirate under the amir, a member of the Al Khalifah family. The constitution provides for separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government.

The first parliamentary elections were held in December 1973, shortly after the constitution had been ratified by popular referendum. The national assembly was composed of thirty elected and fourteen appointed cabinet members. Although the assembly had fewer powers than Kuwait's, its electorate was more widely based. The cabinet resigned in 1975 over the issue of alleged assembly interference in the administrative affairs of the government. The ruler, in response to the resignations, issued a decree that dissolved the legislature for an indeterminate time.

The executive branch of government has been headed by the prime minister. As of 1980, the prime minister was Shaykh Khalifah bin Salman Al Khalifah, the brother of the ruler. Shaykh Khalifah, who has held that position since 1973, is charged with managing the fifteen-member cabinet. Since the adjournment of the legislature, the cabinet has performed both legislative as well as executive functions. The ruler, Shaykh Isa bin Salman Al Khalifah, is advised by the cabinet but has long been personally active in tending to the day-to-day affairs of state. He is also assisted by other members of the ruling family, who hold most of the eight important cabinet portfolios. The heir apparent, Shaykh Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifah, Shaykh Isa's son, holds the post of minister of defense.

The Bahraini legal system is based on Western civil law and Islamic (Shari'a) law. The Shari'a court system accommodates the religious divisions within Bahraini society by establishing separate courts for Sunni and Shi'a sects. The amir has final power of review and pardon. The civil court system is organized much the same as the Shari'a system, i.e., there are courts of first instance, courts of appeal, and a supreme court (high court of appeal). The supreme court not only hears appeals from lower courts but also rules on the constitutionality of laws and decrees.

Political parties are not permitted in Bahrain, although the loosely organized "Popular Bloc" of the left won ten seats in the first elections to the national assembly. In addition, there is a radical subversive group of long standing known as the Bahrain National Liberation Front, but it has never been recognized by the government.

Political Dynamics

The ruling family wields the preponderance of influence within the Bahraini power structure despite the constitutional form of government. This pattern has at times enhanced and on occasion endangered the political stability of a country in which relatively sophisticated labor and leftist intellectual groups exist. Such groups have provided an impetus for a great many of the political and social reforms implemented by the government but have also spearheaded much of the emirate's labor unrest over the years. The leftist reform movement, now more than three decades old, suffered a serious setback when the national assembly was dissolved. As a consequence, the ruling family has relied increasingly on the security forces to maintain its internal security.

The merchant community has generally been content to adopt a position of political neutrality so long as their commercial interests did not appear to be threatened. For example, despite the fairly large electoral base at the time of the 1973 elections, the merchants were not widely represented nor did they apparently care to be.

The Bahraini armed forces, consisting of about fifteen hundred men, and a public security force of roughly the same size, are headed by the amir. Both contingents have been loyal to the government. The public security forces are charged with maintaining internal order, a problem that periodically has plagued Bahrain more than any other emirate in the gulf. These forces are primarily responsible for controlling demonstrations and collecting intelligence on radical individuals and groups within Bahrain.

Foreign Policy

In keeping with its status as a small, militarily weak state, Bahrain has taken care to remain on good terms with its immediate neighbors. In general, the nature and orientation of the emirate's external policies are conservative, pro-Arab and, though not without reservations on specific issues, pro-Western. In regional matters, it generally follows the lead of Saudi Arabia. Like the latter country, and indeed like all the emirates of eastern Arabia, it also has close ties with the West. Until independence in 1971, the British maintained a naval base at Jufair (near Manamah). The

United States, which since 1949 had rented space from the British to establish a headquarters for its Middle East Force (MIDEASTFOR), leased much of the former British facility directly from Bahrain from 1971 to 1977.

The Bahraini government was generally pleased to have the U.S. facility as an overt, official symbol of U.S. support for the regime. At the same time, a growing number of Bahraini officials began to view the U.S. presence as potential liability in terms of the opposition it could engender from local and regional radical groups. Primarily for this reason, Bahrain decided to terminate the lease. Since 1977, MIDEASTFOR has ceased to use Jufair as its home port, although the U.S. admiral who commands MIDEASTFOR's flagship still makes his residence there when he is not at sea, and MIDEASTFOR ships continue to make frequent use of the local facilities.

QATAR

The state of Qatar is situated on a peninsula that extends for about 170 kilometers (ca. 106 mi.) north from Arabia into the Persian Gulf. The emirate's territory encompasses approximately 10,360 square kilometers (ca. 4,000 sq. mi.), and of its population of 170,000 more than 130,000 live in the capital at Doha on the eastern coast. The peninsula is low lying and consists largely of sandy or stony desert.

