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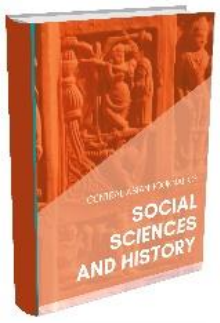

The Omani Military Establishment and Military Spending (1970-1991)

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Abstract:
The military institution has an effective role in formulating state policy and influencing regional and even global policy, at a time when the countries of the world moved towards arming and developing weapons, coinciding with the major powers' pursuit of their interests using force and politics. In light of these developments, the important role of the military institution became clear, and the Sultanate of Oman faced... Great challenges were imposed on it to develop its military institution, as it is in the Strait of Hormuz, with Iran competing in its management, as well as its border disputes, in addition to the outbreak of the Iraqi-Iranian war, which imposed the development of the military institution on the entire Gulf states. The subject of the research sheds light on the Omani military institution, its capabilities, and the stages of its development, consisting of three axes: the first An overview of the history of the Sultanate, its location, and its economic resources. The second dealt with the military establishment, its establishment, the stages of its development, and the most important challenges it faced. The third axis studied military spending and arms purchases.

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The first axis: The civilizational history of the Sultanate of Oman

First: Location and Terrain

The Sultanate of Oman is located in the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula on the Arabian Sea. It is an island surrounded by water from three sides, and its coasts extend from the Dhofar Governorate to the Strait of Hormuz[(i)].

When looking at the coasts of Oman, we can see that they are long and extensive, making it a strategic

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center as it is on transportation routes and is an important center for global trade. Its coasts extend to approximately 3165 km, overlooking the coasts of the Arabian Gulf and the Arabian Sea. On these coasts, there are ports connecting it to various parts of the world[ii]. As for the total land area of Oman, it is 309,500 square kilometers, and its coasts form an entrance to the Indian Ocean, extending to the Gulf of Oman and ending at Musandam in the north, overlooking the Strait of Hormuz, which is the entrance to the Arabian Gulf[iii]. Its borders are with the Republic of Yemen to the southwest, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to the west, the United Arab Emirates to the north, the Arabian Sea to the south, and the Gulf of Oman to the east[iv].

The terrain of Oman forms the coastal plain, which covers about (3%) of the total area of the country, while the mountains cover about (15%). The desert regions cover about (82%) of the total area[v]. Geographically, Oman is characterized by a large mountain range known as the Al Hajar Mountains, which extends from the Musandam Governorate at the Strait of Hormuz to Ras Al Hadd in the southeastern part of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering the Indian Ocean. This forms a large arc that extends from the northeastern part of the country to the southwestern part. The highest point of this range is in the JabalAkhdar region, reaching an elevation of (3000) meters, which is considerably high compared to the heights in the Musandam Governorate, which reach (1800) meters[vi].

In the southern regions of the Dhofar Governorate, there is a semi-continuous mountain range that shapes the general terrain of the area, divided into the Samhan Mountains in the east, the Qara Mountains in the center, and the Jebel Qamar Mountains in the west. The width of these mountains is (23) kilometers, and their maximum elevation reaches (2500) meters. During the summer, they are covered with tall grass due to seasonal rains[vii].

The region located on the coast of the Arabian Sea is called Al Batinah and extends from Muscat to the border of the United Arab Emirates. It includes several governorates such as Barka, Al Musanaa, Al Suwaiq, Al Khabourah, Saham, Shinas, and others. This coastal area is characterized by low-lying valleys, with an estimated width ranging from (15-80) kilometers and a length of over (300) kilometers. It is of great importance as it constitutes important agricultural lands in Oman[viii]. There are numerous valleys in this region, including WadiSamail. The mountains to the west of the valley are called the Western Al Hajar Mountains, while the mountains in the eastern region are known as the Eastern Al Hajar Mountains, where rainfall is abundant. The cities of Salalah, Thumrait, Mirbat, Taqah, and Sadah are located in this area[ix].

