The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/fich20

An Empire of Influence? British Relations with the United Arab Emirates in the 1970s

Simon C. Smith

To cite this article: Simon C. Smith (26 Apr 2024): An Empire of Influence? British Relations with the United Arab Emirates in the 1970s, The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History, DOI: 10.1080/03086534.2024.2345466

To link to this article: https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2024.2345466

Published online: 26 Apr 2024.

THE JOURNAL OF IMPERIAL AND COMMONWEALTH HISTORY
https://doi.org/10.1080/03086534.2024.2345466

Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

An Empire of Influence? British Relations with the United Arab Emirates in the 1970s

Simon C. Smith

University of Hull, Hull, UK

ABSTRACT

As historical debate has moved from an analysis of the end of empire to its aftermath and consequences, there has been growing emphasis on the retention by the colonial powers of a large measure of influence over their former dependencies. With respect to the British experience, some historians have even suggested that the demission of empire amounted to a shift from formal to informal empire, using the term 'imperialism of decolonization' to encapsulate this concept. Given the maintenance of British economic and military ties with the fledgling United Arab Emirates which emerged from the small Sheikhdoms of the Lower Gulf in 1971, the UAE provides an illuminating case study to test interpretations that suggest Britain preserved a degree of influence amounting to the perpetuation of empire. Despite the preservation of such ties, the example provided by the UAE indicates that in the aftermath of formal British withdrawal from the Gulf at the end of 1971, Britain's political, economic, and military position was eroded by the encroachment of other powers, both regional and international. Equally, an analysis of the United Arab Emirates casts doubt on whether British decision-makers actually sought to establish an informal imperial relationship with the Gulf States after 1971, preferring instead to establish recognisably post-imperial relations which respected their independence. Consequently, the 'imperialism of decolonization' paradigm is not an appropriate one to apply to British policy towards, and relations with, the UAE.

KEYWORDS

Britain; the United Arab Emirates; informal empire; imperialism of decolonisation

As the focus of historical attention on the end of empire shifts from the process of decolonisation to its aftermath and consequences, there has been increasing appreciation that formal independence did not signify a decisive severing of ties between the former imperial power and its dependencies. Stephen Ashton, for instance, has observed that 'Historians of the British empire have long debated

CONTACT Simon C. Smith S.C.Smith@hull.ac.uk

the question of when empire began. Equally open to interpretation are questions of when it ended or whether it continued in a different form'.[1] Referring specifically to British policy in the era of decolonisation, A. J. Stockwell argues that it should be seen as an attempt to maintain 'an imperial role as opposed to imperial rule'.[2] Similarly, John Darwin insists that

> speeding up the transfers of power in the colonial Empire was not meant, whatever the actual outcome, to signal the final, lasting and complete retreat from the extra-European world but should be seen as a hasty and sometimes involuntary expedient to stabilize the spheres of British influence amid rapidly changing international and local circumstances.[3]

British policy-makers' grand design, insists Darwin, was to ensure that Britain remained 'at the centre of an empire of both influence and identity'.[4] Equally, Sarah Stockwell contends that the process of decolonisation was 'directed to an "end" which aimed at salvaging from unhappy circumstances as much prestige and influence for Britain as possible'.[5] Elaborating upon her thesis, Stockwell declares: 'the transfers of power did not necessarily result in the cessation of colonialism in all its other guises, whether economic, cultural, or military'.[6] This, so the argument runs, was the 'inevitable consequence of the asymmetric relationship between imperial metropole and colony, with the former not only ambitious to exercise influence, but also in a strong position from which to do so'.[7]

Summarising his assessment of Britain's central policy aim with respect to decolonisation, the doyen of Britain's imperial engagement with the Middle East, Wm. Roger Louis, emphasises that it was to 'alter the structure of Empire from formal rule to more indirect control, or at least influence. Such is the imperialism of decolonization'.[8] Furthermore, he asserts that

> In the post-war period the history of the Empire may be read as the attempt to convert formal rule into an informal basis of equal partnership and influence … The purpose of this transformation was the perpetuation of Britain as a "world power".[9]

In 1968, the Labour government of Harold Wilson had announced its intention to withdraw British forces from 'East of Suez', including the Gulf, within three years.[10] Given the maintenance of British economic and military ties with the fledgling United Arab Emirates which emerged from the small Sheikhdoms of the Lower Gulf in 1971, the UAE provides an illuminating case study to test interpretations that suggest Britain preserved a degree of influence in former dependencies amounting to the perpetuation of empire.

Britain's position in the Lower Gulf had rested on a series of agreements dating back to the General Treaty of 1820 designed to suppress piracy.[11] By signing the Perpetual Maritime Truce of 1853, the Sheikhdoms of Abu Dhabi, Sharjah, Dubai, Ajman, Ras al Khaimah, and Umm al Qaiwain became known as the Trucial States, a name which they retained until

British withdrawal in 1971. Fujairah joined the Trucial States system in 1952 when it was recognised by Britain as distinct entity. Sixty years earlier, in 1892, the Rulers of the Trucial States had signed the so-called Exclusive Agreement with Britain in which they pledged to desist from entering into negotiations with any other power. Reflecting British paramountcy over the Gulf Sheikhdoms, the Foreign Office declared in 1936 that they 'were a special preserve of HMG whose policy towards them rested on a kind of Monroe Doctrine'.[12]

Although Britain's legal responsibility rested essentially on conducting the Sheikhdoms' foreign relations, Britain was prepared to intervene in their internal affairs in order to protect perceived interests.[13] For Mark Hayman, the Second World War represented a turning point since the 'policy and practice of leaving internal arrangements to the ruling sheikhs could not be sustained' as the 'self-declared policy of non-involvement in internal affairs was severely compromised by the exigencies of war'.[14] Helene von Bismarck has observed that Britain's de facto role in the Gulf Sheikhdoms went 'far beyond Britain's formal treaty-based rights and commitments'.[15] This policy shift stemmed from the increasing importance of the Gulf after 1945 as a vital source of oil and as a market for British goods which undermined the non-interventionist approach exemplified by the pre-war years. Reflecting this change, the Foreign Office impressed upon Bernard Burrows when he took up the role of Political Resident in 1953 that

> The Shaikhdoms of the Gulf have become of first importance to the United Kingdom and to the Sterling Area as a whole. It is essential that Her Majesty's Government should exert sufficient influence in them to ensure that there is no conflict between the policies of the Rulers and those of Her Majesty's Government.[16]

It is debateable, therefore, whether the term 'informal empire' is an appropriate one to apply to British relations with the Gulf Sheikhdoms in the aftermath of the Second World War. While Britain possessed a somewhat looser relationship with the Sheikhdoms than, for instance, with the colonial empire, it was still prepared to intervene in their internal affairs notwithstanding the ostensible limitations imposed by the existing treaty relationships.

Despite the announcement in early 1968 of formal British withdrawal from the Gulf by 1971, there was recognition among policymakers that Britain would retain significant interests in the Gulf. Shortly after the decision to withdraw was made known, Britain's Political Resident in the Gulf, Sir Stewart Crawford, advised that, although British forces would be pulling out earlier than had been envisaged, it would 'remain an important British interest on both political and economic grounds that peace and stability should be maintained in the Gulf in the long term'.[17] Likewise, the Permanent Under-Secretary at the Foreign Office, Sir Paul Gore-Booth, emphasised that

> It was clear we could not simply retire into our shell once our troops left the regions in question. We had a general interest in the peace, stability and prosperity of the areas and we had also a substantial economic stake, in the form of investments and export markets, which were important for our future solvency and standard of living.[18]

Foreign Secretary George Brown had already pointed out not only that 40 per cent of Britain's oil supplies came from the Gulf, but also that British oil companies held a 40 per cent share in the exploitation of Gulf oil which made a 'significant contribution to our foreign exchange earnings'.[19]

The existing historiography suggests that Britain was successful in retaining its interests and influence as the Trucial States evolved into the United Arab Emirates following formal British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971. Discussing the Gulf region, Roger Louis claims that 'by dismantling the system of protected states, the formal British presence disappeared, but invisible or informal influence remained'.[20] Referring specifically to the United Arab Emirates, Louis maintains that the new union remained 'informally within the British imperial system'.[21] In a similar vein, Shohei Sato contends that the process of British decolonisation in the Gulf 'entailed only a rearrangement of the collaborative relationship that had developed during the period of Britain's informal empire'.[22] In keeping with this analysis, Tore Petersen stresses that 'The British, despite liquidating most of its [*sic*] fixed positions in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula, successfully made the transition from formal to informal empire in the region'.[23] He goes on to argue that in the Gulf 'British influence remained large and almost paramount'.[24] Examining the post-1971 landscape, Uzi Rabi argues that 'In short, the practical content of the interchange between Britain and the Gulf in all fields exceeds anything that could have been predicted by previous generations'.[25] Likewise, Ash Rossiter emphasises that 'British engagement in security was not a tap that could be turned off' following formal British withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971.[26] Similarly, Esra Çavuşoğlu asserts that in the years following formal withdrawal in 1971, 'British influence had significantly been maintained in the regional affairs based on the enduring colonial ties'.[27] Follow an analogous line of reasoning, Tancred Bradshaw contends that 'One of the notable characteristics of the British legacy in the UAE was the extent of informal influence that prevailed after independence'.[28]

A closer examination of Britain's post-imperial relations with the United Arab Emirates can be used to qualify these existing interpretations. While Britain undoubtedly sought to maintain as much of its influence and as many of its interests as possible after formal withdrawal in 1971, this proved a challenging enterprise in the context of growing external pressures on the UAE and mounting competition from Britain's rivals in the industrial world. Indeed, Britain's once exclusive role in the Lower Gulf[29] was rapidly undermined after 1971. In this sense Britain's end of empire in the Gulf and the emergence of an independent United Arab Emirates marked a decisive moment in

which the limits of Britain's post-imperial influence in the region were revealed. Far from establishing an identifiable informal empire in the UAE after 1971, Britain found that its position was successively eroded. Equally, the example provided by the United Arab Emirates casts doubt on whether British decision-makers indeed sought to establish an informal imperial relationship with the Gulf States after 1971, preferring instead to establish recognisably post-imperial relations which respected their independence and brought to an end Britain's former exclusive position both in name and in fact. What-is-more, the encroachment of Britain's industrial competitors and also regional powers into the UAE after 1971, and in the case of Pakistan even before this date, left Britain with little option but to adjust to a post-imperial environment which left little room for the pursuit of informal empire. Consequently, the 'imperialism of decolonization' paradigm is not an appropriate one to apply to British policy towards the UAE.