Historical Background

Like Bahrain and the United Arab Emirates, Qatar was under British protection until independence in 1971. The protective status was based on treaties signed in 1869, 1913, and 1916. Apart from its having been admitted into the Arab League, OAPEC, OPEC, and the United Nations, the principal political development since independence was a nonviolent palace coup in 1972. On that occasion, Shaykh Khalifah ibn Hamad al-Thani, long known as one of the most forceful and development-oriented personalities in the gulf, ousted his cousin, Shaykh Ahmad.

Political Environment

Population and Social Conditions

Prior to the production of oil in 1949, the population of Qatar was one of the poorest of any in eastern Arabia. The great majority of the inhabitants lived at subsistence level with most of their income derived

from fishing and pearling. Most of the indigenous population is Arab, and a large percentage of this group are *muhawwalah* Arabs with ties of varying strength and duration to their kinfolk along the south Iranian coast. The Arabs of Qatar are largely Sunni Muslims and generally subscribe to the fundamentalist teachings of the same Hanbali school of Islamic jurisprudence as practiced in Saudi Arabia.

There is also a large foreign population of Iranians, Pakistanis, Indians, and Palestinians. The Iranians comprise the majority of the small merchant class while many Indians and Pakistanis are employed as manual laborers, artisans, and clerical staff in local banks and businesses. The Palestinian population occupies the lower and middle levels of the bureaucracy and equivalent white-collar positions in the private sector.

Prior to the discovery and export of petroleum three decades ago, Qatar was devoid of even the remotest semblance of a modern school system, hospitals, clinics, piped water, electricity, and many other government services. Nowadays, however, all of the emirate's primary school teachers are Qataris and the first of what will ultimately be several faculties of the new Gulf University has been opened in Doha. Moreover, whereas in the past most of the local population was bedouin or nomadic, the majority for some years now has been urban and settled.

Economic Conditions

Petroleum production and export, together with the leadership of reform-oriented members within the ruling family, have been responsible for much of the dramatic transformation that has taken place in the country's social and economic life. In 1975, both major oil producers, Qatar Petroleum Company and Shell Oil of Qatar, were nationalized by the government. The emirate's extensive reserves of natural gas have much potential, and a plant has been built at Umm Sa'id (south of Doha) to utilize this resource, with a pipeline paralleling the oil pipeline from the fields at Dukhan on the opposite side of the peninsula. With petroleum providing the emirate's principal export, and nearly everything required beyond basic foodstuffs being imported, the government has been the source of considerable investment in economic infrastructure. The capital city is serviced by paved roads linking Qatar to its neighbors; a new international airport has been built as well as a modern port that is to be expanded.

Qatar is attempting to modernize and diversify its economy as rapidly and efficiently as possible in order to lessen its dependence on oil production. In 1973, it began to manufacture fertilizer. The country has also built a cement plant and flour mills and has expanded its shrinking industry.

Political Structure

In 1970, a year before it achieved independence, Qatar became the first of the lower gulf states to promulgate a written constitution. The constitution provided for a council of ministers and an advisory council, and stipulated that the former be appointed by the ruler and the majority of the latter were to be elected by the general population. A decade later, elections had not been held and there was little indication when the event itself might occur. The council of ministers (or cabinet) is led by the prime minister, who is theoretically appointed by the ruler, although in practice, the ruler himself has served in the post. The cabinet is responsible for proposing laws that must be submitted to the ruler for ratification and is also technically accountable for supervising the state bureaucracy and the financial affairs of the emirate.

The advisory council, finally established in 1972 after the coup, consisted exclusively of members appointed by the ruler. The council, although designed to represent major social and economic interest groups in Qatar, has little more than recommendatory authority and, by itself, is not empowered to initiate legislation.

In keeping with the time-honored practice of legitimizing leadership in eastern Arabia, the ruler is selected by a careful process of consensus within the family dynasty and, like his predecessors since time immemorial, may and indeed can be expected to be replaced by the same process. He is charged with ratifying all laws, commanding the armed forces, appointing governmental officials, and conducting foreign affairs. The constitution also calls upon the amir to select a deputy ruler, who, depending on the consensus of the family at the time the choice is made, may or may not be also designated as heir apparent.

The judicial system includes five secular courts and religious courts. A court of appeals exists, but the function of a supreme court is vested in the ruler, who has the power to reduce or waive penalties.

Finally, although Qatar is a unitary state, progress has been made toward decentralizing the administration. Nevertheless, because the majority of the population lives in Doha, the government has met with only limited success in its efforts to expand the allocation of political authority among the emirate's component political units.

Political Dynamics

The al-Thani constitute the largest ruling family in the region, numbering in the thousands. To a considerably greater extent than any of its counterparts elsewhere in the region, it has traditionally dominated most of the important functions of government. The primary constraints on

the ruler are Islamic law and the influence of what is undoubtedly the most conservative religious establishment of any of the emirates. The al-Thani, although close-knit and secretive like all the other dynasties in the area, harbor within their midst a great many factions and rivalries based on different personalities and genuine disagreements over what, among various options, should be the most efficacious approach to the emirate's development.

