

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

INFORMATION

36145

March 13, 1972

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THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN.

MEMORANDUM FOR:

THE PRESIDENT

FROM:

HENRY A. KISSINGER

SUBJECT:

U.S. Presence in the Persian Gulf--
Summary of Developments

In November 1970 you approved a basic strategy for the Persian Gulf as British "withdrawal" approached. [NSDM 92 at Tab B]. The NSC Under Secretaries Committee was instructed to develop an imaginative US presence. With the British treaties formally terminated at the end of 1971, the Committee is now reporting to you at Tab A on the steps that have been taken. A map is attached to complement the following summary:

Diplomatic Representation

You had approved the expansion of diplomatic representation to the Lower Gulf and the accreditation of our Ambassador in Kuwait to posts there. Late last year the final political configuration of the Gulf emerged with four independent entities: Bahrain, Qatar, the Union of Arab Emirates (the seven tiny Trucial states of which the largest, Abu Dhabi, is taking a lead) and Oman (independent since 1833).

--These four states have all been accepted as members of the United Nations with our support.

--You have sent letters congratulating the heads of each state on their independence (and to Oman on our establishing diplomatic relations). You have received warm replies. Your letters were delivered personally by the Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for the area.

--You have accredited our new Ambassador to Kuwait (William A. Stoltzfus) as our first Ambassador to the Gulf states. His impressive performance as our DCM in Saudi Arabia promises an imaginative presence.

ON-FILE NSC RELEASE INSTRUCTIONS APPLY

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--State plans three Missions at the Charge level--in Bahrain, in Abu Dhabi as the capital of the UAF (it will also serve Qatar) and in Oman at the very tip of the Gulf. Bahrain, as the more developed state, has been the first priority and a Charge was dispatched there last fall to set up our machinery. As facilities can be arranged, State will be moving to create the remaining two missions with emphasis on an imaginative rather than quantitative presence. Some upgrading in our Kuwait embassy on the economic/commercial side is required since they will bear prime immediate responsibility for overseeing regional cooperation in this field.

Assistance and Exchange in the Gulf

The heart of our presence will be US technical and educational assistance and cultural exchange through private and public channels. These states have their own oil money and do not need economic aid. This will require new kinds of effort and programs. To this end, the Under Secretaries Committee is recommending (1) increasing State's budget for scholarship and exchange fellowship activities in FY 73; (2) focussing now on opportunities to provide technical advisors on a reimbursable basis and on concessionary terms when legislative authority and appropriations can be obtained; (3) encouraging the private US sector to become interested in meeting the needs of the Gulf.

Military Presence

The Under Secretary will be forwarding separately a study and recommendations on arms sales to the Lower Gulf. On your approval, however, steps were taken to place Kuwait on the list of countries eligible to purchase arms under FMS credits.

In December, we concluded an arrangement by Executive Agreement to retain--with Bahraini, Saudi and Iranian approval--our small naval presence of three ships which have been there for the last twenty-two years. We will be utilizing a consolidated 10% of the base formally used by the British and replacing the obsolete flagship with a larger and more modern one which will increase somewhat the numbers of US personnel involved. In short, the size of the force remains the same, and the Bahrainis rather than the British are now our landlords. Nevertheless, there has been some reaction in the Arab countries and on Capitol Hill.

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One comment that might be made in conclusion is that the transition in the Gulf has at least begun with more ease than we--or the British--dared hope. In addition to Oman (independent since 1833), Bahrain, Qatar and the Union are now launched and we are moving into a relationship with each.

There have been two minor ripples; both are largely viewed as products of internal, endemic squabbling.

--The ruler of Sharjah, member of the Union, was assassinated by his cousin last month. The UAE troops helped install the deputy ruler of Sharjah as the new ruler to maintain the line of government against the plotting cousin. This was, incidentally, the first time the UAE acted in the interests of Gulf security. There was a strong suggestion of complicity in the assassination by another Union member and Union members have made their displeasure known.