The circumstances surrounding the announcement of withdrawal from East of Suez did little to inspire confidence in Britain among the Sheikhdoms of the Lower Gulf, and hardly provided a sound basis for a seamless transition from formal to a more informal imperial relationship. The collapse of the British-backed Federation of South Arabia in the second half of 1967, coupled with Britain's precipitate pull-out from Aden in November 1967,[30] dealt a 'severe shock' to the Gulf Rulers,[31] not least because the military base there had allowed Britain to fulfil its defence commitments to the Gulf Sheikhdoms. Any comfort derived from Foreign Office Minister Goronwy Roberts' visit to the Gulf in November 1967 was short-lived. He had assured nervous Gulf Rulers that the formal British presence in the region would subsist as long as it was necessary for the preservation of peace and stability. In January 1968, however, the Labour Government of Harold Wilson announced its intention to withdraw British military forces from the Gulf by 1971, sending shockwaves through the region.

Reporting the consternation of the Rulers to London, Britain's Political Resident in the Gulf, Sir Stewart Crawford, stressed that 'In the light of [the] South Arabian experience they consider that this is bound to encourage subversive elements, frighten away foreign investors and increase difficulties all round'.[32] The Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Rashid, informed the hapless Goronwy Roberts, who had returned to the Gulf at the beginning of 1968 to relay the withdrawal decision, that once the British left there would be the 'same outcome as in South Arabia' where they had 'abandoned the Sultans'.[33] Reflecting the views of his fellow Rulers, Rashid condemned 'the decision, its timing and presentation and impending announcement of a date'.[34] Rashid subsequently lamented that

> the British decision to withdraw by 1971 left too short a period for adjustment. This period might have been suitable for more advanced and well-established societies but conditions in the Gulf were such that the area needed a longer period.[35]

Moreover, the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zaid, asserted that if Britain 'went just like that' it would not merely be 'severely criticised', but also lose all its friends in the Gulf.[36] Furthermore, the Ruler of Ras al Khaimah, Sheikh Saqr bin Mohamed al-Qasimi, complained that the 'northern five Rulers[37] were too poor to arrange their affairs by themselves'.[38] Although the extension of the British presence to the end of 1971 facilitated the emergence of the United Arab Emirates of Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Umm al Qaiwain, Ajman, Sharjah, and Fujairah (subsequently joined by Ras al Khaimah), the structure was fragile and riven with internal divisions which complicated British relations with the new state and militated against the maintenance of an imperial relationship after formal British withdrawal in 1971. Equally, the palpable encroachment of Britain's industrial rivals into the economic and military affairs of the United Arab Emirates after 1971 undermined any notion that the Britain could maintain the type of exclusive relations that are the hallmark of an imperial relationship, whether formal or informal. The anodyne Treaty of Friendship between the UK and the UAE, signed on 2 December 1971 the day after the termination of existing treaty relations with the Rulers of all seven former Trucial States,[39] did little to bolster British interests into the era of independence. Indeed, the Treaty of Friendship merely enjoined the two parties to 'consult together on matters of mutual concern in time of need' and to 'settle all their disputes by peaceful means in conformity with the provisions of the charter of the United Nations'.[40] The treaty also contained some vague clauses designed to encourage 'educational, scientific and cultural cooperation between the two States'.[41] The decline, indeed loss, of Britain's former exclusive position in the Emirates became evident with respect to growing French involvement in the Lower Gulf.

In June 1972, Sheikh Zaid notified the British Ambassador to the UAE, C. J. Treadwell, of his decision to purchase Mirage fighters and Puma helicopters from France, adding that he had turned to the French because Britain could supply 'nothing comparable'.[42] At the end of 1973, Treadwell's successor, D. J. McCarthy, confessed that in the military field Britain's commercial relationship with the UAE was being eroded by the French.[43] Referring to the British earlier in the year, Sheikh Zaid had told Salim Lawzi, the editor-in-chief of the Arabic publication, *al-Hawadeth*, that: 'We told them frankly that we are not to blame if we find suitable weapons at lower prices from other sources. We are free to buy arms from any source we wish'.[44] Reflecting the new environment in which Britain was operating, P. A. Raftery of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Middle East Department recorded at the beginning of 1974 that

> the French have been very successful with the sale of Mirage aircraft to Abu Dhabi; they are now engaged in direct competition with us to secure the lucrative contract for a surface to air missile defence system there (ie: Rapier v. Crotale).[45]

'There are no holds barred in the arms sales business and … the French in Abu Dhabi have engaged in a knocking job over Rapier during the last two months', he expatiated.[46] In July 1978, B. A. Major of the FCO's Middle East Department went so far as to observe that in arms supply to Abu Dhabi the French had become 'dominant'.[47] France's growing role in the Lower Gulf was underlined in October 1980 when, in the wake of the outbreak the Iran-Iraq War, the French offered to come to the UAE's aid in the event of an external attack.[48] The undermining of Britain's former exclusive role in the military field was mirrored in the commercial one.

Although Kuwait was the first of the Gulf Sheikhdoms to experience rapid expansion in oil revenues, the Lower Gulf soon began to join the oil bonanza, Britain's Political Resident in the Gulf, Sir George Middleton, commenting towards the beginning of 1960 that Abu Dhabi would soon be 'in the "big money"'.[49] As early as 1963, the British Ambassador to Kuwait, J. C. B. Richmond, predicted that 'In the twentieth century outside forces cannot be kept out of an area where wealth is rapidly growing'.[50] In the aftermath of the Wilson government's decision to withdraw from East of Suez, Britain's Political Resident in the Gulf, Sir Stewart Crawford, asserted that 'we shall have to meet competition from many powers now virtually unrepresented here'.[51] The prescience of this observation was soon demonstrated as Britain's industrial rivals sought to exploit the commercial opportunities in the Gulf States and undermine Britain's traditional dominance. At the end of 1969, Britain's Political Agent in Abu Dhabi, C. J. Treadwell, remarked:

> salesmen from the United States, West Germany and Japan are making serious inroads on what was an exclusively British preserve. They are succeeding not because there is any dearth of good will in Abu Dhabi towards United Kingdom manufacturers. Politically our stock remains high and buyers generally would prefer, other things being equal, to buy British. But the sales methods of our competitors are sometimes more compelling. Their senior representatives seem generally more willing than our own to visit Abu Dhabi and seek out markets for their goods. We do not often hear complaints about delivery times, but there are several merchants who complain that other countries leave us standing when it comes to after-sales service.[52]

Treadwell's remarks were soon vindicated. In his annual report for 1973, Britain's Ambassador to the United Arab Emirates, D. J. McCarthy, stressed that

> There is growing competition, especially in Abu Dhabi, from other nations, considerable investment interest from Japan, and increasing efforts by the Arabs on the one hand and Japan, Pakistan and France on the other towards joint projects, either in the UAE or employing Abu Dhabi money outside it.[53]

McCarthy went on to express regret that 'Our prices are now right, the product is often right, and the habit of buying British is still a factor: but we get worse rather than better on slow delivery promises and even slower performance'.[54] Such

considerations led the British Consul General in Dubai, Henry St. John Basil Armitage, perceptively to note in 1974 that 'the Gulf is no longer a British pearling ground'.[55] Indeed, despite the new opportunities afforded by the expansion in UAE oil revenues, British commerce experienced relative decline in the 1970s.

In his annual review for 1975, Ambassador McCarthy relayed to London the ostensibly positive news that British exports to the UAE were predicted to total £196 million which represented an increase in sterling terms of well over 100 per cent over the previous year.[56] Nonetheless, he made the sober observation that this improvement needed to be viewed in the context of a quintupling of the UAE's income in just two years. Seeking to account for the British failure to exploit fully the new opportunities presented by the growth of the UAE's income from oil, McCarthy noted that 'our performance could have been better had our traders and manufacturers alike not lost on price and delivery in all too many cases'.[57] In addition, he remarked: 'there were whole sectors of the market which British industry virtually could not touch, whether because of price or the absence of product'.[58] 'British exports', he insisted, 'should do much better in a market which is still biased in our favour provided that other things are equal'.[59]

McCarthy's review for 1976 was equally downbeat. Despite the fact that Britain's visible exports totalled around £202 million for the year representing an increase of 53 per cent compared with the 1975 figure, McCarthy highlighted some 'disquieting truth' behind these figures.[60] After initial improvement, he elucidated, 'the year ended with a chorus of complaint about our late deliveries and accompanying cost increases'.[61] Providing specific examples of the shortcomings of British commerce, he drew attention to the fact that Britain remained 'virtually unrepresented' in the vital automotive market.[62] He also lamented that Britain had lost major contracts which it should have secured, concluding that British trade in the key market of Abu Dhabi was 'slipping'.[63] Indeed, British commerce proved unequal to the task of either exploiting fully the new opportunities provided by the UAE's inflated oil revenues, or meeting the challenge presented by rivals from the industrialised world. As the Minister of State at the FCO, David Ennals, underscored following a visit to the Gulf in February 1975: 'Everywhere there were complaints about slow deliveries of goods from Britain'.[64] The Secretary of State for Trade, Peter Shore, encountered similar complaints during his own tour of the region a few months later.[65]

From his post in the UAE, Ambassador McCarthy himself laid bare the growth in the use of American and Japanese technology in oil operations and construction.[66] By 1978 Britain had lost its preeminent position in the UAE's import market, being beaten into second place by Japan. McCarthy's successor as British Ambassador to the UAE, D. A. Roberts, also cautioned