Second: The economic activity of the Sultanate of Oman

The economy of the Sultanate of Oman is distinguished by its economic diversification, relying on many resources, including:

1. Agriculture

Agriculture has flourished in the Sultanate of Oman for several reasons, including the diversity of the climate due to the vast expanse of the country, resulting in more than one climate, such as the coastal, mountainous, and inland climates. Additionally, the availability of water from various sources, including seasonal rainfall due to the movement of winds from the Indian Ocean, mountainous terrain rainfall, as well as springs and other sources, has contributed to the development of agriculture. The fertility of the land, with its diverse soil types such as yellow clay, sandy, and black soil, each with its own characteristics and advantages[x], has also played a role. Furthermore[xi], the skills of the farmers, particularly their ability to locate and determine the depth of water sources, as well as their expertise in

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digging channels and conveying water to agricultural lands, have all contributed to the advancement and growth of agriculture in the Sultanate of Oman, thereby supporting the local economy, although it is not the main source of the Omani economy[xii].

2. Trade

The location of the Sultanate of Oman overlooking the seas that connect it to the outside world and its possession of large coasts overlooking the Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman make it easy for it to connect with the countries of the world. It is connected to the Indian Ocean, the Red Sea, the Arabian Gulf, and from there to the oceans and the global continents. This geographical location has given it a unique depth throughout the ages and made it easy for it to engage in trade[xiii]. Since ancient times, its inhabitants have been involved in trade and have been a maritime power with a prominent position. They mastered shipbuilding, understood the conditions and fluctuations of the sea. When Islam came and the Islamic conquests expanded, Oman's trade and relations flourished. They were the first to engage in trade expeditions with China during the Umayyad era[xiv]. Omani trade flourished in the subsequent eras, developed, and was able to compete with foreign presence in the Arabian Gulf. It is now an important trade hub in the region due to its strategic location, and trade is one of the pillars of the Omani economy, albeit at varying proportions[xv].

3. Oil

The discovery of oil in the Sultanate of Oman began in 1924 when the Anglo-Persian Oil Company conducted geological exploration, but the results were unsatisfactory. In 1937, the Petroleum Development Oman Company obtained development licenses and conducted exploration operations, which were also unsuccessful. However, in 1956, an oil well was drilled in the Fahud mountain area, indicating the presence of oil in the region. Despite many unsuccessful and unprofitable exploration operations by various companies that relinquished their licenses[xvi], in 1962, the Petroleum Development Oman Company began to implement time-bound plans after confirming the presence of oil in the mountainous region, and oil extraction began in the same year. In 1963, oil was discovered in the Natih area, followed by the Fahud area in 1964. Subsequently, numerous licenses were granted to foreign partnerships, and studies and discoveries continued to progress[xvii].

The first oil tanker loaded with Omani crude oil departed from the Port of Al-Fahl in 1967. After that, production and exports increased, reaching approximately 95,600 barrels per day in the 1990s. At the beginning of the current century, the Omani government strengthened its efforts by signing eight agreements with several international companies, and the Oman Oil Company implemented an exploration program, drilling 17 wells, 13 of which were successful, increasing the daily production rate to 737,600 barrels. In 2006, production and exports increased, with exports reaching 2,232 million barrels per day, with the majority of exports going to China, Thailand, South Korea, and Japan[xviii].

4. The mineral

wealth There are many mining projects in the Sultanate of Oman, the most important of which are the production of magnesium, dolomite ores, limestone industries used in the iron and glass industry, salt and soda industry. There are reserves of some minerals such as copper, with a reserve of 15 million tons, which has been known in Oman for five thousand years[xix]. As a result of urban development, countries have focused on mineral production, and the mining and soil sector has advanced, with the

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private sector also participating in this field. Studies have shown the availability of chrome ores, limestone, marble, decorative rocks, silica, lead, gypsum, iron, and dolomite in the Sultanate's soil[xx].

