Britain's Withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, 1964-1971:

A Study of Informal Empire

Digital copy: an author-formatted version

Shohei Sato
St Antony's College, University of Oxford

April 2011

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of DPhil in International Relations in the Department of Politics and International Relations at the University of Oxford

Abstract of Thesis

Britain's Withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, 1964-1971:
A Study of Informal Empire

Shohei Sato
St Antony's College, University of Oxford
DPhil in International Relations (April 2011)

This thesis is about British disengagement from the southern coast of the Persian Gulf. Britain never had colonies in the region, but had held significant imperial sway over nine Protected States since the nineteenth century. The informal empire remained intact until the Labour government (1964-70) announced its intention to leave, in consequence of which Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates became independent in 1971.

This thesis attempts three things. First, it draws on extensive archival research to provide the fullest possible account of British withdrawal: why it had to leave, how it did and what followed. The Gulf rulers wanted to maintain British protection for their own security, but Britain decided nonetheless on military retreat, because it needed to placate the domestic constituency in order to push forward the reversal of social reforms due to economic retrenchment. The Gulf rulers responded quickly, yet unsuccessfully, in deciding how many states would be formed as they achieve independence. It was only after the Gulf rulers and the British diplomats on the ground made late and mutually acceptable compromises about coming together that the nine Protected States became three new independent sovereign states. In the end, Britain was able to leave the Gulf peacefully, and the new states retained close relations with Britain.

Second, the study of an informal empire illuminates the enduring collaborative relationship between Britain and the Gulf rulers, characterised by the nominal sovereignty given to the Protected States. This relationship not only helped Britain maintain its imperial sway at little cost, but also made possible a peaceful withdrawal and the orderly emergence of the new states.

Third, this informal empire characterised by collaboration and nominal sovereignty laid the structural foundations for the later international society in the region – a point more generally telling for the study of international relations.

Acknowledgements

This thesis would not have been possible, first and foremost, without the guidance I have received from my supervisor Avi Shlaim. At every juncture of my DPhil project, as well as in the crucial moments of my MPhil days, he provided me with essential advice, support and encouragement.

I am also heavily indebted to the Swire Educational Trust for providing me with generous financial support throughout my days at Oxford.

I would also like to thank St Antony's College and the Department of Politics and International Relations for providing me with the institutional and social basis for my studying and research. I also owe a lot to many librarians, archivists, administrators, researchers and editors for their advice and support and to a number of institutions for providing me with research grants at different stages of the research. In particular, I thank Oashi Kyohei for his immense support over all the maps and figures, and Kai Hebel and Iason Gabriel for going through the entire manuscript at the very last stage of my research. I would like to extend my thanks to Roger Goodman, Rosemary Foot and James Piscatori for enabling me to embark on this project, and to the Organization for Islamic Area Studies, Waseda University for allowing me to complete it in Tokyo. I only regret that I was not able to show the final version to Tsugitaka Sato at the OIAS before he passed away.

Finally, I would like to thank all my friends and family, particularly my mother and father, for helping me give meaning to this project and to my life.

Table of Contents

List of Maps and Figures

Maps

Figures

Introduction

This thesis is about British disengagement from the southern coast of the Persian Gulf.[1] Britain never had colonies in the region, but had held significant imperial sway over nine Protected States since the nineteenth century. The informal empire remained intact until the Labour government (1964-70) announced its intention to leave, in consequence of which Bahrain, Qatar and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) became independent in 1971.

Drawing on declassified archival sources and Arabic primary sources, this thesis provides the fullest possible account of British withdrawal. The main theme is the enduring collaborative relationship between Britain and the Gulf rulers, structured upon the norm of sovereignty. As a study of an informal empire, it also advances our understanding on how imperialism laid the structural foundations for the later international society in the region.

[1] The name of the Gulf is subject to a politicised dispute between those who favour 'Persian Gulf' and those who prefer 'Arabian Gulf'. Hereafter, I adopt 'Persian Gulf' as the most commonly used term.

Question

England first entered the Persian Gulf at the turn of the seventeenth century, and started to penetrate the southern coast of the region in the nineteenth century. Over the next one and a half centuries, it gradually established an almost exclusive presence in the territories of ‘Ajman, Fujairah, Ra’s al-Khaimah, Sharjah, Umm al-Qaiwain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Qatar and Bahrain.[2] The British presence remained largely intact until the 1960s, but on 16 January 1968, Harold Wilson, the British Prime Minister of the Labour government, officially announced to the House of Commons that Britain would relinquish its imperial commitments in the Persian Gulf within four years. This goal was achieved by the end of 1971, and the territories concerned became fully independent under the names of the UAE, Qatar and Bahrain. Now one of the last corners of the British Empire was finally incorporated into the system of sovereign states. Despite the long prehistory, the emergence of the three states took place in a period of only four years, essentially shaped by the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and the local societies’ reaction to this. Consequently, Britain’s withdrawal

[2] As a principle, this article follows the system of transliteration of the Arabic names of Frauke Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates: A Society in Transition*, New ed., London: Longman, 1996. However, for the convenience of the readers, special fonts have been replaced with the closest standard English alphabet.

marked one of the most crucial turning points for international relations in the Persian Gulf.

At first glance, the sequence of events appears to be another episode of decolonisation. The formerly dependent peoples should – according to this narrative – be understood to have fought for self-determination, forced the imperial power to grudgingly leave, and thereafter been welcomed as full members of international society.[3] However, a close look into the case in hand confounds all these expectations. The predecessors of the three states had not been colonised in the constitutional sense in the first place, nor did their leaders demand independence. Britain willingly left the region even against the wishes of the United States (US), and the whole transition took place without any drastic disturbances to the existing order. What, then, had been the relationship between Britain and the peoples and territories of these three states prior to their independence? Why did their leaders not fight for their right for self-determination? Why did Britain leave? What was left behind by such a counterintuitive imperial retreat? And, above all, why did the whole transition take place in such an orderly fashion? These are some of the questions that this thesis aims to answer.

[3] For example, Mikulas Fabry argues that recognition of new states by existing ones and the idea of self-determination have been 'two sides of the same coin'. Mikulas Fabry, *Recognizing States: International Society and the Establishment of New States since 1776*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 9. I thank Professor Edward Keene for illuminating Fabry's ides. All errors are mine.

This thesis attempts three things. First, it draws on extensive archival research to provide the fullest possible account of British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf. It is a study of Britain's policy towards the Gulf, its perception, thinking, strategy and implementation of its policy, and it examines the antecedents, decision-making, implementation, and the consequences of British withdrawal. The empirical content of this thesis is particularly enriched by the declassified documents of the British and US governments, as well as by some Arabic primary sources – some of which will be used here for the first time.

Second, it seeks to advance our understanding of the history of the region and the British Empire by analysing the whole episode as the end of an informal empire. Britain had never had a formal empire in the southern Gulf, since it did not impose colonial rule in the region. Instead, it had had an informal empire, and one of a particular kind. Unlike other regions of Britain's informal empire, the presence of Britain in the Gulf was not driven by primarily economic concerns until late in the day. Rather, policy in the region was driven by Britain's strategic interests, and was founded upon political collaboration, wherein the Gulf territories were nominally treated as sovereign entities. An investigation of the demise of an informal empire of this kind illuminates certain continuities in the collaborative relationships that were inherited from the imperial order by global international society.

Third, the study of Britain's informal empire in the Gulf also advances our understanding of how imperialism laid the structural foundation for later international society in the region – a point that is more generally telling for students of both history and international relations. It appears to be a historical truism that decolonisation has never been accompanied by a return to the *status quo ante*. While there has been much discussion of the rise of nationalism and the fall of European empires, what has rarely been taken up as an issue is the way in which the formerly dependent peoples entered the postcolonial world by forming or joining independent states. Did they have any other option? An entity is surely either sovereign or dependent. Yet though this dichotomy may sound plausible today, it is precisely through the spread of decolonisation that the norm of sovereignty came to be the global standard.[4] Few have questioned why a norm with a European origin had such a universal appeal in the postcolonial era when the whole point of decolonisation was to demolish the imperial hierarchy.

This thesis does not purport to provide a conclusive answer to these fundamental questions, but it intends to demonstrate their importance and serve as an illustration of

[4] It was in 1961 that Jean-Paul Sartre remarked, 'The settler has only recourse to one thing: brute force, when he can command it; *the native has only one choice, between servitude or supremacy*.' Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Preface', in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, translated by Constance Farrington, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967, p. 11. Emphasis added. Also see Hendrik Spruyt, 'The End of Empire and the Extension of the Westphalian System: The Normative Basis of the Modern State Order', *International Studies Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2000, pp. 65-92.

how they can be usefully explored. In the words of Max Weber, the underlying question of any historical research is whether the specific event under examination has 'had any definite "consequences" of any importance for the course of "world history"'.[5] This thesis intends to join the collective endeavour that Weber highlights by drawing attention to the importance of the endurance of collaborative relationships and the expansion of the norm of sovereignty through a study of the British informal empire in the Gulf.

Literature Review

Area Studies

This thesis examines the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and the origins of Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE, partly in response to the current need to enhance our historical understanding of the region. The continuous and fundamental changes currently taking place in the Middle East call for a fuller investigation into the origins of the states in the region.

[5] Max Weber, *Max Weber: Selections in Translation*, ed. W. G. Runciman, trans. E. Matthews, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978, p. 116.

Prior to British withdrawal, the Persian Gulf was still on the fringes of international society, where the territories were loosely defined as a grey zone lying between the European system of sovereign states and the traditions of the local societies. The retreat of the British Empire paradoxically forced the region towards adopting the European idea of sovereignty, both geographically and demographically. The basic units of the regional system remain largely unaltered today. Accordingly, some experts on the Gulf region have written substantive works on the British withdrawal. A classic in this area is Rosemarie Said Zahlan's *The Origins of the United Arab Emirates*. Further research has been conducted by Muhammad Morsy Abdullah, Abdullah Omran Taryam and Frauke Heard-Bey.[6] These works have two great merits. Firstly, they tend to focus on the implementation, rather than the decision-making process, of the British withdrawal, thereby illuminating the developments that were taking place on the ground in the Gulf as opposed to the metropole. Secondly, their use of Arabic oral and written sources enables them to attain a better insight into the development of local societies.

---

[6] Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Origins of the United Arab Emirates: A Political and Social History of the Trucial States*, London: Macmillan, 1978; Rosemarie Said Zahlan, *The Making of the Modern Gulf States: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman*, Revised and updated ed., Reading: Ithaca Press, 1998; Muhammad Morsy Abdullah, *The United Arab Emirates: A Modern History*, London: Croom Helm, 1978; Abdullah Omran Taryam, *The Establishment of the United Arab Emirates, 1950-85*, London: Croom Helm, 1987; Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*.

However, despite these benefits, the Area Studies literature has a problem of ontology, as it tends to analyse the event within the framework of national history. By and large, it takes the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar as given entities. Yet, if it was the very event of the British withdrawal through which these three states emerged in the first place, then using the framework of these states to examine this event is an act of circular reasoning. Another problem is their usage of sources. Unlike the literature on the British Empire, this body of work has not yet experienced the full influx of the declassified sources of the British and American archives. With these considerations in mind, this thesis intends to advance the Area Studies literature by engaging with the declassified sources and taking the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf as the focus of study in order to empathetically understand the context in which the then actors were placed, without projecting the present into the past.

Informal Empire

While Britain's withdrawal can be understood as a story of the Persian Gulf, it also deserves a place in the history of the British Empire. However, locating Britain's presence in, and withdrawal from, the Gulf as part of the rise and fall of the British Empire calls for a certain amount of qualification. Some authors take the position that Britain had never had an empire on the southern shore of the Gulf, corresponding to

the nationalistic narratives that legitimise the history of the current states. They prefer the viewpoint that Britain had been only a friend of the precursors to the current UAE, Qatar and Bahrain, not their imperial master.[7] This line of argument is supported by the fact that Britain never established a colony over this region in a constitutional sense; however, this does not fit with the fact that it took military responsibility to protect them and had exclusive control over their external affairs up until the withdrawal in 1971. At the other end of the spectrum, some might argue that the British presence was no different in this region than in its colonies. Indeed, it had a military base, and the Political Resident commanded his own force called the Trucial Oman Levies (later renamed as Trucial Oman Scouts). Still, whilst Britain's visible military presence and its influence over the external affairs of the southern Gulf may resemble a formal rather than an informal empire, the crucial point here is the fact that the rulers were given a shadow of sovereignty. The fact that the territories concerned were treated as sovereign states at some levels is not just a theoretical or juridical point of no consequence, but a lens through which an important dimension of the British Empire can be understood.

In between these two extremes, this thesis will view the British presence throughout the southern Gulf as one of informal empire. The idea of 'informal empire'

[7] For example, see Habibur Rahman, *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years, 1627-1916*, London: Kegan Paul, 2005.

was made famous, if not invented, by an article written by Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher and published in 1953.[8] They contended that imperialism and the principle of free trade were not in antithesis of each other, but were mutually constitutive in the outer circle surrounding the formal colonies. Their argument was highly acclaimed and has provoked intense debate among students of the British Empire over the following decades.[9] Forty years later, P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins further advanced the literature by illuminating the importance of the financial concerns of the City of London that drove the expansion of Britain's informal empire after the late nineteenth century.[10]

Drawing a line between the 'formal' and 'informal' empire has an instinctive appeal, but some authors are not satisfied with its level of analytical clarity. For example, Lance Davis casts doubt on the utility and validity of the idea of 'informal empire' all together.[11] He claims that Robinson-Gallagher's idea of an 'imperialism of

---

[8] John Gallagher and Ronald Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1953.

[9] For example, see D.C.M. Platt, 'The Imperialism of Free Trade: Some Reservations', *Economic History Review*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1968; Wm. Roger Louis, 'Introduction: Robinson and Gallagher and Their Critics', in Wm. Roger Louis ed., *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy*, New York: New Viewpoints, 1976.

[10] P.J. Cain and A.G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914*, London: Longman, 1993; *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction, 1914-1990*, London: Longman, 1993. Their idea of 'gentlemanly capitalism' was partly a response to the dependency theory that saw its heyday in the intervening years, and it also corresponded with the contemporary vibrancy of the City after the Thatcher era.

[11] Lance Davis, 'The Late Nineteenth-Century British Imperialist: Specification, Quantification and Controlled Conjectures', in Raymond E. Dumett ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire*, London: Longman, 1999.

free trade' is problematic, because 'an empire without coercion is hardly an empire at all; and it certainly is not an exploitative empire'.[12] Similarly, the line of Cain-Hopkins's thesis is also vague because even though it implies that Britain was able to exercise power over its informal empire, it offers 'no measure of that power'.[13]

Exploring a further precise definition of 'informal empire' or even more basic concepts such as 'empire' or 'imperialism' has its own theoretical merits, but the goal of this thesis is to illustrate a certain aspect of history with the aid of these concepts rather than purifying them for their own sake. To that end, it is inspired by John Darwin's idea of the 'empire project', an understanding of the totality of the British Empire as an aspiration beyond what was actually achieved.[14] Upon such a holistic understanding of empire, this thesis will advance the literature on informal empire by pointing out how the Persian Gulf was importantly different from other examples.[15]

---

[12] Ibid., p. 83.

[13] Furthermore, the financial argument that allows Cain-Hopkins to choose South America as part of Britain's informal empire should also include the US, an argument which is intuitively flawed to Davis. Ibid., p. 84-89. Also see Jürgen Osterhammel, 'Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986, pp. 290-314.

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

[15] Some authors further expand the notion of informal empire to include relationships between sovereign states that are fully independent both economically and juridically. For example, Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim analyse the relationship between the Soviet Union and the East Germany as an example of informal empire, whereby the 'authority structures shape identity and interests' of the latter. This constructivist

The conventional studies on the informal empire of Britain have revolved around three key regions – South America, China and the Ottoman Empire. Although there are variations and controversies in regard to how to understand Britain's relationship with each region, for the present purpose it will suffice to set out a broad typology that will illustrate the importance of studying the Persian Gulf.[16]

In South America, Britain's informal empire expanded after the late nineteenth century to include Argentina, Brazil and Chile, and was driven primarily by the financial interests of the City. It was welcomed by the local Anglophile elites, who were keen to raise funds in London, and political intervention was kept at a minimum.[17] In China, the expansion of Britain's informal empire took off after 1895, and its great contributor was the Hongkong and Shanghai Bank, which eventually

---

approach highlights the importance of exchange of ideas, but it differs from Britain's informal empire in the Gulf, where, as it will be seen, the Protected States had a more ambiguous status as sovereign states. Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, 'Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East-German State', *International Organization*, vol. 49, no. 4, 1995, pp. 690-691.