> when the boom in construction ends and the Costains and the Laings[67] depart, I wonder whether we shall do as well in cars, refrigerators, and the like, where prices

> and dates of delivery are more important than our inheritance of two centuries of skill in engineering.[68]

In April 1978, moreover, the Head of the FCO's Middle East Department, I. T. M. Lucas, observed:

> As regards our historical relationship with the UAE, it seems to me only realistic to recognise that this must become less exclusive as time goes on. When the country achieved full independence in 1971, its people hardly knew that any country existed in the outside world other than Britain; the UAE now has diplomatic relations with a large number of foreign countries, many of whom are energetically promoting their trade.[69]

The erosion of Britain's commercial position in the UAE after 1971 was mirrored by its changing political and diplomatic relationship with the new state.[70] In the immediate aftermath of the withdrawal from East of Suez, British relations with the United Arab Emirates were smoothed by the fact that C. J. Treadwell, Britain's Political Agent since 1968, became the first British Ambassador to the UAE. Sheikh Zaid himself was reported to consider that, despite Britain's formal departure from the Gulf, his relationship with Treadwell 'had not changed'.[71] Treadwell also recorded that Zaid had 'always insisted that the British representative should have special rights of access to him'.[72] When Treadwell stepped down in 1974, nonetheless, a qualitative change in Britain's diplomatic relations with Zaid took place. Referring to his predecessor, the new British Ambassador to the UAE, D. J. McCarthy, observed: 'Jim Treadwell had successfully bridged from Political Agent to Ambassador while retaining his personal intimacy despite the transition'.[73] Sheikh Zaid went so far as to tell British Prime Minister, Edward Heath, in September 1972 that 'He habitually received the advice from the British Ambassador before that proffered from any other quarter'.[74] Two years later, nevertheless, McCarthy declaimed: 'I had little doubt that [Sheikh] Zaid would watch me, a post-independence arrival, against any presumptive tendencies reminiscent of the former role'.[75] McCarthy proceeded to report that while Sheikh Zaid had 'never said anything to us that he wished to weaken the British connection … in practice he was diminishing it'.[76] Seeking to reverse this trend, McCarthy proposed to try and raise Britain's profile in the UAE. He was quick to point out, however, that 'I mean raising the profile within the context of Independence, and not expecting to get back to the pre-Independence relationship'.[77]

The recognisably post-imperial relationship that Britain was forging with the Gulf was also demonstrated by the resolution of the long-running border dispute between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia in 1974.[78] The conflict, centring on contested oil and territorial rights in the Buraimi Oasis in South-Eastern Arabia, stretched back to the 1930s. In April 1949, the British political officer

for the Trucial States, Patrick Stobart, was even briefly detained by Saudi guards while investigating claims that the Arabian American Oil Company had set up camp on territory claimed by Abu Dhabi.[79] Simmering tensions culminated in the occupation of the oasis by Saudi forces in August 1952.[80] Their ejection three years later by a combination of British forces and the British-officered Trucial Oman Scouts did little to dampen the dispute. Towards the end of 1969, D. J. McCarthy, then Head of the FCO's Arabian Department, noted: 'the mentality of these rulers is such that they are prepared to dispute a barren sand dune till judgement day'.[81] Injecting an element of realism into the situation, however, he averred: 'if, after twenty years' effort, we have been unable to settle these particular boundaries it seems unlikely that we shall be able to do so in the next year or so, having reduced our leverage by announcing withdrawal'.[82] Reflecting Britain's diminishing ability to influence Gulf affairs in the run-up to withdrawal, A. F. Goulty of the FCO's Arabian Department commented:

> Although the present position leaves a lot to be desired we do not think that we should take the initiative in attempting to clear up outstanding frontier problems at this stage, since any such attempt would probably arouse more disputes than it would solve. Indeed if British effort were the answer the frontiers would have already been settled.[83]

Unsurprisingly, the territorial dispute between Abu Dhabi and Saudi Arabia remained unresolved at the time of the withdrawal of British forces and continued to fester into the 1970s. Far from seeking either to exercise post-imperial influence or intercede in the dispute, the British resolutely eschewed involvement and left efforts to achieve a settlement to the regional powers themselves.

In February 1972, the British Ambassador in Jedda, Willie Morris, reported that during discussions with the Saudi Second Deputy Prime Minister, Prince Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, the latter had launched into 'lengthy criticism' of Britain's failure to secure a border settlement with Abu Dhabi before terminating its responsibilities.[84] Morris proceeded to characterise the unresolved border problem as 'the real bone in the throat of Anglo-Saudi relations'.[85] With considerable justification, Richard Schofield has argued that

> While Britain had throughout the late 1960s tried to marginalise the debilitating effects for the regional political map of messy, localised traditional territorial claims, it ended up bequeathing a complex, contradictory, and essentially unworkable equation with which the two local disputants have struggled ever since.[86]

Having failed to achieve a settlement before its formal departure from the region, Britain demonstrated a marked reluctance to intervene in the dispute. At the end of 1971, for instance, Ambassador Treadwell insisted: 'let both these independent states get on with it. Active mediation would certainly at

some stage injure our reputation with one or the other, or both'.[87] Injecting an equal measure of realism into the debate, in August 1972 Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home remarked:

> So far as Abu-Dhabi/Saudi relations are concerned, having failed to persuade Zaid to come to an agreement with the Saudis while we were still responsible for his foreign relations, we have no illusions that we can influence him to do so now.[88]

Responding to the Saudi Minister for Foreign Affairs, Omar Saqqaf's, appeal for information about the advice that Britain was giving Sheikh Zaid on the Abu Dhabi-Saudi Arabian frontier, FCO Under-Secretary A. D. Parsons asserted: 'We were no longer acting as Abu Dhabi's lawyer. We had no intention of re-involving ourselves in the dispute'.[89]

Nevertheless, the Saudis continued to press Britain to intercede with Zaid. In May 1973, for example, Prince Fahd bin Abdul Aziz expressly asked both the British Foreign Secretary and the Prime Minister to use their influence with Zaid to achieve a settlement.[90] Reflecting British reluctance to become embroiled, the Head of the FCO's Middle East Department, P. R. H. Wright, insisted: 'Our long association with this has convinced us that there is little profit to be gained from playing the role of honest brokers'.[91] Alec Douglas-Home, furthermore, expressed concern that any further British involvement would 'achieve nothing except further recriminations from both sides'.[92] Referring to regional efforts to resolve the dispute at the beginning of July 1974, McCarthy informed the US Ambassador to the UAE, Michael Sterner, that although the Qataris, Bahrainis, and Kuwaitis were trying to use their good offices to bring the disputatious sides together, the British were 'right out of it'.[93] In addition, McCarthy also emphasised that none of the parties had attempted to involve Britain, and that when he had raised the border question with Sheikh Zaid a couple of months earlier, the Abu Dhabi ruler had 'not even hinted at our taking a hand'.[94] This accorded with the FCO's approach which stressed its 'unwillingness to become involved in the UAE/Saudi dispute'.[95]

While Britain stood on the side-lines, regional efforts to resolve the border dispute gathered pace, Sultan Qaboos of Oman indicating in mid-July 1974 that 'very secret' negotiations were taking place between Saudi Arabia and the UAE which appeared to be 'getting somewhere'.[96] Qaboos' confidence was soon vindicated. The breakthrough came following a visit to the UAE by Prince Fahd which resulted in the release of a communiqué on 29 July declaring the solution of the outstanding differences between Saudi Arabia and the UAE.[97] Wright recorded that the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Khalifah, had 'played an important role in bringing the two sides together'.[98] Equally, the British Ambassador in Doha, E. F. Henderson, reported that the Qatari ruler had succeeded in allying Saudis' fears about making territorial concessions by assuring them that 'Zaid was worth treating with and that the government of

the UAE was reasonably stable'.[99] Indeed, the Saudi Ambassador to Qatar had informed Henderson that

> one of the things which inhibited the King [Feisal] from making further progress towards a solution was the fear that Shaikh Zaid's government of the UAE was very precarious, that it might topple and something of a PDRY/Dhofari[100] kind take its place.[101]

The border agreement itself was formally signed by the Saudi King, Feisal bin Abdul Aziz, and Sheikh Zaid on 21 August 1974 during the latter's official visit to Saudi Arabia.[102] Contrasting the earlier frigidity of relations between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi with the newfound cordiality, H. B. Walker (Counsellor, British Embassy, Jedda) affirmed not merely that Zaid's visit had 'gone off very well indeed', but also the Saudis had 'rolled out the largest of red carpets (literally and figuratively)'.[103] Discussions between Zaid and Feisal were depicted in the final communiqué issued at the end of former's time in Saudi Arabia as having been 'conducted in an atmosphere characterised by a spirit of love, brotherhood and a sincere desire for complete cooperation'.[104] British Prime Minister Harold Wilson's congratulatory messages to both Sheikh Zaid and King Feisal notwithstanding,[105] Britain had played no part in the resolution of the border dispute. Reflecting on Britain's role as a mere observer, McCarthy perceptively remarked:

> I think it fair to say that the dispute could never have been solved so long as concessions appeared to be under Western aegis. It had to be settled – and to be seen to be settled – among the Arabs concerned.[106]

The fact that Abu Dhabi no longer looked to Britain to assist in resolving the border controversy, preferring instead rely on regional diplomacy, reflects the decline in the former imperial power's influence in the Lower Gulf.

