

# Imperial Outpost—Aden

*Its place in British Strategic Policy*

GILLIAN KING

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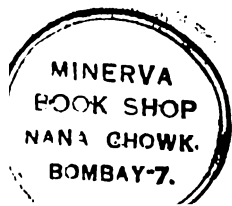
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IMPERIAL OUTPOST—ADEN



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# Imperial Outpost—Aden

ITS PLACE IN BRITISH  
STRATEGIC POLICY

BY  
GILLIAN KING

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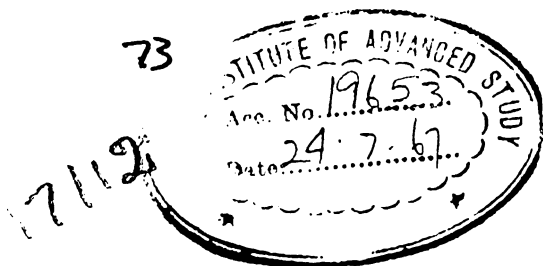


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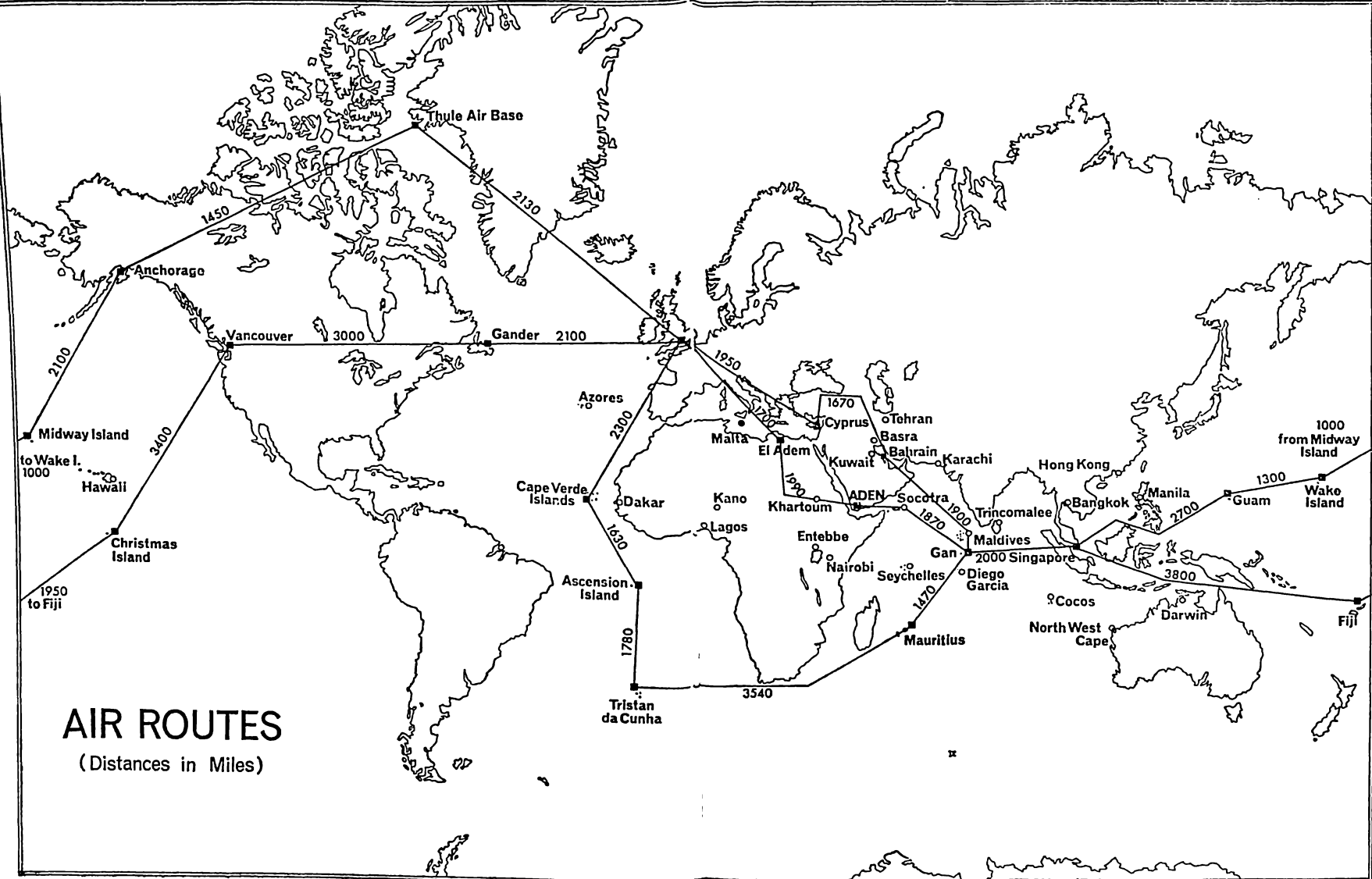


## Introduction

THE rapid shrinking of the British colonial empire to a fraction of its former size and the modification of British defence policy which this has entailed have combined to make Aden the obvious choice as one of the two remaining British bases east of Suez. However, if Aden is an obvious choice in the context of the old imperial defence system, it becomes less so when its useful life is estimated against the background of recent changes in the Arabian peninsula. Already various islands, such as Socotra, Diego Garcia, Mauritius, and the Seychelles, are being canvassed as possible alternatives to Aden (itself third in succession to Suez and Kenya) against the time when for political reasons the colony has become militarily untenable.

Political tension is, in fact, already mounting. As in other previously isolated and backward countries of the Arabian peninsula, the tide of Arab nationalist feeling has been flowing swiftly since the mid-1950's. British constitutional plans for the Colony, particularly the linking up of the Colony and some of the Arab States of the Protectorate in the Federation of South Arabia, have caused violent local repercussions. The resulting situation only serves to confirm the paradoxical conclusion that British policy on political development, here and elsewhere, has sown the seeds of its own destruction (as would indeed be true of any but the most tyrannical and unprogressive of colonial powers) with the introduction of democratic processes into the government of the territory.

Since September 1962, furthermore, the British position, already vigorously attacked in the Colony, has been weak-



**AIR ROUTES**  
(Distances in Miles)

Thule Air Base  
 Anchorage 1450  
 Vancouver 3000  
 Gander 2100  
 Midway Island 2100  
 to Wake I. 1000  
 Hawaii  
 Christmas Island 3400  
 1950 to Fiji  
 Cape Verde Islands 1630  
 Azores 2100  
 Malta  
 Cyprus 1670  
 Basra  
 Bahrain  
 Karachi  
 El Adem  
 Kuwait  
 ADEN  
 Socotra  
 Khartoum 1000  
 Entebbe  
 Nairobi  
 Seychelles  
 Mauritius 1470  
 Tristan da Cunha 1780  
 Ascension Island  
 Dakar  
 Kano  
 Lagos  
 ADEN  
 Socotra  
 Trincomalee 1200  
 Maldives  
 Diego Garcia  
 Cocos  
 North West Cape  
 Darwin  
 Fiji  
 Guam 1300  
 Wako Island 1000 from Midway Island  
 Manila  
 Bangkok 2700  
 Hong Kong  
 Singapore 2000  
 3800

ened by the Republican revolution in the Yemen, which despite its failure to gain complete control, has opened that country's doors, physically as well as ideologically, to the socialist Arab nationalism of President Nasser and the United Arab Republic. As a result the British base in Aden is in danger of being squeezed between the nationalists in the north and the disrupting influence of the local Adeni nationalists with their 80,000 Yemeni supporters. All of these, with the backing of the Egyptians, are aiming at an Arab union of the peoples of the south, necessarily at the expense of British sovereignty and control.

Militarily the British position can be maintained: politically the Federation is likely to function as long as a British presence remains to support it. Nevertheless, there are undoubted military difficulties inherent in trying to cling on to a base which at present depends upon a large Arab labour force, in face of strong and possibly violent opposition. It is therefore a legitimate question whether it is in the long-term British interest to maintain a sovereign base in Aden. How far is the United Kingdom prepared to go, or how far is it right or advisable that she should go, at the expense of local Arab goodwill and inevitably, as the United Nations becomes involved, in the teeth of world opinion, in order to safeguard her interests in the area by military means? Whether the present policies are working, and, if so, for how long they will continue to do so are questions with which this paper will be concerned.

## British Defence Policy in the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf

It is essential to distinguish between three possible roles of Aden: (1) as a base from which to conduct operations for the protection of the Persian Gulf States and their oil; (2) as part of the British contribution to the world-wide system of Western defence; (3) as a garrison to maintain order and security in the Colony and Protectorate themselves. The more important distinction, I hope to show, is between (1) and (2). Recent British defence-policy statements recognize a distinction only between (3) and the first two.

### **The basic objectives**

The basic objectives of United Kingdom defence policy are to maintain the security of the United Kingdom, to carry out any obligations to protect United Kingdom overseas territories and peoples to which the United Kingdom owes a special duty by treaty, and to contribute to the defence of the Western world. There is an underlying assumption that within this very broad framework, the United Kingdom has a special, and one might add jealously guarded, responsibility for the defence of the Indian Ocean and Persian Gulf.

### **The imperial tradition**

In part the United Kingdom role there is a legacy from the past, when the Royal Navy ruled the seas, when the

British Empire was in its heyday and the United Kingdom was therefore responsible for the government of many countries east of Suez, when the British controlled both ends of the Canal and kept more than half the British army in India. Aden was then a link in the chain of imperial colony fortresses, situated wherever British maritime traffic was sizeable, and reaching from Gibraltar, Malta, Cyprus, Suez, &c., to Singapore and Hong Kong. A chain by which it was believed the United Kingdom would be able more or less indefinitely to control her destiny because of the enormous power residing in the system of bases stretching round the world. The Royal Navy operated from these colony fortresses and acted both as a decisive striking force in any major war and as a 'fire brigade' force in any local disorder. The strength of the system lay in the imperial network of coaling stations, cable stations, and staging posts which dominated the world, especially along the chain of fortress colonies. Since the navy was essential to the system, once oil replaced coal as the fuel for the fleet the defence of the Persian Gulf became a strategic priority for the oil alone.

Between the wars the conversion of the old empire into a loose alliance of Dominions did nothing to disrupt the existing strategic network—indeed as air routes developed the base locations were often used as staging posts—and the United Kingdom was still left with the responsibility for the chain of bases. In 1939 the United Kingdom still possessed an extensive system of bases with a highly developed set of ideas about its potential role, and although the loss of certain of the bases in the Second World War lowered the amount of power visualized, this still did not change the fact that power was believed to repose innately in a chain of bases.

The fall of Singapore in 1942, from which Australian confidence in the United Kingdom's power in Far Eastern

waters has never recovered, finally exposed the decline of British influence in the Pacific area, which had remained unnoticed since the change of fleet ratios after the Washington Treaty of 1921. After 1945, however, the Americans were seen to have inherited the responsibility for its defence. In the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern areas the United Kingdom at first seemed to have emerged from the war with her former dominant role, based on military occupation and a system of alliances and military treaties, undiminished. A similar misjudgement occurred in the late 1940's, however, when despite the announcement that British forces were to be withdrawn from Greece, and despite the British withdrawal from Palestine, it was not immediately assumed that here too she was being forced to surrender her former role to the United States, which was now in fact constrained to assume the leadership of the Western world in the face of Soviet opposition.

The United Kingdom, however, still maintained her responsibility for the areas lying between the Mediterranean and the Far Eastern waters. Circumstances for the United Kingdom herself, and in the world around, no longer bore much resemblance to the old imperial days. The Empire had gone although the base network remained; with India's independence in 1947 the old British Indian Army, which had formed the strategic imperial reserve, ceased to exist. Other former imperial possessions dwindled, and British responsibility for their defence was greatly reduced, as was the degree of independent authority over strategic matters in areas where once the United Kingdom had acted alone, but now had to act jointly, or at least after consultation. The Royal Navy no longer claimed to rule the seas, the United Kingdom no longer controlled both ends of the Suez Canal, the use of certain military locations ended abruptly. Such resources as remained after the war were strained in an effort to fulfil

existing commitments, while further undertakings had been made to the Nato alliance and to the Western allies.

Egyptian resistance to the British base at Suez brought about the first acceptance by the military planners that the old imperial system could not be maintained in face of the rising and irrepressible political aspirations of former dependencies, and that in future facilities would have to be granted with the consent of the local power; they could no longer be demanded except in those territories which had not yet received their independence. This failure sooner to recognize the inevitability of national demands, or the hope that somehow the remaining colonial possessions would be isolated from the new ideas, has proved a costly error. The rules of international politics have changed out of all recognition in the last fifteen years, and it now seems inconceivable that it was only some ten years ago that the United Kingdom was still trying to maintain her forces in Egypt.

### **The redefinition of British policy**

As a result of the compulsion to withdraw altogether that followed the Suez disaster British defence policy was redefined in the 1957 Defence White Paper,<sup>1</sup> although the statement contained no reference to the incident. Great emphasis was however laid upon East Africa and the whole area east of Suez, and the paper declared that the United Kingdom would in future fulfil her colonial and international commitments in the Middle and Far East by means of a carrier group normally stationed in the Indian Ocean, to be reinforced by the air-transported central reserve, which was to be maintained in the United Kingdom and would be strengthened by the withdrawal of troops from the former colonial garrisons. At the same time, land,

<sup>1</sup> Cmnd. 124.

sea and air forces had to be maintained locally, the facilities in Kenya were, therefore, extensively developed, as if they too were to last for ever.

This was the first move in the strategic revolution from fixed bases to the more flexible airborne operations conducted from centrally held strategic reserves. The 1962 Defence White Paper<sup>2</sup>—entitled *The Next Five Years*—continued this development in its redefinition of British policy towards the Middle East, although by then the Kuwait expedition had provided ample illustration of the appalling difficulties inherent in the concept.

United Kingdom policy is based on the assumption that Persian Gulf oil, which no-one would deny is of vital strategic and commercial importance to the United Kingdom and many other countries in the Western world, must be protected at all costs, if necessary by force. The 1962 White Paper stated that the United Kingdom is, and will continue to remain, responsible for guaranteeing peace and stability in the oil-producing States of the Arabian Peninsula by means of military assistance to those States of the area to which the United Kingdom is bound by treaty, or which are under United Kingdom protection—this includes all the States of the eastern seaboard of the Arabian Peninsula including Kuwait. At the same time the United Kingdom has assumed the obligation under treaty to protect the Arab rulers of the Federation of South Arabia, and the other States of the Aden Protectorate, and has direct military responsibility for the defence of Aden. The United Kingdom is also, of course, a founder-member of Cento.

The then Minister of Defence, Mr Watkinson, described the means by which these objectives were to be carried out as 'in the long term a fundamental change in policy', since the concept was no longer one of far-flung pockets of United Kingdom forces distributed about the world, but

<sup>2</sup> Cmnd. 1639.



relied on three main bases—the United Kingdom, Aden, and Singapore—where United Kingdom forces would in future be concentrated and from which the troops could be dispersed where required by land, sea, and air. It is important, as the White Paper pointed out, to draw a distinction between a base and a garrison: ‘the military need for an overseas base . . . is determined by the time required to deploy forces and weapons where danger threatens’.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore a place where troops, ships, aircraft, heavy equipment, supplies, and facilities for maintenance and repair can be kept for military operations elsewhere. A garrison exists to help maintain local law and order.

Neither the 1963 or 1964 Defence White Papers<sup>4</sup> nor any government statement gives any reason to suppose that Conservative government policy on the defence of the Middle East has yet undergone any fundamental change.

### **The development of Aden as a base**

A garrison has long been maintained in Aden but the British defence effort in the Persian Gulf area only came to rely on a base there when it had become clear that Kenya would no longer be available after independence in December 1963.<sup>5</sup> The headquarters of Middle Eastern Command is now at Aden, a command area stretching from Kuwait and the Suez Canal in the north right down the African coast to the south. Some 8,000 men are now stationed in Aden, mainly army and air-force personnel. Khormaksar airport is currently the biggest and busiest RAF station in the world. It can accept any type of air-

<sup>3</sup> Cmnd. 1639, p. 4.

<sup>4</sup> Cmnd. 1936, and 2270.

<sup>5</sup> On 6 March 1964 Kenya agreed to grant the United Kingdom certain training facilities for the Army, overflying and staging rights for the RAF, and port maintenance facilities for the Royal Navy (*The Times*, 7 Mar. 1964).

craft, although parking facilities are limited; and the navy maintains a shore establishment of some 100 men, serving as the headquarters unit for an amphibious warfare squadron which is planned to supply the heavy equipment for the strategic reserve. Unfortunately, apart from bunkering, Aden lacks adequate port facilities from which the navy could maintain a task force. Therefore, until such time as political developments make it impossible, the United Kingdom Indian Ocean fleet is maintained from Singapore, whose admirable port and repair facilities compensate to some extent for its distance from the Persian Gulf area. Karachi could in fact provide similar facilities, but the granting of them could not be automatically assumed. Mines are so likely a hazard in Persian Gulf operations, since they are a relatively cheap and simple yet highly effective defence weapon, that minesweepers are kept at Aden in mothballs. Since minesweepers must precede the fleet, and by their very nature are slow and cumbersome ships, it would not be practicable to keep them at Singapore.