[16] For debates on Cain and Hopkins's framework, see Raymond E. Dumett, ed., *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire* London: Longman, 1999.

[17] Cain and Hopkins, *Innovation and Expansion*, pp. 276-315. Davis summarises the debate between Robinson-Gallagher and Cain-Hopkins: The former insists that British policy in South America was designed to promote 'indirect political hegemony' in support of its commercial interests, whereas the latter is inclined to agree with D.C.M. Platt, who argued that the British government intervened only when it was necessary for legal concerns or British lives and property were being threatened. Davis, 'Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism'. Also see A.G. Hopkins, 'Informal Empire in Argentina: An Alternative View', *Journal of Latin American Studies*, vol. 26, 1994.

secured the backing of the Foreign Office.[18] Strategic concerns were minimal, because China was not *en route* to anywhere important for Britain. In contrast, Britain had a significant strategic interest in the Ottoman Empire, since it needed a buffer zone to defend India. Here, strategic and financial interests were intrinsically related to each other, and the City gradually penetrated the Porte by giving loans to the dying empire.[19]

Compared to these examples, Britain's informal empire in the Persian Gulf was more of a political than an economic artefact. Unlike Britain's presence in Argentina, where economic interests were the key driver behind expansion, in the Gulf it was motivated primarily by political interest in securing the trading and communication route to India and excluding rival powers. This is not to say that economic considerations were irrelevant in Britain's presence in the Gulf, but there is an important distinction between the need to secure trade and economic interests *per se*. It was only after the mid-twentieth century that the commercial drilling of oil in the Gulf and the ensuing revenue gave the region economic as well as strategic importance for Britain.

[18] Cain and Hopkins, *Innovation and Expansion*, pp. 397-421.
[19] Ibid., pp. 422-446.

This leads us to the next point. My thesis will bring our attention back to collaboration, inspired by an argument put forward by Robinson in 1972.[20] The study of collaboration was further advanced by John Darwin, who calls the territories of the former Ottoman Empire after the First World War Britain's 'undeclared empire'. Darwin points out the centrality of the political dynamics of 'an empire founded not on rule but on a regional network of uneasy and inequitable collaboration'.[21]

Further to this point, taking the example of the British Mandates of Palestine and Mesopotamia, Kathryn Tidrick demonstrates that the British Arabists' confidence about their knowledge of the local societies enabled Britain to exercise a significant degree of influence with little man-power.[22] Sir Anthony Parsons, one of the British diplomats who worked in the Gulf during the period concerned, also produced a perceptive work on the relationship between Britain and the Gulf rulers, although his recollections should be read critically.[23] Inspired by these works, this thesis will

---

[20] Ronald Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, London: Longman, 1972, pp. 117-142.

[21] John Darwin, 'An Undeclared Empire: The British in the Middle East, 1918-39', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1999, p. 170.

[22] Maureen Heaney Norton further advances this line of argument by focusing on the role of Sir John Glubb. Kathryn Tidrick, *Heart-beguiling Araby*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981; Maureen Heaney Norton, 'The Last Pasha: Sir John Glubb and the British Empire in the Middle East, 1920-1949', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University, 1997.

[23] Anthony Parsons, *They Say the Lion: Britain's Legacy to the Arabs: A Personal Memoir*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1986.

illuminate the relationship between British officials as well as civilians on the one hand and the rulers, local population and the immigrants residing in the Persian Gulf on the other, not only at a structural but also at an individual level.

Finally, this thesis also advances the debates on informal empire by examining the period when it was in decline, or arguably transformation, rather than when it was expanding. Whereas conventional studies have examined the period between the nineteenth century and the Second World War in considerable depth and scope, much remains to be explored in the post-war years. By expanding the notion of 'informal empire' to include territories with an ambiguous degree of sovereignty in the Gulf, this thesis can critically re-examine a period and process that can arguably be called the decolonisation of informal empire.

End of Empire

Thus, while it has been established that this thesis will examine Britain's withdrawal from the Gulf as an episode in an informal empire, it will also advance the studies of the end of the British Empire.[24] Of course, the British retreat from the Persian Gulf was

[24] John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991. This thesis is primarily concerned with the British Empire, but for a more comparative study of the end of European Empires, see: R.F. Holland, *European Decolonization, 1918-1981: An Introductory Survey*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985;

not a typical example of decolonisation, since Britain had never established a formal colony there, but this thesis will expand our understanding of the end of empire by including the informal realm. In this regard, this work builds upon the idea of the 'imperialism of decolonization' put forward by Wm. Roger Louis and Robinson. They contend that 'the post-war British Empire was more than British and less than an *imperium*'.[25] However, while Louis and Robinson focus on the relationship between the nationalist leaders and the Anglo-American alliance – i.e. the agents driving decolonisation – this thesis's focus on the Persian Gulf enables me to illuminate the importance of sovereignty – the rule underlying the whole phenomenon.[26]

Works on the end of the British Empire can be understood in terms of what Darwin called the 'pattern or puzzle' debate.[27] Can we comprehend the transformation from empire to a post-imperial international system as a planned and logical process, or was it an accumulation of a baffling series of withdrawals resulting in unintended consequences? Of course, it is likely that few historians would be able to find a definite satisfactory answer on either side of the spectrum, but the dialectic between the two

---

Hendrik Spruyt, *Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

[25] Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson. 'The Imperialism of Decolonization', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1994, p. 462.

[26] Also see Ronald Robinson, 'The Excentric Idea of Imperialism, with or without Empire', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986, pp. 267-289.

[27] John Darwin, 'British Decolonization since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1984.

explanations has been one of the forces that has advanced the study of the end of the British Empire, and more specifically, its withdrawal from the Persian Gulf.

In a nutshell, there are two strands of thought. On the one hand, the prevailing view is that the long-term relative decline of the British economy compelled the Labour government to withdraw its troops from overseas. This argument posits a strong link between economic retrenchment and military retreat, hence finding some comprehensible pattern in the whole process.[28] On the other hand, a smaller group of scholars contend that the government needed to satisfy domestic opinion, which tended to be against overseas commitment. This group is apt to emphasise an intervening political motive that connected retrenchment and retreat, looking at the more puzzling aspects of the decision.[29] The two groups are not necessarily mutually exclusive, but

[28] Patrick Gordon Walker, *The Cabinet*, Revised ed., London: Collins, 1972; Phillip Darby, *British Defence Policy East of Suez, 1947-1968*, London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1973.

[29] J.B. Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980; F. Gregory Gause, 'British and American Policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 11, 1985. From an international perspective, John Darwin argues that Britain's progression towards Europe, together with the changing self-image of Britain within the government, made it hesitant to continue its engagement in the Gulf. James Onley applied the theoretical debates of formal and informal empire to Britain's policy towards the protected states. See John Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-war World*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988; James Onley, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf, 1820-1971', *Journal of Social Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 87, 2005. For other aspects of the debates in the literature, see Tore T. Petersen, 'Crossing the Rubicon? Britain's Withdrawal from the Middle East, 1964-1968: A Bibliographical Review', *International History Review*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2000.

they differ significantly on the factors they choose to emphasise. On top of these two factors, some scholars draw attention to international factors such as Britain's progression towards Europe.[30]

Recently, this debate has been advanced by the declassification of some pertinent government documents. The declassified sources have enabled scholars to investigate *why* the decision was reached, by scrutinising *when* it was made. For example, Louis notes that it was a 'decision of the Harold Wilson Labour Government to rescue the British economy by taking severe measures, including evacuating all troops from South-East Asia and the Gulf'.[31] Saki Dockrill and Simon C. Smith do not posit a direct causal link between economic retrenchment and military retreat; instead, they argue that the withdrawal decision was effectively taken in July 1967 as a result of a series of defence reviews, which were necessitated by Britain's long-term decline.[32] Extending this line of argument, Tore T. Petersen contends that the Labour government was intending to retreat from the East of Suez region, including the Gulf, due to its anti-imperialistic ideology. He concludes that "the withdrawal from the

---

[30] Avi Shlaim, 'Britain's Quest for a World Role', *International Relations*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1975; Darwin, *Britain and Decolonisation*, pp. 289-298.

[31] Wm. Roger Louis, 'The Withdrawal from the Gulf', *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2006, p. 878.

[32] Saki Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez: The Choice between Europe and the World?*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002, p. 51ff; Simon C. Smith, *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950-71*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.

Persian Gulf was the end of a planned and conscientious process".[33] In contrast, Jeffrey Pickering defends the political argument, by emphasising the shifting of the balance of power within the Labour Party after devaluation in November 1967. He contends that the decision was taken between December 1967 and January 1968, due to the rise of anti-imperialist opinions within the government.[34]

Thus, while Dockrill and others are inclined to find a logical pattern leading to the withdrawal decision that was reached over the course of months, or even years, before the announcement in January 1968, Pickering contends that the decision was taken in January 1968 for more spontaneous reasons. He positions himself more on the 'puzzle' side of the spectrum. This thesis aims to further advance the debate by investigating the key governmental documents more closely.

One problem that has been overlooked by the literature is that its analysis is based on a questionable geographical conception. In most cases, the British decision to withdraw from the Persian Gulf has been regarded as part of a greater decision, commonly called the 'East of Suez' decision. Indeed, on 16 January 1968, the Labour government's declaration that it would withdraw its troops from the Gulf by the end of

---

[33] Tore T. Petersen, *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East, 1961-1969: A Willing Retreat*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2006, p. 114.

[34] Jeffrey Pickering, *Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez: The Politics of Retrenchment*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998; Jeffrey Pickering, 'Politics and "Black Tuesday": Shifting Power in the Cabinet and the Decision to Withdraw from East of Suez, November 1967-January 1968', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2002.

1971 was accompanied by the announcement that a parallel action would be taken in Malaysia and Singapore within exactly the same timeframe. Also, only a couple of months earlier, Britain had withdrawn from Aden, a port on the Arabian Peninsula outside the Persian Gulf. Yet, as the following sections will demonstrate, British withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore had already been decided upon in the first half of 1967, and had been declared in July of that year. As regards these two states, the January 1968 announcement only accelerated an already publicised decision, whereas the withdrawal from the Persian Gulf was decided and announced for the *first time* in January 1968. Nonetheless, the Labour government presented the two decisions – together with its decision to withdraw from Aden, which had already been implemented – as part of the larger package of withdrawal from 'East of Suez'. The terminology has been largely successful in shaping the literature, and indeed there is merit in analysing the decision in the context of a larger strategic transition. Yet, at the same time, the sentimentally vague phrase has obscured the actual context in which the government decided upon withdrawal from the Gulf.[35] Uncritical recycling of the policy-makers' ontology opens the door to an over-rationalisation of past events, particularly when it is stained with an *ex post facto* justification of their decisions.

[35] David McCourt, 'What was Britain's "East of Suez Role"? Reassessing the Withdrawal, 1964-1968', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2009.

In this regard, this thesis is also inspired by the works of Phuong Pham, who focuses on the other side of the 'East of Suez' decision – i.e. the withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore. She powerfully illuminates 'the politics and symbolism of withdrawal', and this thesis also approaches to this theme although from a different regional interest.[36]

Historical analyses should not be dictated by the public presentation of the policy-makers. The task of untangling the actual intention of the policy-makers from their public statements is not easy, but this thesis has the advantage of being able to access declassified official records of the negotiations that took place within the government. Thus, the thesis seeks to contribute to the new generation of literature by distinguishing the decision on withdrawal from the Gulf from the ostensibly larger decision on withdrawal from 'East of Suez'. At the same time, it also aims to contextualise the withdrawal in term of the interplay between the rise and fall of informal empire and the evolution of sovereignty. On the whole, in the spirit of the quote from Weber, or Darwin's 'pattern or puzzle' question, I will negotiate between the merits of taking a macroscopic view in order to understand a larger trend of history and the danger of over-rationalising the past for the virtue of simplicity.

---

[36] Phuong Pham, *Ending 'East of Suez': The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964-1968*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010, p. 238. Also see Phuong Pham, 'End of the East of Suez: The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964 to 1968', unpublished D.Phil. thesis, Oxford: University of Oxford, 2001.

In addition, this thesis builds on the more classical works on the British withdrawal from the Gulf. Glen Balfour-Paul, who worked as the Political Agent in Dubai and later as Deputy Political Resident in Bahrain has also produced an important study of the subject. He asserts that, 'Withdrawal from the Gulf was determined less by political hustling (whether external or internal) than by Treasury calculations and a fading of imperial will in Westminster.'[37] This point will be critically re-examined. He also narrates the critical moments of the implementation of the British withdrawal mostly in terms of the border disputes with Iran, while this thesis will advance on this by looking into the negotiations among the rulers of the Protected States themselves and with Britain.[38] While his analysis is enriched by first-hand experience, this thesis will advance it with the aid of declassified sources that he could not use.

Finally, this thesis also builds upon the more recent works that have benefited from the declassification of government documents. One of the first works of this new generation was produced by Louis, who was followed by Petersen, W. Taylor Fain and James Onley.[39] This thesis will advance this new body of scholarship by delving

---

[37] Glen Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in Her Last Three Arab Dependencies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, p. 6. For a more early study, see J.C. Hurewitz, 'The Persian Gulf: British Withdrawal and Western Security', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 401, no. 1, 1972, pp. 105-116.

[38] Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East*, pp. 125-137.

[39] Louis, 'The Withdrawal from the Gulf; Petersen, *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East*; *Richard Nixon, Great Britain and the Anglo-American Alignment in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula: Making Allies out of Clients*, Brighton: Sussex

further into the archives and using some important and previously unused sources. In particular, the original archival research will enable a detailed study of the implementation of the British withdrawal. Whereas these existing works tend to focus on Anglo-American relations or the British senior diplomats, this thesis examines the events in further detail and looks into the negotiations on the ground that took place between the Gulf rulers, their advisers, and Britain's junior diplomats.

Concepts

Sovereignty and International Society

Before moving onto the empirical analysis, a few key concepts need to be addressed. One is sovereignty, particularly in the context of international relations. For example, few have explored the question on why the status of a sovereign state is so enduring, given the frequency with which regimes and governments alter or their territories are compromised over time. The US has toppled the regimes of Afghanistan and Iraq in recent years, but it has been compelled to operate upon the premise that they will be

---

Academic Press, 2009; W. Taylor Fain, *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008; James Onley, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf, 1820-1971', *Journal of Social Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 87, 2005, pp. 29-45.

sovereign states. Likewise, the ongoing political changes in the Middle East have so far not accompanied significant rearrangement in the system of sovereign states in the region. Thus, sovereignty is one of the most fundamental concepts for the study of international relations, but it is treated at worst as given and at best hypocrisy; and its historical evolution is not looked into closely enough.[40] This is a crucial point for the discipline, as it addresses the problem of the unit of analysis. The discipline of international relations is predicated upon a notion that world politics is centred on a system composed of sovereign states. Although this idea seems to come naturally to us today, we should not assume that it was always such a given. The notion of sovereignty, including its external and internal dimensions, has not existed from the

[40] This problem is also present in the field of history, although to a lesser extent. Take, for example, the rising trend towards 'global history'. Given the current public interest in globalisation and the increasingly featured role of non-state actors, it is understandable that we have witnessed a drawing back from the overly state-centred approaches and Western-centric narratives in recent years. Even when a state-centric approach is recognised to be anachronistic, however, often a certain negative focus tends to be put on states. Even the debate on the terminology of 'global history', 'transnational history', 'international history' and 'diplomatic history' revolves, to some extent, on the role one perceives states to be taking in the particular event or theme to be examined. However, it is often overlooked that understanding sovereignty is central for the ongoing historiographical debate. For example, there is no entry on sovereignty in Akira Iriye and Pierre-Yves Saunier, *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009. For the representative works on 'global history', see John Darwin, *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global History of Empires, 1400-2000*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2007; Patrick O'Brien, 'Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History', *Journal of Global History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2006; Ian Clark, *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

beginning of mankind, but is rather a historically specific product. Moreover, it did not emerge simultaneously across different parts of the world to suddenly cover the globe.