The dilution of Britain's ability to shape events in the region was also reflected in the military sphere. The principal military force in the Lower Gulf Sheikhdoms had been the British-officered Trucial Oman Scouts (TOS), formed in 1952. Although Britain had hoped that the TOS would form the backbone of the new Union Defence Force (UDF) after British withdrawal in 1971, this was thwarted by the tendency of the individual Emirates to establish their own militaries. Standing at 13 000 by early 1974, for instance, the Abu Dhabi Defence Force (ADDF) dwarfed the 3000 men of the UDF.[107] To make matters worse for Britain, officers from other countries began to eclipse Britons in terms of numbers. For example, by April 1974 the ADDF had 115 Pakistani officers and 97 Jordanians compared with 96 British.[108] The British contingent consisted of 12 loaned and 84 contract officers. By September 1974, the former had declined to just seven in line Sheikh Zaid's policy of reducing the number of British loan personnel.[109]

In 1972, the position of commander of the Abu Dhabi air force passed from a British contract officer to a Pakistan Air Force officer.[110] Referring in his annual

report for 1973 to the officered element within the ADDF, the Defence Attaché to the British Embassy in UAE, Colonel J. S. Agar, lugubriously noted: 'Where British influence has declined that of Sudanese, Jordanians and Pakistanis has increased'.[111] Ambassador McCarthy, moreover, remarked upon

> efforts by Abu Dhabi's Under-Secretary of Defence, with considerable success so far, to get rid of British loaned officers, an effort in which he is joined by Pakistani advisers for the different and simple reason that they want their people in instead.[112]

The tendency to incorporate more and more officers from Abu Dhabi itself eroded the proportion of British officers still further.[113] The British presence in the Abu Dhabi Ministry of Defence's General (G) Branch was also reduced in line with Sheikh Zaid's advocacy of the Arabisation and Emiratisation of his force.[114] Indeed, by April 1973 there was only one Briton, compared two Sudanese and five Emiratis, along with two Pakistanis, in the Ministry's G Branch.[115] In the command structure of the Sharjah National Guard, formed in response to the assassination of the Ruler, Sheikh Khalid bin Mohammed, by his cousin, Sheikh Saqr bin Sultan, the leadership roles were held by Emiratis apart from the Adjutant, Captain Nair who was Pakistani.[116]

By the early 1970s, Pakistan had made considerable inroads into Britain's former exclusive position on the Trucial coast. In January 1970, the Air Advisor at the British High Commission in Rawalpindi, Group Captain J. N. Johns, had reported that 'in practice, there is considerable contact between the Ruler and the Pakistan Government without our knowledge probably as a result of Shaikh Zaid's frequent hunting trips to this country'.[117] Despite the traditionally close ties between Pakistan and Abu Dhabi in particular, the former had been unable to send a resident representative because of Britain's special responsibility for the conduct of the Trucial States' foreign relations. By mid-1971, with the end of that responsibility in sight, Britain was no longer able to resist the accreditation of states with special interests in the area. Consequently, Jamil Hassan was appointed in the summer of 1971 as Pakistan's trade agent and was subsequently upgraded to his county's first ambassador to the UAE on the formation of union. Summing up growth of Pakistani influence, the Head of Chancery at the British Embassy in Abu Dhabi, Alec Ibbott, declared: 'Pakistan has used the Islamic card to the full both to promote her own interests in the UAE and to thwart those of countries whom she considers her rivals, notably India and, to a certain extent, ourselves'.[118] Ibbott proceeded to record that 'The Pakistan Ambassador has clearly seen it as the role of Pakistan to succeed Britain in her special relationship with the emirates'.[119] Underlining this point, Ibbott pointed out that in 1972, the Pakistanis had succeeded in bringing Sheikh Zaid, who was resolved to discontinue the pre-eminent British position in his security forces, to accept a ratio of 40/40/20 for British, Pakistani and Arab officers.[120] Also in 1972, an agreement was signed between Abu Dhabi and Pakistan for co-operation in

petroleum matters and industry in general. By mid-1973, the FCO conceded that 'Pakistan is thus in many ways in a relatively strong position to exercise influence where British interests in Abu Dhabi are concerned'.[121] The FCO also reported rumours that Abu Dhabi was providing a considerable amount of financial aid for the Pakistan Armed Services in return for the training of the ADDF.[122]

At the end of 1973, McCarthy had reached the conclusion that 'under the direct instructions of her Ambassador here, and for all I know with Islamabad's approval, the Pakistanis here are committed to trying to get us out'.[123] 'Pakistan is a CENTO[124] ally but conducts her policy here as though on the verge of hostilities with us', he added.[125] Referring directly to Britain's relationship with the UAE, McCarthy observed that it 'remained friendly and at a working level close, but the benefits of this were being eroded politically by the Pakistanis and others and commercially by the French'.[126] He candidly concluded that it would be difficult to claim that British involvement in the Emirates was 'scarcely less apparent than in pre-independence days or that Zaid still looks to us for advice'.[127] Moreover, there were clear limits to the ability (and indeed willingness) of British seconded and contract officers within the armed forces of the UAE to exercise influence. On the one hand, such officers were often distrusted by local Rulers, while on the other they demonstrated a disinclination to advance British interests over local ones.[128]

The British Military Advisory Team (MAT) for the UAE, furthermore, did little to enhance British influence in the Emirates. Established at the end of 1971 as a consequence of Britain's offer to station troops in the UAE after the termination of its special treaty relations with the former Trucial States, the MAT was specifically designed to provide assistance to visiting British units, to practise desert warfare techniques, to make available specialised assistance in training to local forces, and to undertake projects that would benefit the civilian community.[129] In practice, the MAT did little more than carry out the first of these four functions and even then it was restricted by the demands on British forces elsewhere.[130] As the Minister of State at the FCO, Lord Balniel, pointed out in February 1973: 'The MAT is very much underemployed, largely because the Northern Ireland situation prevents us getting as many British troops as we would like out to the Gulf for training'.[131] Far from functioning as a potential source of influence for Britain, A. E. Davidson of the FCO's Defence Department confessed that 'the MAT's presence could become an irritant to our relations with the UAE', adding: 'Zaid tolerates the team only if they are kept well out of sight'.[132] In many ways, the ill-starred creation of the MAT arguably had more to do with acting as a palliative to the imperialist wing of the Conservative Party perturbed by Prime Minister Edward Heath's determination to follow through with the previous Labour government's decision to end Britain's formal Gulf commitments.[133] The MAT's under-employment, coupled with its potential to disrupt relations with the

UAE, led to its reduction in size from 92 to 66 members in 1973[134] and its subsequent winding up altogether in 1975.[135] Highlighting the pitfalls of the MAT's presence, Ambassador McCarthy reported that UAE Rulers would be 'relieved rather than upset' by the decision.[136] Indeed, after 1971 the UAE came under greater pressure from external forces, not least those emanating from within the Arab world, which militated against the maintenance of too close an association with the former imperial power. This pressure can clearly be observed in a number of instances.

On the eve of Britain's formal departure from the Gulf, Iran had occupied the disputed Gulf islands of the Tunbs and Abu Musa claimed by Ras al Khaimah and Sharjah respectively.[137] Arab dismay at these developments was reflected by the issuing of a joint statement by the Kuwaiti and Iraqi Foreign Ministers condemning the occupation of these 'Arab' islands in the Gulf.[138] Iraq went so far as to sever of diplomatic relations with Iran (and also with Britain which it accused of acquiescing in Iranian actions),[139] while the Kuwaiti government informed the British Ambassador to Kuwait that the occupation had 'left a residual grievance' against Iran that any future disagreement was 'likely to exhume'.[140] Despite British hopes for an improvement in relations between the UAE and Iran, Sheikh Zaid informed Ambassador Treadwell in May 1972 that 'his interests wouldn't be served if he were seen by other Arab countries to be running to the Shah [of Iran]'.[141] In a similar vein, the UAE Foreign Minister, Ahmad Suwaidi, told Treadwell that the Shah 'should not … expect a new country like the UAE to be eager to establish formal relations, particularly when other Arab states disliked the idea'.[142] Alluding to Abu Musa and the Tunbs, Suwaidi added that it was the Shah who was 'in the wrong' because he had 'taken Arab islands'.[143] Referring to the Iranians, Suwaidi also declared that 'He was not … prepared to seek their friendship if the UAE lost the goodwill of certain Arab countries in the process'.[144]

In August 1972, Treadwell remarked that 'As seen from here, the best instrument for shifting Zaid is Arab mediation, or even pressure'.[145] British support for reconciliation between the UAE and Iran notwithstanding, it was only when the Secretary General of the Arab League, Mahmoud Riad, advised Zaid towards the end of September 1972 that 'there need be no further obstacle to the UAE's establishment of relations with Iran', that tangible steps were taken to implement this.[146] Riad even counselled Zaid about the timing of the exchange of ambassadors with Iran, advising 'before the end of the year'.[147] In spite of some last-minute complications concerning the nomination of the UAE's candidate for ambassador to Iran,[148] the exchange was finally announced on 24 December 1972.[149]

The susceptibility of political leaders in the UAE to pressure from the Arab world was also underscored by the recrudescence of Arab-Israeli tension culminating in the Yom Kippur War of October 1973. In May 1973, Britain's Joint Intelligence Committee had prophesied that 'Growing oil revenues may

tempt some producer countries to use the interruption of oil supplies as a political weapon'.[150] The US State Department concurred, highlighting in September 1973 Saudi Arabia's 'growing oil revenues and increasing realization of the power of the oil weapon'.[151] Indeed, King Feisal had already pledged to employ the oil weapon if Egypt went to war with Israel,[152] reiterating this promise shortly after Egyptian (and Syrian) forces had commenced a major assault on Israeli positions on 6 October 1973.[153] On 17 October, a meeting of Arab oil ministers in Kuwait agreed to cut production by a recurrent monthly rate of five per cent compared with September levels 'until such time as total evacuation of Israeli forces from all Arab territory occupied during the June 1967 war is completed, and the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people are restored'.[154] This decision inflicted further pain on Western industrial economies still reeling from news on the previous day that the Organization for Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) had determined to raise the posted price of oil by 70 per cent.[155]