Considerable sums are still being spent in Aden to expand the existing stockpile of weapons and equipment, and to accommodate a theatre reserve of brigade strength when the facilities in Kenya have been terminated. A £3.5 million contract for building married quarters and army workshops was awarded in December 1962.<sup>6</sup> In March 1963 Mr Rippon, Minister of Public Buildings and Works, now responsible for all service spending overseas, announced when visiting Aden that his Ministry would be spending some £20 million there in the course of the next three years.<sup>7</sup> Such statements tend to confirm the impression that the pattern already followed in Palestine (where £2 million was spent on married quarters at Gaza

<sup>6</sup> *Guardian*, 12 Dec. 1962.

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 20 Mar. 1963.

in 1947), in Suez, in Cyprus,<sup>8</sup> and latterly in Kenya is to be repeated once more in Aden. It was only three years ago that Mr Watkinson, then Minister of Defence, when questioned during a visit to Kenya about service spending of some £2 million on army cantonments near Nairobi, replied that the rebuilding programme would continue as planned.

Political developments have once more forced the British Army to move on, but there seems to be no reason to believe that the same thing is not going to happen all over again, particularly in view of the political situation in Aden. (See below, pp. 64–73.) If it is granted that a British military presence is required in the Persian Gulf area, then it is relevant to inquire whether the military and colonial authorities have even yet faced the realities of Arab nationalism in general, and of local feeling in particular, when they continue to plan for the expansion of the Aden facilities. Secondly, in the light of future developments and of essential military requirements, one must also question whether British defence planning should depend, at the best, on second, third, or fourth choice facilities. The available sites are presumably selected in order of merit, and the process of accepting the next best thing each time local politics force this step will lead inevitably to accepting somewhere from which it is almost impossible to mount a militarily effective operation. While this absurd situation has not been reached with Aden, it is worth recalling that six years ago, despite the need for troops operating in the Persian Gulf to be acclimatized (see below, pp. 15–16), military opinion considered the climate too disagreeable for stationing men other than those required to maintain the army stockpile. This would indeed be the case with Soc-

<sup>8</sup> On 19 February 1964 Mr Thorneycroft said, in answer to a question in the House of Commons, that about £200 million had been spent in Cyprus between 1952 and 1963.

tra, however (which many suggest as a possible alternative after Aden,) since the monsoons render the island unusable for certain months of the year.

Aden itself has many disadvantages apart from its lack of harbour facilities. If the technical military evidence available after the Kuwait expedition, particularly the medical conclusions on acclimatization, were generally accepted or even publicly admitted, there might be second thoughts not only about the type of response needed if a similar threat were made, but also about the role planned for the base at Aden. A Kuwait-type situation is the present Government's justification for much of current British defence policy, from the retention of a British independent nuclear deterrent to the build-up of British forces in Aden. Kuwait has often been quoted as the sort of emergency where the United Kingdom might be forced to act alone—for example, when Mr Macmillan returned from his talks with President Kennedy with the promise of Polaris submarines—although it has been said that if the United Kingdom were to use tactical nuclear weapons in a new Kuwait intervention, as it seems she was prepared to do, the United States might feel impelled to use her influence against the United Kingdom as at Suez. Once again the Defence Ministry's demand for British sovereign soil on which to place the military installations has led to a political solution that in the end is likely to necessitate the surrender of the base.

Nor can access by air from the United Kingdom to Aden be relied upon, particularly when it would be most urgently needed. The United Kingdom is not automatically afforded overflying rights across the Arab countries. If the direct route to Aden, through Libya and the Sudan, were closed, planes would either have to fly across Tropical Africa, which, for political reasons, will become less and less possible, or further south over Portuguese territory,

Southern Rhodesia, or even South Africa. Conservative leaders have publicly justified United Kingdom policy towards these latter countries against just such an eventuality. The other (but longer) route to Aden is over Turkey and Persia. Here, however, the mountains, the weather, and the proximity of the Soviet frontier involve serious technical disadvantages, and the political pressure exerted on States to prohibit overflying by foreign military aircraft is considerable. At the time of the 1958 landings in Jordan, for example, the Israelis for a time withdrew permission for British aircraft to overfly Israel on their way from Cyprus to Jordan.

### **Lessons of the Kuwait expedition**

The ultimate justification for any policy is that of success. In 1961 the Iraqis did not carry out their threat to seize Kuwait. It will never be known whether this was because of the United Kingdom military response to the threat, or whether it was because Kassem never seriously intended to launch an attack. Subsequent press reports revealed, in fact, that no Iraqi troops were moved nearer the Kuwait border than Basra. One thing is certain, however: the United Kingdom cannot undertake a major strategic redeployment (the 1961 expedition cost nearly a million pounds) every time the Iraqis threaten to invade Kuwait, or if the Saudis were ever similarly to threaten one of the Gulf sheikhdoms. Nor may the troops always be available, for the recent difficulties over Malaysia will increase the United Kingdom commitment of men to the Far Eastern area.

In 1961 the political circumstances happened to be favourable to the United Kingdom, but neither the Kuwait Government nor the rest of the Arab world is likely to welcome another display of British force. Serious Arab

hostility, while unlikely to prove a real military threat to the United Kingdom, could hamper the conduct of operations in the Persian Gulf above all because of the difficulty of access by air. No operation on the scale of the 1961 expedition could be mounted in the Persian Gulf without air support, and it would further delay action if the Suez Canal were ever closed to United Kingdom warships.<sup>9</sup>

Politics apart, certain highly critical military conclusions have emerged from a medical study of the Kuwait expedition, which had previously been regarded as an unqualified success. From the statistics published in a report of the Army's Operational Research Establishment on heat casualties caused by lack of acclimatization in 1961, it has now become clear that, although the Kuwait expedition was a model of quick deployment, it would be foolish to rely in a Persian Gulf climate upon the fighting capabilities of a force despatched direct from Salisbury Plain. The statistics prove that the heat casualties were negligible among the men already stationed in Aden and the Persian Gulf, but among those units from Kenya and Cyprus the percentage was higher; while, although not engaged in active operations, some 10 per cent of those flown direct from the United Kingdom were out of action from heat disorders in the first five days. These conclusions, which the Government has never publicly admitted, have been confirmed by a controlled experiment which set out to compare the reactions to exercises in Aden of a platoon of some thirty men flown direct from Aldershot, with those of a platoon which had been stationed in Bahrain for the previous nine months. The results showed that none of the troops from Bahrain suffered from severe heat illness and

<sup>9</sup> Article I of the Convention of Constantinople 1888 states that the Suez Canal 'shall always be free and open, in time of war as in time of peace, to every vessel of commerce or of war, without distinction of flag'; Article 4, however, forbids 'any act having for its object to obstruct the free navigation of the Canal'.

only a few were casualties from minor complaints. Of the men from the United Kingdom, however, one-quarter were ineffective after a few hours, and over the 12-day period the platoon became, for all practical purposes, ineffective.<sup>10</sup>

This merely reinforced the view already held by medical officers, based on previous acclimatization tests (and after all this problem had been with the British Army even in the First World War in Mesopotamia), that more than half the troops committed to operations in a Kuwait-type climate, without a full programme of acclimatization of at least a week, would become casualties from the heat alone, without taking account of enemy action. The admitted failure in 1961 to follow instructions in heat discipline, and the inadequacy of food, equipment, and clothing for a desert climate, if corrected in a future operation, would minimize the discomfort and reduce the casualties fractionally; but adequate training and preparation cannot invalidate the conclusion that something must be done if a strategic deployment on the 1961 scale is to remain an integral part of the United Kingdom defence capability. Obviously the troops must have been acclimatized by the time they arrive on the scene of action, but since it is not possible to simulate a Persian Gulf climate on Salisbury Plain the current trend of relying on a strategic reserve held in the United Kingdom for dealing with 'brushfire' wars, must be reversed. The alternative is to station sufficient men in a comparable climate, preferably somewhere near the probable trouble area.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>10</sup> *The Times*, 23 July 1962. When the Minister of Defence made a statement in July 1961 in the House of Commons after a force commander in Aden had said that quite a lot of men were suffering from heat exhaustion, he gave an average casualty figure of 1 per cent.

<sup>11</sup> *The Times*, 23 July 1962.

## **Alternative bases and methods of defence**

Bahrain, where the United Kingdom currently enjoys limited facilities, mostly naval, would be ideal strategically and climate-wise, but for political reasons the Sheikh is not prepared to extend the existing arrangements. The disadvantages of stationing troops in Australia heavily outweigh any solution the desert areas of that continent might otherwise offer. The current expansion in Aden can therefore be seen as the logical extension of a policy which might demand the rapid deployment of large numbers of men in the Gulf area.

On the other hand if it were once conceded that the necessary deterrent to trouble in the Gulf, on the scale with which the United Kingdom would expect to cope on her own, could be provided by a sea-borne force, then many of these disadvantages would be removed. The great drawback is that it is at least twice as expensive to build and operate a balanced carrier task force as to maintain a land-based force of similar strength. However, the advantages in respect of acclimatization (although it is difficult to keep ship-based soldiers mentally and physically fit), invulnerability, freedom from hostile political pressure, and relative permanence are all substantial; and the fact that all expenses in a floating base are paid for in the currency of the country concerned could even go some way to reduce the economic disparity, and, moreover, prove an important factor in the British balance of payments.<sup>12</sup>

Military equipment in an overseas operation poses a problem whether the force itself is sea- or air-borne. The Americans are experimenting with a floating stockpile, but

<sup>12</sup> In 1958, for example, the United Kingdom spent some £180 million abroad on military items connected with bases; in the same year sterling became fully convertible, since when payments to the sterling area for military expenditure have been a serious drain on the United Kingdom reserves.



the United Kingdom has not yet found the money to follow suit. The United Kingdom does still have, however, a number of colonial possessions scattered in and around the Indian Ocean. Most of these would accommodate a stock-pile, which should ideally be situated as near the fighting area as possible since military hardware is expensive in terms of freight space.<sup>13</sup>

The most important of these facilities, after Aden itself, is the RAF station which has been built on Gan in the Maldive Islands. Gan is the nearest of these Indian Ocean islands to the Persian Gulf; it is a coral atoll some 800 miles south of Ceylon, 6 feet above sea-level, and about 3 miles long. The airstrip there was constructed at a cost of some £5 million to replace Trincomalee in Ceylon, and it now handles approximately twenty-five aircraft on an average day. In Trincomalee, the British military presence became a local election issue after Suez; in the Maldives it has been opposed by local nationalists. Gan itself greeted the construction of the facilities with enthusiasm, because of the economic benefits to follow, but bitter nationalist resentment was aroused in all the other Maldive Islands. The people of Gan revolted against the central Government, who imposed a food blockade on the rebelling island, and launched a punitive military expedition. In 1960 the position was temporarily stabilized when the United Kingdom and Maldive Governments signed a new agreement that gave the United Kingdom a 26-year lease on Gan, and gave the Maldive Islands internal self-government. Anti-British feeling has broken out again, however, and since November 1962 a United Kingdom warship has been standing by at Male, the capital of the Maldives. Geographically the islands would provide an excellent fleet anchorage, as was proved in the Second World War when

<sup>13</sup> One Argosy aircraft, for example, costing some £600,000, can only transport three 3-ton trucks at one time.

the remains of the British Far Eastern fleet hid there from the Japanese, but politically the idea would almost certainly prove explosive. At the same time nationalist resentment, which is provoked by island bases, and has nowhere on the mainland to uphold its case, presents a much smaller problem than that expressed by mainlanders who have a whole hinterland of fellow nationalists at their back.

Transport Command has facilities on various islands forming part of the Indian Ocean command area. Not all are conveniently situated for operations in the Persian Gulf, and not all the facilities could be expanded to provide an effective stockpile in the event of a withdrawal from the Arabian peninsula. At present the RAF maintain a staging post on Mauritius with a 6,000-foot runway; some naval facilities are also available. So far the political atmosphere in Mauritius, which is currently advancing towards Dominion status and has powerful vested interests in maintaining good relations with the United Kingdom, would not rule out the extension of the British military presence. From the British point of view the ideal island is the dependency of Diego Garcia, some 1,300 miles north-east of the main island. Diego Garcia is sparsely populated, but has a good deep harbour, and a site suitable for a large airfield, and is relatively well situated for any possible operations in the Arabian peninsula area.

The RAF also have staging facilities in the Seychelles, where the present 6,000-foot runway could be extended and the lagoon of the Aldabra atoll, 700 miles south-west of the main group of islands, could take ships of up to cruiser size; and also on the Australian Cocos Islands. Whilst the Seychelles are politically backward, and local nationalism is almost non-existent, the same is not true of the Cocos Islands, which in any event are not conveniently placed strategically, and where the lagoon can only take vessels of up to 24-foot draught.

In the light of the foregoing account of the antecedents of the present situation and the unhappy experiences that British military and colonial authorities have undergone since the Second World War, let us examine the military, economic, and colonial interests and treaty obligations which the British Government (in 1964) still conceives that it has an overriding need to pursue and discharge.

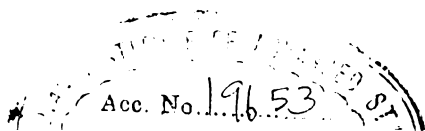
## British Interests and Treaty Obligations

FIVE outstanding arguments are put forward for maintaining a military presence in the Persian Gulf area. First, that the United Kingdom has certain treaty obligations and responsibilities to the States of the western seaboard of the Persian Gulf; secondly, there is the question of protecting the vast commercial interests which the United Kingdom has developed in a number of these States; thirdly the need to maintain for strategic reasons a route to the Far East, particularly to Singapore and Hong Kong; and, fourthly, the provision of some sort of British military presence in the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean area as this country's contribution to the world-wide system of Western defence. The fifth argument relates to the United Kingdom's specifically colonial responsibilities towards Aden itself, and this will be dealt with when we come to discuss the Colony and Protectorate.

### British treaty obligations in the Persian Gulf

Until 1961 all the sheikhdoms of the Persian Gulf received British protection under arrangements which varied widely,<sup>1</sup> but all of which dated from the nineteenth century, and some of which had, with the complacency of the time, been labelled 'perpetual'. The most important feature of these arrangements to note here is that they gave the United Kingdom rights only in matters of defence and

<sup>1</sup> For details see J. B. Kelly, 'The Legal and Historical Basis of the British Position in the Persian Gulf', in St Antony's Papers No. 4, 1958, pp. 119-39.





foreign affairs. In domestic matters, on the other hand, while some rulers sought British advice,<sup>2</sup> the United Kingdom enjoyed no rights whatsoever.

At the time when the treaties were made, the British obligation was conceived as a purely maritime operation. The inland frontiers were in deserts so remote and arid that several opportunities to define them were missed. From the mid-twentieth century, however, the possibility of discovering oil vested them with a new and sharp significance, and saddled the United Kingdom with awkward and embarrassing obligations in disputes between Arab and Arab.

Until 1947 these responsibilities were discharged by the Government of India; thereafter they devolved on the Foreign Office.

### **Kuwait**

In 1961 (and, so some observers thought, belatedly) a distinction that had long been apparent between Kuwait and the rest of the sheikhdoms was recognized in London. On Kuwaiti initiative, the old arrangement with the United Kingdom was terminated. Kuwait accordingly took over its own defence and foreign affairs, subject now to a new treaty with the United Kingdom whereby the British would come to the Ruler's aid if invited to do so. Kuwait immediately accepted foreign emissaries, joined the Arab League, and, later, the United Nations.

The distinctive circumstances of Kuwait, to which its new status afforded recognition and emphasis (some were already of long standing), may be summarized as follows. First, that of size: under the impact of oil, Kuwait's population had risen to over 300,000—some of the smaller

<sup>2</sup> One or two employed British advisers in their own service; the most famous and long-standing of these being Sir Charles Belgrave in Bahrain.

sheikhdoms have only about 2,000 inhabitants. Secondly, that of maturity: Kuwait had from the first made more of the Gulf's scanty resources than most of its neighbours. It had a middle class which engaged in international pearl and boat trading before oil was discovered. Since then, it had used the oil revenues to provide education of a high order; the first products of a decade of education were emerging from the secondary schools and universities by 1961. Thirdly, that of geographic location. Kuwait is situated at the junction of two equally powerful neighbours (Saudi Arabia and Iraq), both of which have in the past laid claim to it. Their rivalry improves its chances of lasting independence. Furthermore Kuwait, separated by 350 miles of empty coastline from the rest of the Gulf sheikhdoms, has always looked primarily to the Arab capitals in the north for educational and political inspiration, and not, as the others do, just as much to Karachi. It has no interest in their blood feuds and petty rivalries.

In December 1961 the Ruler of Kuwait gave substance to this link with the Arab world by establishing a fund for Arab economic development. Till then, most of Kuwait's large savings had been invested on the London Stock Exchange. Since then, development loans have been made to Tunisia (£7 million), Algeria (£20 million), Jordan (£7.5 million), and Iraq (£30 million) as well as direct budgetary subventions to Algeria and Iraq.