In this regard, this thesis will build upon the work of a group of scholars, sometimes called the 'English School', who have concerned themselves with the process through which the states-system originated in Europe and expanded elsewhere. The definite feature of the English School is their conception of the international system as 'international society'. Here, it is important to make a distinction between a 'society' in the general sense and 'international society' as is understood in the discipline of international relations. There is a society when a group of people form a community with shared interests and values, whereas 'international society' is a community of sovereign states with shared interests and values. Society is almost universal in the history of humanity, whereas international society is a historically specific product.[41]

International society is built upon a system of sovereign states.[42] The notion and institution of sovereignty originated from Europe, a small corner of one of the

[41] Thus Headley Bull, the key thinker on international society, conceives of 'primitive stateless societies'. I do not share the underlying teleological view but I build upon his analytical clarity. Hedley Bull, *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3rd ed., Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002, pp. 57-62.

[42] International society does not have an overarching authority, but is bound as a society by common rules and institutions. This notion is a combination of two ideas: (1) a system of sovereign states; and (2) a society of nations. Although this thesis is primarily concerned with the former element, it is important to note that the concept of international society is based upon both. Ibid.

continents of the world. It gradually intersected with different societies, each with its own culture and historical context. The way in which this system emerged and spread towards different regions has had a lasting effect on the way in which it operates today. However, the literature on the origin and evolution of the states-system is still at an early stage of development. There is still a pronounced tendency among scholars of international relations to embrace an ahistorical view of the states-system and project its operation into the past.[43] A few authors from the English school have approached the legal and philosophical side of the subject but,[44] apart from some notable

[43] This trend is most clearly manifest my exponents of the orthodox positivist approach to international relations. For a critique of this approach to the study of international relations, see Hedley Bull, 'International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach', in Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau eds., *Contending Approaches to International Politics*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970; S.H. Haber, D.M. Kennedy, and S.D. Krasner, 'Brothers under the Skin: Diplomatic History and International Relations', *International Security*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1997; J. L. Gaddis, 'History, Theory, and Common Ground', *International Security*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1997, pp. 75-85.

[44] Following a classic comparative work by Martin Wight, a number of authors contributed to a seminal book entitled *The Expansion of International Society*. This addressed the need to examine the process through which European international society had expanded towards the rest of the world. Although its notion of 'expansion' did not fully liberate them from the Eurocentrism that it aimed to problematise, it was a landmark in scholarship on the subject. Watson later moved on to compare European international society with other societies in different historical and regional settings. Building upon these macroscopic comparative approaches, Edward Keene advanced the subject by focusing on the philosophical foundations of the system of states. With a perceptive reflection on the way in which Grotian theory and the evolution of its interpretation justified the dual nature of European international society, he concludes that 'the fundamental norm governing relations between European states was therefore the reciprocal recognition of each state's equality and independence with regard to its territorial sovereignty', whereas beyond Europe 'the fundamental norm governing relations between European states and non-European peoples was that the latter were

exceptions, the literature on the historical aspect is still underdeveloped.[45] A more detailed examination of the historical process through which the norm of sovereignty developed in different parts of the world before it came to construct a global system of states is badly needed.

---

backward and that some of the sovereign prerogatives of indigenous rulers ought to be held by more advanced Europeans'. Following this insightful work, Keene has recently begun a comparative study on the legal aspects of the evolution of the system of states; similar approaches have been taken by legal scholars such as Jörg Fisch. See Martin Wight, *Systems of States*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977; Hedley Bull and Adam Watson, *The Expansion of International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984; Adam Watson, *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, London: Routledge, 1992; Edward Keene, *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002, p. 147; 'International Law and Diplomacy in the European and Extra-European Worlds during the early Nineteenth Century', unpublished article, 2008; Jörg Fisch, 'Internationalizing Civilization by Dissolving International Society: The Status of Non-European Territories in Nineteenth-Century International Law', in Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann eds., *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

[45] A notable exception includes the works by Gerrit W. Gong, Shogo Suzuki. Gong traces the process through which Japan, China and Siam resisted imperialism. He reveals that European imperialism expanded by imposing the norm of civilisation on the new members of international society. Further advancing Gong's work, Suzuki focuses on the Japanese example. His careful examination of the Japanese sources suggests that, when Japan entered international society, it adopted not only the European norms of law but also its violence and imperialism, and applied them to its relations with the non-European peoples. Gerrit W. Gong, *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984; Suzuki, 'Japan's Socialization into Janus-faced European International Society', p. 156. Also see Yannis A. Stivachtis, *The Enlargement of International Society: Culture versus Anarchy and Greece's Entry into International Society*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998.

In one of the few studies on the historical side of the subject, Robert Jackson looks into the later stages of European imperialism and points out the normative shift that took place during the tide of decolonisation in the 1960s. With the changing notion of sovereignty, now that the 'quasi-states' without the self-standing domestic foundation for statehood could be members of the system of states, the world had formally levelled into a single and coherent constitutional category.[46] This thesis will take his argument from this general point and look into the overall process in further historical detail. The British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf provides an illuminating example here, as we shall see in this thesis, because it is a case where the interdependence between the former imperial metropole and the local collaborative elites was highly pronounced.

In contrast to these approaches that focus on the overall system composed of sovereign states, Stephen Krasner takes a closer look at sovereignty, the conceptual unit of the structure. His argument is particularly relevant in trying to clarify, at this stage, what we mean by sovereignty.[47] He points out that there are four properties associated with sovereignty – territory, control, autonomy and recognition.[48] Although

---

[46] Robert H. Jackson, *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

[47] Also see Antonio Cassese, *International Law in a Divided World*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986, pp. 42-43,77-80.

[48] Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999, p. 220.

all four are important and intrinsically related, it is the last with which this thesis is primarily concerned. In particular, it will focus on the external dimension of sovereignty as the recognition of authority. Here, I refer to external sovereignty as the status of a certain state recognised as an independent political unit free of intervention, at least in principle, from other states; internal sovereignty, on the other hand, means the authority to have supreme control over the domestic affairs of that particular state. The external dimension of sovereignty, with its focus on recognition, or 'international legal sovereignty' in Krasner's term, significantly overlaps with what Jackson calls 'juridical statehood'.[49] For the ease of readers, this thesis will simply refer to 'external sovereignty'.

[49] Jackson, *Quasi-states*, pp. 21-26; Krasner, *Sovereignty*, pp. 14-20. Further advancing their framework, one can also make a distinction between external sovereignty and internal sovereignty in terms of the process through which they are constructed. In more simple terms, external sovereignty can be built either from the outside or from the inside. External sovereignty is constructed outside-in when the pre-existing states-system nominates who will be the new member, regardless of its coherence or will. Sovereignty is built inside-out when a society seeks approval from the pre-existing states-system to become a new member. Similarly, internal sovereignty can be constructed either through top-down or through bottom-up processes. It can be understood to be built in a top-down fashion if a certain individual or group within a political unit enjoys supreme authority and succeeds in imposing its will upon others, whereas it is constructed bottom-up when the society as a whole reaches a consensus upon how to decide its internal affairs. Of course, these four directions are never clear-cut in practice, and they can also be mutually reinforcing. Nonetheless, an analytical distinction can be instrumental in understanding the process through which a state becomes a state.

The difference between external and internal sovereignty is particularly important when one examines the Persian Gulf, because the full independence of the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar in 1971 was essentially the transfer of external sovereignty from Britain to the three states, but not the internal sovereignty. Prior to British withdrawal, Britain had exercised exclusive control over the external affairs of those societies but, to a large extent, it had left their internal affairs to be taken care of by the local rulers.

In summary then, this study relates to the literature on the evolution of the system of sovereign states, and it intends to build upon those works especially concerned with the philosophical and legal side of the subject, and to advance the field by expanding the historical horizon. Though this detailed examination of the British withdrawal will not be able to present a coherent or conclusive theory, it will aim to illustrate a direction in which the literature can be fruitfully advanced. In particular, I will explore the idea that sovereignty developed as a deal between the upper echelons of different societies, who were pursuing their own interests but also had a common stake in the consolidation and preservation of a stable and exclusive system of states. It was not necessarily a manifestation of the ideal of self-determination of the larger populace, but a deal between a small number of people, who were dependent on each

other for the preservation of the *status quo*, even though they were independent in an asymmetric manner.[50]

Collaboration

Another concept that needs to be addressed here is collaboration. Here, I use the word 'collaboration' in a specific sense, referring to the mutual coexistence and asymmetric interdependence between Britain and the Gulf rulers, as opposed to the relationship between Britain and a wider group of indigenous/foreign elites – such as the conventional studies tend to focus on.[51]

On top of the classical work by Robinson, this thesis is inspired by the work of Colin Newbury, who argued that the European empires did not create patron-client relationships in a vacuum but instead reorganised pre-existing ones and superimposed their own.[52] Due to the sense of guilt among the former metropole and insecurity among the formerly dependent peoples, the mutual dependence between the two sides

[50] I thank Professor Sir Adam Roberts for introducing me to the idea of sovereignty as a 'deal'. All errors are mine.

[51] For example, see: James Onley, *The Arabian Frontier of the British Raj: Merchants, Rulers, and the British in the Nineteenth-Century Gulf*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

[52] Robinson, 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism; Colin Newbury 'Patrons, Clients and Empire: The Subordination of Indigenous Hierarchies in Asia and Africa', *Journal of World History*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2000, pp. 258-259, 261.

in the past is not addressed openly and frequently enough. Even the use of the term ‘collaboration’ still tends to be avoided as being indiscreet or immoral. Among the important exceptions are the works that have focused either on the processes or the agents of collaboration. The former highlights the asymmetry of economic activities or political negotiations, and the latter the transformation of the agents concerned, such as the shift of the metropole from Britain to the Anglo-American alliance. This thesis purports to advance these works by highlighting the structure of the collaborative order, particularly a structure founded upon the norm of sovereignty.

Sources

This is an empirical study of the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf, situated within a conceptual framework connected with the debates on the British Empire and sovereignty. The significance and originality of this work rests partly on the framework set out above, but more largely on the quality of the sources that are employed as well as my critical interpretation of them. Hence, this section will lay out the main sources and map out the ways in which these sources are examined.

I engage with three different types of primary sources: (1) declassified official documents of the British, American and Arab governments; (2) published official

documents of these governments; and (3) other contemporary documents, media reports and memoirs.

The most important are the declassified documents, particularly those produced by our protagonist, the British government. As a rule, all British government documents produced behind the scenes during the decision-making process are classified for thirty years before public access is allowed at the National Archives in Kew (formerly known as the Public Record Office). There are exceptions to this rule, as some documents become declassified earlier while others remain classified after the thirty-year period. Nonetheless, the thirty-year rule is applied to most of the sources related to our topic, which is why we have seen in recent years the flourishing of studies revising the conventional narrative with the help of declassified sources. The declassified documents are particularly helpful in learning what the policy-makers were thinking and doing behind the scenes, as opposed to what they openly said or wrote in public.[53] Of course, this does not mean that declassified documents provide direct access to the policy-makers' minds. When writing these documents they may not have to worry about publicity; however, but it is likely they had other considerations, such as interdepartmental politics or personal ambition. However, compared to

[53] For a discussion on the distinction between the policy-makers' actual intentions and the public presentation, see Yuen Foong Khong, *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

memoirs or interviews – which tend to lose some detail and reflect the policy-makers' *ex post facto* justification or, in some cases, their deliberate attempts to re-write history – declassified documents are one of the most revealing sources that a historian can access. In fact, this is precisely why they were classified in the first place.

In particular, this thesis will use the declassified British documents of the Cabinet Office, the Prime Minister's Office, the Treasury, the Foreign (and Commonwealth) Office, the Ministry of Defence (MOD) and the War Office. Some of them are now published in compilation, but the majority are only available in the National Archives.[54] The same applies to the declassified sources of the US government. The main ones include the State Department Records, Records of the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), documents available through the CIA Records Search Tool (CREST) and the Nixon Presidential Library. These are all accessible at the American National Archives II in College Park, Maryland. In addition, some declassified records are available online.[55] Documents that are published in compilation also provide a good starting point for research.[56]

---

[54] The notable compilations include: C.U. Aitchison, *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and the Neighbouring Countries*, vol. 11, Delhi: Government of India, 1933; S.R. Ashton and Wm. Roger Louis, *British Documents on the End of Empire, Series A, Vol. 5: East of Suez and the Commonwealth, 1964-1971*, 3 vols, London: The Stationery Office, 2004; Roger Bullen and M. E. Pelly, *Documents on British Policy Overseas*, series 1, vol. 4, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987.

[55] Notable examples include: Declassified Documents Reference Systems (DDRS), [http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com]; Digital National Security Archive (DNSA),

Whereas most of these documents are written in English, this thesis will also use some Arabic declassified sources now published in *Watha'iq al-Khalij al- Árabi, 1968-1971: Tamuhat al-Wahdah wa Humum al-Istiqlal* (Arabian Gulf Documents, 1968-1971: Attempts at Federation and Independence) and *Qatar wa Ittihad al-Imarat al-'Arabiyah "al-Tis'" fi al-Khalij al-'Arabi, 1968-1971: Dirasah wa Watha 'iq* (Qatar and the Union of the 'Nine' Arab Emirates in the Gulf, 1968-1971: A Study and Documents).[57] There are also some declassified Arabic documents in the British archives. A lot of these documents are the agreements signed between the rulers of the Persian Gulf in response to the British announcement of the withdrawal. They do not necessarily provide the details of the decision-making process behind the scenes to the extent that the British or American documents do on their side, but nonetheless they are significant contemporary evidence produced directly by the local actors of the Gulf.

[http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/home.do]; Presidential Recordings Programme [http://millercenter.virginia.edu/index.php/academic/presidentialrecordings/].

[56] U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States*, various vols, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. *FRUS* is also available online at: [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus].

[57] Riyad Nahib al-Rayyis, *Watha'iq al-Khalij al-'Arabi, 1968-1971: Tamuhat al-Wahdah wa Humum al-Istiqlal* (Arabian Gulf Documents, 1968-1971: Attempts at Federation and Independence), London: Riad El Rayyes, 1987; al-Shalaq, Ahmad Zakarya and Mustafa 'Aqil al-Khatib, *Qatar wa Ittihad al-Imarat al-'Arabiyah "al-Tis'" fi al-Khalij al-'Arabi, 1968-1971: Dirasah wa Watha 'iq* (Qatar and the Union of the 'Nine' Arab Emirates in the Gulf, 1968-1971: A Study and Documents), Doha: Dar-al-Thaqafah, 1991.

The second group of sources are the published official documents issued by the governments involved. These sources may not necessarily reflect what the policy-makers were actually thinking, but we should remember that their public presentation has its own significance. If the declassified documents reveal the decision-making process, the published sources are records of their implementation, as public presentation is a significant part of policy-makers' action. On the British side, they include *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard)* and *Parliamentary Papers*; from the American side, some papers of the Congress; and from the Gulf region, those compiled in *Watha'iq al-Khalij al-Árabi*.[58]

Although these declassified and published official documents provide a good insight into the policy-makers involved, the picture would be incomplete and the larger social context missed if not complemented by a wider range of sources. For this purpose, a range of contemporary documents, media reports, papers of oil companies – some of which are classified but I gained special permission to access –, memoirs and interviews will be employed.[59] These sources sometimes shed new light on the

[58] *Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons Official Report*, Fifth Series, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office; *Parliamentary Papers: House of Commons and Command*; U.S. Congress, House of Representatives, 'U.S. Interests in and Policy Toward the Persian Gulf', Hearings before the Subcommittee of the Near East Committee on Foreign Affairs, 92nd Congress, Second Session, Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1972.