Abu Dhabi, a leading Arab oil producer and a member of OPEC since 1967, was clearly in a position to play a key role in the use of the oil weapon at the time of the Yom Kippur War. On the one hand, Sheikh Zaid was reported with respect to the oil weapon to be 'contemptuous of Saudi Arabia's preference for equal misery rather than selective embargoes'.[156] He also stated publicly that Britain and France, which were deemed to have taken positions helpful to the Arab cause during the Yom Kippur conflict, should not suffer from the cuts in oil exports.[157] On the other hand, Sheikh Zaid could not avoid the pressures emanating from his Arab neighbours and was obliged to admit when Prime Minister Edward Heath tackled him about the use of the oil weapon that 'it was impossible for one Arab State to take an independent line if the rest favoured such action'.[158] Ultimately, the British had to satisfy themselves with the fact that Zaid interpreted the Arab cut-back resolution in as favourable a way as possible and did his best to assist the UK with oil supplies.[159]

The pressures to which Sheikh Zaid was increasingly subjected by the Arab world after 1971 were also felt by the Ruler of Dubai and Vice-President of the UAE, Sheikh Rashid. McCarthy reported that Rashid continued to see British expatriates as the 'sinew of his state' even after the ending of formal British protection at the end of 1971 as part of the withdrawal from East of Suez.[160] In contrast with Abu Dhabi, moreover, he eschewed employing 'hordes of Egyptians, Iraqis and Palestinians, or even Lebanese', preferring instead to Arabize his administration only when nationals of his own state were qualified to take over responsibility.[161] Sheikh Rashid also retained the services of Scottish banker Bill Duff who had been appointed as his financial adviser in 1960 and helped transform Dubai from a primitive settlement into a modern city and financial centre.[162]

The remarkable continuum in which key positions remained in the hands of Britons was, however, vulnerable to Arab criticism which came to centre on the

Commander of Police in Dubai, Jack Briggs. Local officers began to question why the Dubai Force was the only one in the UAE still to employ Britons in executive posts.[163] Discontent with this situation resulted in non-cooperation from Arab officers who began to refuse to carry out Brigg's orders. This led Briggs to offer his resignation in mid-1974 which McCarthy characterised as the 'beginning of the end of an era'.[164] 'Shaikh Rashid', he continued, 'would lose the best of his intimate British advisers as well as an outstanding Chief of Police. Those hoping or working for an overall change would be enormously encouraged to push for it in other respects'.[165] Drawing wider conclusions, McCarthy remarked that Sheikh Rashid would be 'forced … to move faster than his judgement or the optimum pace of Arabisation would dictate'.[166] The request in June 1974 for the British Head of Dubai Special Branch, Commander Pugsley, to leave the Emirate can be seen in this context.

McCarthy bluntly pointed out that 'Mr Pugsley's departure was essential because Abu Dhabi would not cooperate with Dubai in Special Branch matters as long as Dubai left these in British hands'.[167] Equally, the Defence Attaché to the British Embassy in UAE, Colonel J. S. Agar, recorded:

> The initial move which led to his [Pugsley's] dismissal was inspired from Abu Dhabi; the initiative must be viewed in the light of other departures of British expatriates from the intelligence departments of the various Union Forces and it will no doubt be heralded as the extraction of the last British officer from any intelligence-gathering organisation in the Union. The move is certainly not out of context with all the other similar happenings which have been reported in the past years, and it must give considerable satisfaction in some quarters.[168]

Such evidence serves to cast doubt on those interpretations which identify a seamless transition from formal to informal empire in the Gulf after 1971. Indeed, it suggests instead that the British presence and influence, even in Dubai which had maintained close relations with Britain, was palpably eroded in the aftermath of Britain's formal withdrawal from the Gulf.

As the 1970s progressed, British policy-makers became less and less inclined to consider intervention in the internal affairs of the UAE. Responding in April 1972 to entreaties from US State Department officials for Britain to try and influence Sheikh Zaid with a view to resolving his long-standing territorial disputes with Saudi Arabia, British diplomats in Washington underscored the altered nature of the relationship with Abu Dhabi, highlighting that 'our ability to influence Shaikh Zaid was now strictly limited and that HMG no longer had a *locus standi* in the dispute'.[169] Whereas Britain had often intervened in succession questions in the Gulf Sheikhdoms before 1971,[170] including the deposition of Zaid's brother, Sheikh Shakhbut, in 1966, the British refused to countenance Iranian pleas in 1972 for the removal of the Abu Dhabi Ruler. Rejecting Iranian entreaties, the Head of the FCO's Middle East Department, P. R. H. Wright, asserted that 'it would be extremely difficult and probably

futile to attempt to replace Zaid with another member of his family'.[171] The British Ambassador in Tehran, Peter Ramsbotham, expressly told the Iranian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Abbas Ali Khalatbari, that 'There was no question of our going along with any plans aimed at replacing Zaid'.[172] Equally, when the Iranian Ambassador in London, Amir Khosrow Afshar, condemned Britain in July 1972 for not ensuring that Zaid 'behaved properly', Wright countered with the observation that

> our influence with Zaid is by no means what it was under the old relationship. This was not to say that we had no influence anymore; but it was a mistake to think that we could get Zaid to do what we wanted.[173]

This response is all the more significant given that Britain, as already discussed, was anxious to see an improvement in relations between the UAE and Iran. A year later, Wright rebuffed the attempt of the United Arab Emirates Ambassador in London, Mahdi Al-Tajir, to enlist Britain's help in prevailing upon Sheikh Rashid of Dubai to accept changes in the composition of the UAE's Cabinet with the remark: 'we must regard this as an internal matter on which it would be quite improper for us to advise'.[174]

A disinclination to become involved in local affairs can be identified as regards a seabed boundary dispute between Sharjah, Ajman, and Umm al Qawain which emerged in the course of 1973. Foreign Secretary Alec Douglas-Home was especially keen to eschew involvement, asserting: 'HMG has no status to intervene in this matter since the termination of the special treaty relations with the former protected states'.[175] Likewise, A. D. Harris of the FCO's Middle East Department recorded that 'we had made it clear that we wanted to proceed to bow out of this problem with the UAE'.[176] In addition, when the Ruler of Ras al Khaimah, Sheikh Saqr bin Mohammed al-Qasimi, requested a seconded officer for his Mobile Force, British policy-makers exhibited a marked scepticism. Ambassador McCarthy, for instance, noted:

> The issue was the wider one of instituting an entirely new arrangement with an individual State of the Union after independence. The individual States had the right to their own forces under the Federal Constitution; but whether we should nowadays start new direct assistance to States was quite a different matter.[177]

P. A. Raftery of the FCO's Middle East Department confirmed British aversion providing a loan officer with the remark that

> I do not see any particular advantage for British interests in getting involved with Ras al Khaimah Mobile Forces. On the contrary, it could complicate our relations with Shaikh Zaid, Sultan Qaboos (on the border issues) and possibly King Faisal, whose officers in Ras al Khaimah although passive, might well dislike any participation by us.[178]

A similar British reluctance to intervene in the internal affairs of the UAE can be detected with respect to growing tension within the union. Britain's

precipitate decision, announced in January 1968, to withdraw from the Gulf by the end of 1971 had prompted Sheikhs Rashid and Zaid to put aside their differences, if only temporarily, and proclaim on 18 February 1968 the unification of Abu Dhabi and Dubai which provided the foundation for the creation of the United Arab Emirates from the former Trucial States. Mutual suspicions, nonetheless, were apparent from the outset, Sheikh Rashid being especially exercised by the expansion of the Abu Dhabi Defence Force which by the end of 1968 numbered some 1991 men.[179] Responding to this perceived threat, Rashid embarked upon establishing his own force with an initial complement of 500.[180] Taking into account the fact that Zaid and Rashid had even been briefly at war in 1948,[181] Ambassador Treadwell not unreasonably characterised the two Rulers shortly after the creation of the United Arab Emirates as 'unlikely bedfellows'.[182] In May 1973, he recorded not merely that the relationship between Zaid and Rashid had 'never been a really confident one', but also Abu Dhabi's 'overbearing ways' had been the cause of 'much bitterness in Dubai'.[183] The validity of this observation was soon borne out.

On 31 January 1978, Sheikh Zaid issued decrees abolishing the three existing regional commands of the UAE Armed Forces and putting all units under the direct control of the Federal Military Command in Abu Dhabi. In addition, Zaid appointed his own son, Sultan, Commander-in-Chief of the re-organized Federal Armed Forces. Sheikh Rashid and Sheikh Saqr of Ras al Khaimah promptly rejected the decrees, arguing that they were unconstitutional as they had been produced without consultation. Explaining Sheikh Rashid's response, his senior adviser, Mahdi Al-Tajir, highlighted that Dubai 'wanted to see a strong UAE but a union of partners not overlords and underlings'.[184]

On 9 May 1978, Sheikh Rashid informed British diplomats that he was planning to withdraw from the UAE.[185] Reflecting Britain's changed position in the Lower Gulf, the former British Ambassador to the UAE, D. J. McCarthy, noted that Rashid was:

> clearly trying to make our flesh creep by dragging us in as though it were still the days of the Political Resident and the Political Agent. Those days were ended by the decision of Sir Harold Wilson's Government in February [*sic*] 1968. The local resentment of that decision is one reason among many why we can no longer revert to the status quo ante. The very Arab nature of the mess, moreover, suggests to me that we cannot in fact influence its outcome greatly … My instinct and judgment alike suggest therefore that we should not get mixed up in this any further.[186]

Indeed, the resolution of the immediate crisis, which saw Sheikh Rashid taking on the role of the UAE's Prime Minister and the withdrawal of his threat to pull Dubai out of the UAE, stemmed from local initiative, rather any intercession, direct or indirect, from Britain.[187]

Ongoing divisions within the UAE were revealed during the Queen and Prince Philip's visit to the country as part of their tour of the Gulf in early