Meanwhile, as an immediate sequel to the 1961 treaty, Kuwait was claimed by the megalomaniac Dictator of Iraq, Abdel Kerim Kassem. The Ruler at once appealed to the Arab League, which thereupon found itself divided (Iraq is a member), only Saudi Arabia responding. At this the Ruler invoked his agreement with the United Kingdom. The British replied with alacrity; they conducted an outwardly efficient military operation in sweltering heat but without gaining evidence that the Iraqis had seriously

intended to attack. In consequence, too large a part of their strategic reserve was immobilized in this operation and they were, after three months, more than glad to hand over to the force which the Arab League in the end provided.

The incident is less important for its immediate impact than for its repercussions on Kuwaiti and British opinion. In the period since independence, the Ruler of Kuwait has transferred some measure of power to a National Assembly (though not enough by Kuwaiti-nationalist standards). Nevertheless, while nationalist hearts are drawn towards Arab unity and the severance of the link with the United Kingdom, nationalist heads are not so sure. Independence calls for a protective umbrella, and a reliable one, and most Arabs in Kuwait would be loth to lose the privileges they enjoy as an independent people. Born Kuwaitis, who number rather less than half the population, have special rights in the matter of jobs and votes; immigrants (whether free-lance or refugees from Arab States whose governments they do not fancy) well know that they enjoy salaries and working conditions they could not obtain elsewhere. There is thus a generally felt interest in retaining independence, and a realization that for this some protective umbrella is necessary. Yet almost all would prefer the dignity of Arab protection as opposed to British, which none can relish except as a *pis aller*; it is significant that a resolution demanding an end to the British connexion, tabled in the Assembly in April 1963, coincided with the agreement of that month between Egypt, Syria, and Iraq (although, as significantly, perhaps to Kuwait the latter was to prove abortive).

What then of British thinking? One effect of the Kuwait episode had been to cause concern in military circles about the indefinite commitment of an undue proportion of the strategic reserve. Others meanwhile observed that no



change had taken place in Kuwait's readiness to sell oil, or in its investment policy, as a result of its change in status.

It was also easy to infer from the atmosphere in the Kuwait Assembly that, with the passage of time, and the further transfer of powers from the Ruler to the Assembly, appeal to the United Kingdom would certainly grow less rather than more likely. Nor was any other Arab power likely to repeat Kassem's surprising technique of giving advance notice of predatory intentions—on the contrary all experience of Arab developments suggested that, if a *coup* were later to be staged, it would take place internally, and too rapidly to allow the injured party time to summon a rescue squad.

### The other sheikhdoms

Whatever Kuwait's future, however, British liabilities in the other sheikhdoms can hardly disappear so fast. The Kuwait pattern can never become a pilot scheme for the rest, on account of the major differences between its circumstances and theirs, some of which have been described above. Kuwait was in a position to seek full independence with impunity; most of the others could not.

Bahrain's economic dependence on Saudi Arabia is complete. Saudi goodwill is vital both to its port and oil refinery. Though claimed by Persia, it could not sever itself from Saudi Arabia and still prosper. Until political developments within its powerful neighbour become tempting enough to risk a change, Bahrain is virtually bound to seek the preservation of its present status.

Further south, rulers of sheikhdoms most of which are too small and poor to constitute units suitable for independence are each at odds with his immediate neighbour. All have resisted British advice to federate. Now that some are rich (e.g. Abu Dhabi)—or have any hopes that some day

they might become so—while others remain poor beyond all hope of rescue, disinclination to join forces has if anything increased. Swift development on the Kuwaiti model is moreover ruled out in these family estates because there is no middle class and each ruling family is jealous of its privileges and independence. To this the only threat would come either from a neighbour or from Saudi Arabia.

At the same time there is not, as in Kuwait's case, any risk of attack by a modern army. Only minor British forces therefore are needed to fulfil the United Kingdom's 'perpetual' obligations for as long as this awkward commitment continues to be binding on her. Here it should be noted that the obligation does not extend to internal matters; an appeal for help by the Ruler of Qatar, over a strike stirred up by the behaviour of some members of his family, was refused by London in April 1963. Help over the preservation of frontier rights on undefined frontiers has on the other hand been given, notably against Saudi claims to the Buraimi Oasis.

In the Trucial States therefore, in contrast to Kuwait, it may be seen that the United Kingdom's obligation is not to a representative body but to a ruler (and ruling family), the choice of whom she cannot determine and of whose behaviour she may not approve. While her 'perpetual' obligation is thus on a relatively small scale in terms of the men and equipment required to discharge it, it is none the less to ruling families who have on the whole kept their word to the United Kingdom and are comparatively securely placed. It is for these reasons difficult to abrogate and unlikely for the time being to lapse.

The only foreseeable ways for the United Kingdom to be relieved of this awkward commitment would thus seem to be: (a) if developments in Arabia took a turn which might frighten the rulers into a wish to federate; (b) if the Arab League developed in such a way as to cause them to

desire an Arab protector, or (c) if internal changes in Saudi Arabia made federation with their strong and wealthy neighbour an attractive proposition. While none of these contingencies seems at present to be on the cards, none, if it did materialize, should give the United Kingdom the slightest reason to withhold her blessing for a moment.

## **Oil in the Persian Gulf**

It would be absurd to deny that the discovery of oil in the sheikhdoms of the Gulf has complicated all the United Kingdom's problems—not least because of the enormous benefits she has reaped as a result and of the correspondingly large part that oil has played in her thinking about the area. Nevertheless, contrary to popular belief, Persian Gulf output is very far from being predominantly 'British'. More than 60 per cent of the operating companies are American, while Japanese and Italian companies are also at work.

All the same, and despite recent oil and gas discoveries elsewhere, there is as yet no substitute for the huge oil reserves of the Persian Gulf area. The owners are Persia, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Kuwait, and Abu Dhabi, with smaller, exhaustible fields in or off Qatar and Bahrain. The principal supplier to the United Kingdom is Kuwait.

So far, defection by one supplier (e.g. Persia under Musaddeq) has at once and gladly been made good by others. It remains to be seen whether the foundation of OPEC (the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries) will affect this question of ready access to alternative sources of supply. Meanwhile concern lest too much oil should fall into the same pair of possibly hostile hands is an obvious and understandable United Kingdom motive for helping Kuwait to remain independent.

A salient feature of supplier countries in recent years,

however, is that each is committed to an immense social programme which its people await eagerly and which cannot be abandoned except at the cost of internal upheaval. The Arabs have noted the Mussadeq lesson; even Kassem, at his most hostile, was powerless to cut adrift from the IPC and the Western purchaser. In Kuwait, commitments to an expectant population are particularly large—e.g. £55 million on wages and salaries (to a population of approximately 330,000) in 1962, plus a further £95 million of state expenditure at home. The best guarantee of steady supply is local inability to forego these huge earnings—backed by the present world surplus. Independence made no difference whatsoever to Kuwait's eagerness to supply its good customer, the United Kingdom.

It is therefore beginning to be questionable how far armed forces are required in order to 'protect' oil supplies. Certainly British experience at Suez was that the use of force at one point provoked stoppages at others—a display of Arab unity that has seldom, if ever, been paralleled. In the wilder parts of South Arabia, the small British forces available may, it is true, sometimes serve the oil companies as a local security force, or a stabilizer; but as soon as political maturity is reached (as in Kuwait or at Aden), forces stationed locally tend to be as much a political liability as a military asset.

An additional reason sometimes adduced for British concern over Kuwait's independence is the threat to the British balance of payments were the Kuwait Government suddenly to withdraw its huge investments on the London Stock Exchange; at one time these were said to amount to £400 million. Undoubtedly this investment constitutes a sizable item on capital account, while profit from British oil earnings in the Gulf is a sizable item on current account also. But neither item is as large as it was in the late 1950's, because Kuwait has in its own interest begun to invest its

savings in Arab lands, and because company profits are falling. Kuwait's assumption of independence in 1961 brought about no sudden alteration in its investment policy.

When these various considerations have been given their due weight in the policy debate, it is perhaps worth adding that the United States maintains a small naval squadron in the Gulf, based on Bahrain.

### **The route to the Far East**

The United Kingdom has certain responsibilities and obligations in the Far East, which require the maintenance of an air and sea link. These liabilities include those arising from membership of Seato, the alliance responsible for the collective defence of Western interests in South East Asia; commercially valuable colonial possessions such as Hong Kong; and certain very specific undertakings to defend the new Malaysian Federation. Although the United Kingdom contributes forces jointly with Australia and New Zealand, the real teeth of Seato are provided by the Americans. Hong Kong itself is only garrisoned by a token force, since in the event of any serious external threat to the colony the United Kingdom could do little to defend it. The United Kingdom is, however, prepared to commit large numbers of men to guarantee the success of the new anti-Communist political union of Malaysia, particularly in view of the hostile reactions which the new federation has aroused among certain neighbouring States.

*The Commitment to Malaysia.* Article 6 of the Malaysia Agreement, signed in London on 9 July 1963,<sup>3</sup> states that the Agreement on External Defence and Mutual Assistance between the United Kingdom and the Government of the Federation of Malaya of 12 October 1957, and its

<sup>3</sup> Cmnd. 2094.

annexes,<sup>4</sup> shall apply to the new Federation. By the middle of September Duncan Sandys had been forced by external developments to give assurances that 'if Malaysia should be threatened by outside interference and her Government should feel it necessary to call on Britain for support, the British Government will, of course, honour their treaty obligations and give Malaysia all the help they can to maintain her independence and integrity'.<sup>5</sup>

At present the main threat to Malaysia's independence comes from Indonesia, with her army of some 300,000 men. The general standard of training and efficiency is not high, except in the paratroop and commando units, but all three services possess some modern equipment.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless the United Kingdom could contain any Indonesian military offensive, whether by regular or guerrilla forces, although if the Indonesians embarked on a prolonged guerrilla struggle in the Borneo territories, British troops would have to be committed for a long time to come, and on a scale comparable to that in the Communist insurrection in Malaya, for despite the rapid expansion of her armed forces, Malaysia will not be able to defend herself in the foreseeable future without outside help.

Military facilities are granted to the United Kingdom in Malaya and Singapore in return for the United Kingdom guarantee of assistance, which would be worthless without the use of the British base there. On present form it looks as though the United Kingdom will continue to guarantee Malaysia's independence for as long as her people require it, provided that United Kingdom freedom of action over the use of the base is not restricted. Politi-

<sup>4</sup> Cmnd. 263.

<sup>5</sup> *Observer*, 15 Sept. 1963.

<sup>6</sup> The navy has a Russian heavy cruiser, 4 Skoryi-class destroyers, 6 W-class long-range submarines, 11 tank-landing ships and 3 American infantry landing craft, also frigates, submarine chasers and patrol boats; the air force consists of 4 bomber and 4 fighter squadrons, 1 coastal patrol squadron and at least 2 transport squadrons (*The Times*, 20 Sept. 1963).

cally, the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, is in difficulties, however, over the granting of military facilities to the ex-colonial power, and he has already indicated that the United Kingdom cannot expect to have complete freedom of action. He refused to permit the facilities in Malaya to be used in direct support of operations in Laos, and he raised difficulties over the possible use of the Commonwealth forces stationed in Malaya in Seato operations in Thailand.<sup>7</sup> Such restrictions of use might at some time apply to any action that the United Kingdom might wish to take in the Persian Gulf, if, as seems practical, the United Kingdom's military capability there becomes dependent on a force maintained from Singapore.

*Aden as a Stepping-stone.* Assuming that Malaysia continues to permit the United Kingdom's use of Singapore, &c., there remains the vital question of access from the United Kingdom. This is relevant to a study of Aden, for one of the reasons given in the House of Commons debate in November 1962 by the Colonial Secretary to justify his political settlement at Aden, with the retention of base facilities, was that: 'Our military base at Aden is a vital stepping-stone on the way to Singapore.'<sup>8</sup> This sort of argument leads inevitably to the conclusion that Aden is essential to maintain United Kingdom obligations in the Far East, while one of the reasons for maintaining the Far East responsibilities is in order to safeguard the United Kingdom position in the Persian Gulf. This is an over-simplification, but it is the kind of impression gained after discussion with those responsible for the United Kingdom's Middle Eastern and Asian affairs. Neither group appears willing to defend its position as such, but each virtually excuses United Kingdom action by referring to the de-

<sup>7</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 18 May 1962; *The Times*, 21 May 1962.

<sup>8</sup> 13 Nov. 1962. H. C. Deb., vol. 667, col. 247.

mands of another department, or sometimes indeed, another branch of the same department.

First, a brief comment on Mr Sandys's statement. What ever else may constitute this stepping-stone to Singapore it is not the *military base* at Aden which does so. The navy requires fuel, water, and provisions, all of which could be got without the base, and the air force only requires a landing strip plus a limited number of men to maintain it, which is all they have at present in Aden. Khormaksar is an important civil airport and can as such provide most of the facilities required. True, this puts the facilities in Aden on a less formal basis, but, as we shall see later, neither the port nor the airfield could be operated for any length of time without the local Arab labour force. Surely no-one could believe that a United Kingdom military presence in Aden is going to ensure that local employees continue to work.

Aden is at present on both the sea and air routes most commonly used between the United Kingdom and South East Asia. For the navy the Suez Canal is the one possible hazard,<sup>9</sup> but if the Egyptians tried to use the threat of a closure as a weapon against the United Kingdom, for example over Aden or the Yemen, which so far they have shown no tendency to do, ships could always go round the Cape. Now that all trooping is done by air, it is the air routes to the Far East that give rise to the most concern. Khormaksar airport is the second stop, after El Adem, in Libya, on the shortest route from the United Kingdom to Singapore (some 7,500 miles); but this is also the most vulnerable to the withdrawal of overflying rights.<sup>10</sup> In the recent airlift of troops to Australia for training manoeuvres, the soldiers had to travel in mufti at the request of King Idris of Libya, who is constantly being attacked by the Egyptians for continuing to allow the United Kingdom

<sup>9</sup> See above, p. 15.

<sup>10</sup> pp. 13-14.



facilities in his country. However, if use of the Khormaksar route remained possible the refuelling post required could be maintained by a small RAF unit.

If there are likely to be difficulties in overflying North Africa, it is increasingly likely that other African States, even including, for other reasons, South Africa, will become less and less willing to grant the United Kingdom overflying rights. Hence the recently announced RAF plans for the development of island landing strips to provide alternative refuelling facilities for the shorter-range aircraft of Transport Command.

*The West-about Route.* A more realistic alternative than the prolongation of the concept of a chain of island bases, which are highly vulnerable and politically explosive (as Gan has been), might be to use the already existing facilities on a west-about route. It is shorter to fly to Singapore westwards than to go round the African continent, and although there are adverse head winds, the staging posts are conveniently placed. The determination to maintain British-owned stepping-stones out to the Far East is a legacy of the old colonial heritage, and to the deep-seated conviction that the United Kingdom could still, if pressed, go it alone.

### **The United Kingdom contribution to Western defence**

The Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf area is strategically of vital importance to the West, particularly because the oil is at present essential to Western Europe. Traditionally the area has come within the British sphere of influence, and from the French departure in the late eighteenth century up to the fall of Singapore, the Indian Ocean was a British lake in all but name, and the Royal Navy was responsible for the defence of most of the States bordering upon it.

With direct British influence gone and with no major world power or group of powers emerging in the area, Communist intervention remained a nightmare possibility to the British Government at least, from the end of the war until well on into the 1950's. Politicians in the Eden era, for example, were obsessed by the fear that the oil might fall into the hands of one man or group of States either Arab or Soviet, or both. It is hardly conceivable now that the Soviet Union would precipitate a crisis to get hold of Middle East oil since surplus Russian oil is exported; it is more likely, in the improbable event of some form of political union, that all the major oilfields might come under one Arab authority. In such a case economic rather than military pressure would more effectively guarantee the continuing flow of oil.

Weapons systems and the techniques of international diplomacy are now so highly sophisticated that an overt military threat is not likely. The potentially unstable political conditions of many of the countries around the Indian Ocean make external interference in civil war, or the promotion by the USSR of hostile political systems, a more probable danger. Keeping the peace in the Persian Gulf, where the risk of inter-state strife will remain high as long as the present inequalities of wealth persist, contributes to the general stability of the area, since endemic civil or inter-state war has in the past proved a profitable target for cold-war tactics.

*The United States View.* Although the United States has taken over the defence of the Mediterranean/Middle East area, with the Sixth Fleet providing the visible support, and of the Far East with the Seventh Fleet, the Americans have hitherto been glad<sup>11</sup> to leave the Indian Ocean to the defence of the only power which had the territorial resources with which to patrol the area. Before the Suez

<sup>11</sup> But see below, p. 40.

débauché the United States believed that any military grouping in the Middle East (an area which at the best is a pact-maker's nightmare) should be led by the United Kingdom; although with the loss of the Suez facilities which had always been regarded by the United Kingdom as the centre of Middle East military power, the strength she could deploy in the area became less and less credible for any but strictly local conflicts.

While the United States felt that the withdrawal of United Kingdom power in the area would necessitate some form of regional military assistance, she has never become a full member of Cento, partly to avoid becoming too closely associated with certain countries of the Middle East at the expense of the good will of those States who preferred to remain less obviously committed to a Western-orientated military alliance. The wisdom of this policy is demonstrated by the fact that, since the withdrawal of Iraq in 1959, the United Kingdom has found herself committed to a non-Arab alliance.