The family holds ten of the fifteen cabinet portfolios including all of the vital ones, such as interior, defense, finance, and foreign affairs. Shaykh Khalifah ibn Hamad al-Thani has maintained close control over the country's affairs while granting to select members of the family a sufficient number of governmental positions to assuage their political ambitions. In much the same way as his counterpart in the ruling family of Saudi Arabia, Shaykh Khalifah is strongly anticommunist and maintains an ongoing vigilance on potential subversion within his borders.

The merchant class has traditionally exerted less influence on government affairs than its larger and older counterparts in Kuwait, Bahrain, Dubai, or Oman. The power of the merchants is primarily exerted on the commercial aspects of the emirate's developmental projects. However, as oil revenues accumulate and as many members of the ruling family have become more interested and involved in business themselves, the traditional separation of al-Thani-dominated government and merchant class-dominated business has begun to disintegrate. The dynasty and the business community, by symbiotic process, have increased their cooperation and collaboration in a great many areas pertaining to the emirate's economic growth.

Foreign Policy

The emirate's foreign policy has been consistently conservative, pro-Arab and pro-Western in the process of being, above all, dedicated to the pursuit of Qatari national interests. The focus of its policy has been primarily on gulf affairs with the exception of its broader oil interests. On many external policy matters, Qatar has been prone to follow the lead of Saudi Arabia while trying to maintain friendly relations with Iran, with respect to which it shares a maritime border that lies astride potential reserves of significant energy resources, and whose nationals constitute a substantial proportion of the overall population of the emirate. The continuation of traditional forms of rule in the gulf area is of no less concern to Qatar's dynasty than it is to other ruling households in the region, and for this reason, if no other, Qatar has sought to remain on friendly terms with all the littoral states of the gulf.

Qatar has managed to maintain remarkably good relations with most other Arab states. Although it has consistently supported the Arab cause on the Palestinian issue, Qatar fully realizes, as does its neighbors, the threat to its own interests from the radical proclivities of various elements within the Palestine liberation movement. Qatar has also been generous with financial aid, in keeping with the traditional Arabian ethos of those with bountiful resources feeling an obligation to extend a helping hand to their less fortunate neighbors. Foreign aid programs are also a means of maintaining good relations with possible domestic and Arab critics.

On oil matters, Qatar is an active member of both OPEC and OAPEC. Considered a moderate in contrast with some of the more militant OPEC members, the emirate has nevertheless pursued a considerably more activist role on oil price rises than either its Saudi or UAE neighbors.

UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Historical Background

In 1820, in an attempt to protect maritime trading routes from privateers operating from ports along the lower gulf, Great Britain devised and in rapid succession imposed by force on the littoral emirates the first of what were to become a series of truces designed to put an end to what had previously been practically incessant naval warfare. As a result, the area, formerly known as the Pirate Coast, became known in time as the Trucial Coast and the seven small principalities that dotted its shores as the Trucial States.

The international status of these principalities as British-protected states continued until 1971, when Great Britain terminated its special treaty relationships with Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States. For the previous three years, following the announcement of its intention to withdraw from the gulf, Britain tried to create a federation that would have included all seven of the Trucial States plus Qatar and Bahrain. Until 1970, Iran's territorial claim over Bahrain prohibited these efforts from being realized. Thereafter, Bahrain took the initiative and lobbied for representation in the new federation in accordance with population (it had the largest number of inhabitants). When refused, it elected to withdraw. Qatar, which not only contested Bahrain's drive to dominate the new state politically but also remained in conflict with Bahrain over the latter's claim to both the Hawar Islands and the village site of Zubarah on the Qatar peninsula, then also decided to withdraw, leaving only the Trucial States to form the new UAE. On December 1, 1971, Abu

Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaywayn, and Fujayrah joined the union. Ras al-Khaymah joined in early 1972.

At the outset, the UAE faced numerous difficulties. Abu Dhabi had an unresolved dispute with Saudi Arabia and Oman over the Buraymi Oasis, which lay in the eastern region of the emirate. There were, moreover, strong traditional rivalries among the rulers, which served to dampen an otherwise more favorable atmosphere conducive to achieving a measure of functional integration among the member states. Finally, on the eve of independence, Iran, resurrecting a claim to the Greater and Lesser Tunbs islands claimed by Ras al-Khaymah, and Abu Musa, which was claimed by Sharjah, occupied all three islands. Iran's occupation of Abu Musa was in accordance with an eleventh-hour agreement arrived at between the shah and the ruler of Sharjah but no such understanding had been reached with Ras al-Khaymah regarding the Tunbs. As a result, Ras al-Khaymah's troops forcibly resisted the Iranian invasion and there was loss of life on both sides. The islands problem contributed directly to a coup attempt in February 1972 that cost the life of the ruler of Sharjah. Another long-standing territorial dispute involved a number of villages in the Buraymi Oasis region, which were claimed by Saudi Arabia. In 1974, an agreement between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia ended this long-standing dispute and paved the way for the establishment of Saudi-UAE diplomatic relations.