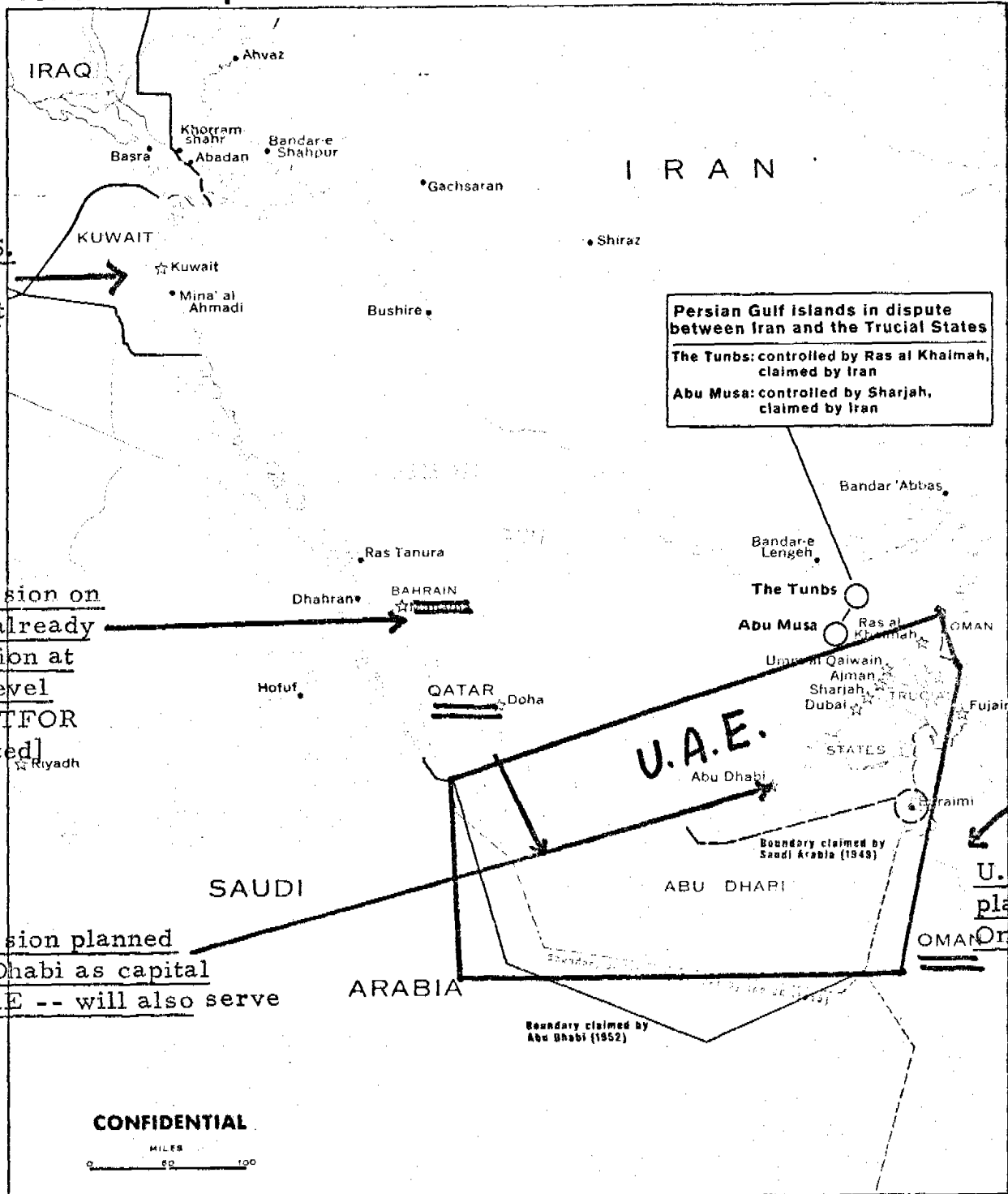
--Recently, Qatar's deputy ruler deposed the ruler and assumed office. The new ruler has long been regarded the chief executive in fact while the ex-ruler has been known to vacation abroad at great lengths.

This is just to point out that while the transition went reasonably well there is still potential for instability.

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Territorial Disputes in the Persian Gulf Area



Main U.S. Embassy in Kuwait

U.S. Mission on Bahrain already in operation at Charge level [MIDEASTFOR homeported]

U.S. Mission planned for Abu Dhabi as capital of the UAE -- will also serve Qatar

Persian Gulf islands in dispute between Iran and the Trucial States
The Tunbs: controlled by Ras al Khaimah, claimed by Iran
Abu Musa: controlled by Sharjah, claimed by Iran

U.S. Mission planned for Oman

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