Without United States support, which is guaranteed under the bilateral defence treaties of March 1959 with Pakistan, Persia, and Turkey,<sup>12</sup> by which the United States promises to 'take such appropriate action, including the use of armed force, as may be mutually agreed on' in the event of external aggression, the Cento powers would do little to stop any serious external military threat. The United States is also committed in the event of Russian interference in the internal affairs of Turkey, Persia, or Pakistan. The United Kingdom contribution to the Cento alliance, whatever its value in the struggle against the Communist bloc, is one justification for the retention of RAF facilities on Cyprus. Aden, however, has no planned role in Cento, although no doubt facilities available there

<sup>12</sup> These were based upon the Eisenhower Doctrine and the Mutual Security Programme of 1954, as amended.

could be used in the event of a Cento operation. The United States on the other hand would use facilities provided in Turkey, Persia, and Pakistan, if involved in any local military operations, although, as was demonstrated in the autumn of 1962 with almost painful realism, a Cuba-type crisis is not, in fact, settled by a local military struggle. Any overt Soviet threat not only in the Middle East, but anywhere in the non-committed or non-Communist world, will in the last resort, be settled by a nuclear chess game of potentially deadly outcome.

*British and American Attitudes Compared.* Certainly most of the countries forming part of the Persian Gulf/Indian Ocean theatre are not in a position to look to their own defence unaided. All receive some sort of assistance from outside, but whereas the United States has given enormous sums in military aid, provides military training missions, and tries to establish local facilities which can be used in an emergency in conjunction with the power concerned, the United Kingdom prefers to operate from her own territory at the request of, rather than at the side of, the local power. If the United States feels capable of operating at considerably greater distances from home base without sovereign facilities, it seems reasonable to ask why the United Kingdom cannot follow this example, particularly when in the last resort any United Kingdom action would have to be supported by the Americans. Rather than mount another operation on the scale of the 1961 Kuwait expedition it would be cheaper and of more lasting benefit to offer to provide our allies with the technical knowledge necessary to run a modern army.

The Americans recognize that the Persian Gulf itself is an area of United Kingdom responsibility, and although in 1961 they felt that the United Kingdom was employing a sledge-hammer to crack the Iraqi nut, at least the United States supported the British Government's action and some

American ships even steamed towards the Persian Gulf from the African coast. However, where United Kingdom political action in the Gulf is of the most concern to the United States is in so far as it may affect United States-Saudi Arabian relations, especially since almost any political action in the Gulf is liable to involve the Saudis.

In the dispute over the Yemen in the autumn of 1962 the United States Government for the first time formally endorsed Her Majesty's Government's view of the essential role of Aden in Western strategy, but it refused to get embroiled in the Aden-Yemen dispute. In the long run it is more likely that the United States will become increasingly concerned to ease the United Kingdom out of her present colonial relationships in the Arabian peninsula, in order to avoid the embarrassment of taking sides between the United Kingdom and the feudal rulers on the one hand, and the forces of Arab nationalism on the other. Whatever the rights and wrongs of the Yemen dispute, this basic difference in outlook was reflected in United States and United Kingdom policies towards the revolutionary Government.

The United Kingdom, with her carrier force based on Singapore, is at present the only power with a navy of any size in the Indian Ocean/Persian Gulf area. In the event of a serious crisis the United States could contribute parts of her Sixth or Seventh Fleet, although to do so would stretch their resources to the limit. Much of the Sixth Fleet would not, in fact, pass through the Suez Canal, and the Americans are already hard put to it to maintain the Seventh Fleet in the Western Pacific. If such a situation ever did arise, the threat would be so grave that Pakistan would be certain to grant the United States the necessary facilities at Karachi, which, unlike Aden, has the extensive dockyards required to maintain a fleet for any length of time.

The signs are, however, that the Americans are not alto-

gether satisfied with the existing arrangements. In the first half of 1962 the Australian Government agreed to lease some 28 square miles on Northwest Cape, about 50 miles west of Onslow on the West Australian coast, to the United States Government for the construction of a naval radio station which, when it is finished in 1965, will be one of the most powerful radio stations in the world. Such stations are essential for controlling Polaris submarines, since it is obviously vital to retain contact at all times with the submerged vessel. This recent development implies that the United States will shortly be able to patrol the Indian Ocean with nuclear powered submarines controlled from western Australia. The whole strategic *apparatus* will then have been removed far beyond the scale of effort on which this country's resources enable her to plan.

In December 1963 it was unofficially reported from Washington that the United States plans to send a small task group detached from the Seventh Fleet to the Indian Ocean.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup> *New York Herald Tribune*, 31 Dec. 1963, and 11, 12 Jan. 1964.

## Aden: The Colony

THE United Kingdom has two colonial responsibilities in Southern Arabia: the Colony of Aden and the twenty-four States of the Aden Protectorate, which for administrative purposes have been divided into the Eastern and Western Protectorates. These territories have some common characteristics—the inhabitants are of the same race, speak the same language, and are of the Shafai sect of Sunni Moslems; and since Aden is the port for the whole region their economic interests are closely linked. There are, however, greater contrasts between them.

The Colony, which is the direct responsibility of the Colonial Office, is a densely populated urban area of some 75 square miles, in which a powerful highly organized industrial proletariat has emerged. At the last census in 1955 the total population was 138,441 (106,400 Arabs, 15,800 Indians, 10,600 Somalis, 4,400 Europeans, and 800 Jews); by 1963 the total had increased to some 220,000 (about 60,000 locally-born Arabs, 35,000 Arabs from the Protectorate, and 80,000 Yemenis, with 20,000 Indians, some Pakistanis, and 20,000 Somalis). The Yemenis and many of the Arabs from the Protectorate form part of the large migrant labour force coming to Aden for two or three years to look for work. These workers make good trade-union material.

Aden's economy rests basically on three assets: the port, the oil refinery, and Middle Eastern Command. A wealthy self-confident Arab society of landlords, traders, small industrialists, and contractors has grown up alongside Aden's transformation from the small fishing village of the early

nineteenth century to a modern port with imports and exports worth some £72 million and £60 million respectively each year. The colony has an annual budget revenue of some £5 million. Since 1955 it has spent something in the region of £8 million on capital development, mainly on housing, public utilities, communications, new schools and a hospital. Between 1956 and 1961 the total grant to the Colony by the United Kingdom Government amounted to £596,000, and loans to £1,020,000.<sup>1</sup> The Colony spends about half a million pounds a year on education, and there is now a well developed educational system, which aims to give free primary and intermediate schooling up to the age of 14 for all boys and girls within the Colony, and secondary education with scholarships abroad on a selective basis. Technical and commercial courses may be taken at the Technical Institutes in Aden and Maalla. Aden being an international port and the only modern city in the surrounding territories, at least half the patients treated by its expanding medical services inevitably come from outside the Colony. Despite the improved facilities the infant mortality rate was still 138 per thousand live births in 1958.

### **The port and the oil refinery**

From pre-Roman times until Vasco da Gama found the Cape passage to India and the Spice Islands, Aden was a great entrepôt centre on the trade route to the East. Once the new Cape route was established Aden's former prosperity vanished; but after the opening of the Suez Canal it grew in seventy years from a minor East India coaling station to one of the largest bunkering ports and centres of entrepôt trade in the world—in tonnage of ships handled

<sup>1</sup> Mr Fraser in reply to a question in the House of Commons, see 28 Mar. 1961, H.C. Deb., vol. 637, coll. 1125-6.



coming third in the Commonwealth after London and Liverpool.

The Port Trust has been the authority responsible for the administration of Aden's harbour facilities since 1888. Considerable sums of money have been spent recently on extending and developing the facilities. In 1952, for example, the Port Trust began a £2 million development scheme, and the inner harbour now has sixteen first-class berths, and can accommodate vessels drawing up to 37 feet, and over 900 feet long. A new £900,000 project was announced in December 1962, to install three sets of 'dolphin' berths, or small deep-water quays, in the harbour, which would provide large ships with quicker and safer berthing facilities at any stage of the tide.<sup>2</sup> Despite the modernization schemes the port and bunkering revenues have not continued to increase at the 1954-6 rate. The closure of the Suez Canal in 1956 clearly demonstrated to what extent modern Aden is in fact a child of the Canal. In the two months after the closure in November 1956, both the tonnage of shipping handled and the bunkering trade decreased by nearly 80 per cent.

There has been a considerable decline in the last five years in Aden's role as a regional distributing centre, and this trend, which follows a world-wide pattern, seems likely to continue. Much of the colony's prosperity in the past depended on local trade in commodities such as sugar, rice, flour, and tea, but with the improvement of their own facilities neighbouring countries are gradually importing direct. Sales from Aden to Saudi Arabia, Eritrea, and Ethiopia have all declined, and even the Yemen, which until lately depended almost entirely on Aden since it had no active port of its own, has increasingly been importing directly through Hodeida, the Red Sea port recently opened up by the Russians. It had been hoped that a good

<sup>2</sup> *The Times*, 24 Dec. 1962.

motor road from Aden to Taiz on the Aden–Yemen border might have retained a considerable part of the trade with the Yemen, but in view of recent political developments this no longer seems likely.

Since the war, oil has played a vital part in the development of Aden, and its importance as a fuel bunkering station was reinforced by BP's decision in 1952 to build a £45 million refinery at Aden with a throughput of some 5 million tons of crude a year. BP's Aden bunkering installation began supplying ships in 1919, and until the new refinery was commissioned in November 1954, oil had been brought from various neighbouring refineries by tanker, until 1952 principally from Abadan. The Aden refinery, which gets its crude oil from Kuwait, provides jobs for some 300 British personnel, and 1,800 Arabs, and supplies the bunkering installations, besides selling refined products for local use in Aden, and neighbouring territories. BP has eight floating terminals in Aden harbour, served by submarine lines from shore tanks, which are capable of supplying bunkers in a ship at any rate of delivery which may be required, up to 1,500 tons an hour. The bunkering operations employ some 780 men, and supply about 4,500 ships a year with approximately 2.5 million tons of oil.

No matter how modern the facilities available, however, nothing could be calculated to destroy confidence in Aden's reputation as a reliable bunkering station, more than the series of strikes preceding the industrial legislation in 1960. These stoppages, many of them wildcat strikes, closed the port and bunkering services for weeks at a time, and lost the Colony much business, a proportion of which failed to return to Aden after each shut-down. Although some 28 million tons of shipping used the port in 1961 (bringing over a quarter of a million tourists to the bazaars and markets of Aden), the regular annual increase of 5 per cent

has not been maintained since 1958. In September 1963 the Aden Government appointed a commission to inquire into port facilities and ways of regaining the traffic going to Djibouti and Hodeida.<sup>3</sup> The leaders of the Aden TUC admit that they are prepared, if necessary, to jeopardize Aden's future economic prosperity, and the jobs of about 10 per cent of the estimated male labour force employed in port activities, in order to achieve their political aims. In July 1962, for example, despite the legislation prohibiting strike action, the port was closed for 24 hours by a general strike protesting against the opening of the London conference to discuss Aden's constitutional future. Even if the oil refinery were to close, and the bunkering traffic to drift to the much improved port of Djibouti, 150 miles away, the secretary-general of the TUC, Abdullah al Asnag, and his followers feel they have little to lose, and relying on financial assistance from Cairo (in the past disappointing) and elsewhere, are prepared, as leaders in other new countries have been, to risk economic prosperity for national autonomy.

### **Employment at the base**

The British forces in Aden spend some £12 million a year, excluding capital expenditure, and provide directly or indirectly some 20,000 jobs—one-third of the total. It has been estimated that the wages bill of the industrial labourers employed by the military authorities is in the region of £107,500 per month.<sup>4</sup> Since job-sharing is common practice in Aden, and many Aden workers may have up to ten dependents, the withdrawal of the British military presence would profoundly affect the prosperity of the colony.

<sup>3</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 18 Sept. 1963.

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, 29 Nov. 1963.

The rest of the population is employed in retail trade, the distribution and transport industries, catering, the building and construction trades, and in the cleaning, sorting, and packing for re-export of goods such as hides, skins, coffee, incense, gum, and oyster-shells. Since there is no agriculture in the colony, and the only local products are salt and salted fish, much of Aden's food supplies come from the Protectorate.

### **Constitutional development**

As a Crown Colony Aden has advanced some way towards a democratic system of government, and is now the most politically advanced State in the Arabian Peninsula. The East India Company took Aden in 1839, after an Indian ship had been plundered on the Arabian coast near by, and from then until 1932 the settlement formed part of the Bombay Presidency. After the First World War political developments in India made a break with Bombay inevitable, and in any event most people in Aden were unwilling to remain under the jurisdiction of Bombay, once political autonomy had come to India. In the words of a former Governor of Aden the Governments of both India and Bombay 'invariably treated Aden as if it was a small town in the Bombay Presidency'.<sup>5</sup> In 1932 it was announced that Aden was to be created a chief commissioner's province under the direct control of the Government of India and that it ceased to be subordinate to the Government of Bombay. This transfer of power did not noticeably change the situation in Aden, and the Indian Government's continued lack of sympathy for and interest in Aden led to Arab deputations and requests for the transfer of the administration of Aden to the Colonial Office. On 1 April 1937 the former settlement of Aden became a

<sup>5</sup> Sir Tom Hickinbotham, *Aden* (London, 1958), p. 16.

Crown Colony under the direct control of the Colonial Office, with the guarantee that Aden would remain a free port. The Indian influence prevailed for many years; and it was only in 1951, for example, that the East African shilling replaced the rupee as the currency of Aden. Today much of Aden's business is conducted by a relatively prosperous Indian entrepreneurial class, who for commercial reasons alone wish to see the British remain in Aden and the *status quo* maintained; these merchants have a voice in the affairs of the Colony out of all proportion to their relative numbers.

Constitutional progress in Aden followed the regular Colonial Office pattern towards self-government. The Aden Colony Order, 1936,<sup>6</sup> provided for a Governor, who was also Commander-in-Chief, an Executive Council consisting of the political secretary and the civil secretary and such persons as His Majesty should direct, and a Supreme Court of unlimited civil and criminal jurisdiction. Appeals were still to be heard by the High Court of Jurisprudence in Bombay and from there passed to His Majesty in Council; with the granting of Indian independence in 1947 appeals were transferred to the Court of Appeal for East Africa.<sup>7</sup> A Legislative Council was inaugurated in 1947, consisting of eight official and eight unofficial members (four of the official and all of the unofficial members were nominated by the Governor),<sup>8</sup> and in July 1955 an elected element was introduced into this Council for the first time. The Governor still had the casting vote in the 18-member Legislative Council, the nine unofficial members, five of them nominated and four elected, being balanced by four *ex officio* and five official members.<sup>9</sup>

Four elected members in the Legislative Council gave

<sup>6</sup> *British and Foreign State Papers, cxl* (1936), pp. 88-95.

<sup>7</sup> Aden Colony (Amendment) Order 1947, *ibid.* 1947, part 1, vol. 147,

pp. 551-3.

<sup>8</sup> *The Times*, 7 Jan. 1947.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* 19 May 1956.

little satisfaction to the moderate pro-Commonwealth party, the Aden Association—which in fact had three out of the four elected seats, and represented the substantial merchant class—and still less to the United Nationalist Front, which boycotted the elections in December 1955, and sought to replace British with Arab control. In May 1956 the Aden Association took the opportunity of a visit to Aden by Lord Lloyd, the then Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, to present certain moderate, but at that moment over-ambitious, proposals for further advance towards self-government: these included an entirely elected legislature, an elected ministry, recognition of Arabic as an official language, and a reduction in the number of British officers in senior posts.<sup>10</sup>

Lord Lloyd's words to the Legislative Council on 18 May brought little hope of more rapid advance.

There is no reason why you cannot expect to achieve further constitutional development in due course. Many of you have a perfectly legitimate desire to take a greater part in the affairs of Government and there is no reason why this desire should not be realized. But I should like you to understand that for the foreseeable future it would not be reasonable or sensible, or indeed in the interests of the Colony's inhabitants, for them to aspire to any aim beyond that of a considerable degree of internal self-government.<sup>11</sup>

He concluded with the words:

Her Majesty's Government wish to make it clear that the importance of Aden both strategically and economically within the Commonwealth is such that they cannot foresee the possibility of any fundamental relaxation of their responsibilities for the Colony. I feel confident that this assurance will be welcome to you and to the great majority of the inhabitants of the Colony.

<sup>10</sup> *Observer*, 20 May 1956.

<sup>11</sup> *The Times*, 21 May 1956.

The paternalistic tone of Lord Lloyd's speech was typical of the attitude adopted by successive administrations in their dealings with the Colony.

Lord Lloyd's visit to Aden took place shortly after Egypt, Saudi Arabia, and the Yemen had signed a military agreement which among other things provided for the defence of Aden Colony and Protectorate,<sup>12</sup> and at a time when President Nasser was still very much the idol of the Arab nationalist world. Cyprus, furthermore, had already provided one unpleasant lesson, but the policy towards Aden gave no hint that the lesson had been learnt. Indeed the idea that it might be worth considering the moderates' proposals, as the most effective counterblast to the extreme nationalist opposition, seems to have been discarded.