[59] To set out the notable ones: Denis Wright, *The Memoirs of Sir Denis Wright, 1911-1971*, unpublished memoir, 2 vols plus index, Bodleian Library, Oxford; Anthony Shierlie, *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlies Journey Ouerland to Venice, Frõ*

decision-making process and the actions of the policy-makers. For example, it is conventionally understood that, after the British withdrawal was announced in 1968, the American government eventually adopted what came to be known as the 'twin pillars' policy, nominating Iran and Saudi Arabia as its regional proxies in association with the Nixon Doctrine issued in 1969. However, examination of declassified official records from the Nixon administration suggests that few, if any, documents used the term 'twin pillars'. In fact, the earliest use of the term that this author has been able to identify came out in 1975 in *The Washington Post*. Personal correspondence with the

---

Thence by Sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Babylon, and Soe to Casbine in Persia: His Entertainment There by the Great Sophie, London, 1600; William Luce, 'Britain in the Persian Gulf: Mistaken Timing over Aden', *The Round Table*, no. 227 1967; William Luce, 'Britain's Withdrawal from the Middle East and Persian Gulf', *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, vol. 114, no. 653, 1969; Tony Benn, *Office Without Power: Diaries 1968-72*, London: Hutchinson, 1988; Kuan Yew Lee, *From Third World to First: The Singapore story, 1965-2000*, Singapore: Singapore Press Holding, 2000; Tony Benn and Ruth Winstone, *Out of the Wilderness: Diaries 1963-67*, London: Hutchinson, 1987; George Brown, *In My Way: The Political Memoirs of Lord George-Brown*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1971; Barbara Castle, *The Castle Diaries, 1964-1970*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984; Richard Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister: Volume Two, Lord President of the Council and Leader of the House of Commons, 1966-68*, London: Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1975; Hugh Dalton, *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60*, ed. Ben Pimlott, London: Jonathan Cape, 1986; Denis Healey, *The Time of My Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989; Roy Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre*, London: Macmillan, 1991; Henry Kissinger, *The White House Years*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979; Richard M. Nixon, *Leaders*, New York: Warner Books, 1982; Richard M. Nixon, *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1978; Harold Wilson, *The Governance of Britain*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976; Harold Wilson, *The Labour Government, 1964-70: A Personal Record*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971.

author of this article suggested that even he was not clear when and how exactly it came into use.[60] This finding might lead us to question what exactly the 'twin pillars' policy was – whether it was a proactive and coherent policy, or more plausibly a way of justifying a lack of policy that was only retrospectively applied in later years.

In short, this thesis will employ declassified and published official documents, in both English and Arabic, together with a wider range of contemporary sources, memoirs and interviews, in order to empathetically understand the British withdrawal.

Scope and Outline

The thesis will provide a detailed account of the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf by looking into its antecedents, decision-making, implementation, and the consequences. Since the whole process arguably stretches over four centuries or even more, the main empirical focus will be on decision-making and implementation of this policy between 1964, when the main agent of the decision-making process of the British withdrawal, namely Harold Wilson's Labour government (1964-1970) took power, and 1971, when the implementation of the withdrawal was completed.

[60] Murray Marder, 'U.S. Ties Seen Continuing', *The Washington Post*, 26 March 1975, p. 1. Present author's correspondence with Murray Marder, 6-7 April 2009.

The argument of this thesis will proceed in the following order. Chapter 1 will lay out the antecedents that preceded the eventual British withdrawal. In the early nineteenth century, Britain sent military expeditions to the southern coast of the Gulf. Thanks to its subsequent military victory, London coerced the local forces into entering a series of treaties. The primary aim of these unequal treaties was to establish a peace in the region favourable to British commerce and communication, yet the very act of signing these treaties implied that Britain had acknowledged the legal status of its counterparts. Consequently, the territories concerned were given the persona of sovereign states as 'Protected States'.

Chapters 2 and 3 will examine the decision-making processes that led to the withdrawal announcement in January 1968. The withdrawal decision was taken in the context of the British Empire's long-term economic retrenchment and military retreat, but the actual process through which the Labour government reached the final decision was significantly affected at the last minute by domestic forces. In particular, the need to justify social cuts in the wake of the devaluation of the pound pushed the Labour government towards making an explicit cabinet decision, setting a rigid timeframe and publicly announcing it.

Chapters 4 and 5 will move on to the implementation of the withdrawal decision. The Gulf rulers responded quickly, yet unsuccessfully, to decided how they would become independent, if at all. In Britain, the Conservatives took over the government

but did not help by attempting to reverse Labour's plan. It was only after the British diplomats on the ground and the Gulf rulers made feasible compromises to come together very late in the day that the nine Protected States became independent in three sovereign states, as Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE.

Chapter 6 will look into the consequences of the British withdrawal. The transformation of their sovereign status from that of an informal colony to a member of global international society not only meant that the new states possessed legal personalities equal to those of the former imperial metropole and superpowers, it also enabled both Britain and the US to maintain an international order favourable to the West by means of consensus and collaboration, whilst minimising direct involvement and the use of coercive measures. The whole process entailed only a rearrangement of the collaborative relationship that had developed during the period of Britain's informal empire.

On the whole, this thesis is not designed to make any generalisations, but it encourages us to ask more critically why the norm of sovereignty had such a universal appeal, not just for the former metropole but also for those who grew out of the imperial sway. The findings on the withdrawal of Britain's informal empire in the Persian Gulf invite us to examine sovereignty not just as a norm of independence but as one of collaboration.

Chapter 1

Britain's Informal Empire in the Persian Gulf

> Although tacit 'influence' over another state is a part of international politics today, the sovereignty of a state must, formally, be exclusive, not hierarchical or multiple, and it must be unambiguous.[1]

This statement summarises the way in which the norm of sovereignty operates in international society today. However, this was not the case when Britain originally entered the Gulf.

This chapter will lay out how the British presence in the Gulf developed prior to the Labour government coming to power in 1964. An underlying theme is the hybridity of informal empire, an international system structured on a mixture of European norms and local traditions. In particular, this chapter will ask how Britain entered and increased its presence in the Gulf, how it justified its presence, and what the outcomes were at the point of the early 1960s. Given the length of the timeframe, it will rely more heavily than other chapters on secondary sources.

[1] Tongchai Winichakul, *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994, p. 88.

Chapter 2

Clinging On

On 16 December 1964, the new Prime Minister of Britain, Harold Wilson, proudly proclaimed in the House of Commons:

> I want to make it clear that whatever we may do in the field of cost effectiveness, value for money, and a stringent review of expenditure, we cannot afford to relinquish our world rôle [sic], our rôle which, for shorthand purposes, is sometimes called our 'East of Suez' rôle…[1]

At the beginning of his premiership, Wilson was openly sanguine about Britain's commitment to 'East of Suez'. During the ensuing years, however, his Labour government would change its position regarding Britain's commitment overseas and, in January 1968, it would announce its intention to leave the Persian Gulf. The next two chapters will address the question of why Britain ultimately decided to withdraw from the Gulf. This chapter will focus on the first three years of Wilson's premiership, critically re-examining the traditional explanations for the withdrawal; while the next chapter will put forward a different explanation, drawing on original archival research.

Our concern here corresponds directly to the central question concerning the end of empire: Why, when and how does an empire end? John Darwin categorises various explanations into three groups, according to their emphasis on metropolitan, peripheral

[1] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 704, cols. 423-424.

or international factors.[2] This framework can be further advanced by dividing the three groups according to their analytical perspectives, depending on whether they give precedence to economic, political and military, or social and cultural factors. Of course, nine factors are interconnected, but the division provides a helpful starting point for a concrete analysis. In particular, when looking at the reasons behind the Labour government's decision to withdraw from the Gulf, there are five plausible factors: economic retrenchment of Britain; political and ideological changes in the international environment; ideological pressure at home; local opposition, either from the rulers or from their society; and domestic political considerations. The existing literature is divided as to which were the more important ones. The prevailing view pivots around economic retrenchment, in the sense that the long-term relative economic decline had convinced the government by July 1967 that it should leave the 'East of Suez', including Aden, Malaysia, Singapore and the Persian Gulf. This view rests upon three ideas:

(1) That the withdrawal from the Gulf was decided upon as part of the retreat from a larger area 'East of Suez';
(1) That the decision had been taken by July 1967; and
(1) That economic pressure was the main driver behind the whole process.

The next two chapters will take issue with each of these components, and demonstrate that the decision-making process was far more contingent, contested and fraught.

In particular, this chapter will look at the first three years of Wilson's premiership and critically re-examine: (1-1) the extent to which Labour government's policy

[2] John Darwin, *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

towards the Gulf was crafted as part of the ‘East of Suez’ policy; and (1-2) whether the withdrawal from the Gulf had been decided by July 1967. The first section will set out the Wilson government’s initial stance towards the Persian Gulf and look into the background behind it. The second section will take up the question concerning (1-1), and the third section will examine the significance of (1-2). Furthermore, this chapter will examine (2) the international environment; (3) whether there was significant ideological pressure pushing Britain out of the region; and (4) whether any local considerations that moved Britain to leave the Gulf were emerging.

Chapter 3

The Decision

For three years after coming to power, Wilson's Labour government was committed to keeping the British informal empire in the Persian Gulf. They decided on withdrawing from Aden, Malaysia and Singapore, but little seemed to have changed on the Gulf front even after the devaluation in November 1967. While Downing Street hesitated, Sir William Luce published an article warning the government against a premature decision:

> It would be a mistake to lay down any specific period [for the withdrawal from the Persian Gulf] since there are many factors which could either hasten or delay progress; and certainly it should not be determined by any arbitrary or unilateral decision designed to effect a small saving in British defence costs or to satisfy opinion based on the artificial division of the world into east and west of Suez.[1]

In this article, which came out in July 1967, the British senior diplomat accepted that Britain might not be able to remain in the Gulf indefinitely, but he argued that the government should be careful not to decide to withdraw from the region for the wrong reasons nor with any explicit timeframe. Were these words of caution taken into account in the final stages of the process that led to the government's decision to withdraw from the Gulf? This chapter examines this question in some detail: Who exactly took the decision, for what reasons, on what terms, and within what timeframe?

[1] Luce, 'Britain in the Persian Gulf: Mistaken Timing over Aden', pp. 282-283.

The Treasury and Foreign Policy

As we have seen in chapter 2, Harold Wilson took no personal initiative to remove the British troops from the Persian Gulf after he became Prime Minister. He was not against the British presence in the Gulf, either due to his ideological beliefs or because of practical calculations to secure American cooperation. His inner circle more or less shared his attitude. Although by July 1967 the OPD Official Committee started considering withdrawal, the cabinet did not take the issue seriously enough to discuss practicalities such as the timeframe or whether it should be preceded by an open announcement. The point is when the decision pertaining to these key issues was taken.

Even with the heightening of economic pressure and subsequent devaluation, a minister of state at the Foreign Office visited the Gulf and assured 'the Rulers that the British presence would continue as long as it is necessary to maintain peace and stability in the area'.[2] Thus, the decision to leave the Gulf, arguably 'the most momentous shift in our foreign policy for a century and a half' as the then cabinet minister later put it, did not originate from the usual guardians of foreign policy – the Prime Minister, the Secretaries of Defence or Foreign Affairs, or their offices.[3] Instead, it was initiated by the Chancellor and the Treasury. Therefore, counter-intuitive as it may sound, the main protagonist of the decision-making process was the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, Roy Jenkins, backed up by the Treasury officials. The overall process followed three steps. Firstly, there were the internal consultations within the Treasury involving Jenkins and his staff. Secondly, the Treasury brought the issue to the government to persuade the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office and the MOD. Then,

[2] Roberts to Brown, 17 November 1967, FCO 8/31, compiled in Ashton and Louis, *East of Suez and the Commonwealth*, Part I, pp. 118-20.
[3] Gordon Walker, *The Cabinet*, p. 122.

thirdly, the British government as a whole took the issue to the foreign governments involved. Here, we will start from the first level.

Roy Jenkins was born in 1920 into a Welsh trade-unionist and former mining family. Four years younger than Wilson, Jenkins had also studied at the University of Oxford. When Wilson formed his government in 1964, he nominated Jenkins Minister of Aviation, making him the youngest, albeit non-cabinet, member of the government. The following year, he was promoted to home secretary, now becoming the youngest member of the cabinet. Over the next three years, he initiated a number of social reforms, attempting to transform Britain into what he called a 'civilised society'. Given Jenkins's successful career as a politician, it was regarded as reasonable that Wilson should appoint him Chancellor of the Exchequer on 30 November 1967 after the devaluation turmoil.[4]

Despite somewhat similar career paths, the two politicians had contrasting views regarding Britain's world role. Jenkins recalls that, unlike Wilson, he had been against 'keeping Britain over-committed in the world' long before arriving at the Treasury.[5] Jenkins's coming to the Treasury triggered the discussions within the Labour government concerning withdrawal from the Persian Gulf.

According to Pickering, the nomination of Jenkins as chancellor marked a shift in the balance of power within the Labour government between those in favour of and those against Britain's overseas military engagement. Pickering emphasises the role of Jenkins in unleashing the Labour government's decision-making process regarding the withdrawal between December 1967 and January 1968.[6] Similarly, Darwin emphasises

[4] Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre*; John Campbell, *Roy Jenkins: A Biography*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983; Andrew Adonis and Keith Thomas, eds., *Roy Jenkins: A Retrospective* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.
[5] Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre*, p. 225.
[6] Pickering, 'Politics and "Black Tuesday"', pp. 155-157.

the role of Jenkins as the central force pushing for further reduction in overseas commitment.[7] However, Jenkins's memoir indicates that he never fully understood the particular implications of withdrawing from the Persian Gulf. He refers to the region only as 'East of Suez' and aggregates the Gulf with Southeast Asia.[8] Also, the declassified British government sources suggest that there was one week of silence after Jenkins took over the Treasury on 30 November. Only on 7 December did Jenkins state that some 'very big cuts' have to be made in defence, and even at this point he made no specific reference to the troops in the Gulf.[9]

It is unknown what was discussed off the record between Jenkins and the Treasury's senior officials during this one-week hiatus. The earliest evidence of the government's consideration of withdrawal from the Persian Gulf during Jenkins's chancellorship notes that, on 4 December, the principal private secretary to the chancellor asked his junior staff to examine the possible effects of 'pressing for somewhat earlier military withdrawal from the Gulf'. However, this was only a discussion between the Treasury officials and does not suggest any involvement of Jenkins.[10] It is debatable what level of co-ordination Jenkins and the officials reached during this period. On the one hand, a member of the government who later supported Jenkins as Minister of State and then Financial Secretary testifies that Jenkins 'soon established a good relationship with the civil servants at the Treasury'. On the other hand, Jenkins himself recalls that the 'Treasury at that time was less good at suggesting constructive action' and 'the one time in my ministerial career when I consider that I was badly advised on major questions was my first two or three months as

[7] Darwin, 'Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez', p. 155.
[8] Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre*, p. 223.
[9] A note on a conversation between Jenkins and Armstrong, 7 December 1967, T 225/3066.
[10] Wright to Mackay, 6 December 1967, T 225/3066.

Chancellor'.[11] On the basis of the existing evidence, it is difficult to assert whether it was Jenkins who initially raised the issue of making an explicit decision on the withdrawal or whether it was the Treasury officials who proposed the idea to the new chancellor.

In any case, on 7 December, Jenkins and the officials agreed on the general point of cutting defence expenditure. That said, at this point, they did not specify how this could be achieved,[12] so officials started to consider a practical plan, beginning with a calculation of the cost of keeping forces in the Gulf.[13] Within a few days, on 11 December, they had concluded that withdrawal from the Gulf was the most desirable option. After comparing various potential options for reducing overseas commitment, including in Europe, Southeast Asia, Cyprus and Hong Kong, they concluded that the 'Persian Gulf is the most obvious candidate of all for withdrawal'. The fact that, at this stage, the Treasury officials were comparing the withdrawal from the Gulf to the hypothetical option of leaving Europe or Hong Kong backs up the point in the last chapter that they had not taken a *decision* in July.[14]

On 12 December, officials became confident enough to note that 'the presentational advantages of being able to declare that, with a few scattered exceptions, we aim to complete our withdrawal world-wide into Europe by say 1 April 1971 could be very great'.[15] By 14 December, Jenkins had agreed to the proposal of Treasury officials that withdrawal from the Persian Gulf had to be completed by 1 April 1971 and

[11] Dick Taverne, 'Chancellor of the Exchequer', in Andrew Adonis and Keith Thomas eds., *Roy Jenkins: A Retrospective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 88; Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre*, p. 220.
[12] A note on a conversation between Jenkins and Armstrong, 7 December 1967, T 225/3066.
[13] A note by Baldwin, 7 December 1967, T 225/3066.
[14] Bancroft to Nicholas, 11 December 1967, T 225/3066.
[15] Bancroft to Baldwin, 12 December 1967, T225/3066.

also that the decision should be publicly announced.[16] Although this was just an internal consensus within the Treasury, it created a momentum within the government towards taking an explicit decision and configuring the terms of withdrawal.