Political Environment

Population and Social Conditions

The UAE is a federation of seven emirates extending for some 1,200 kilometers (746 mi.) along the southern coast of the Persian Gulf and another 250 kilometers (155 mi.) on the Gulf of Oman. Consisting of approximately 83,650 square kilometers (32,300 sq. mi.), the country has a population of nearly three quarters of a million. Abu Dhabi is almost as large as the rest of the shaykhdoms combined and contains more than half the total population. Six of the emirates—Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm al-Qaywayn, and Ras al-Khaymah—have territory on the Persian (Arabian) Gulf, with Sharjah having additional, noncontiguous territory along the coast of the Gulf of Oman. Only Fujayrah is located wholly in the latter portion of the federation.

The indigenous inhabitants account for only about one-quarter to one-third of the union's total population. The UAE citizenry is in many ways similar to its counterparts in other countries, which, like it, are caught up

in the throes of administrative, social, and economic modernization. Basically tribal and familial in terms of social organization, the native population ranges from an ever-dwindling number of bedouins, who remain basically illiterate and traditional in outlook, to a largely Western-educated, and well-traveled elite.

One of the most distinguishing characteristics of the various shaykhdoms is not so much geography as tribal affiliation. Six principal tribal groups inhabit the country: the Bani Yas, a confederation of nearly a dozen different tribes, two branches of which (the Al Bu Falah and the Al Bu Falasah, respectively) provide the ruling families of Abu Dhabi and Dubai; the Manasir (singular: Mansuri), who range from the western reaches of the UAE to Saudi Arabia and Qatar; the Qawasim (singular: Qasimi); the Al Bu Ali in Umm al-Qaywayn; the Sharqiyin in Fujayrah; and the Nu'aym in Ajman. All the native tribes are Arab and Sunni Muslims. In the nineteenth century, many of them espoused the teachings of the Wahhabi revival that spread from Saudi Arabia.

Of all the tribal groupings, those that can still be classified as bedouins comprise no more than 15 percent of the local population. They usually live around oases and for some years now have been migrating to and settling in urban areas. Numerous UAE citizens of bedouin stock are to be found in the police and military forces, upon whose loyalty the government heavily depends.

A highly sophisticated merchant class has developed, particularly in Dubai. It has maintained and, where possible, expanded, what for several decades now has been a rather extensive trading relationship with Iran and the Indian subcontinent. Most of the merchant families are Sunni Arabs, but allied with them are a substantial number of Persians and Indians who have been resident in the lower gulf for generations. For much of the period following World War II and prior to the emergence of oil as the dominant factor in the region's economies, among the most colorful merchants were those "free traders" in gold and other luxury items whose picturesque dhows concealed powerful engines capable of outrunning curious coast guard vessels of half a dozen countries.

The period of the 1960s and 1970s brought a new kind of entrepreneur: Western contractors and bankers who have played an important role in the oil-revenue-financed development boom. Because of the long-standing ties between the emirates and Great Britain, UK firms have remained in an especially strong position. In addition to Europeans, thousands of Indians, Pakistanis, Persians, Baluchis, and third-country Arabs have flocked to the gulf as clerks, accountants, and manual laborers.

Economic Conditions

Before the discovery of oil in Abu Dhabi in 1958, only Dubai and Sharjah had developed an extensive entrepôt trade. The oft-reported rivalry between these two shaykhdoms stems in part from the fact that Dubai began to eclipse Sharjah both politically and commercially when Sharjah's harbor began to silt up in the 1940s. The conditions for perpetuating the former's economic edge over the latter were practically assured in the 1950s, when Dubai succeeded in dredging its own estuary or "creek" as they are called locally.

Abu Dhabi Town, by contrast, was situated on an island and was little more than a mud-brick village prior to the petroleum discovery. Today, however, it is a major city, by far the most advanced in terms of administrative and social welfare services of any in the UAE. Dubai and Sharjah, which possess oil in lesser amounts than Abu Dhabi, have also undertaken extensive development projects. The contrast between these three affluent shaykhdoms and the other four remains substantial, although the gap has been lessened somewhat in recent years by the fact that the federal government, using largely Abu Dhabi money, has funded numerous development projects in the poorer states. The abundance of new income, the lack, to date, of a strong, centralized planning authority with power to veto or modify individual emirate developmental ventures, and, more importantly, the continuation of intense competition among the various rulers for prestige and preeminence in the area, inevitably have resulted in the duplication of many facilities, such as "international" airports and harbors in Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, and Ras al-Khaymah.