Another step forward was, however, taken in November 1957, when further constitutional changes for the Executive and Legislative Councils were announced.<sup>13</sup> Under this constitution, which became law in November 1958, the new Legislative Council was to consist of 12 elected, 5 *ex officio*, and 6 nominated members and a Speaker appointed by the Governor. The proposals removed the official majority in the Legislative Council, and gave the responsibility for the departments of education, public works, communications, labour and social service, and medicine to five members of the Legislative Council, three of whom were to be elected. Seats were to be provided for the five members in charge of departments in the Executive Council. The Governor still kept reserved executive and legislative powers, but Arabic was for the first time recognized as an alternative official language to English in the Legislative Council. The term of each legislature was extended from three to four years.

<sup>12</sup> *Observer*, 20 May 1956.

<sup>13</sup> *The Times*, 12 Nov. 1957.

## **The 1959 election and the Aden TUC**

Opposition, not only to the proposals themselves but also to the limited franchise, caused 73 per cent of the voters to observe the Aden TUC boycott of the elections held in January 1959. The franchise was extended to any male over the age of 21 who was either a British subject born in the colony (roughly 60,000) or, not being born there, was a British subject or protected person who had resided in Aden for two out of the three years immediately preceding the application for registration, provided that he also fulfilled certain minimum property and income qualifications. Out of a total population in 1959 of some 180,000, the number of registered voters was 21,554. What angered the Arabs, and still does, was that Indians, Pakistanis, and Somalis could be eligible by virtue of Commonwealth citizenship, whereas the great majority of Arabs were not, either because they could not meet the necessary financial qualifications or because they were Yemenis (roughly 70,000). Sixty thousand of the disenfranchised Arabs came from the Protectorate. One of the first tasks of the present legislature, whose life was extended by one year to 1964 in order to avoid elections before the merger of Aden with the Federation of South Arabia, is to revise the franchise. Since 1 July 1960, when the United Somali Republic was proclaimed, Somalis are no longer eligible under the existing system.

Despite, or probably because of, the boycott twelve moderate leaders were elected council members, by some 5,000 voters. The boycott was most successful in the refinery area, which was, not surprisingly, the TUC stronghold. The absence of any of the extreme nationalist leaders from the new Legislative Council was greeted with relief in many quarters, but it brought no promise of peace for the future. Exclusion from the normal political life of the



Colony, although partly the result of their own actions, increased the agitation and unrest amongst the working population, and lent added force to the anti-colonial propaganda broadcast by Cairo radio. The trade unions led by Abdullah al Asnag, secretary-general of the Aden TUC, currently serving a 12-month jail sentence, became inevitably the only mouthpiece for left-wing nationalism.

In theory, of course, as the Colonial Office has indeed claimed, it cannot 'accept the principle that by boycotting an election a party thereby acquires the right to question the validity of the decisions which may subsequently be taken by the Legislature',<sup>14</sup> but it may not always be practical politics to uphold the principle too vigorously when guiding a Colony like Aden towards self-government.

### **Strikes as a political weapon**

The economy of the Colony rests largely on the services supplied by a predominantly Arab labour force, many of whom are union members. It was inevitable, therefore, that as the extreme nationalist and pro-Nasser opposition grew the number of strikes increased. In 1959 there were some eighty-four strikes (not all of them necessarily political) which caused the loss of nearly 150,000 man-days of work, threatening to bring the industrial life of the Colony to a standstill, and seriously to prejudice Aden's economic future.

One immediate result of this period of growing political and industrial unrest was that government-sponsored legislation was introduced in August 1960 in an effort to control strike action. The Industrial Relations (Conciliation and Arbitration) Ordinance was based on a report made by Mr Fellows, a former trade unionist and expert on

<sup>14</sup> Mr Sandys in the Commons debate on Aden on 13 Nov. 1962. *H.C. Deb.*, vol. 667, col. 249.

industrial relations, who visited the Colony at the Government's request to investigate the causes of the industrial strife. The ordinance aimed at providing a speedy and efficacious method of settling industrial disputes. In future trade unions were restricted in their right to strike, and the employers in their right to effect a lockout; and labour officers were charged with the duty of attempting to bring about the amicable settlement of disputes. All disputes which could not be settled amicably were to be referred to the Industrial Court, which, subject to certain provisos, could make an award binding on parties to the dispute. Freedom of association of workers was specifically guaranteed under the ordinance. An ordinance introduced at the same time provided for the establishment of wages councils to make recommendations on the conditions, pay, &c., of workers in industry, where no adequate provisions already existed for their regulation.

In effect the Industrial Relations Ordinance, by providing for compulsory arbitration, made strikes illegal. The Aden TUC had undoubtedly concerned itself as much with constitutional as with industrial matters; there had been a steady deterioration in labour relations; and the TUC had refused to accept the principles of arbitration. Much of this was, however, due to the political situation; and it was not a problem that could be solved in the long run by legislating against the fundamental right of any trade union movement to withdraw labour. A general strike was called by the Aden TUC in protest against the bill on 15 August, when it came before the Legislative Council. The strike closed down the port, airport, shops, and restaurants, and the Legislative Council passed the bill by 13 votes to 8 after a debate in which some of the non-official and nominated members walked out of the assembly in protest.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 16 Aug. 1960.

Ironically it had been a feature of British policy to encourage trade unionism in the Colony, and legal provision for trade unions in Aden had been made in 1942. The Aden TUC was recognized by the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions in 1956, only three years after the first two Arab unions had been registered. The number of unions increased rapidly in the second half of the 1950's, as young Adeni nationalists, encouraged by radio propaganda from Cairo, began to appreciate the opportunities to mobilize opposition to the British colonial presence presented by the unions. Some thirty unions were registered between 1953 and 1956, and by 1963 the total paid-up membership of the Aden TUC, recently described by the ICFTU as the most highly developed union movement in the Middle East, was approximately 22,000.

Outwardly, at least, this legislation, strongly criticized in a recent report of the ILO,<sup>16</sup> did bring a spell of industrial peace to the Colony. It did not, however, end the increasingly anti-British outlook of the trade-union leaders, whose aims were known to include the expulsion of the British from Aden, the overthrow of the existing constitution, the destruction of the Federation of Arab Emirates of the South, and the formation of a single state made up of the Colony, the Western Protectorate, and the Yemen, either as part of the UAR, or in close association with it.<sup>17</sup> In August 1960 an Aden newspaper, *Recorder*, reported that the TUC had demanded United Nations trusteeship for Aden as a preliminary step to self-determination on the grounds that the United Kingdom had failed to adhere to the United Nations Charter in the administration of the Colony.<sup>18</sup>

It was hardly surprising that moderate Colony leaders, fearing a premature United Kingdom withdrawal in the

<sup>16</sup> 23 Nov. 1962, *H.C. Deb.*, vol. 669, col. 1604.

<sup>17</sup> *Sunday Times*, 14 Aug. 1960.

<sup>18</sup> *Dawn*, 29 Aug. 1960.

face of this nationalist opposition, began to favour some sort of alliance with the rulers of the Federation. Although in the long run Adeni leaders hoped either for union with the Protectorates or for an eventual union with the Yemen, in present circumstances no Colony leader would have proposed an alliance with the hitherto despised feudal rulers of the Protectorate. The rulers of the Federation for their part, anxious lest a British withdrawal should weaken their control over dissident tribesmen, welcomed Aden's accession to the Federation as a means of confirming their own positions.

## The Protectorate and the Federation of South Arabia

By the time discussions on a merger between the Colony and the Federation of Arab Emirates of the South<sup>1</sup> began in December 1960 the Federation itself consisted of ten of the eighteen States of the Western Protectorate, and had been working for nearly two years, with some of the appearances of constitutional rule. Quite apart from the problem of attracting the other States of the Protectorate, the basic problem was, and still is, how to associate Aden with a federation of more or less autocratic rulers, who have naturally enough little incentive to disturb the *status quo*. Even in those States where the powers of the ruler have been limited by advisory and executive councils this has been done by the voluntary action of the ruler not of the people, and the councils, where they exist, do so at the will of the ruler not of the people, and in any case normally consist of the ruler's own nominees.

The United Kingdom gradually incurred the responsibility of protecting the twenty-four States of the surrounding hinterland, known as the Aden Protectorate (some 112,000 square miles, with an estimated population of some 650,000). Between the occupation of Aden in 1839 and 1914, when the last of the rulers, the Audhali Sultan, entered into protective treaty relations, the United Kingdom had almost imperceptibly, by a combination of negotiation backed in the last resort by force, brought relative

<sup>1</sup> In March 1961 the Federation was renamed the Federation of South Arabia, because one of the new members was not an Amirate.

peace to an area where tribal conflicts had hitherto been endemic.

It soon became essential, if peace was to be maintained, for the Colonial Office to reconcile the need for some sort of follow-up to the initial pacification campaign with its natural reluctance to undertake further responsibility for the administration of a poor and backward area. A start was made before the Second World War when advisory treaties were signed with two of the States in the Eastern Protectorate—in 1937 with the Qu'aiti Sultan, and in 1939 with the Kathiri Sultan—by which the rulers undertook to accept the advice of a resident British adviser on all matters except those concerning Mohammedan religion and custom. After the war similar treaties were signed with the Wahidi Sultan of Balhaf in 1949, and with the Sultan of Qishn and Socotra in 1954, both from the Eastern Protectorate, whilst in 1944 and 1945 five of the Western Protectorate chiefs (the Sultans of Fadhli, Lower Aulaqi and Lower Yafa'i, the Sharif of Beihan, and the Amir of Dhala) entered into closer relations with the United Kingdom. They agreed among other things to abide by the advice of the Governor of Aden in the improvement of their administrations. The Sheikh of Upper Aulaqi and the Audhali Sultan signed similar treaties in 1951, and in the same year the newly elected Sultan of Lahej also signed an advisory treaty and accepted a political officer as adviser.

The United Kingdom has never administered the Protectorate directly. The advisory treaties only granted the most limited powers of jurisdiction and legislation to the colonial administrator, who consistently tried to increase the authority of the local ruler, and to create an administration capable of running at least rudimentary services. However, events have begun to outstrip such policies. The coming and going of some 40,000 Protectorate inhabitants

in quest of the work which Aden has to offer, the improved air and road communications, and the transistor radio have inevitably brought the remotest parts of the Protectorate into contact with the world outside. Some rulers have made changes, but the majority have not; and the United Kingdom under the present treaty arrangements has only the power to advise.

### **First steps towards federation**

Federation as a workable political solution for the Protectorate was first seriously discussed in the early 1950's. A scheme was worked out by Mr (now Sir Kennedy) Trevasakis, then Adviser for the Western Protectorate, amended in the course of discussions with the Governor and his advisers, and finally submitted to London for approval, which it received. The proposals were simple, envisaging in the first instance two separate federal structures—one for the Eastern, and one for the Western Protectorate, thereby making allowance for the more advanced administrative machinery in the eastern States, and for the natural tendency of those States to keep themselves apart. The head of both federal structures was to be the High Commissioner for the Protectorate (also the Governor of Aden); and the federal Governments were each to consist of a Council of Rulers, or a working committee of the Council consisting of three representatives for each ruler, and Executive and Legislative Councils of nominated members. The federal authorities were, in the first instance, only to be responsible for those departments (customs, communications, education, and public health) which lend themselves to central control and which were, except for customs, already subject to direction by advice under advisory treaties. Independent internal authority for each State was to remain the concern of each ruler, although it

was hoped that as the advantages of federal control became apparent, so the functions of government would gradually be transferred to the federal authorities.

A centralized customs service was essential so that the new federations could begin to finance themselves, instead of relying almost entirely upon subsidies from the British taxpayer. One efficient system instead of a multiplicity of inefficient ones would have reduced administrative costs and enabled realistic levies to be raised from certain goods such as cotton lint. It would have meant that the federal authorities could have asked the Colony for a customs drawback on goods imported into the Protectorate which under the old system were subject to full Colony duty or excise, for example tobacco and petroleum products. This last would have enabled the federal authorities to impose their own import duties, thereby increasing their revenue without raising retail prices.

When the proposals for federation were put before the rulers in January 1954 the Governor, Sir Tom Hickinbotham, emphasized that the scheme was only intended to provide a framework, which was to be filled in after close consultation with the rulers. The general principle of federation was accepted by those present at the meeting, and the rulers returned to their States for further discussions with their advisers. Negotiations were begun with individual rulers and at first progress was made. The United Kingdom, anxious lest she be accused of imposing federation, did not set a deadline or try to hasten the negotiations.

External pressure against federation mounted as the period of negotiation lengthened. When anti-British feeling in Egypt reached new heights in 1954 over the Canal base, it was reflected in violent anti-federation propaganda relayed throughout the Protectorate, in which individual rulers were accused of betraying their subjects to colonialism. British counter-propaganda in the Protectorate had,



and still has, much to learn from the Egyptian techniques, which had been efficiently and effectively developed. The range of the Aden broadcasting station was only increased from 50 to some 1,000 miles in 1958: the Government's reason for the delay being that the cost of the new equipment would be some £20,000 more than it was prepared to pay.<sup>2</sup> Even by 1962 broadcasting from Aden was limited in output and of low quality, because the budget allocation was not sufficient to buy better programmes. Radio Cairo and San'a meanwhile broadcast almost continuously.

Pressure against the federal proposals also came from the Yemen and from Saudi Arabia; and the Arab League sent a protest mission to the Governor of Aden. It was not surprising, in view of the prevailing atmosphere and the United Kingdom's reluctance to apply pressure, that the negotiations were dropped until the rulers themselves requested their resumption.

Two years later, in March 1956, the question of federation was brought up again by certain rulers. By now the United Kingdom had dropped her earlier proposals and offered simply to guide and assist the states 'to seek some form of close association with each other for mutual assistance and support' which the 'rulers and peoples of these states are entirely free to negotiate among themselves'.<sup>3</sup> Suspicions that federation might reduce their power, together with the ancient tribal squabbles and personal rivalries among the rulers (which had already destroyed any prospect of federation in the Eastern Protectorate), prevented any real chance of agreement until 1958.

## **Lahej**

The Yemen's accession to the United Arab States, with Egypt and Syria, on 9 March 1958 (see below, p. 85)

<sup>2</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 26 May 1958.

<sup>3</sup> *The Times*, 2 Apr. 1956.

increased the threat of external pressure on the Protectorate States and impelled the rulers to conclude that collaboration among themselves would provide the only effective long-term protection of their independence. This was not all. A month later it was rumoured that the Sultan of Lahej, the ruler of the largest, wealthiest, and most developed State in the Western Protectorate, who had already expressed doubts about federation<sup>4</sup> (particularly since it was becoming clear that he would not assume a leading role in a British-sponsored federation), was planning to contract out of the Protectorate, to join the United Arab Republic.<sup>5</sup> Under the influence of his friends and advisers, the Jifri brothers, the British-educated Sultan, Sir Ali Abdul Karim, had come to associate his future with Arab nationalism, with himself as leader of a united Southern Arabia as envisaged by Muhammad Ali Jifri's political group, the South Arabian League. Lahej was the only State in the Aden Protectorate where direct Egyptian influence was felt, since at least half the school teachers were from Egypt.<sup>6</sup>

Shortly after the Sultan's intentions were known, troops were rushed to Lahej from Aden in an attempt to arrest the Jifri brothers for organizing subversion throughout the Protectorate. One brother, the Minister of Education, was arrested, the other two fled to Cairo.<sup>7</sup> On 26 June the Commandant of the Lahej state forces deserted with a considerable number of men and some state funds. The British Government, certain that the Sultan must at least have condoned these actions, withdrew recognition and banished him in July.

The real difficulty was that the Yemen's adherence to the UAR, although it did not last long, and changed little in Yemen-UAR relations except to increase their basic

<sup>4</sup> *The Times*, 14 May, 14 June 1958.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 11 July 1958.

<sup>6</sup> OFNS, 18 May 1958.

<sup>7</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 11 July 1958.

mutual disenchantment, made it possible for nationalists in Aden and the Protectorate to be both enlightened and anti-British. It became possible to look not to the obscurantist theocracy of the Yemen, but to the pan-Arabism of President Nasser, which in 1958 seemed to be on the way to engulfing the Arab world including the British position in Southern Arabia. This was the source of the trouble in Lahej, whatever part individuals had played there, and the other rulers of the Protectorate were quick to recognize that the same trouble might break out elsewhere.

### **The federal constitution is signed**

This was the context in which the rulers from the Western Protectorate visited London in the summer of 1958 to urge the speedy establishment of a federation, with guarantees from the United Kingdom Government of more British troops and aircraft to defend their borders, and increased economic aid to counteract the financial pressure exerted on their subjects from outside. The Sultan Salih bin Hussein of Audhali estimated the amount of money needed to strengthen the States of the Western Protectorate to resist subversion, pressure, and propaganda from the Yemen (which was known to have received Russian arms)<sup>8</sup> and Egypt, at about £20 million a year,<sup>9</sup> and the amount needed by his own State at about £1 million a year.<sup>10</sup>

The financing of Protectorate government services was, and still is, the responsibility of the United Kingdom Government, as opposed to the local State Governments many of whom have only very small sums to dispose of. In 1958–9 the revenue of Lahej was just under £200,000, whilst that

<sup>8</sup> *Manchester Guardian*, 6 June 1958.