After Jenkins and the Treasury officials decided internally that Britain should leave the Gulf, they negotiated with the Prime Minister, the Foreign Office and the MOD. The negotiations started from 'a "softening up" lunch' between Jenkins and Denis Healey, the Secretary of State for Defence, on 14 December. Unexpectedly, Healey was understanding and took Jenkins's proposals 'without fainting or blustering.'[17] However, this should not be mistaken that the MOD was totally happy about military retreat. On 21 November, the Chiefs of Staff of the Ministry of Defence had come to Chequers and presented their views to Wilson and the main Cabinet members concerning defence and foreign policies, claiming that Britain's 'first priority should be the maintenance of oversea commitments.'[18] Later the Chiefs of Staffs would also express their concerns about the repercussions of the withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and the acceleration of withdrawal from Southeast Asia, arguing that the withdrawal would inevitably entail 'compulsory redundancies' and that the 'morale and discipline' of the forces would be in risk.[19]

In any case, on 15 December, Jenkins had a private discussion with Wilson of one and a half hours, which was only recorded in the papers the Prime Minister's Office but not the Treasury. Without much hassle, Wilson also agreed to the withdrawal idea.[20] Following this, the Treasury's target was the Foreign Office. Knowing that they would

[16] A note by Baldwin, 15 December 1967, T 225/3066.
[17] Jenkins, *A Life at the Centre*, pp. 222-223.
[18] 'Defence Policy,' 21 November 1964, CAB 130/213, MISC 17/1, in Louis and Ashton, *British Documents on the End of Empire, Series*, Part 1, pp. 4-7.
[19] Broadbent to Palliser, 11 January 1968, PREM 13/1999; Record of Meeting, 13 January 1968, PREM 13/1999.
[20] Ibid., pp. 223-224.

be in charge of re-arranging the complicated states-system of the Gulf if the withdrawal were to be decided, the Foreign Office was more hesitant than the Prime Minister or the Defence Secretary. Yet, by 23 December they had accepted that the withdrawal *per se* was inevitable, even though they resisted the particular terms of withdrawal, such as when to withdraw and whether to make a public announcement.[21] Once the internal consensus was built, the focus of the debate shifted onto how to push the proposal through the cabinet and check the stances of the external actors.

There was also some discussion of the Soviet threat. On 21 December, the Permanent Secretaries of the three departments gathered to discuss the matter at a sub-ministerial level. The Treasury regarded the Foreign Office's proposal as 'inadequate.'[22] Meanwhile, the Foreign Office forwarded a note, originally submitted to Brown, to the Treasury. It argued that British withdrawal would create a power vacuum what would allow the Russians to come in. It could cause 'a historic change in the balance of power in the area bounded by the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean including the Gulf.' The Russians were already 'consolidating their power position and using the inter-Arab cold war as the means of doing it.' It would enable the Russians to further penetrate into the region and damage Western oil interests.[23] This was an exaggerated account, and it did not convince the Treasury to reconsider its plan.[24]

---

[21] Baldwin to Jenkins, 19 December 1967, T 225/3066; Maitland to Brown, 19 December 1967, FCO 46/43; Gore-Booth to Brown, 19 December 1967, FCO 46/43; Baldwin to Maitland, 20 December 1967, T 225/3066; Minutes of meeting, 20 December 1967, PREM 13/1999; Bancroft to Baldwin, 21 December 1967, T 225/3066; Garner to Brown, 22 December 1967, FCO 46/43; Bancroft to Butler, 23 December 1967, T 225/3066; Record of meeting, 23 December, 1967, FCO 46/43.

[22] Bancroft to Baldwin, 21 December 1967, T 225/3066.

[23] Gore-Booth to Brown, T 225/3066. The document itself was not dated. Considering the sequence of the file, it was most likely forwarded to the Treasury on 21 December 1967.

[24] On 23 December, the Treasury was still insisting on withdrawing from the Persian Gulf in 1968 or 1969. Bancroft to Butler, 23 December 1967, T 225/3066.

Meanwhile, in the Persian Gulf, there was no noticeable move towards pushing Britain out of the Gulf. There had been rumours on and off since October that Sayed Nofal of the Arab League was planning to visit the Gulf, ostensibly for fund raising for war victims but with a hidden agenda to increase the influence of Arab nationalism, as had been tried in 1965.[25] Nor there was any significant uprising.

On 4 January 1968, talk of withdrawal from the Persian Gulf was brought into the cabinet for the first time. At this meeting, the cabinet took an explicit, although internal, decision that Britain would not stay in the Gulf for an indefinite period. Hereafter, the debate in the cabinet shifted from withdrawal *per se* to the particular terms of withdrawal, specifically about when to withdraw, and whether to make a public announcement. The cabinet also decided to consult various foreign governments in order to test the water before bringing the final verdict.[26] In short, between 14 December and the cabinet meeting on 4 January, the Treasury by and large smoothly convinced the relevant departments about the necessity of the withdrawal *per se*, if not necessarily the terms of the withdrawal. Also to be noted is the split within the cabinet. Crossman observed Wilson departing from the 'right-wing junta', which now only consisted of Brown, Healey and Stewart. They were defending the 'status barrier', which 'is as

[25] Bahrain to Foreign Office, 25 October 1967; Foreign Office to Bahrain, 26 October 1967; Bahrain to Foreign Office, telegram no. 697 27 October 1967; FO to Cairo, 30 October 1967; Bahrain to Foreign Office, telegram no. 699, 27 October 1967; Weir to Brenchley, 31 October 1967; Graham to Balfour-Paul, 2 November 1967; Roberts to Balfour-Paul, 14 November 1967, FCO 8/7.

[26] On Christmas Dy, the Chancellor spoke to the Prime Minister and decided to hold an *ad hoc* inner Cabinet meeting. In this Cabinet meeting, two days later, the Foreign Office and the MODreed that the consultation with foreign governments would take place after 4 January. From the archival evidence it is not clear exactly which countries they meant to consult, be it the US, the Persian Gulf states, or others. But the answer was given on 4 January, the first Cabinet meeting in 1968. See Note for the Record, Palliser, 27 December 1967, PREM 13/1999; Note for the Record, Baldwin, 27 December 1967, T 225/3066; 'Defence Expenditure,' 27 December 1967, T 225/3066; 1st Conclusions, 4 January 1968, CAB 128/43 CC(68).

difficult to break through as the sound barrier: it splits your ears and it's terribly painful when it happens.'[27]

The day after the cabinet meeting, Foreign Office officials started negotiations with the states of the Persian Gulf, which included Iran, and Saudi Arabia and the recently independent Kuwait, together with the littoral Protected States such as Bahrain, Abu Dhabi, Dubai and Qatar.[28] Several days later, the government also consulted the US. [29] With the exception of for Iran and Saudi Arabia, most of these foreign governments responded to the British plan with outrage. However, in the end, on 16 January, Wilson announced in the House of Commons that Britain had to 'come to terms' with its 'rôle in the world' and would withdraw from the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971.[30] Thus, it seems, at least on the surface, that the reactions from the foreign governments were not the main factor pushing Britain out of the Gulf. Then why exactly did Britain decide to withdraw?

Withdrawal from 'East of Suez'

It is clear from the last section that Jenkins and the Treasury initiated the movement towards withdrawal. One may assume that the Treasury's proposal for withdrawal from the Gulf derived from economic necessity after devaluation. Yet the linkage between

[27] Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister: Volume Two*, p. 639.
[28] Foreign Office to Tehran, 5 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Tehran to Foreign Office, 7 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Tehran to Foreign Office, 8 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Tehran to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 87, 10 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Dubai to Foreign Office, 9 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Bahrain to Foreign Office, 9 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Kuwait to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 14, 15, 9 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Bahrain to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 29, 34, 37, 10 January 1968, PREM; Abu Dhabi to Foreign Office, 10 January 1968, PREM 13/2209; Roberts to Brown, 11 January 1968, FCO 46/43.
[29] From Johnson to Wilson, 11 January, 1968, PREM 13/1999; Washington to Foreign Office, 14 January 1968, PREM 13/1999.
[30] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 756, col. 1580.

the two was remote. To begin with, Treasury officials reported on 7 December that, 'as regards the year 1968/69, cuts in defence expenditure were not likely to show results too quickly'. In fact, even the full cost of maintaining the troops was only £12 million in foreign exchange costs, and 25 million in budgetary costs.[31] This was an insignificant figure compared to the cuts in social expenditure that were being discussed simultaneously and which in the end amounted to £606 million.[32]

Moreover, the rulers 'begged' for the continuation of British support after withdrawal; and they even offered to pay for the maintenance of the British forces in the region.[33] A report on the discussion with the Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Shaikh Zayid, symbolises the level of their desperation:

> In order to secure indefinite continuation of British military presence he was prepared to contribute financially to its cost *whether publicly or secretly and in any way required by Her Majesty's Government*.[34]

Such a payment was not necessarily unusual in the British Empire, but the fact that he offered to pay *secretly* exemplifies how desperate he was. Bahrain even proposed a practical plan to waive the annual payments for British military facilities, whose net cost was £350,000 a year.[35] Bahrain was relatively poor amongst the four, but also the most vulnerable to the Iranian threat. The financial contributions from other states were presumed to be in 'straight cash.'[36] British officials understood that these offers were

---

[31] 'Long-term Policy in the Persian Gulf', a note by the Secretaries, Defence and Oversea Policy (Official) Committee, 7 June 1967, CAB 148/80; *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 754, Written Answers, col. 134; *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 735, Written Answers, col. 289.
[32] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 756, cols. 1619-1620.
[33] Roberts to Brown, 11 January 1968, FCO 46/43.
[34] Abu Dhabi to Foreign Office, 10 January 1968, PREM 13/2209. Emphasis added.
[35] Bahrain to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 37, 10 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.
[36] Bahrain to Foreign Office, 9 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.

'clearly a most significant new factor.'[37] The Ruler of Qatar, Ahmad bin Ali Al Thani, put the point most clearly in his account:

> If it was true that Britain's financial position was such that she could no longer support her military forces in [the] Gulf, he and other Gulf Rulers, especially Sheikh Zaid [Ruler of Abu Dhabi], would be pleased to pay, each one according to his own ability, to maintain them.[38]

The rulers also tried to convince the British by suggesting that they 'would remove their sterling funds from Britain.' [39] As demonstrated in the previous chapter, when formulating the withdrawal plan, the Treasury officials had thought that removing their sterling funds would be the only option to which the Persian Gulf rulers could resort to for retaliation. At this juncture, the rulers threatened just that.

The rulers' efforts to oppose British withdrawal were based upon their 'long friendship' and 'deep affection' towards Britain.[40] Yet, apart from these feelings of affinity, they had more substantial fears. On the one hand, each had multiple concerns in their region. In particular, they were deeply concerned about Iranian ambitions. Although the Shah said that 'he had had no wish to make the Gulf an Iranian *mare nostrum*,' his regional counterparts were suspicious.[41] Of course, the most profoundly threatened was the Ruler of Bahrain, who had a long-standing dispute with the Iranian claim over his territory. He was in 'profound shock' when he found out that Britain was planning to leave.[42] He argued that the island's economic and political future depended on continuing security. With the heightening of the perceived Iranian threat, he

---

[37] Ibid.
[38] Bahrain to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 34, 10 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Abu Dhabi to Foreign Office, 10 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.
[41] Tehran to Foreign Office, 8 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.
[42] Dubai to Foreign Office, 9 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.

approached the King of Saudi Arabia and the Americans for protection.[43] The other rulers were also suspicious of Iran,[44] as well as being afraid of the Saudis and the Russians.[45] In addition, they lacked confidence in their own ability to run their respective states.

On top of these direct approaches, there was even a Conservative MP reporting to Wilson that Kuwait was implicitly offering to contribute financially to the keeping of British troops in the Gulf. On 10 January at the Kuwait Embassy in London, Peter Tapsell, a Conservative MP, met the minister-plenipotentiary who was the *chargé d'affaires* and temporarily in charge of their mission in the absence of the ambassador. The Kuwaiti *chargé d'affaires* implied that Kuwait was ready to consider financial contributions to the maintenance of the British troops. The next day, the Conservative MP reported the case to Wilson, and the Prime Minister's Office sent a copy of the letter to the Foreign Office. The Foreign Office replied that the 'offers had clearly important implications'. Almost undoubtedly, the officials would have reported the news to Wilson and Brown, but the offer from Kuwait was not taken into account elsewhere during the Labour government's decision-making process.[46]

Had the withdrawal plan been mainly driven by economic concerns, such financial offers would have significantly affected the government's decision-making. However, in reality, the financial offers from the Persian Gulf were not taken into consideration by the Treasury or in the cabinet, and they were formerly declined on 30 January.[47] One may argue that the Labour government refused the offer because they did not want to create the image of British soldiers being turned into paid mercenaries.

---

[43] Roberts to Brown, 11 January 1968, FCO 46/43.
[44] Ibid.
[45] Bahrain to Foreign Office, Telegram No. 34, 10 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.
[46] Tapsell to Wilson, 11 January 1968; Palliser to Morphet, 11 January 1968; Maitland to Palliser, 11 January 1968, PREM 13/2209.
[47] 'Annual Review of Bahrain', 4 January 1969, FCO 8/1004.

However, as Kelly points outs, this was unlikely to have been the case considering that Britain had accepted contributions from 'the Western German government towards the cost of supporting the British Army of the Rhine' and 'the government of Hong Kong towards the maintenance of the colony's British garrison'.[48]

The actual reasons why the Treasury initiated the discussion on the withdrawal from the Gulf were more political than economic. During a conversation with Treasury officials, Jenkins opined that some 'very big cuts' in defence expenditure would be needed as 'a necessary condition for making civil cuts on a substantial scale'.[49] Also, at a meeting with the Foreign Office, the MOD and the Commonwealth Office, he stated:

> It was already clear that there was practically no prospect of obtaining any further reduction in defence expenditure in 1968/69 and only a relatively small reduction in 1969/70… The immediate objective of the announcement would be to solve the problem of securing support for the required cuts in public expenditure as part of the economic measures which our situation necessitated.[50]

In the aftermath of the devaluation, the Labour government was about to put through a set of highly contentious social policies. It was planning to restore prescription charges for the National Health Service (NHS), which had been abolished by the first Wilson government. It was considering postponing for four years the raising of the school-leaving age to 16. It was also putting restrictions on road expenditure and abandoning the promise made in the 1966 election campaign to construct 500,000 new houses.[51] The *raison d'être* of the Labour government was at stake. In the interest of persuading the relevant departments, parliament and the public that these cuts were necessary, the Treasury believed that defence cuts would show that the government was trying its best

[48] Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, p. 51.
[49] Jenkins and Armstrong, 7 December 1967, T 225/3066.
[50] Baldwin to Maitland, 20 December 1967, T 225/3066.
[51] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 756, cols. 1577-1620.

on all fronts. Even though withdrawal from the Gulf would yield only a minor saving, what mattered was what it looked like rather than what it actually was.