1979. Britain's Ambassador to the UAE, D. A. Roberts, reported that Mahdi Al-Tajir was prevented from taking his place on the Queen's Flight from Abu Dhabi to Jebel Dhanna because Sheikh Zaid would not travel in the same aeroplane as him.[188] Responding to this slight, Al-Tajir played no further part in the royal engagements in Abu Dhabi and returned to Dubai. The animosity between the two leading states in the UAE continued unabated, the Abu Dhabian Head of the Delegation of Honour, Sheikh Sarour bin Mohammed, objecting to Dubai's parading a Guard of Honour for the Queen's arrival which he interpreted as an attempt to present Dubai as a separate country.[189] Reflecting on the royal visit to the UAE, the Head of the FCO's Middle East Department, A. G. Munro, asseverated: 'The squabble over the guard of honour and Shaikh Zaid's refusal to travel in the same plane as Mahdi Al-Tajir would be laughable, if they did not reflect the incorrigible nature of this feud'.[190] In a similar vein, Ambassador Roberts remarked that 'the infant Federation is vexed by tribal and dynastic vendettas from the past, compounded by rivalry in the markets of the modern world'.[191]

In spite of the frictions exposed by the royal visit, British decision-makers remained disinclined to become involved in the internal affairs of the UAE. Epitomising this tendency during US-UK talks on the Middle East in Washington in March 1979, the Deputy Under-Secretary of State at the FCO, Sir Anthony Parsons, impressed upon the American side that 'The UAE Federation was admittedly not working well and this could be a source of instability; but attempts from the outside to make it work better might well lead to its total collapse'.[192] Equally, the Minister of State at the FCO, Douglas Hurd, rebuffed Crown Prince Sheikh Khalifa bin Zaid of Abu Dhabi's entreaty in August 1981 that Britain attempt to sway those states in the UAE not committed to 'total unity' with the observation: 'it was not for us to tell the Rulers how to run their affairs'.[193]

These remarks underline that in the decade following Britain's formal withdrawal from the Gulf in 1971, its willingness, and indeed ability, to exercise significant influence over the United Arab Emirates markedly declined. This, in turn, casts doubt on the existing interpretations of Britain's post-imperial relations with the United Arab Emirates, more especially claims that the new country remained informally within the British imperial system after 1971. Mounting competition from Britain's industrial rivals undermined its economic interests, while the growing involvement of the Arab world in the affairs of the UAE served to erode Britain's former exclusive position in the Lower Gulf and militate against retaining influence after empire. Britain's military pre-eminence was also diluted by the encroachment of other suppliers of advanced weaponry, most notably the French, and the incorporation of other nationalities into the armed forces of the UAE as officers and advisers, especially from Pakistan. The principal Rulers of the UAE were also less and less inclined to seek or follow British advice. Ruminating in 1980 on this phenomenon, Ambassador Roberts observed that whereas in the early days

after British withdrawal the UK Ambassador continued to see Sheikh Zaid 'on a privileged basis and at very regular intervals', this practice had 'dropped away some time in the last five years or so'.[194] In contrast with the prevailing historiography, moreover, there was also a desire among British policy-makers to move away from the old relationships of the past. Far from attempting to oversee a seamless transition from formal to informal empire in the Gulf after 1971, British policy-makers sought to place relations with the UAE on a recognisably post-imperial footing which no longer relied upon exclusive influence. Roberts pointed out that 'After independence in 1971 we went out of our way to avoid any appearance of seeking to preserve an imperial position in the area. We concentrated on maintaining and if possible improving our share in a growing commercial market'.[195] Equally, referring in 1978 to the former Trucial States, Assistant Under-Secretary at the FCO, M. S. Weir, observed: 'There was indeed something slightly unhealthy and unnatural about the old "special relationship" … and I think the new UAE generation are grateful to us for not trying to cling on to it beyond its time'.[196]

Notes

1. Ashton and Louis, *East of Suez and the Commonwealth*, xxix.
2. Stockwell, *Ending the British Empire*, 24.
3. Darwin, "Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez," 149. See also Darwin, "British Decolonization since 1945," 205–06.
4. Darwin, *The Empire Project*, 579.
5. Stockwell, "Ends of Empire," 281.
6. Stockwell, "Exporting Britishness," 169.
7. Ibid.
8. Louis, "Suez and Decolonization," 28. See also. Louis and Robinson, "The Imperialism of Decolonization," 462–511.
9. Louis, "Introduction," 27.
10. For accounts of British withdrawal from the Gulf, see Smith, *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf*; Shohei Sato, *Britain and the Formation of the Gulf States*; Bradshaw, *The End of Empire in the Gulf*.
11. For accounts of the growth of British power in the Lower Gulf, see Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*, 283–88; Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States*, 14–17.
12. Cited in Balfour-Paul, *The End of the Middle East*, 105.
13. Kennedy, *The Imperial History Wars*, 111; Bradshaw, "The Dead Hand of the Treasury," 328.
14. Hayman, "Economic Protectorate in Britain's Informal Empire," 324.
15. Von Bismarck, *British Policy in the Persian Gulf, 1961–1968*, 182.
16. Letter from the Foreign Office to Bernard Burrows, No. 125, 24 July 1953, TNA, FO 371/104270/EA 1053/8.
17. Despatch from Crawford to Brown, 27 January 1968, cited in Ashton and Louis, *East of Suez and the Commonwealth*, 145.
18. Minutes of a meeting of the Defence and Oversea Policy (Official) Committee, 10 June 1968, The National Archives (hereafter TNA), CAB 148/83, OPDO(68)4th meeting.

19. 'Public expenditure: post-devaluation measures': Cabinet conclusions, 4 January 1968, cited in Ashton and Louis, *East of Suez and the Commonwealth*, 124.
20. Louis, "Britain and the Middle East after 1945," 48.
21. Louis, "The British Withdrawal from the Gulf," 102.
22. Sato, *Britain and the Formation of the Gulf States*, 143.
23. Petersen, *Anglo-American Policy toward the Persian Gulf*, 2.
24. Ibid., 1.
25. Rabi, "British Possessions in the Persian Gulf and Southwest Arabia," 276
26. Rossiter, *Security in the Gulf*, 267.
27. Çavuşoğlu, "Britain's Post-colonial Foreign Policy towards Persian Gulf Security," 39.
28. Bradshaw, *The End of Empire in the Gulf*, 159.
29. Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj*, 32.
30. See Hinchcliffe, Ducker, and Holt, *Without Glory in Arabia*; Brehony and Jones, *Britain's Departure from Aden and South Arabia*; Spencer Mawby, *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates*, 151–81.
31. Letter from Sir Stewart Crawford to George Brown, 12 January 1968, in Burdett, *Records of the Emirates: Volume 2*, 4.
32. Telegram from Crawford to the Foreign Office, No. 34, 10 January 1968, TNA, FCO 8/47.
33. Record of a meeting between Mr Goronwy Roberts, MP, Minister of State, Foreign Office, and Their Highnesses the Rulers of Qatar and Dubai in Dubai, 8 Jan. 1968, cited in Burdett, *Records of the Emirates, Volume 3*, 212.
34. Telegram from D. A. Roberts to the Foreign Office, No. 25, 11 January 1968, TNA, FCO 8/47.
35. Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the Ruler of Dubai at No. 10 Downing Street, 12.30pm, 22 July 1969, cited in Burdett, *Records of the Emirates, Volume 4*, 210.
36. Record of meeting between the Minister of State for Foreign Affairs and the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, 9 January 1968, at 12.00, cited in Burdett, *Records of the Emirates, Volume 3*, 207.
37. Umm al Qaiwain, Ras al Khaimah, Ajman, Sharjah, and Fujairah.
38. Record of a conversation between Mr Goronwy Roberts, MP, Minister of State, Foreign Office, and HH the Rulers of the Northern Trucial States in Dubai, 9 January 1968, cited in Burdett, *Records of the Emirates, Volume 3*, 215.
39. Letter from G. G. Arthur (Political Resident, Persian Gulf) to Douglas-Home, 24 Jan. 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1804.
40. Treaty of Friendship between the United Arab Emirates and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, cited in Burdett, *Records of the Emirates: Volume 6*, 254.
41. Ibid.
42. Letter from Treadwell to Wright, 25 June 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1934.
43. Letter from McCarthy to Douglas-Home, 31 December 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2354.
44. Interview with Sheikh Zaid bin Sultan by Salim Lawzi (translation), *al-Hawadeth*, p. 3, 2 March 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2126.
45. Letter from Raftery to R. W. Renwick (British Embassy, Paris), Ref: NBT 10/6, 17 January 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2366.
46. Ibid.
47. Letter from Major to Lt. Col. R. Jury, 14 July 1978, TNA, FCO 8/3101.
48. Letter from Roberts to Carrington, 16 November 1980, TNA, FCO 8/3509.
49. Letter from Sir George Middleton to R.A. Beaumont, No. 1535/1, 11 February 1960, TNA, FO 371/149084/B 1534/7.

50. Letter from Richmond to Stevens, No. 1059/63G, 3 February 1963, TNA, FO 371/168632/B 1052/9/G.
51. Cited in Sato, *Britain and the Formation of the Gulf States*, 131–32.
52. Letter from Treadwell to Crawford, 19 December 1969, cited in Burdett, *Records of the Emirates, Volume 4*, 12.
53. Letter from McCarthy to Douglas-Home, 31 December 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2354.
54. Ibid.
55. Letter from Armitage to P. M. S. Corley (Department of Trade), 10 October 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2361. See also Letter from A. T. Lamb to Corley, 10 Aug. 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2198; Letter from D. J. McCarthy to D. F. Ballentyne (Trade Relations and Exports Department, FCO), 25 February 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2361.
56. Letter from McCarthy to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 10 January 1976, TNA, FCO 8/2659.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. Ibid.
60. Letter from McCarthy to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 5 January 1977, TNA, FCO 8/2888.
61. Ibid.
62. Ibid.
63. Ibid.
64. Letter from Ennals to Peter Shire, 19 February 1975, TNA, FCO 8/2399.
65. Letter from McCarthy to James Callaghan, 14 April 1975, TNA, FCO 8/2400; 'Mr Peter Shore reports concerns over delivery dates', Press Notice: Department of Trade, 9 May 1975, TNA, FCO 8/2400.
66. Letter from McCarthy to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 5 January 1977, TNA, FCO 8/2888.
67. Costain and Laings were two large, well-established British construction and engineering firms which had participated in the growing development projects in the UAE from the early 1970s.
68. Letter from Roberts to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 1 January 1979, TNA, FCO 8/3319.
69. Ibid.
70. 'United Kingdom diplomatic representation in the UAE', Minute by Lucas, 21 April 1978, TNA, FCO 8/3140.
71. Letter from Treadwell to Wright, 27 December 1972, TNA, FCO 8/2126.
72. Letter from Treadwell to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 10 June 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2126.
73. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 21 April 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2359.
74. Record of a conversation between the Prime Minister and the President of the United Arab Emirates at Chequers at 12 noon on Tuesday 12 September 1972, TNA, PREM 15/1086.
75. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 21 April 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2359.
76. Ibid.
77. Ibid.
78. For a detailed analysis of the origins of the dispute, see Morton, *Buraimi*.
79. Ibid., 80.
80. Petersen, "Anglo-American Rivalry in the Middle East," 71.
81. 'Territorial disputes in the Persian Gulf', Minute by McCarthy, 12 November 1969, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 10*, 51.