<sup>9</sup> *Financial Times*, 11 Feb. 1959.

<sup>10</sup> *New York Times*, 6 June 1958.

of the wealthiest of all the Protectorate States, Qu'aiti, was some £546,630.<sup>11</sup>

On 11 February 1959 in the presence of the Colonial Secretary and the Governor of Aden, the chiefs of the Western Protectorate States of Beihan, Audhali, Fadhli, Dhala, Upper Aulaqi, and Lower Yafa signed the constitution of the Federation of Arab Emirates of the South, took the oath of allegiance and signed a new treaty with the United Kingdom Government.<sup>12</sup> In the treaty the United Kingdom gave guarantees of internal and external protection and of financial and military aid to help the Federation to progress towards independent statehood. The Federation, on the other hand, undertook not to enter into any treaty, agreement, correspondence, or other relations with any foreign State, Government, or international organization without the knowledge and consent of the United Kingdom Government.

Although amendments were made in detail, it was to this basic federal constitution that Aden Colony acceded in January 1963. The constitution provides: that the general executive authority of the Federal Government be vested in a Supreme Council, responsible for the initiation of all legislation, and consisting of not more than six ministers, elected by and from the members of the Federal Council, which in turn is made up of six elected representatives of each member State of the Federation; that the Supreme Council appoints all staff of the federal public service, which is organized into ministries and departments; that all revenues go to the Federal Consolidated Fund from which all expenditure is met; that the federal authorities have exclusive legislative and executive authority in respect of law, order, and good government within

<sup>11</sup> Great Britain, Colonial Office, *Aden: Report for the years 1957 and 1958* (1961), p. 100.

<sup>12</sup> Treaty of Friendship and Protection between the United Kingdom and the Federation of Arab Emirates of the South (Cmd. 665).

the Federation, and that any amendment of the constitution be approved by not less than two-thirds of the members of the Federal Council.

The United Kingdom undertook to provide the Federation with financial and technical assistance to help with its social, economic, and political development, and in the establishment and maintenance of a federal army and a Federal National Guard. The existing Government Guards of the Western Protectorate, numbering 2,000 (all ranks) and responsible for internal security duties, were handed over to the Federation, and formed the nucleus of the Federal National Guard. In November 1961 the Aden Protectorate Levies were transferred to the federal authorities to constitute a federal army. The Levies had been formed in 1928, and were used primarily to guard the airfield, protect Aden on the landward side, and provide small garrisons on Perim and Kamaran Islands. In 1957 the army in Aden took over responsibility for the force, which expanded considerably to over 3,000 (all ranks), and included five infantry battalions, an armoured-car squadron, and a signals unit. Arabs are replacing British troops in all detachments, but for some time to come the federal army will have to rely on Middle East headquarters in Aden. The security forces cost the United Kingdom about £4 million each year.

Arab opinion generally was hostile to the Federation, which was much criticized, not least by the Imam of the Yemen, who regarded it as a breach of the undertaking not to disturb the existing *status quo* given by the British in the Treaty of San'a in 1934. Many Arab nationalists, particularly the Aden trade unionists, thought it a device whereby, at the same time, the British could consolidate their position in southern Arabia (a fear confirmed by British talk at the time of an Arab Dominion, possibly including part of the Yemen, within the Commonwealth),

and the rulers could increase their chances of survival. Indeed the secretary-general of the Arab League called on all the member-states of the League to unite in an effort to destroy the Federation.<sup>13</sup>

By the time discussion opened on Aden's accession to the Federation, four more Western Protectorate States had joined it, including Lahej in October 1959;<sup>14</sup> and the foundation stone of the federal capital, Ittihad City, had been laid at Bir Ahmed.<sup>15</sup>

### **Aden's accession**

Paradoxically, as the United Kingdom's enthusiasm for a constitutional link between the Colony and the Federation increased, that of the Colony and Federation ministers, who had initiated the discussions, diminished. Preparatory talks were held between the Governor and ministers of the Federation and Colony (in January 1961 the title of member-in-charge was changed to minister)<sup>16</sup> in Aden and London during 1961 and the earlier part of 1962. A constitutional conference was held in London in July and August 1962, and on the basis of agreement reached, a draft treaty was signed on 16 August.

Throughout the eighteen months of negotiation an uneasy peace prevailed in the Colony. There were few strikes, although a number of union officials were imprisoned on charges of sedition and encouraging strikes, contrary to the provisions of the Industrial Relations Ordinance,<sup>17</sup> but basically there was no change in TUC policy towards the United Kingdom Government. Broadly speaking the two

<sup>13</sup> *Le Monde*, 5 Feb. 1959.

<sup>14</sup> *The Times*, 5 Oct. 1959; *Guardian*, 12 Feb. 1960.

<sup>15</sup> *The Times*, 30 Sept. 1959.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* 17 Jan. 1961.

<sup>17</sup> For example Abdullah Ali Murshid, secretary-general of the Technical Workers' Union, who was sentenced to 24 months' rigorous imprisonment in November 1961 (*The Times*, 25 Nov. 1961).

main currents of nationalist opposition came, first, from the moderates, who wanted a new constitution to enable a democratically-elected government to negotiate the union, and, secondly, from the extreme nationalists of the TUC and the South Arabia League (most of whose leaders were in voluntary exile in Cairo), who demanded immediate independence for the Colony and the Protectorate outside the Commonwealth, but with the Yemen.

The United Nationalist Party, the most moderate political group, repeated their 1956 proposals of internal self-government for the Colony to Mr Macleod, the then Colonial Secretary, when he visited the Colony in April 1961;<sup>18</sup> and by the time the talks began in London in July 1962 many Aden moderates were already having second thoughts about the merger as proposed, although still favouring some sort of link in principle. One Aden minister, Mr Saidi, who before his death led the People's Congress Party, was forced to resign in May 1962, because he refused to sign a secret preparatory agreement on the merger.<sup>19</sup>

The most serious threat to the British plans for Aden still came from the trade-union movement, which in the summer of 1962 formed its own political party, the People's Socialist Party, three of whose leading members were Aden barristers.<sup>20</sup> The Aden TUC called a general protest strike on 23 July to coincide with the opening of the talks in London, and despite a government ban of 5 September on all processions, organized a mass demonstration in protest against the federation proposals being discussed in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>21</sup>

By the terms of the merger treaty of 16 August 1962<sup>22</sup> Aden Colony was to become a State of the Federation of South Arabia by 1 March 1963, or earlier (Art. 3); British

<sup>18</sup> *Daily Telegraph*, 4 Apr. 1961.

<sup>19</sup> *Observer*, 22 July 1962; *Guardian*, 22 Aug. 1962.

<sup>20</sup> *The Times*, 17 July 1962.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.* 25 Sept. 1962.

<sup>22</sup> Cmnd. 1814.

sovereignty over Aden was not affected, although the United Kingdom undertook 'that it will not exercise its sovereign powers so as to withdraw Aden at any time from the Federation during the currency of this treaty' (Art. 8), but reserved the right to 'exclude or withdraw at any time from the Federation any area or areas within Aden, if it considers this desirable for the purposes of its world-wide defence responsibilities' (Art. 9). A procedure for, but not a right of, secession was granted to Aden, effective only in the seventh year after the treaty came into force (Art. 10). And here it is worth noting that even if successful Aden can only secede in order to become a British colony once more.

The Colony, with more than half the population of the Federation, was to be represented by 24 members in the Federal Council (each other state having 6 members), and the number of members required to form a quorum was decreased from two-thirds to one-half, thus ensuring that the Council could function even if all the Aden members boycotted it. Certain provisions apply specifically to Aden: these include that 'the executive and legislative authority of the Governor will prevail over the Federation on matters concerning defence, external affairs, and internal security (including defence and security forces)'; that the Privy Council shall be the final court of appeal in most cases affecting Aden; and that 'the Constitution of the Federation shall be subject to the code of fundamental human rights established by the Constitution of Aden'.

Once the union had taken place it was laid down that all the *ex-officio* members except the Attorney-General would retire from the Aden Executive and Legislative Councils, and that the Governor, who was to be known as High Commissioner (a change in name not function), was to appoint a chief minister to advise him on the composition of a council of ministers, on whose advice he would



henceforth act, except in those matters covered by his reserved powers.

### **The Yemeni coup and Aden's future**

Between the signing of the draft treaty and the ratification of the proposals by the Aden Legislative Council and the House of Commons, events in the Yemen once again began to play their part in the constitutional development of Aden. On 19 September 1962 it was announced from San'a that the 71-year-old Imam Ahmed had died of natural causes, and that his son Crown Prince Muhammad al Badr, had succeeded to the Imamate. Eight days later San'a radio reported that Imam Muhammad had been overthrown in a military coup and that a republic had been proclaimed. The republican coup could not have been worse timed from the United Kingdom point of view (its success is irrelevant in this context), since it served to highlight and accentuate the basically unreconcilable objectives of the United Kingdom and the Protectorate rulers on one side and the majority of Adenis on the other, before Aden's accession to the Federation was an accomplished fact.

The news from the Yemen, not unnaturally, had quite different effects on the federal rulers and on the people of the Colony. The former, fearing a precedent too near home for comfort, sent three federal ministers to London, first, to discuss the new situation across the border with the Colonial Secretary, secondly, to find out what attitude the United Kingdom would adopt towards the new revolutionary régime, and, thirdly, to discover whether the uprising would affect the proposals for Aden's accession to the Federation. For many in the Colony, the end of the barbarous régime of the Imams removed one of the most serious obstacles to a future union of the peoples of the

south. While no-one expected a sudden transformation in the Yemen, which in most respects was only beginning to emerge from the middle ages, the change of régime caused Adenis to appreciate to what extent Aden's accession to the Federation, with no right of secession, would strengthen an institution designed to perpetuate the existing *status quo* in the Protectorate.

There were those, and they were not all from the TUC, who had already made an unfavourable comparison between Aden's proposed accession to the Federation and union with the Yemen. As Mr Saidi put it when in London in August to lobby against the merger: 'In Aden we are opposed to Yemen because it is feudal, but there is only one Imam there. There will be 26 Imams in the Federation.'<sup>23</sup> Of course this was an exaggeration, and Mr Saidi knew it to be one, but there was certainly no provision in the federal constitution to ensure political advance in the other states of the Federation against the wish of the local ruler. As anti-federation propaganda it was an effective slogan, and the British Government made little effort to counter it.

The federal rulers were defended in the House of Commons Aden debate on 13 November by Nigel Fisher, Under Secretary of State for the Colonies: they 'are not nearly as feudal' as commonly described 'they are democratically elected for five-year periods by their fellow-Members in the Federal Council' to the Supreme Council of the Federation, and 'the leaders are elected . . . by the tribal leaders, who are themselves elected by their tribes in their own way'. Many States have Legislative Councils representing all sections of the community, and Lahej 'is a constitutional sultanate, with its own Legislative Council and municipal councils', with municipal elections due in 1963.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *The Times*, 22 Aug. 1962.

<sup>24</sup> H.C. Deb., vol. 667, coll. 321-2.

Mr Fisher did not, however, remind members that in 1956 the constitutional sultan had been deposed by the United Kingdom Government.

To charges of rushing the merger through without elections, particularly in view of the implications of the Yemeni coup, Mr Sandys replied that he did not believe that if the United Kingdom Government were to postpone the merger by waiting for elections 'the Federal Government would be willing to reopen these difficult negotiations' with any new Aden Government,<sup>25</sup> (or as Nigel Fisher later put it with 'less moderate Colony Ministers'). The weakness of that argument, as Mr Healey pointed out in the Opposition reply, was that if the merger was 'so fragile and delicately poised that a delay of three, four or six months would wither their [the sheikhs'] enthusiasm'<sup>26</sup> for it then there must be something wrong with it. The government case was that general elections in Aden would have one of two results: either the People's Socialist Party would win, the merger would then be off, and the PSP would agitate for union with the Yemen, which 'would be totally unacceptable both to the Protectorate and to Her Majesty's Government', or one of the more moderate groups would win and the merger would go ahead as before, except that a year would have been lost. In the Commons the Opposition was not convinced; the bill was passed by 253 to 181 votes.

It was not only the Opposition in Westminster that remained unconvinced; it was questionable whether any moderate Aden group elected to office would have gone ahead with the merger as proposed, since most political groups were opposed to a number of the treaty's provisions. Mr Husseiny, Minister of Education and Public Relations until his resignation on 14 November 1962 and leader of the People's Party, was expressing views shared

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.* coll. 250-2.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.* col. 256.

by a number of Aden politicians when he wrote in his letter of resignation to Mr Sandys, 'of my conviction of imminent danger to general interests, if the British Government were to insist in rushing the merger plan'. He went on: 'The federation and merger plans have often been presented as steps to Arab unity, but I have pointed out to you that to disassociate or separate any of the people of the south is practically impossible.'<sup>27</sup> Mr Husseiny was, in fact, one of the four elected members who voted for the merger plan on 26 September after the debate in the Legislative Council; it was on 27 September that the news came from San'a of the overthrow of Imam Muhammad. The other eight elected members in the Legislative Council abstained from voting, seven because they opposed the bill, and one because he felt he had been insulted during the debate; the five official and six nominated members, and the Speaker, voted in favour of the proposals. Six of the elected members favoured immediate self-government for Aden, in place of, or certainly before, federation.<sup>28</sup>

There is no doubt that if the People's Socialist Party won elections the merger would be off, and the party would agitate for union with the Yemen. However it was already clear that the PSP, backed by the strength of the TUC, did not need to win elections to do this. On the other hand, for as long as the United Kingdom remains vitally interested in the Aden base, union with the Yemen, whatever its eventual system of government or political allegiance, will be unacceptable to her, particularly since, for the PSP nationalists, union with the Yemen implies immediate British withdrawal from the Arabian Peninsula. Furthermore, whether or not any sign of change in British defence thinking about Aden can be detected, the Foreign Office case for retaining the base as a stabilizing influence while

<sup>27</sup> *The Times*, 16 Nov. 1962.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.* 27 Sept. 1962.

so much of Arabia is in a state of upheaval has gathered strength from recent events in the Yemen.

The Colony moderates are more concerned with getting full internal self-government, leading over a period of some five years to complete independence, and many have merely been antagonized by the United Kingdom's insistence in proceeding with the Federation in spite of the September revolt in the Yemen; the extreme nationalists were by this time opposed to all proposals falling short of British withdrawal, and union with the Yemen.

So far, the outstanding achievement of the Sandys plan has been to unite nearly all political opinion in the Colony against the Federation; it has done nothing to convince the Aden Arabs that the United Kingdom has a policy for the future of the Protectorate that is in their own interests as well as in the interest of the protecting power. Strikes and bomb-throwing incidents helped to maintain a tense atmosphere in the Colony, but the constitutional changes were in fact greeted with less agitation and unrest than had been feared. On 17 December Aden's Legislative Council, sitting as an electoral college, elected four out of the fifty-one Aden Arabs contesting the four seats vacated by the retiring British *ex-officio* members in the Council.<sup>29</sup> The Federation was inaugurated on 16 January 1963,<sup>30</sup> and the next day Mr Hassan Ali Bayoomi, leader of the United Nationalist Party, member-in-charge of labour relations when the Industrial Relations Ordinance was passed in 1960, and a firm advocate of the merger as proposed despite the fact that six of his party's candidates were soundly beaten in local municipal elections on 7 October,<sup>31</sup> announced his eight-member cabinet.<sup>32</sup> The Aden Govern-

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 18 Dec. 1962.

<sup>30</sup> The Federation of South Arabia (Accession of Aden) Order 1963. It came into effect on 18 January 1963.

<sup>31</sup> *Observer*, 14 Oct. 1962.

<sup>32</sup> *The Times*, 18 Jan. 1963.

ment selects the twenty-four Aden representatives to the Federal Council, and Aden has been allotted four ministers in the Federal Government.

The Bayoomi Government and the TUC were soon at loggerheads over the question of the amendment or revocation of the Industrial Relations Ordinance, and by the end of March 1963 the TUC refused to extend recognition to the Government, on the grounds that it was unrepresentative. Mr Bayoomi died in June, and was succeeded as Chief Minister by Zain Abdu Baharun, the Finance Minister. At 32 Mr Baharun was the youngest member of the Legislative Council, and since he had no party affiliations, it was hoped that under his leadership the Government would make progress on the urgent task of preparing new franchise laws.

Despite the fact that elections must be held within three months of the end of the life of the Legislative Assembly on 25 January 1964, no agreement had been reached on the franchise. The constitutional conference due to be held in London in December 1963 had to be postponed for two months after a bomb attempt was made on the life of the High Commissioner, Sir Kennedy Trevaskis, as he and other delegates to the London conference were about to board a plane at Aden airport.