Dubai, because of its long-standing position as the major trading center of the lower gulf, and the commitment of its ruler to developing the maritime sector of its economy, has by far the largest port facilities in the region. Attempts have been made to diversify the economies of the individual emirates in order to lessen their dependence on the petroleum industry. Toward this end, a huge drydock is under construction in Dubai, an aluminum plant has been proposed, several cement plants have been constructed, tourism is encouraged, the local fishing industry has been modernized and expanded, and agricultural improvements and experimentation continues to be encouraged in Abu Dhabi and Ras al-Khaymah. In addition, ongoing consideration is given to the establishment of various kinds of light to intermediate industries, for which the principal energy source would be gas that has traditionally been flared.

Political Structure

The UAE's provisional constitution, which dates from 1971, provides for federal legislative, executive, and judicial bodies. The legislature, called the Federal National Council (FNC), is, in reality and in keeping with the norms of traditional tribal and Islamic rule in this part of Arabia, more nearly akin to a consultative assembly. The FNC is composed of forty members nominated by the president and approved by the rulers of the seven member states who constitute the Federal Supreme Council. In accordance with the relative size of their constituent populations, eight of the seats are apportioned to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, respectively; six each to Ras al-Khaymah and Sharjah; and four each to the remaining three members. The FNC's duties are limited mainly to its discussion and approval of the budget, its authority to draft legislation to be presented for action by the Council of Ministers, and, of no small significance owing to the absence of political parties, trade unions, and various other kinds of voluntary associations familiar to Westerners, to its role as forum for discussion and debate of policies and programs under consideration by the government.

The Council of Ministers was composed of twenty-six ministers in early 1980. Although together with the Federal Supreme Council (FSC) and the presidency it forms a key part of the executive branch, two of its primary responsibilities are to draft laws and to act as a legislative body when the FNC is not in session.

The greatest concentration of authority within the federal structure is in the FSC. The seven-member council is charged with formulating and supervising all federal policies, ratifying UAE laws, approving the union's annual budget, ratifying international treaties, and approving the prime minister, the president and the members of the supreme court. In procedural matters, a simple majority vote is sufficient for passage of any resolution. However, in substantive concerns, Abu Dhabi and Dubai have a veto power. Thus, on any substantive vote, five members, including the two veto powers, must approve a resolution in order for the motion to have the force of law. This constitutional allocation of a preponderance of political power to Abu Dhabi and Dubai has been a major point of contention among most of the other emirates.

Since independence, Shaykh Zayid of Abu Dhabi has been president of the UAE, a post to which he was reappointed for a second five-year term in 1976. Shaykh Rashid of Dubai has been the union's vice-president for the same period of time and, in 1979, became its prime minister as well. Although the powers of the presidency are in theory subordinate to the

FSC, Shaykh Zayid has been relatively successful in keeping together what has become in this century the Arab world's foremost example of regional political integration. This has been due in part to Abu Dhabi's preeminence as the most profederation state in the union and Zayid's own strong personal dedication to the UAE's development. Many of the federation's operations are almost completely funded by Abu Dhabi.

Foreign policy decision making is vested in the federal executive branch. However, although articles 120 and 121 of the constitution stipulate that foreign affairs decisions are the responsibility of the union, article 123 states that the individual shaykhdoms may conclude limited agreements concerning local matters, as, for example, in the granting of concessions—including the right to explore for, produce, refine, and export oil—to foreign economic interests. Thus, to some extent, the individual shaykhdoms have considerable latitude and power in the conduct of foreign affairs.

A federal judicial system established by the constitution has both a supreme and lower court. The judges are appointed by the president with the approval of the FSC. To date, however, the function of administering and applying UAE laws through the union's court procedures has remained one of the least developed of UAE government activities owing to the scarcity of local citizens who have received legal training and to the as yet relatively small accumulation of a body of federal laws that the courts might apply.

Consequently, the bulk of cases submitted for adjudication in the UAE are dealt with by the lower courts in each of the shaykhdoms.

The powers reserved to the shaykhdoms, as stated in article 122, imply that the individual emirates remain responsible for all matters that do not fall under the domain of the federal authorities. Additionally, the emirates retain a few expressed powers.

Political Dynamics

Since the inception of the federation, the strongest cohesive force within it has been Shaykh Zayid of Abu Dhabi followed by Shaykh Sultan of Sharjah. Shaykh Rashid of Dubai has always been in a position to play a role in federal affairs. However, in the eyes of his critics he did not seriously begin to perform such a function until he accepted the post of prime minister, having previously concentrated most of his attention and energies on Dubai.

Within the shaykhdoms, politics traditionally have been tribally based and autocratic, even if tempered by such age-old concepts as social

democracy, consultation, consensus, and adherence to the principles and norms as enshrined in Islamic law. The ruler, or shaykh, is usually the oldest son of the immediately preceding ruler, although there are instances where his uncle, a brother, a nephew, or a cousin has been the one to accede to power. To remain in power, the shaykh must maintain the support of the inner circles of the ruling family and numerous other groups (e.g., religious leaders, merchants, et al.) within the emirate.