In geographic terms, the Persian Gulf was on the same side of the Suez Canal as Singapore and Malaysia. Since the withdrawal from the two countries had already been declared in July 1967, a further announcement of withdrawal, this time from the Gulf, would increase the impression that the government was making its best efforts to save money, even by withdrawing from 'East of Suez'. In order to maximise the utility of this presentational device, the Treasury wanted to decide on a firm and early *deadline* for the withdrawal and make a public *announcement* of it. In short, the need to justify civil cuts precipitated the withdrawal decision. J.B. Kelly, F. Gregory Gause and John Darwin have briefly put forward this point, and the declassified official documents confirm their argument.[52]

On 18 December 1967, Wilson told the House of Commons that 'the review will cover defence and overseas expenditure as well as home civil expenditure. The review as a whole is being related to what is essential in expenditure here at home, and to what is appropriate at a time when we have been, and are, reassessing Britain's role in the world. This must involve overseas policy'.[53] According to Darwin, these words also hinted that 'devaluation and the expenditure review had coincided with the climax of the negotiation of Britain's second abortive attempt to enter the EEC' which was announced on 20 December.[54]

Despite its far-reaching implications in international relations, the discussion leading to the explicit *decision* for withdrawal was primarily driven by domestic

[52] Kelly, *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, pp. 48-49; Gause, 'British and American Policies in the Persian Gulf', p. 123; Darwin, 'Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez', pp. 153-156.
[53] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 756, col. 923.
[54] Darwin, 'Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez', p. 36.

political motivations. The Labour government thus virtually ignored the opposition coming from the relevant Arab governments. Goronwy Roberts, who had assured the local rulers only a few months back that Britain would stay in the Gulf for the foreseeable future, was now asked to convey a message going back on his own words. The Foreign Office Arabists in London expected Roberts to resign, and they were 'stunned' when they knew that Roberts was to carry out 'double-dealing'.[55] The situation was even worse for the British diplomats stationed in the Gulf. They had to face the rulers, who were by no means going to be pleased. Anthony Parsons, a Political Agent in Bahrain, even came close to resigning; despairingly he noted, 'How could I now confront this volt-face and retain my honour?'[56]

Indeed, the reaction of the rulers was not far off from what the Arabists anticipated. According to a report in the Foreign Office as we have seen, some of the states in the Persian Gulf not only offered to pay for the maintenance of the British troops, but even desperately 'begged' for British support after the withdrawal.[57] They were deeply concerned by the potential opposition that could follow the British departure and threaten their supremacy, which had been heavily dependent upon British protection. According to what they had learned from observing the British departure from Aden, setting a rigid and tight deadline for withdrawal, still less declaring it officially, would only increase the risk of instability.

The US also strenuously opposed Britain's withdrawal. Having enough trouble of its own trying to extract itself from Vietnam, the last thing that the US wanted to hear was that its principal ally was retreating from its imperial commitment. The US could

[55] Alec Sterling, 'The End of British Protection, 1969-71', in Paul Tempest ed., *Envoys to the Arab World: MECAS Memoirs, 1944-2009, Volume II*, London: Stacey International, 2009, pp. 123-124.
[56] Parsons, *They Say the Lion*, p. 134.
[57] Roberts to Brown, 11 January 1968, FCO 46/43.

not afford to fill the void left by British withdrawal and did not want to see any power vacuum in the context of the ongoing Cold War. When the British Foreign Secretary, George Brown saw Dean Rusk, the US Secretary of State, on 11 January, Rusk said to him, 'For God's sake be Britain [*sic*]'.[58] However, this outright US opposition did not have any significant effect on British decision-making. In fact, Rusk was right when he sensed an 'acrid aroma of the *fait accompli*'.[59] Britain was not actually consulting the US on whether to withdraw; it was merely informing the US of a decision already taken. Also, with regards to the anti-imperial pressure on Britain in the United Nations (UN), Balfour-Paul argues that by this point anti-colonial hostility towards Britain had been ebbing away, as Britain was no longer regarded as a serious imperial power, and the findings of this thesis supports this point.[60] The paradox was that Britain was making an important foreign-policy decision not for reasons of international relations but in order to justify domestic social expenditure cuts.

Scrambling and Announcement

The factors laid out in the last section help us to understand why the Labour government decided to withdraw from the Persian Gulf. However, they do not sufficiently account for the precise deadline for withdrawal, which was, ultimately, set for the end of 1971. Gause claims that bureaucratic politics played only a negligible role in the decision-making process concerning British withdrawal from the Gulf. The following section will explore the boundaries of this argument by looking into the processes through which the withdrawal timeframe was determined.

[58] Extract from a record of a meeting between Brown and Rusk, 11 January 1968, FCO 46/43.
[59] Ibid.
[60] Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East*, p. 152.

Between December 1967 and January 1968, there was a split within the Labour government over the deadline for withdrawal. On the one hand, the Treasury demanded that withdrawal be completed by 31 March 1971. In addition to the reasons illustrated above, Jenkins called for an even earlier withdrawal, for electoral reasons. He thought that the 'end of 1971' was 'over the dam', because it would be after the next general election.[61] At least in theory, if the Conservatives won the election they could reverse the decision. On the other hand, the Foreign Office and the MOD sought to buy time, and clamoured for the withdrawal to be delayed until 1972.

The Treasury was concerned only with the presentational effect of the decision, but the Foreign Office and the MOD were to be responsible for its execution. Completing the military withdrawal, and making the necessary diplomatic arrangements for the Protected States to achieve full independence in four years, would seem like a 'miracle' if this were to be achieved peacefully.[62] On top of the internal division, the Singaporean premier, Lee Kuan Yew, came to London to see Wilson and pressed for a delayed departure from Southeast Asia. Like the rulers of the Gulf, he was utilising British protection to maintain stability at home.[63]

The debate between the two camps continued until 15 January, the day before the withdrawal announcement. In the end, Wilson proposed a compromise. Although a decision in favour of delaying the final withdrawal until March 1972 would lack the presentational and catalytic advantages of adopting the date of a year earlier, this would not be so if Britain were to decide that the withdrawal should be completed by the end of the calendar year 1971. A decision along these lines would, moreover, have the

[61] Gore-Booth to Brown, 3 January 1967, FCO 46/43.
[62] A note on a conversation between Gore-Booth and Wilson, 10 January 1968, FCO 46/43.
[63] Lee, *From Third World to First*, pp. 56-62; Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez*, pp. 205, 220.

advantage of demonstrating that there had been sufficient substance in the British undertaking to take account of the views of the foreign governments. At last, it was decided that withdrawal from the Gulf should be completed by the end of 1971 and, furthermore, that the withdrawal from Southeast Asia should be accelerated to coincide with this date. This was a political compromise between the Treasury, on the one hand, and the MOD, the Foreign Office and the foreign governments, on the other.[64] To this extent, one could argue that bureaucratic politics played some role in the decision-making process.

The next day, on 16 January 1968, Wilson announced in the House of Commons that Britain would withdraw all its troops from the Persian Gulf, as well as from Malaysia and Singapore, by the end of 1971. Simultaneously he also announced the social cuts as well as the reduction in military expenditure.[65] In the cabinet and amongst the Conservative Party, there was a feeling that the announcement was 'a fig-leaf that had made the end of Empire acceptable at home and less revealing abroad', that 'the form that the decision had taken symbolized the unpredictably rapid decline of British influence and inflicted an unnecessary loss of great-power dignity'.[66]

A week after the announcement, Denis Healey, the secretary of defence, made the following comment on the BBC:

> Well I don't very much like the idea of being a sort of white slaver for the Arab sheikhs. I think we must decide as far as the Gulf's concerned, what it's [sic] in our own British interests in the long run to do consistent with our commitments. And I think it would be a very great mistake if we allowed

[64] 7th Conclusions, 15 January 1968, CAB 128/43 CC(68); Barbara Castle, *The Castle Diaries, 1964-1970*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984, p. 357.
[65] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 756, cols. 1577-1620. According to Richard Crossman, the cancellation of fifty F-111 aircraft, which the government decided to purchase in March 1967 at nearly £2.7 million each, saved some £400 million. Crossman, *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister: Volume Two*, p. 278.
[66] Darwin, 'Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez', p. 156.

> ourselves to become mercenaries for people who would like to have a few British troops around.[67]

The statement summarised the nature of Britain's withdrawal decision, perhaps too honestly. Healey had to apologise shortly thereafter.[68]

Coming back to the 'pattern or puzzle' problem set out in the introduction of this thesis, can we comprehend the transformation from empire to a post-imperial international system as a planned and logical process, or was it an accumulation of a baffling series of withdrawals resulting in unintended consequences? Whereas much of the literature on the end of the British Empire focuses on historical moments when Britain was, to a certain extent, pushed out by local oppositional groups, in the case of the Gulf the local rulers actually asked Britain to stay. Switching between different geographical conceptions helps us to understand both the 'puzzles' and the 'patterns' of the end of empire. Dockrill argues that in terms of the nature and scope of Britain's withdrawal from 'East of Suez', the January 1968 decision 'made little difference to that which had been taken in July' 1967.[69] This was indeed a case for the reduction of military capabilities and the retreat from Southeast Asia; but this section has shown that, as far as the departure from the Persian Gulf was concerned, the decision-making process was more contingent, contested and fraught. In July, the government had only vaguely agreed upon the necessity to eventually withdraw from the Gulf, and it took another half a year for the government to convert the broad consensus into a practical and explicit decision.

---

[67] Extract from BBC TV *Panorama*, 22 January 1968, PREM 13/2218.
[68] He asked the British missions to deliver his apologies to Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Abu Dhabi and Dubai. He wished 'to express regret for any offence he may unintentionally have given by the way in which he phrased certain remarks' during the programme. He also wished to express his appreciation for the 'spirit' in which the rulers of the protected states made the offer to contribute financially to the maintenance of the British troops. See Foreign Office to Bahrain, 23 January 1968, PREM 13/2218.
[69] Dockrill, *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez*, p. 204.

The findings of this chapter can be summarised as follows. After the devaluation of the pound in November 1967, the Treasury under Roy Jenkins needed to introduce large-scale cuts in social expenditure. Withdrawal from the Persian Gulf was chosen as one of the means to justify the Labour government's reversal of its social policies. The precise deadline for the withdrawal was set for the end of 1971, only the day before the announcement, as a compromise between the Treasury, which called for an earlier withdrawal, on the one hand, and the Foreign Office and the MOD, which insisted on a later date, on the other. Despite the decision's far-reaching consequences in terms of international relations, the outright opposition from the US and the Persian Gulf states was almost ignored. Yet the government obscured the contingent and domestic nature of the policy by presenting it as an 'East of Suez' decision, emphasising that it was an economic policy intended to yield cuts in expenditure.

The next day after the announcement, Jenkins addressed the House of Commons:

> We are no longer, and have not been for some time, a super Power [sic]. It does not make sense for us to go on trying to play a rôle [sic] beyond our economic strength… the idea that these changes have been brought forward only as part of a package to appease some of my hon. Friends [sic] is absolute nonsense.[70]

The actual financial savings from the military withdrawal were, however, negligible compared to the social cuts that were announced simultaneously. Even Healey admitted that the 'foreign exchange cost of stationing troops abroad is offset by all sorts of gains

[70] *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 756, col. 1797.

we get in consequence but the objective of the decisions we took last week was not to reduce foreign exchange expenditure'.[71]

Drawing on extensive and original archival research, these two chapters have advanced the literature by examining the decision-making process of the British withdrawal from the Gulf, which has mostly been misleadingly aggregated as part of the 'East of Suez' decision.

At this point, it is useful to make a brief comparison with the other half of the 'East of Suez' decision, namely the decision to withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore. Phuong Pham, who has written a sophisticated account on the subject, emphasises the 'symbolism' of withdrawal. But there is a significant difference with the withdrawal from the Gulf. According to Pham, the 'strategic fundamentals' of the withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore had been decided by July 1967, and once the withdrawal had been effectively decided, the 'politics and presentation' of withdrawal came to the fore in the following months.[72] In the case of the Gulf, however, the 'politics of presentation' preceded the withdrawal decision and was precisely the key precipitator, if not the sole driver, behind it. These points reinforce the view that uncritical recycling of the policy-makers' rhetoric opens the door to an over-rationalisation of past events, particularly when it is stained with an *ex post facto* justification of their decisions.

[71] Healey's interview on television quoted by Sir Alec Douglas-Home on 24 January 1968 in the Commons. *Parliamentary Debates (Commons)*, vol. 757, col. 424.
[72] Pham, *Ending 'East of Suez'*, p. 196.

Chapter 4

Dilemmas and Delay

When Harold Wilson announced in January 1968 that Britain intended to leave the Persian Gulf by the end of 1971, the obvious implication was that the Protected States, even though they had adamantly opposed Britain's plan, would now have to become fully independent sovereign states within four years. Removal of British protection would require the rulers to be more accountable to their own societies, while at the same time they would have to defend themselves from potential threats inside or outside their country. In turn, regional powers like Iran and Saudi Arabia might capitalise upon this opportunity to increase their influence, while the US would need to ensure that independence would not become another source of turmoil, as was happening in Vietnam. In this contested theatre, the British needed to implement the withdrawal peacefully and gracefully, so that a mechanism could be left that would enable them to exercise some degree of influence after the retreat. The aim of the next two chapters is to examine the whole process of the implementation of the British withdrawal, which in the end accompanied the emergence of the UAE, Bahrain and Qatar in international society.

Whereas various actors had different stakes in this process, they also shared a set of unresolved questions: In what form would the nine Protected States be independent, if at all? Would they be organised under one political body, or two, or three, or even nine separate units? What would happen to the territories that were disputed amongst the Protected States and with their neighbours?

Underlying these questions was a fundamental tension between the local political traditions and the norms of international society that was now going to be introduced. The British imperial presence and the modality thereof had shaped the way in which these questions were put forward, but they were not the most essential cause of tension. The problem arose from the difference between the local tradition of diplomacy and social organisation on the one hand, and the modern form of international relations based upon the notion of sovereignty on the other. In order to obtain full membership of the existing international society, the Protected States would have to subscribe to the idea of sovereignty, and mutual recognition and territorial exclusivity lay at its heart. Who would represent whom? Where and how would they demarcate their people, lands and water? These questions, which have disturbed almost all peoples in the world at some point in modern times, now loomed upon the southern shore of the Persian Gulf. At the same time, given the long-standing influence of the British Empire and the fact that the whole process was initiated from London in the face of opposition from the Gulf rulers, it was also questioned what role Britain was going to play in this crucial moment of transition.

Taken from this perspective, the next two chapters not only possess a significant resonance for the histories of the Gulf and the British Empire, but they are important for all those who are interested in the history of international relations. In particular, this chapter will look into the initial developments following Wilson's announcement in January 1968 and examine how effectively the local and external actors responded to the new situation. The first section will set out the main actors and their initial relationship, and the second will analyse how the local actors came together in order to take their own initiative towards unity, and what problems they encountered. The third

section will analyse how Britain took a meditative role in overcoming one of the main problems by the spring of 1970, as well as looking at and what remained to be solved.

Chapter 5

Compromise and Collaboration

It was set out at the beginning of chapter 4 that chapters 4 and 5 would examine the implementation of British withdrawal. Chapter 4 has demonstrated that the regional response to Harold Wilson's withdrawal announcement was fraught and contested between January 1968 and the first half of 1970. The rulers of the Protected States promptly responded by setting up a regional initiative, but they could not follow it through. The failure of the initiative put forward in the Dubai Agreement could be explained partly by the rivalries between the rulers and the neighbours, but it was also due to the fundamental difficulty in realising the modernisation of international relations. Consequently, the crucial questions remained unresolved. How was Britain going to implement withdrawal from the Persian Gulf? How, if at all, were the Protected States going to emerge into international society? This chapter examines how these problems were settled during the later stages of British withdrawal.

On top of the empirical contribution, this chapter also attempts to address a more conceptual issue by suggesting that we need to critically re-examine the idea of 'decolonisation'. Although the application of the terminology here is disputable, given that the Protected States were arguably never colonised, the narratives of the literature essentially correspond with the paradigm supported by the same idea. Focusing on Britain's informal empire in the Persian Gulf, the enquiry is therefore driven by one of the most typical questions of decolonisation: how was the outcome of the end of empire and the concurrent emergence of the new states determined?