Decisions must be made on two major points besides the question of the extension of the franchise. First, agreement must be reached on the constitutional advance of Aden Colony as a State within the Federation of South Arabia. As Mr Baharun, who seeks drastic changes in the constitution providing for Aden's accession to the Federation, said at a press conference at the beginning of the year, Aden's position as a Colony controlled from London within a Federation comprising internally independent States is an unnatural one. Many Adenis, moreover, are already disturbed by the realization that the up-country States of

the Federation have far more control over Aden than was immediately apparent from the terms of the 1963 merger. Nor is the Colony reassured by the recent reappointment by the ninety-four members of the unrepresentative Federal Council of the Federal Ministers for a further five-year period. In contrast to the undemocratic processes of the Federal Government, many Adenis want to see the Aden Legislative Assembly become a wholly elected body, without the seven nominated members.

Secondly, some sort of compromise must be reached on the next steps towards ultimate independence for the Federation as a whole, if the good will and co-operation of the local rulers are to be maintained. Already requests have been made for independence in 1964, together with a high rent from the United Kingdom for the continued use of the base facilities.

### **The Eastern Protectorate**

Whatever the future of the Federation of South Arabia, the problem of the five States of the Eastern Protectorate so far remains unsolved. The six western States which were not already members of the Federation at the time of Aden's accession, have all applied to join, and one State, the Sultanate of Haushabi, has been accepted as the thirteenth member.

The eastern States, which cover twice the area of the western, with less than half of the 650,000 inhabitants of the Protectorate, have much in common with their western neighbours. The land is 98 per cent uncultivable, being mostly desert and barren mountains intersected by wadis (ravines formed by intermittent watercourses) some of which are fertile; and it cannot entirely support its people. Ninety per cent of the population is engaged in agriculture, and the rest in traditional crafts such as dyeing,

weaving, fishing, and the preparation of hides and skins.

The United Kingdom, in the five years 1956–61, made grants to the Protectorate of some £5.5 million and loans of approximately £1 million. A further £5,694,000 was spent directly by the United Kingdom on Protectorate services.<sup>33</sup> The eastern States are advised by a British resident in Mukalla, the capital of Qu'aiti; the two principal States, Qu'aiti and Kathiri, are administered by their Sultans as constitutional rulers with State Councils. The 2,000 strong Hadhrami Beduin Legion, whose duties are defined as border defence and political liaison with the Beduin, is entirely financed by Her Majesty's Government. Each State also has its own force under the control of the local ruler.

So far the eastern States have shown little enthusiasm for federating either with the western States or among themselves. Traditionally the eastern States have looked to the East, and it was to places like India, with whom there are strong cultural links, Java, Malaya, and Hong Kong, that the Protectorate emigrants went in search of work (in contrast to the people of the Western Protectorate, who went to Aden). Money was sent home by these emigrants to support their families. This remittance economy, which before the war brought in £600,000 a year from the Dutch East Indies alone, left a tradition of civilized urban society which made for greater stability than elsewhere in the Protectorate. Recently, however, exchange controls, particularly in Indonesia, have been tightened, and many emigrants have been forced either to return home or to seek work elsewhere, for example in Saudi Arabia.

The process of pacification began earlier in the east than the west, and once tribal disputes had been brought to an end, it was possible to go ahead with the development of

<sup>33</sup> 28 Mar. 1961, H.C. Deb., vol. 637, coll. 1125–6.



government organization and social services. Considerable progress had already been made, for example, in the Hadhramaut in the late 1930's, and there are now well-established educational facilities, particularly in the states of Kathiri and Qu'aiti. Although the eastern States have had their security problems, there has never been systematic subversion and frontier warfare like that from the Yemen that has so hampered advance in the Western Protectorate. The Saudis have from time to time in the past encouraged dissident elements among the tribesmen near the frontier of the 'empty quarter', and conflicts amongst the armed and unpredictable Badu tribesmen have had to be quelled. Recently there have been disturbances over lorry convoys, which are gradually replacing the traditional camel caravans on which the tribal camel owners relied for their incomes.

As long as the rulers of Kathiri and Qu'aiti continue to dream of oil, it is unlikely that the United Kingdom will be able to persuade the eastern States to federate amongst themselves. The chances of oil discovery are thought to be slight by all except the sheikhs, who have shown little desire to share any oil revenue that might be gained with their neighbouring States. Petroleum Concessions Ltd., a British subsidiary of the Iraq Petroleum Company, was awarded an exploration licence in 1938 for the whole of the Protectorate territory and this has been renewed periodically. A geological and geophysical party visited the Thamud area in 1958, and the next year an application was made for an exploitation concession. A draft agreement was submitted, through the Governor of Aden, to the Kathiri and Qu'aiti rulers, each of whom claimed the Thamud area but finally agreed on the division of any profits from the concession. Negotiations were broken off with PCL in April 1960, as the company was not prepared to accept the terms demanded by the two Sultans. Eighteen

months later an exploration concession was signed with the Pan American Oil Company, which provided for profit-sharing on a 55-45 per cent basis in favour of the rulers.<sup>34</sup> In July 1963 the Pan American Oil Company signed a concession with Mahra State.

<sup>34</sup> *Beyrouth Express*, 2 Dec. 1961.

## Aden's Neighbours

THE Aden Protectorate is bordered by the independent State of Muscat and Oman to the east and Saudi Arabia and the Yemen to the north.

### **Muscat and Oman**

The United Kingdom has maintained friendly relations with the Sultan of Muscat and Oman for some two centuries, and has tried throughout this period, first, to secure co-operation in suppressing piracy, slavery, and arms traffic, and, secondly, to maintain the independence of the sultanate whenever it was threatened by aggression from abroad or subversion from within. The United Kingdom has given an undertaking, rather similar to that given to Kuwait in 1961, to come to the aid of Muscat and Oman if asked to do so. In exchange the United Kingdom is permitted to overfly the Sultan's territory and to refuel there, thus cutting off the easterly corner of the Arabian peninsula on flights between Aden and the top of the Persian Gulf.

There has never been any border trouble between the Protectorate and Muscat and Oman.

### **Saudi Arabia**

The frontier with Saudi Arabia, whose inhabitants are, like those of Aden and the Yemen, predominantly Arabs of the Shafai sect of Sunni Moslems, extends right across the Eastern Protectorate and part of the way across the

Western. The Saudis have attempted from time to time to stir up trouble among dissident elements on the Protectorate-Saudi border, but traditionally the United Kingdom has supported the House of Saud. By a treaty of friendship signed in December 1915 with Ibn Saud, she recognized the latter's independence and guaranteed the integrity of his territories; and Ibn Saud undertook to maintain free access to the Holy Places, to protect pilgrims, and also to refrain from all aggression against, or interference with the territories of Kuwait and Bahrain and of the Sheikhs of Qatar and the Trucial Coast. This treaty was replaced on 20 May 1927 by a treaty of friendship and good relations signed at Jidda, whereby the United Kingdom recognized the complete and absolute independence of Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its dependencies,<sup>1</sup> and Ibn Saud confirmed the undertakings he had given in the earlier treaty. The Treaty of Jidda was renewed in 1934, and in 1943 it was agreed in an exchange of notes that the treaty should henceforth be renewed automatically for periods of seven years at a time, unless six months' notice was given by either party.

Oil, or the prospect of oil, has, however, given rise to a number of disputes between the United Kingdom on behalf of the protected States of the Persian Gulf on the one hand, and Saudi Arabia on the other, beginning in the mid-1930's and culminating in the Buraimi Oasis crisis some twenty years later. In November 1956 Saudi Arabia broke off diplomatic relations with the United Kingdom in protest against the British intervention in Egypt, and for the next six years insisted that the resumption of diplomatic relations be preceded by the settlement of the Buraimi dispute. The republican coup in the Yemen underlined the Saudis' need to carry out reforms at home and to

<sup>1</sup> On 19 September 1932 Ibn Saud changed his title to King of Saudi Arabia.

seek friends abroad; and on 16 January 1963, with the Buraimi dispute still unresolved, diplomatic relations were resumed.

## **The Yemen**

The affairs of the Yemen, in contrast to those of Saudi Arabia, have had a considerable effect upon the development of Aden. For over fifty years the British Government has been involved in spasmodic frontier trouble, first with the Turks, and then with the Yemen Government. The people of the Yemen share many of the characteristics of the inhabitants of Aden Colony and Protectorate—they are of the same race; the majority of the population (those who inhabit the lowland plain between the highlands and the Red Sea, and part of the southern highlands) are of the Shafai sect of Sunni Moslems; they speak the same language and basically regard themselves as one people: 'the people of the south'. By contrast with the Protectorate the Yemen, some 74,000 square miles in area with an estimated population of 4 million, contains in the highlands and central plateau and the higher parts of the maritime range the most fertile parts of Arabia, with an abundant and regular rainfall. Traditionally the port of Aden, often known as the eye of the Yemen, has been the outlet for the Yemen, which supplies Aden Colony and Protectorate with much of its grain.

Until the military coup in September 1962 the Yemen was ruled by the Imam, spiritual head of the minority Zeidi sect, who was both theocratic and temporal head of the State. In theory the Imamate was elective, and a candidate might come from one of the few families whose ancestors had at one time been Imams; recently, however, the succession has followed the rule of primogeniture.

The Yemen formed part of the Ottoman Empire until

the end of the First World War. The Turks had regained control of the whole of the Yemen in 1872 after an interval of some 200 years, and during these years of Turkish rule agreement had been reached on the delimitation of the Aden frontier in May 1904, and had been confirmed in the Anglo-Turkish Convention of March 1914. Yemen uprisings against Turkish rule occurred in 1891, and again after the election of Imam Yahya in 1904, and so in 1911 it was agreed that the Imam should appoint provincial governors in the Zeidi districts of the Yemen, and the Turkish vali in the Shafai and Hanafi districts. With the Turkish withdrawal in 1918 the Yemen became an independent State under Imam Yahya, who soon made it clear that he did not consider himself bound by the pre-war Anglo-Turkish frontier agreement.

Frequent Yemeni raids and incursions, countered by RAF action, continued for the next fifteen years. Several attempts were made to come to an agreement with the Imam, but the negotiations always failed because of his insistence on his claim to the whole of south-western Arabia, including a large part of the Protectorate, and of Aden Colony. The claim, which was not recognized by the tribes or rulers of the Protectorate, was based on the Zeidi Imam's control of the whole territory from about 1630 to about 1730.

A provisional solution was found in the Treaty of San'a, signed between the United Kingdom and the Imam on 11 February 1934,<sup>2</sup> in which the United Kingdom recognized the independence of the Imam as King of the Yemen (Art. 1), Article 3 provided that:

The settlement of the question of the southern frontier of the Yemen is deferred pending the conclusion, in whatever way may be agreed upon by both high contracting parties in a spirit of friendship and complete concord, free from any dispute

<sup>2</sup> Cmd. 4752.

or difference, of the negotiations which shall take place between them before the expiry of the present treaty.

Pending the conclusion of the negotiations referred to in the preceding paragraph, the high contracting parties agree to maintain the situation existing in regard to the frontier on the date of the signature of the treaty, and both high contracting parties undertake that they will prevent by all means at their disposal, any violation by their forces of the above-mentioned frontier, and any interference by their subjects, or from their side of the frontier, with the affairs of the people inhabiting the other side of the said frontier.

The duration of the treaty was for forty years from the date of ratification and it therefore remains in force until 4 September 1974, by which date a permanent settlement of the frontier should have been reached, although the treaty gives no indication of the lines along which an eventual solution might be sought. It seems clear that Imam Yahya regarded the treaty as a licence to the British Government to continue to administer the Protectorate and the Colony; and certainly for some time after 1934 Anglo-Yemeni relations improved considerably. At the suggestion of the Yemen Government, who did not then wish to have a permanent British representative in San'a, both Governments appointed frontier officers to deal with tribal disputes or incidents likely to disturb the peace on the border.

The Yemen remained neutral during the Second World War, and made no open move to take advantage of the hostilities to press her claims to the Protectorate. Nevertheless difficulties arose—on the one hand Imam Yahya objected to the presence in Aden of members of the hostile Free Yemeni party, who received considerable sympathy and support from many Adenis, and on the other hand the Crown Prince Ahmed, Governor of Taiz in the southern Yemen, was thought by the United Kingdom to be encouraging dissident elements in certain Protectorate bor-

der states. Some incidents took place, but the situation deteriorated rapidly after the assassination of Imam Yahya in February 1948 and the accession of his son Ahmed to the Imamate.

The new Imam, not altogether unexpectedly, pursued a frankly anti-British policy and sought, not to settle Yemen's frontier with the Protectorate but to abolish it, and to drive the British from their position in southern Arabia, and replace that presence by Zeidi domination. Once again a series of frontier incidents broke out, and in 1949 the RAF bombed and destroyed a fort built by the Yemen inside the territory of the protected Sheikh of Beihan. The incident precipitated a crisis in which the Yemen threatened to appeal to the United Nations (to which it had been admitted in November 1947); the position was aggravated by the arrival in November 1949 of a Petroleum Concessions Ltd survey team in the district of Shabwah, to which the Yemen had a long-standing claim but which the United Kingdom regarded as part of the Protectorate.

A Yemen mission came to London at the invitation of the United Kingdom Government in August 1950, and after a couple of months, an agreement was reached on a *modus vivendi*. Among other things, diplomatic representatives were to be exchanged, and a frontier commission was to be set up 'for the purpose of settling certain incidents or disputes which have occurred at various places in the limitrophe areas'. Both parties agreed not to take any action, pending the findings of the commission, which might alter the *status quo* in the disputed areas. Soundings were made about the possibility of some permanent settlement, but the positions of the two sides were obviously irreconcilable. The Yemen demanded the recognition of her claims to Aden and the Protectorate by the United Kingdom, and the United Kingdom maintained that as the successor State of the Ottoman Empire, the Yemen



was bound by the Anglo-Turkish Convention of 1914, and that the frontier established then was the *de jure* boundary of the Aden Protectorate unless and until modified by mutual consent.

Diplomatic representatives were exchanged in 1951, although the Imam only permitted a *chargé d'affaires* to represent British interests in Taiz, the seat of government during Imam Ahmed's reign. The Yemen Government proved unwilling to set up the frontier commission, and the frontier incidents continued, after a brief interval, as before. In 1952 the Yemen protested against the despatch of British troops to Lahej to maintain order while a new ruler was elected in the traditional manner after the Sultan had fled to the Yemen. The Yemenis argued that since, after the settlement envisaged in the Treaty of San'a, the southern frontier of the Yemen might include the whole of the Protectorate, anything done in the area meanwhile constituted interference with the *status quo*; and further, that the Arabic word in the treaty translated as 'frontier' was intended to refer to areas rather than to a line. The United Kingdom maintained, on the other hand, that the word in question conveyed the idea of a delimiting line, the root implying a definite limit, like the edge of a sword.

In the light of the Yemen's interpretation of the Treaty of San'a any move towards political federation within the Protectorate should bring increased pressure from the Yemen, not only in the frontier regions, but also, which was more serious for the United Kingdom in the long run, in the Arab League (which the Yemen had joined in 1945) and the United Nations.

Not only did Imam Ahmed fear that federation would induce the Protectorate rulers to form a united anti-Zeidi front, as was intended by the United Kingdom, but also that it might incline the Shafai Yemenis (two-thirds of the population) to agitate for inclusion within it. The Imam

received the support of the Arab League, in 1954 and in each succeeding crisis, not because the League viewed the Zeidi régime with any favour, or even wished to see it extended to the Protectorate, but because the proposed Federation sought to create a new nationalism opposed to the Yemen, which to Arab eyes was an imperialist attempt to divide the Arab world, however it might be presented locally as a unifying project. To Arabs the Yemen, Aden Colony and the Western Protectorate form an indivisible regional entity—Al-Yemen—although the area has never yet achieved full unity. Traditionally frontiers were drawn merely as convenient lines of demarcation; it was the British pursuing the concept of a Western nation State with so-called democratic, federal institutions, who called for hard and fast boundary lines.

In 1957 and the early part of 1958 the border incidents assumed minor war proportions, and once again political developments inside Aden, together with events in the Arab world outside, lay behind the Imam's increased pressure. There is no doubt that after Suez, the Imam thought the British were on the run, and that if he gave them a push, the military effort, together with what support he could muster in the United Nations, would be sufficient to expel them from the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>3</sup> The Imam fully appreciated that his own régime was not sympathetically viewed by members of the Arab League, and both he and the Yemen were subjected to violent abuse from Cairo radio, whilst members of the Free Yemeni movement were given sanctuary and support by the Egyptian Government. In 1956 the Yemen entered into the tripartite Pact

<sup>3</sup> A number of communications were addressed to the United Nations by the United Kingdom and the Yemen, containing charges and counter-charges about armed attacks on the territory of the Aden Protectorate and of the Yemen, during 1957, 1958, and 1959. In 1958 letters from the United Kingdom denying Yemeni allegations were sent on 6 March, 17 April, 7 May, 9 July, 10 September, and 7 October, and counter-charges and denials were made in Yemeni letters of 27 February, 2 May, and 18 July.

of Jidda, with Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and in March 1958 she formed with the UAR, established in February 1958, the federation known as the United Arab States. The Yemen never submitted to administrative union with Egypt, for although the Imam hoped for Nasser's support in his campaign over Aden, and the Protectorate, he deeply mistrusted Egypt and her modernizing tendencies. The Egyptians gained nothing from the Yemen's adherence, but the Yemen reaped considerable advantages (if nothing else the hostile anti-Yemen propaganda from Cairo ceased) until Nasser terminated the union at the end of 1961. The young extremists in Aden and the Free Yemenis welcomed the United Arab States, as it seemed to offer the way towards a Nasser-dominated Arab world, in which the reactionary oppression of Zeidi rule would be eliminated.