The past history of internal politics of the ruling families has been replete with intrigue and jockeying among real and potential contenders for the limited number of positions of official power. Prior to the establishment of the UAE, numerous local rulers were assassinated, in many cases by their brothers, cousins, or sons. As recently as 1966, a palace coup in Abu Dhabi brought a new ruler to power; and in February 1972, the UAE's Minister of Education, Shaykh Sultan bin Muhammad al-Qassimi, of Sharjah, assumed the rulership in his home emirate following the abortive palace coup in which his predecessor was murdered.

Popular participation in local government along lines or in accordance with organizational forms familiar to Westerners is limited. In the early 1980s there were no trade unions, political parties, or popularly elected bodies through which local demands could be articulated. Neither was there, again as defined by Western standards, the existence of a free press. Political power continued to be maintained and effectively wielded at the top by cousins, sons, brothers, and uncles of semihereditary tribal rulers although an increasing number of foreign-trained technocrats were to be found in such sensitive areas as national defense, internal security, foreign relations, developmental planning, and communications.

Delegation of responsibility between the federal and local level, like that in the United States for decades after its establishment, is not in every instance as well defined as modern practitioners of public administration would prefer. Theoretically, the federal government has control over defense, finance, and foreign affairs. In practice, however, the dual capacity exercised by the rulers as both members of the federal government and rulers of member states, yields additional opportunities for control to the various shaykhdoms. The integration of the shaykhdoms into a federation, therefore, has been no simple or easy task and, for the reasons delineated herein, remains a challenge fraught with myriad difficulties for the members of UAE officialdom.

In 1976, continued dissension among the various members of the federation prompted a crisis when Shaykh Zayid refused election for another five-year term as president unless fundamental changes were

made. After considerable negotiation and accommodation, he finally changed his stand, was reelected, and the temporary constitution was extended for five more years.

Undoubtedly one of the most important steps taken toward integration occurred in May 1976, when all external and internal military forces were united and placed under the single command of the Union Defense Force. Previously there had been a separate and independent army for nearly every emirate, plus the union force. Although constitutional in formulation each emirate competed to have its local contingent form an important component of the larger and more modern military force. Abu Dhabi's oil revenues—at more than \$5 billion annually, somewhat prodigious in comparison with the income of the other emirates—gave Shaykh Zayid an obvious advantage in pressing for unification of the UAE's armies. Even so, as with most administrative reforms, total integration of the military was evidenced sooner on paper than in practice into the 1980s. The logic behind the process, however, remained unassailable: its major internal task of preventing or pacifying local, tribal disputes would have remained an infinitely more difficult task had the armed forces themselves, as had been the case for the first four years of the union's existence, remained organized along tribal lines.

Foreign Policy

Conduct of UAE commercial and economic relations is shared by the federal government and the member shaykhdoms. One fact of cardinal importance in terms of the outside world's interest in the UAE cannot be overstressed: namely, that the economy of Abu Dhabi is predominant among the concerns of foreign investors and exporters who would seek to increase their share of the UAE's two most important exports—petroleum and capital. Abu Dhabi ranks second, after Saudi Arabia, in terms of exports from the oil-producing states of the Arabian peninsula to the United States. In financial terms, it is the sole member of the UAE, and along with Kuwait and Saudi Arabia one of only three states in the entire Arab and OPEC world, which produced annually a capital surplus during the latter half of the 1970s.

In its external political relations, the UAE is conservative, anticommunist and strives to maintain friendly relations with all its neighbors. In addition to being a fervent supporter of the Palestinians' right to self-determination as a *sine qua non* for bringing an end to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the UAE has also contributed funds plus a battalion of troops to the Arab Defense Force in Lebanon. Because the occasional divergences between Arab and Iranian nationalist aspirations (such as the Abu Musa

and Tunbs islands dispute) have been an element in UAE issues, maintaining a balance between Iran and Saudi Arabia has been a major goal of UAE foreign relations. UAE President Shaykh Zayid has long enjoyed an almost fabled reputation as a skilled mediator in inter-Arab affairs. More than any other head of state in the Arabian peninsula he has succeeded in delineating successfully nearly all of his emirate's internal and international frontiers.