There are two principal schools of thought in the literature. On the one hand, a group of scholars attribute importance to the role of the former imperial metropole. Wm. Roger Louis emphasises the importance of the British role in explaining the largely peaceful British withdrawal and the emergence of new states. In particular, he portrays Sir William Luce, a special envoy to the Gulf, as a crucial mediator between the jealous rulers of the Protected States. This line of argument is helpful in order to understand the British perspective.[1] On the other hand, Frauke Heard-Bey and Simon C. Smith illuminate the role of the local rulers. They trace the negotiations undertaken between the local rulers and demonstrate that the crucial turning point came in the summer of 1971. The important question is, what brought about this change? Heard-Bey identifies a week-long negotiation in mid-July that could have been crucial, but she cannot demonstrate this detail due to limitations in the sources.[2] Taking Heard-Bey's case forward, Smith argues that Dubai's Ruler was persuaded by one of his advisers to compromise with Abu Dhabi and set aside their long-standing rivalry in order to move forward towards independence. This explanation is insightful, but it does not show why Abu Dhabi accepted negotiating with Dubai and what exactly happened during this crucial one-week period. After all, Smith mainly bases his inference on one report issued later, in December 1971.[3]

Although there are significant overlaps between the different approaches, there is a discernible difference in terms of their emphasis. Whereas Louis's work highlights the British role, the narratives of Heard-Bey and Smith lean towards portraying the July negotiations as a success in regional settlement. The literature is essentially divided between those who emphasise the role of the former imperial metropole in deciding the

[1] Louis, 'The Withdrawal from the Gulf'.
[2] Heard-Bey, *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates*, pp. 362-363.
[3] Smith, *Britain's Revival and Fall in the Gulf*, pp. 103-4, 180n.

outcome of decolonisation and those who hold that the formerly dependant territories took greater control over their own fate. This chapter revisits this debate by examining the role played by both Britain and the local rulers during the crucial stages of the withdrawal. Drawing on interviews with the British diplomat who was directly involved in the negotiations on the ground, as well as his memoirs and the declassified documents available from the British archives, on top of the Arabic sources, it puts forward a synthesised interpretation by illuminating the compromise and collaboration between Britain and the local rulers.[4] As in previous chapters, the fluctuations in the ambivalent relationship between Britain and the Protected States remain an underlying theme. This chapter starts by introducing a new British government, and then examines the July negotiations in detail, before going on to the final days of the British withdrawal from the Gulf.

[4] From Dubai to Bahrain and Abu Dhabi, 15 July 1971, FCO 8/1761; Telephone interviews with Julian Walker, 21, 28 October 2009; Julian Walker, 'Personal Recollections of the Rapid Growth of Archives of the Emirates', in *The Historical Documents on Arab History in the Archives of the World Conference*, Abu Dhabi: Centre for Documentation and Research, 2002, pp. 35-47; Walker, *Tyro on the Trucial Coast*, Durham: The Memoir Club, 1999.

Chapter 6

Formal Sovereignty and Continuing Collaboration

This chapter will examine the consequences of the British withdrawal from the Persian Gulf and the granting of full independence to Bahrain, Qatar and the UAE. The impact of decolonisation in international relations has not been analysed in sufficient depth. Mohammed Ayoob explores the impact of decolonisation on the security issues of the Third World. He argues that 'imperial powers bequeathed to their postcolonial successor regimes territorial entities that were composed of distinct... ethnic groups or... divided previously homogenous ethnic communities' into different states through a 'cavalier construction of colonial borders'. Consequently, these postcolonial states 'found themselves facing challenges of either a secessionist or an irredentist character' after independence.[1] Leaving aside his dubious conception of a 'homogenous ethnic community', one has only to think about Ireland or the Basque region in Spain to question whether such a problem is in fact unique to the Third World. Most critically, he fails to make a clear distinction between four different issues:[2]

(a) A resumption, or a continuation, of the issues that had existed prior to the arrival of the imperial power;

(b) The issues that were brought in by, or created through contact with, the imperial power,

[1] Mohammed Ayoob, *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995, p. 35.
[2] Ibid., pp. 34-39.

(c) The issues that were created or exacerbated by the modality of the way in which the imperial power departed, and

(d) The issues created by modernity or modernisation.

Making an analytical distinction between these interconnected issues helps us understand what is often called the ‘legacy of imperialism’. Partly due to the sense of guilt in the former metropole, or the insecurity of the postcolonial states, imperial powers are often condemned not only for their own conduct (b), but also for existing problems at the time of their expansion into foreign territories (a), or what had been created by the way in which they left (c), or what was going to happen sooner or later regardless of the imperial presence, as long as the region concerned was going to experience modernisation (d).

For example, there had been various rival groups in the Persian Gulf before Britain established a foothold in the region in the nineteenth century (a). The treaty relations with Britain institutionalised some of those divisions (b), and subsequently some groups were marginalised when the three states achieved full independence in 1971 (c). However, irrespective of British presence or withdrawal, sooner or later the polities in the region had to choose between becoming sovereign states or being absorbed by existing ones. It was the process of, and reflection on, the modernisation of international relations. It was a global phenomenon, even though it carried a strong European colour (d). Other examples could be found in debates over ‘ethnic’, economic and other problems, but this chapter will focus on the issue of external sovereignty.

Further to this point, this chapter will critically re-examine the existing understanding of the relationship between decolonisation and the norm of self-determination. Mikulas Fabry asserts that ‘for the last 200 years, recognition of new

states has been tied to the idea of self-determination of peoples. In fact, recognition and self-determination have been... two sides of the same coin.'[3] This line of argument suggests that the idea of self-determination significantly contributed to the new states being recognised as fully sovereign states. This chapter will examine if self-determination did indeed play a pivotal role in the new states in the Gulf.

Another point of reference for this chapter will be the argument put forward by Wm. Roger Louis and Ronald Robinson on the persistence of imperial sway. They contend that decolonisation did not demolish imperial associations but merely translated them into a less conspicuous guise. This idea of the 'imperialism of decolonization' has been advanced by focusing on the co-option of nationalist movements by the Anglo-American alliance. This chapter will build upon their argument by illuminating the centrality of sovereignty throughout the whole process.[4] Whereas Louis and Robinson fixed their attention on the players of the game, this chapter will look into the rules. While players alter over time, the rules tend to endure.

This chapter will explore these points by focusing on the 1970s. This is partly because most government sources of the 1980s onwards remain classified. Another consideration is that the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1978-79 fundamentally altered the regional dynamics of the Persian Gulf, something that deserves to be examined in a separate study. Of the various events that took place in the 1970s, four will be closely analysed: Ra's al-Khaimah's attempt to achieve independence in 1971-2; the Oil Shock in 1973-74; the UAE and Saudi Arabia's *rapprochement* in 1974; and the development of US policy towards the Gulf during the Nixon era.

[3] Fabry, *Recognizing States*, p. 9.
[4] Louis and Robinson, 'The Imperialism of Decolonization', p. 487.

Conclusion

> A map anticipated a spatial reality, not vice versa. In other words, a map was a model for, rather than a model of, what it purported to represent.[1]

This is a quote from Tongchai Winichakul's study of how the modern map of Thailand was created. He argues that the map, based on a delineation of boundaries in the modern sense, was not indigenous to the local traditions but rather discursively constructed in response to European influence. Such a notion presents a striking parallel with the way in which Britain's informal empire in the Gulf laid the structural foundations of the international relations of the Persian Gulf.

[1] Winichakul, *Siam Mapped*, p. 130.

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

1. Unpublished Primary Sources

British National Archives, Kew

CAB 21, CAB 128, CAB 129, CAB 133, CAB 148: Cabinet Office.

CO 1069: Colonial Office.

DEFE 4, DEFE 13, DEFE 25, DEFE 69: Ministry of Defence.

FCO 7, FCO 8, FCO 46: Foreign Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

FO 371, FO 973, FO 1016: Foreign Office.

PREM 13, PREM 15, PREM 16: Prime Minister's Office.

T 225: Treasury.

WO: War Office.

U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, College Park, MD

CREST (CIA Records Search Tool).

Records of the CIA.

State Department Records.

Richard M. Nixon Presidential Materials Project, College Park, MD

Files of the National Security Council, 1969-1973.

HAK Administrative and Staff Files.

National Security Council Institutional Files.

Exeter University Library, Exeter

Papers of Sir William Luce Relating to Aden and the Gulf.

Palace Green Library, Durham University, Durham

Donald Hawley Papers

BP Archive, University of Warwick, Coventry

Papers of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company.

Papers of the British Petroleum Co Ltd.

Papers of BP Trading Ltd.

Classified papers of Iraq Petroleum Company Ltd (the author gained special permission to access them).

Middle East Centre Archive, St Antony's College, Oxford

Sir Geoffrey Arthur Collection.

The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford, Oxford

CAB 128 (Cabinet Minutes, microfilm).

Parliamentary Labour Party Archives (microfiche).

Denis Wright. *The Memoirs of Sir Denis Wright, 1911-1971*, unpublished memoir, 2 vols plus index.

Harold Wilson Papers

Internet (all accessed in December 2010 unless otherwise noted)

The American Presidency Project, [http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/].

Declassified Documents Reference Systems (DDRS), [http://infotrac.london.galegroup.com].

Digital National Security Archive (DNSA), [http://nsarchive.chadwyck.com/home.do].

Presidential Recordings Programme, [http://millercenter.virginia.edu/index.php/academic/presidentialrecordings/].

The Times Digital Archive, [http://www.galeuk.com/times/].

U.S. Department of State, The Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS), [http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ho/frus].

Interviews and Correspondence

Craig, James. Interview, 13 October 2009.

Marder, Murray. Correspondence, 6-7 April 2009.

Pelletreau, Robert. Correspondence, 3-4, 16 July 2009.

Walker, Julian. Telephone interviews, 19, 21, 28 October 2009.

2. Published Primary Sources

Published Official Documents

Arbitration Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom (acting on behalf of the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and His Highness the Sultan Said bin Taimur) and the Government of Saudi Arabia, Jedda, July 30, 1954, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1954 (Cmd. 9272).

Commonwealth, European and Overseas Review, London: Conservative Political Centre.

The Diplomatic Service List, various volumes, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

The Foreign Office List and Diplomatic and Consular Year Book, various volumes, Londo: Harrison and Sons.

Parliamentary Debates (Hansard): House of Commons Official Report, Fifth Series, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Parliamentary Papers: House of Commons and Command:

Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1965 (Cmnd 2592).

Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1966: Part I, the Defence Review (Cmnd 2901).

Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1966: Part II, Defence Estimates (Cmnd 2902).

Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1967 (Cmnd 3203).

Supplementary Statement on Defence Policy, 1967 (Cmnd 3357).

Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1968 (Cmnd 3540).

Statement on the Defence Estimates, 1969 (Cmnd 3927).

The Persian Gulf Gazette, various volumes, London: Her Majesty's Stationery

Office.

Aitchison, C.U. *A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and the Neighbouring Countries*, vol. 11, Delhi: Government of India, 1933.

Ashton, S.R. and Wm Roger Louis eds. *British Documents on the End of Empire, Series A, Vol. 5: East of Suez and the Commonwealth, 1964-1971*, 3 vols, The Stationery Office: London, 2004.

Bennett, G.H. and K.A. Hamilton eds., *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series III, Volume I: Britain and the Soviet Union, 1968-72*, London: The Stationery Office, 1997.

Bullen, Roger and M.E. Pelly eds. *Documents on British Policy Overseas, Series I, Vol. 4: Britain and America: Negotiations of the United States Loan, 3 August - 7 December 1945*, London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office, 1987.

Hukumah al-Mamlakah al-'Arabiyah al-Saudiyah. *Al-Tahkim li Taswiyat al-Niza' al-Iqlimi bayna Musqat wa Abu Zabi wa bayna al-Mamlakah al-'Arabiyah al-Saudiyah: 'Ard Hukumah al-Mamlakah al-'Arabiyah al-Saudiyah*, 3 vols. 1955.

Parry, Clive ed. *The Consolidated Treaty Series*, Dobbs Ferry, NY: Oceana Publications, various volumes, 1981.

Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom. *The Buraimi Memorials 1955: The Territorial Dispute concerning Buraimi, Liwa and Khor al-Udayd: The Memorials Submitted to Arbitration by the Governments of Saudi Arabia and the United Kingdom*, 5 vols, Gerrards Cross: Archive Editions, 1987.

al-Shalaq, Ahmad Zakarya and Mustafa 'Aqil al-Khatib, *Qatar wa Ittihad al-Imarat al-'Arabiyah "al-Tis'" fi al-Khalij al-'Arabi, 1968-1971: Dirasah wa Watha 'iq*

(Qatar and the Union of the 'Nine' Arab Emirates in the Gulf, 1968-1971: A Study and Documents), Doha: Dar-al-Thaqafah, 1991.

United Nations. *Treaty Series: Treaties and International Agreements Registered or Filed and Recorded with the Secretariat of the United Nations,* vol. 1733, New York: United Nations.

U.S. Atomic Energy Commission. *The Nation's Energy Future: A Report to Richard M. Nixon President of the United States,* U.S. Government Printing Office, 1973.

U.S. Department of State. *Foreign Relations of the United States* (FRUS), Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, various vols.

al-Rayyis, Riyad Nahib. *Watha'iq al-Khalij al-'Arabi, 1968-1971: Tamuhat al-Wahdah wa Humum al-Istiqlal* (Arabian Gulf Documents, 1968-1971: Attempts at Federation and Independence), London: Riad El Rayyes, 1987.

Internet (accessed in April 2011)

United Nations, [http://www.un.org/en/documents/index.shtml].

Periodicals

al-Ahram, Cairo.

Arab Report and Record, London.

The Guardian, London.

al-Hayat, Beirut.

al-Jumhuriyah, Baghdad.

The Times, London.

Memoirs

Allfree, P.S. *Warlords of Oman*, South Brunswick: A.S. Barnes, 1967.

Benn, Tony. *Office Without Power: Diaries, 1968-72*, London: Hutchinson, 1988.

Benn, Tony, and Ruth Winstone. *Out of the Wilderness: Diaries 1963-67*, London: Hutchinson, 1987.

Brown, George. *In My Way: The Political Memoirs of Lord George-Brown*, London: Victor Gollancz, 1971.

Burrows, Burnard. *Footnotes in the Sand: The Gulf in Transition, 1953-1958*, Wilton: Michael Russell, 1990.

Castle, Barbara. *The Castle Diaries, 1964-1970*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1984.

Crossman, Richard. *The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister*, 2 vols, London: Hamish Hamilton and Jonathan Cape, 1975.

Dalton, Hugh. *The Political Diary of Hugh Dalton, 1918-40, 1945-60*, Ben Pimlott ed., London: Jonathan Cape, 1986.

Healey, Denis. *The Time of My Life*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1989.

Jenkins, Roy. *A Life at the Centre*, London: Macmillan, 1991.

Kissinger, Henry. *The White House Years*, London: George Weidenfeld & Nicholson, 1979.

Lee, Kuan Yew. *From Third World to First: The Singapore Story, 1965-2000*, Singapore: Singapore Press Holding, 2000.

Nixon, Richard M. *Leaders*, New York: Warner Books, 1982.

———. *RN: The Memoirs of Richard Nixon*, London: Sidgwick and Jackson, 1978.

Parsons, Anthony. 'Foreword', in Glen Balfour-Paul, *The End of Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in Her Last Three Arab Dependencies*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991, pp.xv-xviii.

———. *They Say the Lion: Britain's Legacy to the Arabs: A Personal Memoir*, London: Jonathan Cape, 1986.

Tempest, Paul. 'Qatar: A Strong New Bridge, 1967-2007', in Paul Tempest ed., *Envoys to the Arab World: MECAS Memoirs, 1944-2009, Volume II*, London: Stacey International, 2009, pp. 130-137.

Walker, Julian. *Tyro on the Trucial Coast*, Durham: The Memoir Club, 1999.

———. 'Personal Recollections of the Rapid Growth of Archives in the Emirates', *The Historical Documents on Arab History in the Archives of the World*, Abu Dhabi: Centre for Documentation and Research, 2002.

Wilson, Harold. *The Governance of Britain*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1976.

———. *The Labour Government, 1964-70: A Personal Record*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971.

Wright, Patrick. 'The Run-up to Independence, 1971', in Paul Tempest ed., *Envoys to the Arab World: MECAS Memoirs, 1944-2009, Volume II*, London: Stacey International, 2009.

Miscellaneous Contemporary Documents

A Correspondent, 'Oil in the Persian Gulf', *Oil in the Persian Gulf*, vol. 20, no. 7, 1964, pp. 305-313.

Kelly, J.B. 'The British Position in the Persian Gulf', *The World Today*, vol. 20, no. 6, 1964, pp. 238-249.