Imam Yahya had always preferred to conduct his dispute with the United Kingdom without support from outside, but his son, an astute politician, was not unsuccessful at maintaining a despotic rule at home, where most people were isolated as far as he could manage it from the outside world, and at the same time gaining sympathy and support from abroad against so-called British imperialist ventures in southern Arabia. In the autumn of 1956 his son, Crown Prince Al Badr, as Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence, went to Moscow and Peking, where he was not only received with honour, but obtained promises of financial and military assistance.

During the next eighteen months or so, a small air force was built up, and some thirty T.34 tanks and light artillery were supplied, together with mechanics, instructors, and pilots, based mainly on Taiz and San'a airfields and at Hodeida. Much of the equipment was never used, but, according to British officials, rifles and ammunition were distributed in increasing quantities to Protectorate tribes-

men. More important, however, was the development aid received from the Russians and Chinese, in far greater quantity than anything ever given by Western countries, as a result of a number of trade agreements signed with Rumania, Poland, Yugoslavia, and later with China, by Crown Prince Badr in the autumn of 1957, after a goodwill visit to the United Kingdom, which was a personal success for the Crown Prince, but produced no basic improvement in the United Kingdom-Yemen relationship.

Although there was talk in the House of Commons, and in the British press, of trying to persuade the United Kingdom Government to propose the appointment of a United Nations Commission to demarcate the Aden-Yemen frontier, and of United Nations observers to check possible border aggression, no such move was made. Informal talks were, however, held in July 1958 and continued to be so for most of 1959 and 1960. The Governor of Aden paid two private visits to the Yemen in November 1959 and June 1960, and had talks with Crown Prince Badr, and other prominent Yemen officials on matters of common interest, and on the maintenance of peace on the frontier. Despite this improvement in Anglo-Yemeni relations the Yemen upheld her claim to the Protectorate territory.

Trouble flared up again after the republican coup in September 1962, and the effect of the revolt on the political development of the Colony and the Protectorate has been dealt with earlier.<sup>4</sup> The proposal to link Aden with the Federation of South Arabia inevitably created a violent reaction from the Government in the Yemen, since Aden's accession would only reinforce all the arguments already used by Imam Ahmed over the federation proposals of 1954, and in 1959. Indeed on 17 August 1962, the day after the announcement of agreement on Aden's accession,

<sup>4</sup> See above, pp. 67-71.

the Yemen Legation in London stated that Aden was in an area which formed an integral part of the Yemen, and that the people and Government of the Yemen reserved the right to consider the resolutions of the London conference null and void, and to ignore any change that would constitute a deviation from the Treaty of San'a.<sup>5</sup>

Once it became clear that a military struggle was developing between the republican and royalist forces in the Yemen, the United Kingdom was placed in an awkward position between the Colony and the Protectorate rulers, who supported opposite sides. For some weeks after the coup there was speculation about the fate of Imam Muhammad, whom the republicans claimed to have killed on the night of 26 September. The Imam's uncle, Prince Hassan (who had been the Yemen's representative at the United Nations) returned to the Yemen on 28 September, and by early October it was clear from various reports that were beginning to seep through to Aden, that the republican régime, which had received a cable of support from the Aden TUC within 48 hours, was meeting with considerable resistance. Imam Muhammad, who had merely been wounded in the fighting on the 26 September, gave an interview to journalists on 10 November and re-assumed leadership of the royalist forces.

It was not long before Egypt, called upon by the republican régime to fulfil her obligations under the 1956 Treaty of Jidda, and Saudi Arabia, supporting the royalists, became involved in the dispute, which by the end of the year had become serious enough for the United States to try to effect the withdrawal of all foreign forces from the Yemen. On 19 December the United States recognized the Yemen Arab Republic, and welcomed, first, the undertaking given by the republican Government to honour all treaties concluded by previous Yemen Governments, in-

<sup>5</sup> *The Times*, 18 Aug. 1962.

cluding the Treaty of San'a, and, secondly, Egypt's guarantee to withdraw her troops (which were reckoned to number some 15,000 men, with transport and air support) from the Yemen as other external forces engaged in support of the royalists were withdrawn. The Lebanon, German Federal Republic, India, the UAR, Mali, Somalia, Ceylon, Syria, Tunisia, Iraq, Afghanistan, Indonesia, and the Soviet-bloc States had also recognized the new régime.

The British Government took no part in the American initiative and in spite of the Yemen Government's undertaking in respect of the Treaty of San'a, refused to recognize Brigadier Sallal's Government on the grounds that his régime was not assured of widespread support, and did not appear to be in control of the greater part of the country. Numerous contradictory statements were in fact made by Sallal, and other members of his Government. At the end of October, for example, he stated in an interview that a democratic and parliamentary Government would be introduced in the Yemen. Sallal emphasized that his country had no intention of interfering in the problems of Aden, and that the United Kingdom was a monarchy 'avec laquelle les républicains peuvent vivre', unlike Saudi Arabia and Jordan, whom he accused of attacking all republican régimes (including the Yemen).<sup>6</sup> However in a speech to recruits of the national guard on 9 November, which was relayed on San'a radio, Sallal called on 'our brothers in the occupied south to be ready for revolution and for joining the battles we shall wage against colonialism'. He also referred to the United Kingdom's 'aging and ailing colonial empire', and said that 'we have been patient too long towards Britain's plotting against us', and 'we have great forces ready to fight on our side when we ask them to do so'.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>6</sup> *La Bourse Egyptienne*, 31 Oct. 1962.

<sup>7</sup> *The Times*, 10 Nov. 1962.

British-led troops of the Federation of South Arabia were moved up to the frontier state of Beihan in October as a precautionary measure after an 'unprovoked attack by Yemeni aircraft on two villages in the area'.<sup>8</sup> The position on the frontier deteriorated rapidly, until by the new year, with the United Kingdom's continued refusal to recognize the republican régime, a border war of 1957-8 proportions seemed to have developed. The United Kingdom, pressed by the federal sheikhs to come to their defence, further strengthened her forces in Aden,<sup>9</sup> and thereby enhanced the risk of involvement in the civil war. At least five other powers had by this time become sufficiently implicated to be using, or encouraging the use of, armed forces, and U Thant, in an attempt to limit the conflict, sent Dr Ralph Bunche to the Yemen as his personal representative.

The incidents on the Yemen border illustrate the contradictions inherent in current United Kingdom policy in the Middle East. What suits the sheikhs of the Federation of South Arabia, who continue to press for British action, is more and more harmful to the wider British interest in good relations with the rest of the Arab world. Nor does action against the Yemen, which has vigorously denied all charges of crossing the Protectorate border, improve the future British position in Aden. Nothing could probably have been better designed to exacerbate nationalist feeling in the Colony, particularly in view of the current potentially-explosive political situation there. The Yemen and her allies have been able to represent British action as aggression foreshadowed by the refusal to recognize the republican régime. Diplomatic relations were broken off by

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. 24 Oct. 1962, for this statement by federal army headquarters.

<sup>9</sup> A squadron of Hunter jet fighters arrived from Cyprus on 1 March, and the aircraft carrier *Centaur* from the United Kingdom later in the month.

the Yemen Government, who appointed a Minister of State for South Yemen affairs. The claims to the Protectorate, which the republicans had seemed ready to shelve, were thus revived.



## Conclusion

### **Order and security in Aden**

ALTHOUGH federation has in the past offered convenient political solutions for small, scattered territories, recent colonial history has proved that success depends upon the consent of the majority of the peoples in each member State. The majority of Adenis oppose the plan; and, by refusing to work, the Arab labour force can close the base, oil refinery, and port, as has frequently been demonstrated in the past. So far, opposition has been limited for the most part to strike action, but it could easily deteriorate into another Cyprus situation and prove once again that, since the end of the war, British military deployment overseas has been determined more by political developments on the spot than by overall military necessity.

Moreover since Western concepts of government and political institutions are quite alien to Arab society, it is likely that the Federation will survive only so long as the British remain in Southern Arabia. There is little danger of the United Kingdom being driven out of Aden, but, whatever political barriers the Colonial Office may erect, events in the Yemen and the rest of the Arab world will play an increasingly important part in the affairs of the Colony and the Protectorate. At the same time they already highlight the degree to which British defence policy in Aden is at the mercy of Arab events which the United Kingdom has no power to control.

Security requirements in Aden itself could no doubt be met by a relatively small garrison force such as that provided by the Federal Army; and this review of local poli-

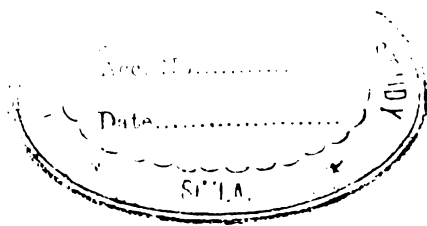
tical developments leads one to conclude that it is almost entirely the assumed need for the base which is likely to create a security problem greater than a small-scale garrison can be expected to meet. If external pressure from the Yemen or elsewhere threatened to overwhelm such a garrison, support could always be speedily provided from the United Kingdom.

### **The future of the base**

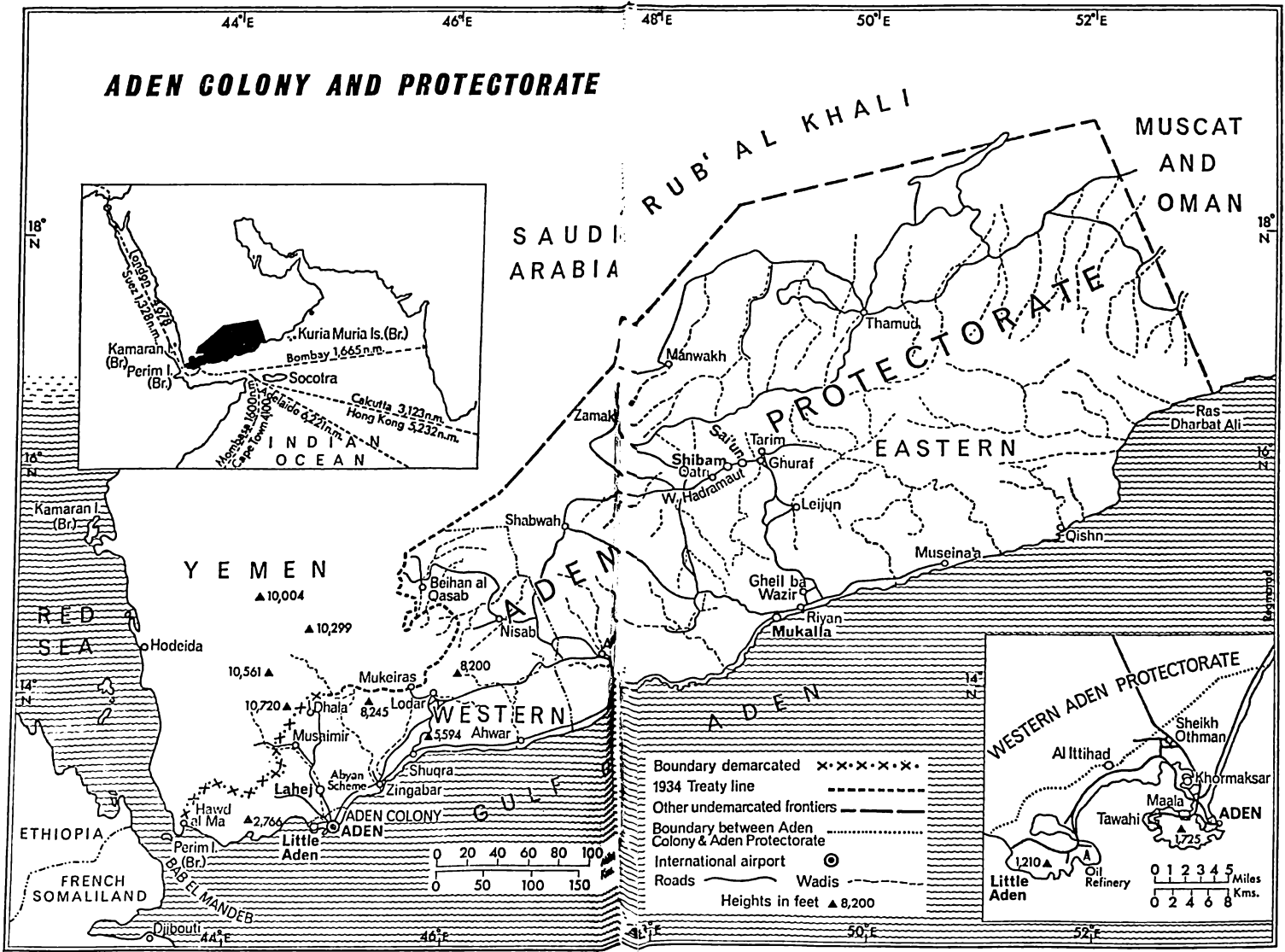
Briefly, the following points emerge: the planned expansion of the military facilities in Aden seems likely to continue, despite the Colony's uncertain future, which has been rendered even more explosive by the recent constitutional settlement created to ensure retention of the base facilities; and despite the risk of alienating not only the Arab States (particularly Kuwait) for whose protection, together with that of British commercial assets, a United Kingdom military presence in the Arabian peninsula is claimed, but also those Arab countries from which in the long run the leaders of the Arab world will inevitably emerge. Is not expenditure on a base at Aden dangerously similar to that wasted at Suez and in Kenya? Is not the term in Aden likely to be as short?

Even if Aden's future is uncertain, the overriding need for a base might still justify so perilous a course, in which case we must ask: 'Why is a base at Aden needed?' We have examined the three possible roles that a military establishment there might perform, from local garrison to world-wide strategic post, and we have seen that while a garrison would probably serve its purpose more effectively were the whole question of a major base to be forgotten, in strategic terms the base is badly placed for any independent role that the United Kingdom could legitimately expect to play. Forces from home or from Singapore could

better meet such dwindling obligations as remain her sole responsibility at the strategic level, as the recent excursions to East Africa, Malaysia, and Cyprus have shown. As for the protection of the Persian Gulf and its oil, both the oil and the sheikhdoms must in future be protected either by a small force or not at all. There is no need to provide for landing large forces in the Persian Gulf area.



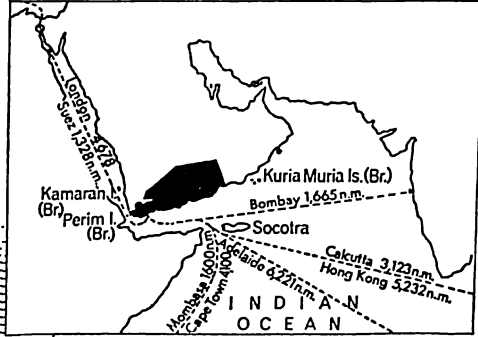
# ADEN COLONY AND PROTECTORATE



44°E      46°E      48°E      50°E      52°E

18° N

18° N



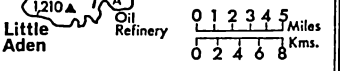
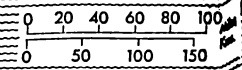
YEMEN

EASTERN PROTECTORATE

WESTERN PROTECTORATE

WESTERN ADEN PROTECTORATE

- Boundary demarcated    x x x x x x x
- 1934 Treaty line        - - - - -
- Other undemarcated frontiers    - - - - -
- Boundary between Aden Colony & Aden Protectorate    ······
- International airport      ⊙
- Roads                      ———
- Wadis                     - - - - -
- Heights in feet    ▲ 8,200



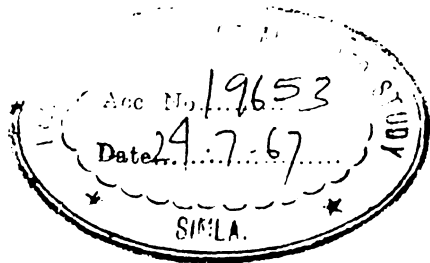
Kamaran I. (Br.)  
 RED SEA  
 Hodeida  
 ETHIOPIA  
 FRENCH SOMALILAND  
 Djibouti  
 SOFAL MANDEB  
 Perim I. (Br.)  
 Hawd al Ma  
 ▲ 2,766

▲ 10,004  
 ▲ 10,299  
 ▲ 10,561  
 ▲ 10,720  
 ▲ 8,245  
 ▲ 8,200  
 ▲ 5,594  
 ▲ 2,766  
 ▲ 1,210

Manwakh  
 Zamakh  
 Shabwah  
 Beihan al Qasab  
 Nisab  
 Ghail ba Wazir  
 Riyan  
 Mukalla

Thamud  
 Tarim  
 Ghuraf  
 Leijun  
 Museina'a  
 Qishn

Sheikh Othman  
 Al Ittihad  
 Khormaksar  
 Maala  
 Tawahi  
 ADEN  
 Little Aden  
 Oil Refinery



Acc No. 19653

Date 24.7.67

SIRILA.

STUDY