OMAN

Historical Background

Oman has a proud history dating back many centuries. It has maintained its independence since the expulsion of Portuguese garrisons from its coastal towns in the seventeenth century. A Persian occupation in the mid-eighteenth century was ended under the leadership of Ahmad bin Sa'id Al Bu Sa'id, who was subsequently elected imam. The imamate was a combination of religious and political leadership uniquely developed by the Ibadi Muslims of Oman. The Ibadi are part of the Kharijite schism, dating from the earliest days of Islam, and broke with the main body of Muslims over their insistence that the caliph should not be determined in accordance with genealogical considerations but be elected on the basis of merit. Ahmad's successors, however, abandoned this procedure and, in time, became purely secular rulers with the title of sultan. This development created a political schism between the coastal areas administered from Muscat and the more conservative interior ruled by the imam. The sultans in Muscat, as a security measure, developed a close association with Great Britain that has continued to the present. Assisted by British forces, the country was reunified during the 1950s after the military defeat of the imam of Oman at his interior stronghold, Nizwa. Unification was completed under sultan Qabus, who in a nearly bloodless coup d'etat in 1970 replaced his father, Sa'id bin Taymur (ruler since 1932), and changed the name of the country from the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman to, simply, the Sultanate of Oman.

The southernmost province of Dhufar, annexed in the late nineteenth century after years of quasi-autonomous existence, became the site of another insurrection in the early 1960s. By 1968, leadership of the rebellion had been seized by the Marxist-oriented Popular Front for the Liberation of the Occupied Arabian Gulf (PFLOAG), the same group that subsequently changed its name, first to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf (also PFLOAG) in 1971, and, in 1974, to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman (PFLO). Sup-

ported by Soviet and Chinese aid channeled through South Yemen, the PFLO had occupied large areas of the province by the early 1970s. Ideological affinity existed with South Yemen. Both had espoused the radical doctrines of the Arab Nationalists Movement, whose leaders also included George Habbash of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine. The rebellion was finally put down in late 1975 through the combined efforts of mainly British advisors and Iranian combat troops. Under Sultan Qabus the heretofore isolated country has been opened to the outside world on a scale unprecedented in its history while the government has simultaneously embarked on an equally unprecedented ambitious program of socioeconomic development. For the first time, an impressive array of modern government services has been extended to even the most remote regions of the interior of the country.

Political Environment

Located on the eastern reaches of the Arabian peninsula, the Sultanate of Oman is a country of some 212,000 square kilometers (82,000 sq. mi.). The estimated population is around 550,000. The capital, Muscat, has a population of 20,000 and is neighbored by the somewhat larger commercial center of Matrah. The largest single town is Salalah, capital of the southern province of Dhufar. This province consists of three ranges of low mountains surrounding a small coastal plain and is separated from the rest of Oman by several hundred miles of desert. Oman proper consists of inner Oman and the coastal plain known as the Batinah. Inner Oman contains a fertile plateau and the oldest towns in Oman, including the religious center of Nizwa. Separating this region from the Batinah is the Hajar mountain range, which stretches in an arc from northwest to southeast and reaches nearly 3,000 meters (9,800 ft.) at Jabal al-Akhdar (Green Mountain). The majority of Oman's population is found along the Batinah coast, which has the greatest agricultural potential in the country. An important fishing center and traditional port is at Sur, southeast of Muscat.

Population and Social Structure

Most Omanis are Arab, although many Baluchis who were originally from the coastal area of Iran and Pakistan live along the Batinah coast. Many of the merchants of the capital region and the coast are Indians, either Hindu or Khoja (a community of Shi'ite Muslims). There are also Persians and other groups of Shi'ite Muslims, including some originally from either Iran or Iraq. Dhufar and the surrounding desert is the home of several peoples whose primary language is South Arabian. In the

Musandam peninsula to the north, █████ Shihuh tribesmen, legendary descendants of the Biblical Shuhites, speak their own language. In recent years, Oman has experienced an influx of migrant labor, principally from other Arab states and the subcontinent.

With the change in government in 1970, Oman entered a new era. The accumulation of oil revenues over several years of production (exports began in 1967) was quickly put to work in an effort to modernize the country. Within a few years, the number of schools increased from three to sixty-eight and the number of government employees from several hundred to over nine thousand. Fortunately, the country was able to rely on the manpower and expertise of a number of Omanis who had migrated to Saudi Arabia and various gulf countries for work and education in the years prior to 1970. Another important source of manpower were the "Zanzibaris"—Arabs of Omani origin whose ancestors had migrated to the former Omani dominion of Zanzibar over the last two centuries. With the Africanization of Zanzibar, many of them returned to Oman.

Before 1970, the population was fairly evenly distributed throughout the country. With the rapid pace of development in the past few years, however, urbanization is beginning to occur, particularly in the capital area.

Economic Conditions

Oil is undoubtedly the most important natural resource. However, Omani production has been modest by gulf terms and it likely to decrease in the future unless further exploration by the major producer, Petroleum Development (Oman) Limited, and other concessionary firms is successful. The limited water supply in most areas prevents wide-scale agriculture. Traditionally, Omani cultivation has been of a subsistence nature, with the only significant cash crops being dates and limes. In Dhufar, where monsoon rains fall, coconuts are also grown.

Oman was known as an exporter of copper in prehistoric times and plans are underway to produce copper from a mountain valley in the north. Plans have also been laid for a natural gas pipeline paralleling the oil pipeline from the interior to the coast just north of Muscat. A cement plant and a number of import-substitution schemes are also planned to complement the traditional metalworking industry.