82. Ibid., 52.
83. Letter from Goulty to G. P. Wall (Residency, Bahrain), 5 August 1969, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 8*, 486.
84. Record of a conversation between HM Ambassador Jedda and Prince Fahd bin Abdul Aziz, Second Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior at the latter's office in Jedda, 26 February 1972 at 1.00pm, in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 13*, 111.
85. Telegram from Jedda to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 129, 28 February 1972, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 13*, 109.
86. Schofield, "The Crystallisation of a Complex Territorial Dispute," 50.
87. Letter from Treadwell to W. Morris, 13 December 1971, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 12*, 518.
88. Telegram from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (Douglas-Home) to Amman, No. 348, 10 August 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1930.
89. 'Abu Dhabi-Saudi frontier', Minute by A. D. Parsons, 23 February 1973, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 14*, 319.
90. Telegram from Jedda to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 228, 13 May 1973, in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 14*, 354; Letter from Lord Denman (Chairman, Committee for Middle East Trade) to Douglas-Home, 17 May 1973, in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 14*, 355.
91. 'Saudi-UAE relations', Minute by Wright, 23 May 1973, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 14*, 359.
92. Letter from Douglas-Home to Denman, 24 May 1973, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 14*, 362.
93. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 7 July 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 172.
94. Ibid.
95. Letter from Wright to McCarthy, 23 July 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 176.
96. Letter from Hawley to Wright, 15 July 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 174.
97. 'Settlement of the Saudi/UAE dispute', Minute by Wright, 30 July 1974, in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 186.
98. Ibid., 187.
99. Letter from Henderson to Wright, 15 August 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 229.
100. The Saudi Ambassador is referring here to the socialist state in South Yemen, officially known the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen, which had emerged when the British withdrew in 1967. The term 'Dhofari' alludes to the ongoing uprising against Sultan Qaboos of Oman centred on the province of Dhofar.
101. Letter from Henderson to A. D. Harris, 6 May, 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 168.
102. Telegram from Jedda to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 598, 23 August 1974, in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 242.
103. Letter from Walker to T. J. Clark, 24 August 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 245.
104. Translation of joint communiqué issued at Jedda on 21 August 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 247.
105. Telegram from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Tunis, No. 50, 2 August 1974, in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 194; Telegram from the

Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Cairo, No. 436, 2 August 1974, in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 195.
106. Letter from McCarthy to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 7 August 1974, cited in Schofield, *Arabian Boundaries: Volume 15*, 207.
107. Yates, *The Evolution of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates*, 231.
108. Intelligence Report No. 10 by Colonel J. S. Agar (Defence Attaché, British Embassy in the United Arab Emirates), 4 April 1974, Annex A, TNA, FCO 8/2371.
109. 'Loan Service Personnel', attached to minute by K. G. Bloomfield, 5 September 1974, FCO 8/2365.
110. Yates, *The Evolution of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates*, 212. In 1975, the British contract officer who had commanded the Abu Dhabi Navy was replaced with a seconded Egyptian officer (Ibid).
111. Annual Report for 1973 by Agar, 22 Jan. 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2371.
112. Letter from McCarthy to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, 4 February 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2371.
113. By April 1974, there were 139 Abu Dhabian officers (Intelligence Report No. 10 by Colonel J. S. Agar (Defence Attaché, British Embassy in the United Arab Emirates), 4 April 1974, Annex A, TNA, FCO 8/2371).
114. Yates, "The Formation of Military Intelligence in the United Arab Emirates," 239.
115. Ibid., 238–39.
116. Yates, *The Evolution of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates*, 219; Intelligence Report No. 12 by Agar, Annex B: Sharjah National Guard, 3 June 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2371.
117. Letter from Johns to Group Captain D. J. Rhodes (Headquarters, Air Forces Gulf), 20 January 1970, TNA, FCO 8/1514.
118. Letter from Ibbott to D. H. Doble (South Asian Department, FCO), 13 March 1973, TNA, FCO 8/1953.
119. Ibid.
120. Ibid.
121. 'Pakistan's relations with her Middle East neighbours: Annex B: Persian Gulf', draft paper by the South and South East Asia Section: Research Department, FCO, attached to letter from R. A. Longmire to Giles Bullard (Islamabad), 29 June 1973, TNA, FCO 8/1953.
122. Ibid.
123. Letter from McCarthy to P. R. H. Wright, 18 December 1973, TNA, FCO 8/1953.
124. The Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), which came into being on 19 August 1959, was a defence alliance between Britain, Iran, Pakistan, and Turkey replacing the defunct Baghdad Pact – see Yesilbursa, "CENTO," 856.
125. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 18 December 1973, TNA, FCO 8/1953.
126. Letter from McCarthy to Douglas-Home, 31 December 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2354.
127. Ibid.
128. Yates, "The Use of British Seconded and Contracted Military Personnel to Advance British Interests," 229–34.
129. 'Military Advisory Team in the UAE', Minute by P. R. H. Wright (Middle East Department, FCO), 19 February 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2137.
130. Ibid.
131. 'Military Advisory Team in the UAE', Minute by Balniel to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 21 February 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2137.
132. Letter from Davidson to R. A. Lloyd Jones, 9 March 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2137.
133. Yates and Rossiter, "Military Assistance as Political Gimmickry," 154

134. Letter from Wright to R. Abraham (Ministry of Defence), NBT 10/9, 24 May 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2137.
135. Yates and Rossiter, "Military Assistance as Political Gimmickry?" 160–61.
136. Telegram from McCarthy to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 216, 6 December 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2370.
137. See Ahmadi, *Islands and International Politics in the Persian Gulf*, 83–114; Petersen, *Richard Nixon, Great Britain, and the Anglo-American Alignment in the Persian Gulf*, 62–78.
138. Telegram from Kuwait to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 285, 4 May 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1837.
139. Ahmadi, *Islands and International Politics in the Persian Gulf*, 101–02.
140. Letter from Wilton to the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, 6 January 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1834.
141. Telegram from Abu Dhabi to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 247, 8 May 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1929.
142. Letter from Treadwell to Wright, 18 June 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1929.
143. Ibid.
144. Letter from Treadwell to A. Reeve, 31 July 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1930.
145. Telegram from Abu Dhabi (Treadwell) to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 367, 10 August 1972, FCO 8/1930.
146. Telegram from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to Tehran, No. 505, 29 September 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1931.
147. Ibid.
148. 'Iran-UAE', Minute by Wright, 8 November 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1931.
149. Telegram from Abu Dhabi to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 526, 24 December 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1931.
150. 'The outlook for the Persian Gulf up to 1978', Report by the Joint Intelligence Committee, May 1973, TNA, CAB 186/15, JIC (A) (73) 10.
151. Record of the Anglo-US talks on the Middle East held at the State Department, Friday 28 September 1973, TNA, FCO 8/1950.
152. Bamberg, *British Petroleum and Global Oil*, 474.
153. Vassiliev, *King Faisal of Saudi Arabia*, 376.
154. Paust and Blaustein, *The Arab Oil Weapon*, 43.
155. Bamberg, *British Petroleum and Global Oil, 1950–1975*, 477.
156. Letter from McCarthy to Sir Alec Douglas-Home, 31 December 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2354.
157. Ibid.
158. Summary record of discussions during the luncheon party given in honour of the President of the United Arab Emirates on 20 September 1973 at No. 10 Downing Street, TNA, PREM 15/1760.
159. 'UAE Annual Review', Minute by A. D. Harris, 17 January 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2354.
160. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 24 June 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2359.
161. Ibid.
162. *The Herald*, 26 February 2014, https://www.heraldscotland.com/opinion/13147631.william-duff/ [accessed 6 February 2024]; *The Independent*, 13 March 2014, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/obituaries/william-duff-banker-whose-expertise-helped-transform-dubai-into-a-financial-powerhouse-and-a-major-force-in-the-arab-world-9190920.html [accessed 6 February 2024].
163. Intelligence Report No. 12 by Agar, 3 June 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2371.
164. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 24 June 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2359.