Lorimer, John Gordon. *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, vol. 1, Calcutta, 1915.

Luce, William. 'Britain in the Persian Gulf: Mistaken Timing over Aden,' *The Round Table*, no. 227, 1967, pp. 277-283.

———. ‘Britain’s Withdrawal from the Middle East and Persian Gulf’, *Journal of the Royal United Service Institution*, vol. 114, no. 653, 1969, pp. 4-11.

Shierlie, Anthony. *A True Report of Sir Anthony Shierlies Journey Ouerland to Venice, Frõ Thence by Sea to Antioch, Aleppo, and Bablion, and Soe to Casbine in Persia: His Entertainment There by the Great Sophie*, London, 1600.

Watt, D.C. ‘Britain and the Future of the Persian Gulf States’, *The World Today*, vol. 20, no. 11, 1964, pp. 488-496.

SECONDARY SOURCES

Abdullah, Muhammad Morsy. *The United Arab Emirates: A Modern History*, London: Croom Helm, 1978.

Adonis, Andrew, and Keith Thomas, eds. *Roy Jenkins: A Retrospective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Alvandi, Roham. ‘Muhammad Reza Pahlavi and the Bahrain Question, 1968-1970’, *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2010, pp. 159-177.

——. ‘The Origins of Nixon’s Persian Gulf Policy: A New Cold War History’, unpublished paper presented at the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Society for Historians of American Foreign Relations, 2009.

Amin, Abudul Amir. *British Interests in the Persian Gulf*, Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967.

Ayoob, Mohammed. *The Third World Security Predicament: State Making, Regional Conflict, and the International System*, Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 1995.

Balfour-Paul, Glen. *The End of Empire in the Middle East: Britain's Relinquishment of Power in Her Last Three Arab Dependencies*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991.

Barnwell, Kristi N. 'Formation and Function: British Institutions and Antecedents to a Federation of Arab Emirates', conference paper presented at the 2010 annual British Scholar Conference at the University of Texas, Austin, 2010.

Bismarck, Helene von. 'The Kuwait Crisis of 1961 and Its Consequences for Great Britain's Persian Gulf Policy', *British Scholar*, vol. 2, pp. 75-96.

Bull, Hedley. *The Anarchical Society: A Study of Order in World Politics*, 3rd ed., Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.

──. 'International Theory: The Case for a Classical Approach', in Klaus Knorr and James N. Rosenau eds., *Contending Approaches to International Politics*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1970, pp. 20-38.

Bull, Hedley, and Adam Watson. *The Expansion of International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

Cain, P.J., and A.G. Hopkins. *British Imperialism: Crisis and Deconstruction, 1914-1990*. London: Longman, 1993.

──. *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion, 1688-1914*, London: Longman, 1993.

Campbell, John. *Roy Jenkins: A Biography*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1983.

Cassese, Antonio. *International Law in a Divided World*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1986.

Clark, Ian. *Globalization and Fragmentation: International Relations in the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997.

Darby, Phillip. *British Defence Policy East of Suez, 1947-1968*. London: Oxford University Press for the Royal Institute of International Affairs, 1973.

Darwin, John. *After Tamerlane: The Rise and Fall of Global History of Empires, 1400-2000*, New York: Bloomsbury Press, 2007.

——. *Britain and Decolonisation: The Retreat from Empire in the Post-war World*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988.

——. 'Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez', in Carl Bridge ed., *Munich to Vietnam: Australia's Relations with Britain and the United States since the 1930s*, Victoria: Melbourne University Press, 1991, pp. 140-158.

——. 'British Decolonization since 1945: A Pattern or a Puzzle', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 12, no. 2, 1984, pp. 187-209.

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

——. *The End of the British Empire: The Historical Debate*, Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1991.

——. 'An Undeclared Empire: The British in the Middle East, 1918-39', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1999, pp. 159-176.

Davidson, Christopher M. 'Arab Nationalism and British Opposition in Dubai, 1920-1966', *Middle Eastern Studies*, vol. 43, no. 6, 2007, pp. 879-892

——. *Dubai: The Vulnerability of Success*, London: Hurst, 2008.

Davies, Charles E. *The Blood-Red Arab Flag: An Investigation into Qasimi Piracy, 1797-1820*, Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 1997.

Dockrill, Saki. *Britain's Retreat from East of Suez: The Choice between Europe and the World?*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002.

Dumbrell, John. *A Special Relationship: Anglo-American Relations from the Cold War to Iraq*, 2nd ed., Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.

Dumett, Raymond E., ed. *Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Imperialism: The New Debate on Empire*, London: Longman, 1999.

Fabry, Mikulas. *Recognizing States: International Society and the Establishment of New States since 1776*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Fain, W. Taylor. *American Ascendance and British Retreat in the Persian Gulf Region*, New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008.

Fisch, Jörg. 'Internationalizing Civilization by Dissolving International Society: The Status of Non-European Territories in Nineteenth-Century International Law', in Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulmann eds., *The Mechanics of Internationalism: Culture, Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001, pp. 235-257.

Gaddis, J. L. 'History, Theory, and Common Ground', *International Security*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1997, pp. 75-85.

Gallagher, John, and Ronald Robinson. 'The Imperialism of Free Trade', *The Economic History Review*, vol. 6, no. 1, 1953, pp. 1-15.

Gause, F. Gregory. 'British and American Policies in the Persian Gulf, 1968-1973', *Review of International Studies*, vol. 11, 1985, pp. 247-253.

——. *The International Relations of the Persian Gulf*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010.

Geyer, Martin H. 'One Language for the World: The Metric System, International Coinage, Gold Standard, and the Rise of Internationalism, 1850-1900', in Martin H. Geyer and Johannes Paulman eds., *The Mechanism of Internationalism:*

Culture; Society, and Politics from the 1840s to the First World War, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Gong, Gerrit W. *The Standard of "Civilization" in International Society*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

Gordon Walker, Patrick. *The Cabinet*, Revised ed., London: Collins, 1972.

Haber, S.H., D.M. Kennedy, and S.D. Krasner. 'Brothers under the Skin: Diplomatic History and International Relations', *International Security*, vol. 22, no. 1, 1997, pp. 34-43.

Hawley, Donald. *The Trucial States*, New York: Twayne Publishers, 1970.

Heard-Bey, Frauke. *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates: A Society in Transition*, New ed. London: Longman, 1996.

Holland, R.F. *European Decolonization, 1918-1981: An Introductory Survey*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985.

Hourani, George Fadlo. *Arab Seafaring in the Indian Ocean in Ancient and Early Medieval Times*, Beirut: Khayats, 1963.

Hurewitz, J.C. 'The Persian Gulf: British Withdrawal and Western Security', *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 401, no. 1, 1972, pp. 105-116.

Iriye, Akira, and Pierre-Yves Saunier. *The Palgrave Dictionary of Transnational History*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009.

Jackson, Robert H. *Quasi-states: Sovereignty, International Relations, and the Third World*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990.

Kazim, Aquil A. *The United Arab Emirates, A.D. 600 to the Present: A Socio-discursive Transformation in the Arabian Gulf*, Dubai: Gulf Book Centre, 2000.

Keene, Edward. *Beyond the Anarchical Society: Grotius, Colonialism and Order in World Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002.

——. 'International Law and Diplomacy in the European and Extra-European Worlds during the early Nineteenth Century': unpublished article, 2008.

Kelly, J.B. *Arabia, the Gulf and the West*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1980.

——. *Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795-1880*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

——. *Eastern Arabian Frontiers*, London: Faber and Faber, 1964.

Khong, Yuen Foong. *Analogies at War: Korea, Munich, Dien Bien Phu, and the Vietnam Decisions of 1965*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992.

Khuri, Fuad I. *Tribe and State in Bahrain: The Transformation of Social and Political Authority in an Arab State*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

Kissinger, Henry. *The White House Years*, London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1979.

Krasner, Stephen D. *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999.

Lockhart, L. 'Hormuz', in *Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition*, accessed through [http://www.brillonline.nl] on 25 March 2009.

Louis, Wm. Roger. *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945-1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States, and Postwar Imperialism*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984.

——. 'Introduction: Robinson and Gallagher and Their Critics', in Wm. Roger Louis ed., *Imperialism: The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy*, New York: New Viewpoints, 1976, pp. 2-51.

——. 'The Withdrawal from the Gulf', *Ends of British Imperialism: The Scramble for Empire, Suez and Decolonization*, London: I. B. Tauris, 2006, pp. 877-903.

Louis, Wm. Roger, and Ronald Robinson. 'The Imperialism of Decolonization', *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 22, no. 3, 1994, pp. 462-511.

Macris, Jeffrey R. *The Politics and Security of the Gulf: Anglo-American Hegemony and the Shaping of a Region*, London; New York: Routledge, 2010.

Maitra, Jayanti and Afra Hajji. *Qasr Al Hosn: The History of the Rulers of Abu Dhabi, 1793-1966*, Abu Dhabi, UAE: Centre for Documentation and Research, 2001.

Mattair, Thomas R. *The Three Occupied UAE Islands: The Tunbs and Abu Musa*, Abu Dhabi: Emirates Center for Strategic Studies and Research, 2005.

McCourt, David M. 'What was Britain's "East of Suez Role"? Reassessing the Withdrawal, 1964-1968', *Diplomacy and Statecraft*, vol. 20, no. 3, 2009, pp. 453-472.

Mendelson, M.H. 'The Application of International Legal Concepts of Sovereignty in the Arabian Context', *Geopolitics*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1998, pp. 133-138.

Newbury, Colin. 'Patrons, Clients and Empire: The Subordination of Indigenous Hierarchies in Asia and Africa', *Journal of World History*, vol. 11, no. 2, 2000, pp. 227-263.

Norton, Maureen Heaney. 'The Last Pasha: Sir John Glubb and the British Empire in the Middle East, 1920-1949', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Baltimore, MD: John Hopkins University, 1997.

O'Brien, Patrick. 'Historiographical Traditions and Modern Imperatives for the Restoration of Global History', *Journal of Global History*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2006, pp. 3-39.

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

——. *Britain and the Gulf Shaikhdoms, 1820-1971: The Politics of Protection*, Doha: Center for International and Regional Studies, School of Foreign Service in Qatar, School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Georgetown University, 2009.

——. 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf, 1820-1971', *Journal of Social Affairs*, vol. 22, no. 87, 2005, pp. 29-45.

——. 'The Politics of Protection in the Gulf: The Arab Rulers and the British Resident in the Nineteenth Century', *New Arabian Studies*, vol. 6, 2004, pp. 30-92.

Osterhammel, Jürgen. 'Semi-Colonialism and Informal Empire in Twentieth-Century China: Towards a Framework of Analysis', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986, pp. 290-314.

Petersen, Tore T. 'Crossing the Rubicon? Britain's Withdrawal from the Middle East, 1964-1968: A Bibliographical Review', *International History Review*, vol. 22, no. 2, 2000, pp. 318-340.

——. *The Decline of the Anglo-American Middle East, 1961-1969: A Willing Retreat*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2006.

——. *Richard Nixon, Great Britain and the Anglo-American Alignment in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Peninsula: Making Allies out of Clients*, Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2009.

Pham, Phuong. 'End of the East of Suez: The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964 to 1968', unpublished DPhil thesis, Oxford: University of Oxford, 2001.

——. *Ending 'East of Suez': The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964-1968*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

Pickering, Jeffrey. *Britain's Withdrawal from East of Suez: The Politics of Retrenchment*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998.

——. 'Politics and "Black Tuesday": Shifting Power in the Cabinet and the Decision to Withdraw from East of Suez, November 1967-January 1968', *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. 13, no. 2, 2002, pp. 144-170.

Platt, D.C.M. 'The Imperialism of Free Trade: Some Reservations', *Economic History Review*, vol. 21, no. 2, 1968, pp. 296-306.

Popp, Roland. 'Subcontracting Security: The US, Britain and Gulf Security before the Carter Doctrine', unpublished chapter of a forthcoming edited volume.

al-Qasimi, Sultan ibn Muhammad. *The Myth of Arab Piracy in the Gulf*. 2nd ed. London: Routledge, 1988.

Rahman, Habibur. *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years, 1627-1916*. London: Kegan Paul, 2005.

Reynolds, David. 'A 'Special Relationship'? America, Britain and the International Order since the World-War-II', *International Affairs*, vol. 62, no. 1, 1986, pp. 1-20.

Robinson, Ronald. 'The Excentric Idea of Imperialism, with or without Empire', in Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities*, London: Allen and Unwin, 1986, pp. 267-289.

——. 'Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration', in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism*, London: Longman, 1972, pp. 117-142.

Ruggie, John Gerard. 'Territoriality and Beyond: Problematizing Modernity in International Relations', *International Organization*, vol. 47, no. 1, 1993, pp. 139-174.

Sartre, Jean-Paul. ‘Preface’, in Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, tranlated by Constance Farrington, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1967, pp. 7-26.

Sato, Shohei. ‘Britain’s Decision to Withdraw from the Persian Gulf, 1964-68: A Pattern and a Puzzle’, *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*, vol. 37, no. 1, 2009, pp. 99-117.

Shlaim, Avi. ‘Britain’s Quest for a World Role’, *International Relations*, vol. 5, no. 1, 1975, pp. 838-856.

Slot, B.J. *The Arabs of the Gulf, 1602-1784: An Alternative Approach to the Early History of the Arab Gulf States and the Arab Peoples of the Gulf, Mainly Based on Sources of the Dutch East India Company*, Leidschendam: B.J. Slot, 1993.

Smith, Simon C. *Britain’s Revival and Fall in the Gulf: Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, and the Trucial States, 1950-71*, London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004.

Spruyt, Hendrik. *Ending Empire: Contested Sovereignty and Territorial Partition*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005.

—. ‘The End of Empire and the Extension of the Westphalian System: The Normative Basis of the Modern State Order’, *International Studies Review*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2000, pp. 65-92.

Stivachtis, Yannis A. *The Enlargement of International Society: Culture versus Anarchy and Greece’s Entry into International Society*, Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1998.

Suzuki, Shogo. ‘Japan’s Socialization into Janus-faced European International Society’, *European Journal of International Relations*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2005, pp. 137-164.

Taryam, Abdullah Omran. *The Establishment of the United Arab Emirates, 1950-85*, London: Croom Helm, 1987.

Taverne, Dick. ‘Chancellor of the Exchequer’, in Andrew Adonis and Keith Thomas eds., *Roy Jenkins: A Retrospective*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004.

Tepper, Jonathan. ‘The Dollar, the Pound and British Policy East of Suez, 1964-67: Deals and Understandings between Wilson and Johnson’, unpublished MLitt thesis, Oxford: University of Oxford, 2004.

Tidrick, Kathryn. *Heart-beguiling Araby*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

Yergin, Daniel. *The Prize: The Epic Quest for Oil, Money, and Power*, New York: Free Press, 1992.

Watson, Adam. *The Evolution of International Society: A Comparative Historical Analysis*, London: Routledge, 1992.

Weber, Max. *Max Weber: Selections in Translation*, translated by E. Matthews. Edited by W. G. Runciman. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978.

Wendt, Alexander. ‘Anarchy Is What States Make of It: The Social Construction of Power-Politics’, *International Organization*, vol. 46, no. 2, 1992, pp. 391-425.

Wendt, Alexander and Daniel Friedheim. ‘Hierarchy under Anarchy: Informal Empire and the East-German State’, *International Organization*, vol. 49, no. 4, 1995, pp. 689-721.

Wight, Martin. *Systems of States*, Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1977.

Wilson, Arnold T. *The Persian Gulf: An Historical Sketch from the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Twentieth Century*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1928.

Winichakul, Tongchai. *Siam Mapped: A History of the Geo-Body of a Nation*, Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1994.

Woodward, Nicholas. ‘Labour's Economic Performance, 1964-70’, in Richard Coopy, Steven Fielding and Nick Tratsoo eds., *The Wilson Governments, 1964-1970*, London: Pinter, 1993.

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

——. *The Origins of the United Arab Emirates: A Political and Social History of the Trucial States*, London: Macmillan, 1978.

Encyclopaedia of Islam, Second Edition. Accessed through [http://www.brillonline.nl] on 25 March 2009.