A new six-berth port is in operation at Matrah and a smaller port has been opened near Salalah in Dhufar. A number of major airlines make use of the new international airport at al-Sib (50 kilometers northwest of Muscat) and Gulf Air operates regular flights between al-Sib and Salalah. The government has embarked on a major program of road construction. All-weather routes now link Muscat to Dubai in the gulf and

to Nizwa in the interior. Radio and color television stations operate from both Muscat and Salalah.

Although government revenues reached approximately \$1 billion by 1975, the sultanate underwent a cash-flow crisis during this period, partially due to overcommitment on various development projects, and partially because of the heavy military and civilian pacification expenditure in Dhufar.

Political Structure

The sultan's father maintained a basically traditional, personalized rule. Modern political institutions in Oman are therefore new and still in a relatively embryonic stage. There is no constitution or modern judicial system and there are no political parties or elections. Islamic law is still the law of the land and is administered through traditional Islamic courts. Judges are appointed by the sultan. In the most remote regions, tribal law still functions in a rough-and-ready manner.

Final legal and administrative power in the country is vested in the sultan. Sultan Qabus is head of state and all authority emanates from him. Since coming to power, however, he has created a formal council of ministers to carry out the administrative and legislative operations of the government. The Council of Ministers is headed by the prime minister, who is appointed by the sultan. Although all important decisions must have the approval of the sultan, the ministers have a great deal of latitude in formulating day-to-day policy.

In 1976, the sultan reorganized regional and local government by establishing thirty-seven divisions (*wilayats*), one province, and a municipality of the capital. The *wilayats* are administered by governors appointed by the sultan, who collect taxes, provide local security, settle disputes, and advise the sultan. The province, Dhufar, was historically a separate sultanate and still has more local autonomy than other regions. The municipality of Muscat was also considered important enough to warrant special status.

Political Dynamics

There are four politically important groups in Oman: the royal family, the tribes, the expatriate advisors, and the merchant class. In many respects the royal family is still the most important group. Among the sultan's most influential advisors are his cousins and uncles. They occupy a number of key ministerial and gubernatorial posts. The importance of the royal family can be illustrated by the fact that Sultan Qabus mar-

ried the daughter of his uncle, Tariq bin Sa'id, and any male offspring from this marriage will most probably be named heir apparent.

Traditionally the tribes have also played a key role in the Omani political process. Under Qabus' father, Sultan Sa'id bin Taymur, manipulating tribal rivalries was a major element in ruling the country. Qabus, on the other hand, has made attempts to decrease the power of the tribes by decentralizing the government through political reforms such as the establishment of local government councils.

Because of long, close relations with Great Britain, many of the expatriate advisors are British. In the past, Britons held key posts in the government and especially in the military. Today they still direct and train the army, but Qabus has made moves to bring more Omanis and other expatriates into other governmental positions. The process of Omanization is accelerating as the Omani educational system turns out more qualified personnel. Nevertheless, for some time to come, Oman will have to rely on foreigners to assist in developing the country.

The merchant community has traditionally been the sultan's link to the outside world. In addition to old Omani trading families, there is still a sizeable number of non-Omani merchant families from India and Pakistan, reflecting Oman's traditionally stronger ties with the Indian Ocean countries. In recent years, however, there has been a more Westward orientation. Oman has participated in both Arab and world politics. It has strengthened ties with the Western industrial world to gain goods and services for Oman's development programs. As a result of oil revenues, many less-established Omanis are being induced to enter into commerce, a position once monopolized by the merchant families. This process is beginning to dilute the power of the traditional merchant families.

Foreign Policy

Prior to the reign of Sultan Qabus, Oman was one of the most isolated countries on earth. It relied on the British for protection and in return granted the British air and naval bases in Salalah and on the southern island of al-Masirah. Qabus altered the policy of isolation by both design and necessity. He was forced to seek outside support against the Dhufar insurgency, and he also moved to gain international and Arab acceptance of the Omani regime. On both counts he has been successful. By forging strong bonds with Iran, which sent three thousand troops to help in the suppression of the Dhufar rebellion, and by gaining the support of the conservative regimes of the Arab world, the sultanate neutralized the rebels' outside support. Iraq, one of the primary supporters of the rebels,

effectively stopped aiding the Dhufaris in 1975, in the wake of its treaty with Iran. Relations with South Yemen have remained hostile, even though its support of the Dhufar rebels ended with the collapse of the insurgency in late 1975.

Relations with the Arab world have centered on the conservative states. Improved relations with Saudi Arabia and other Arab countries were reflected in Arab acceptance of Oman into the Arab League in 1971. Oman has also maintained good relations with the West. In 1975, Sultan Qabus made an historic first state visit by an Omani monarch to the United States.

Bibliography

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