165. Ibid.
166. Ibid.
167. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 24 June 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2359.
168. Intelligence Report No. 12 by Agar, 3 June 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2371.
169. Letter from Moberly to Acland, 10 April 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1806.
170. See Bradshaw and Curtis, 'Persian Gulf Coups Misrepresented', accessed 5 December 2022.
171. 'Iran/UAE relations', Minute by Wright, 18 May 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1929.
172. Telegram from Tehran to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, No. 478, 30 May 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1929.
173. 'Iran/UAE', Minute by Wright, 31 July 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1930.
174. Letter from Wright to D. J. McCarthy, 5 December 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2126.
175. Letter from Douglas-Home to Dr Armand Hammer, 6 February 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2133.
176. 'Sharjah/Umm al Qawain', Minute by Harris (First Secretary FCO), 19 April 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2133.
177. Letter from McCarthy to Wright, 12 February 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2372.
178. 'Ras al-Khaimah Mobile Forces', Minute by Raftery, 23 February 1974, TNA, FCO 8/2372.
179. Bradshaw, *The End of Empire in the Gulf*, 127. By 1973, the Abu Dhabi Defence force numbered 9565 personnel.
180. Bradshaw, *The End of Empire in the Gulf*, 127.
181. For an account of the conflict, see Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*, 311.
182. Letter from Treadwell to Douglas-Home, 11 May 1972, TNA, FCO 8/1923.
183. Letter from Treadwell to P. R. H. Wright, 8 May 1973, TNA, FCO 8/2126.
184. Teleletter from H. St. John B. Armitage to the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, 5 February 1978, TNA, FCO 8/3140.
185. 'United Arab Emirates: Internal', note attached to Lucas' minute, 17 May 1978, TNA, FCO 8/3140.
186. 'The UAE mess', Minute by McCarthy, 15 June 1978, TNA, FCO 8/3141.
187. Letter from D. K. Haskell to Carrington, 1 January 1980, TNA, FCO 8/3507.
188. Letter from Roberts to Owen, 10 March 1979, TNA, FCO 8/3300.
189. Ibid.
190. Letter from Munro to Roberts, 23 March 1979, TNA, FCO 8/3300.
191. Letter from Roberts to Owen, 10 March 1979, TNA, FCO 8/3300.
192. Anglo-US official talks on the Middle East, Washington, 15–16 March 1979, B2: The Gulf Sheikhdoms, TNA, FCO 8/3283.
193. Record of a meeting between Sheikh Khalifa bin Zaid, Crown Prince and Prime Minister of Abu Dhabi, in Hans Crescent, 5 Aug. 1981, TNA, FCO 8/3923.
194. Roberts' views cited in 'British relations with the United Arab Emirates', Minute by H. D. A. C. Miers, 9 Dec. 1980, TNA, FCO 8/3509.
195. 'UAE attitudes to the United Kingdom', Memorandum attached to Roberts' letter to Miers, 1 March 1981, TNA, FCO 8/3820.
196. Minute by Weir, 24 April 1978, TNA, FCO 8/3140.

Disclosure Statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

References

Ahmadi, Kourosh. *Islands and International Politics in the Persian Gulf: Abu Musa and the Tunbs in Strategic Perspective*. London: Routledge, 2008.

Ashton, S. R., and W. R. Louis, eds. East *of Suez and the Commonwealth 1964–1971: Part 1*. London: HMSO, 2004.

Balfour-Paul, Glen. *The End of the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in her Last Three Arab Dependencies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Bamberg, James. *British Petroleum and Global Oil, 1950–1975: The Challenge of Nationalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.

Bradshaw, Tancred. "The Dead hand of the Treasury: The Economic and Social Development of the Trucial States, 1948–60." *Middle Eastern Studies* 50, no. 2 (2014): 325–342.

Bradshaw, Tancred. *The End of Empire in the Gulf: From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*. London: I. B. Tauris, 2019.

Bradshaw, Tancred, and Michael Curtis. "Persian Gulf Coups Misrepresented." *Middle Eastern Studies*, published online 6 June 2022. https://www-tandfonline-com.hull.idm.oclc.org/doi/pdf/10.108000263206.2022.2080196?needAccess=true.

Brehony, Noel, and Clive Jones, eds. *Britain's Departure from Aden and South Arabia: Without Glory but Without Disaster*. Berlin: Gerlach Press, 2020.

Burdett, A. L. P., ed. *Records of the Emirates, 1966–71: Volume 2, 1967*. Slough: Archive Editions, 2002.

Burdett, A. L. P., ed. *Records of the Emirates, 1966–1971: Volume 3: 1968*. Slough: Archive Editions, 2002.

Burdett, A. L. P., ed. *Records of the Emirates, 1966–1971: Volume 4: 1969*. Slough: Archive Editions, 2002.

Burdett, A. L. P., ed. *Records of the Emirates, 1966–1971: Volume 6: 1971*. Slough: Archive Editions, 2002.

Çavuşoğlu, Esra. "Britain's Post-Colonial Foreign Policy towards Persian Gulf Security (1971–1991): An Alternative Approach." *Turkish Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* 5, no. 2 (2018): 37–64.

Darwin, John. "Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez." In *Munich to Vietnam: Australia's Relations with Britain and the United States since the 1930s*, edited by Carl Bridge, 140–158. Carlton, VIC: Melbourne University Press, 1991.

Darwin, John. "British Decolonization since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle?" *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 12, no. 2 (1984): 205–206.

Darwin, John. *The Empire Project: The Rise and Fall of the British World System, 1830–1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Friedman, Brandon. *The End of Pax Britannica in the Persian Gulf, 1968–1971*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020.

Hayman, Mark. "Economic Protectorate in Britain's Informal Empire: The Trucial Coast during the Second World War." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 46, no. 2 (2018): 323–344.

Heard-Bey, Frauke. *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*. Harlow: Longman, 1996.

Hinchcliffe, Peter, John T. Ducker, and Maria Holt. *Without Glory in Arabia: The British Retreat from Aden*. London: Tauris, 2006.

Kennedy, Dane. *The Imperial History Wars: Debating the British Empire*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018.

Louis, Wm. Roger. "Britain and the Middle East after 1945." In *Diplomacy in the Middle East: The International Relations of Regional and Outside Powers*, edited by L. Carl Brown, 21–58. London: I. B. Tauris, 2004.

Louis, Wm. Roger. "The British Withdrawal from the Gulf, 1967–71." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 31, no. 1 (2003): 83–108.

Louis, Wm. Roger. "Introduction." In *The Oxford History of the Twentieth Century: Volume IV: The Twentieth Century*, edited by Judith M. Brown and Wm. Roger Louis, 1–46. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999.

Louis, Wm. Roger. "Suez and Decolonization: Scrambling out of Africa and Asia." Introduction In *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization*, 1–31. London: I. B. Tauris, 2006.

Louis, Wm. Roger, and Ronald Robinson. "The Imperialism of Decolonization." *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 22, no. 3 (1994): 462–511.

Mawby, Spencer. *British Policy in Aden and the Protectorates, 1955–67: Last Outpost of a Middle East Empire*. London and New York: Routledge, 2003.

Morton, Michael Quentin. *Buraimi: The Struggle for Power, Influence and Oil in Arabia*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2013.

Onley, James. *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, and the Nineteenth-Century Gulf*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Paust, Jordan J., and Albert P. Blaustein. *The Arab Oil Weapon*. New York: Oceana Publications, 1977.

Petersen, Tore T. *Anglo-American Policy toward the Persian Gulf, 1978–1985: Power, Influence and Restraint*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2015.

Petersen, Tore Tingvold. "Anglo-American Rivalry in the Middle East: The Struggle for the Buraimi Oasis, 1952–1957." *The International History Review* 14, no. 1 (1992): 71–91.

Petersen, Tore T. *Richard Nixon, Great Britain, and the Anglo-American Alignment in the Persian Gulf: Making Allies Out of Clients*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2009.

Rabi, Uzi. "British Possessions in the Persian Gulf and Southwest Arabia: The Last Abandoned in the Middle East." In *Britain and the Middle East: From Imperial Power to Junior Partner*, edited by Zach Levey, and Elie Podeh, 264–279. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2008.

Rossiter, Ash. *Security in the Gulf: Local Militaries before British Withdrawal*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020.

Sato, Shohei. *Britain and the Formation of the Gulf States: Embers of Empire*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2016.

Schofield, Richard, ed. *Arabian Boundaries: New Documents, 1966–75: Volume 8, 1969*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Schofield, Richard, ed. *Arabian Boundaries: New Documents, 1966–75: Volume 10, 1970*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Schofield, Richard, ed. *Arabian Boundaries: New Documents, 1966–75: Volume 12, 1971*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Schofield, Richard, ed. *Arabian Boundaries: New Documents, 1966–75: Volume 13, 1972*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Schofield, Richard, ed. *Arabian Boundaries: New Documents, 1966–75: Volume 14, 1973*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Schofield, Richard, ed. *Arabian Boundaries: New Documents, 1966–75: Volume 15, 1974*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Schofield, Richard. "The Crystallisation of a Complex Territorial Dispute: Britain and the Saudi-Abu Dhabi Borderland, 1966–71." *Journal of Arabian Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 27–51.

Smith, Simon C. *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950–1971*. London: Routledge, 2004.

Stockwell, A. J. *Ending the British Empire: What did They Think They Were Doing?* Egham: Royal Holloway, University of London, 1999.

Stockwell, Sarah. "Ends of Empire." In *The British Empire: Themes and Perspectives*, edited by Sarah Stockwell, 269–293. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2008.

Stockwell, Sarah. "Exporting Britishness: Decolonization in Africa, the British State and its Clients." In *The Ends of European Colonial Empires: Cases and Comparisons*, edited by Miguel Bandeira Jeronimo, and Antonio Costa Pinto, 148–177. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015.

Vassiliev, Alexei. *King Faisal of Saudi Arabia: Personality, Faith and Times*. London: Saqi Books, 2012.

Von Bismarck, Helene. *British Policy in the Persian Gulf, 1961–1968: Conceptions of Informal Empire*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Yates, Athol. *The Evolution of the Armed Forces of the United Arab Emirates*. Warwick: Helion and Company Limited, 2020.

Yates, Athol. "The Formation of Military Intelligence in the United Arab Emirates: 1965–1974." *Journal of Intelligence History* 20, no. 2 (2021): 221–241.

Yates, Athol. "The Use of British Seconded and Contracted Military Personnel to Advance British Interests: A Case Study from the United Arab Emirates from 1965 to 2010." In *Defense Engagement since 1900: Global Lessons in Soft Power*, edited by Greg Kennedy, 133–152. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2020.

Yates, Athol, and Ash Rossiter. "Military Assistance as Political Gimmickry? The Case of Britain and the Newly Federated United Arab Emirates after 1971." *Diplomacy & Statecraft* 32, no. 1 (2021): 149–167.

Yesilbursa, Behcet Kemal. "CENTO: The Forgotten Alliance in the Middle East (1959–1979)." *Middle Eastern Studies* 56, no. 6 (2020): 854–877.

Zahlan, Rosemarie Said. *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman*. Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998.