5 . Industry

Omani industry began with handicrafts, relying on animal and plant production. The city of Dhofar was an important center for the production of wool, silk, cotton, and linen, as well as silk textile industry[xxi]. Other cities involved in handicrafts include Sohar, Nizwa, Dhofar, and Bahla, where they were used in the production of clothes, tents, and saddlebags for horses[xxii]. The Omani handmade dagger industry also became famous, which is part of the traditional dress worn on all religious and national occasions, embodying the authenticity and identity of the nation. These daggers are made of silver and have finely crafted sheaths[xxiii]. The textile industry has developed in the modern era, with the opening of the largest textile factory in the region in 1988, the first of its kind in the Gulf Cooperation Council countries. The factory has a textile training center and produces the finest woven fabrics from synthetic and natural yarns such as cotton, wool, and silk to meet the local market's needs for consumer goods[xxiv]. Oman is also renowned for its traditional shipbuilding industry due to its geographical location [xxv]

6. The Omani Renaissance

In the recent decades, Oman has achieved multiple accomplishments in various fields and has begun steps of construction and development in various areas of life. Oman became a member of the Arab League in 1971 and joined the United Nations in 1972. Omani embassies gradually opened in Arab and international countries[xxvi]. In July 1970, Sultan Qaboos bin Said assumed power in Oman, followed by the formation of ministries for the first time in the Sultanate. After a year, the number of ministries became ten, managing the state's affairs[xxvii]. The country focused on education, with a multiplication of schools and students, and Oman was able to establish the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research in 1994[xxviii]. The state implemented a policy to support economic growth domestically, increasing budget spending to continue stimulating economic growth and sustainable development in all its forms, benefiting from low inflation rates to launch new projects in various fields alongside completing developmental projects, including service projects such as roads, paving, and the establishment of new institutions for telecommunications, water, electricity, health, education, tourism, and others[xxix].

The second axis: The Omani military institution

1- Its establishment

Since the 17th century, Oman has possessed a maritime military force that played an active role in expelling the Portuguese forces under the leadership of the Al Yaruba dynasty. In 1605, Omani forces built military fortifications, making them a competitive and dominant force in the Arabian Gulf waters. During the rule of Sultan Said bin Ahmed Al Said in the era of the Al Busaidi dynasty, the Omani naval military force became dominant in the Arabian Gulf, ranking second after the United Kingdom. However, after Sultan Said's death, divisions and conflicts occurred, transforming the country from a military empire into a poor country with weakened military power and capabilities[xxx]. Therefore, the current Omani military institution, despite the fact that a military force was established in 1907 called the Muscat Protection Force, which initially had limited tasks in protecting the city of Muscat, evolved and expanded into a force known as the Muscat Infantry in 1921[xxxi]. The Omani military force remained in this formation until the early 1950s, which witnessed the formation of some military units.

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After that, various formations for the Omani military institution followed, but they were slow until 1976 when the Omani army was reorganized in terms of equipment, armament, and organization, becoming an independent military force called the Omani Sultan's Ground Forces[xxxii]. At a time when the population of Oman was about 930,000, the number of armed forces at that time was approximately 15,000 men. The state spent approximately 879 million dollars to equip and prepare them, which was equivalent to a GDP of 2.55 billion dollars. The area of Oman is 212,460 square kilometers, making it one of the largest countries in the southern Arabian Gulf, and as such, it requires.In doing so, it needs more military forces than others to secure its borders, in addition to being besieged by leftist ideologies in the south and border issues in the west and north[xxxiii].

2- The challenges faced by Oman

We cannot ignore the challenges that Oman has faced due to the Strait of Hormuz, which borders it to the south of Iran. Oman overlooks the strait through the Musandam Peninsula, which has made it the eastern gateway to the Arabian Gulf. However, the problem facing it is that Musandam is geographically separated from the rest of Omani territory, as the United Arab Emirates borders it from all directions except the east, and it is a significant strategic burden on military supplies and provisions in the west, and can only be accessed by sea[xxxiv]. Oman also faces a new challenge, which is border disputes with neighboring countries, including its dispute with Yemen over border demarcation. The Gulf countries did not attach great importance to border issues among them, but after the discovery of oil in the region and the emergence of oil privileges, those countries began attempts to annex as much.I can translate the text for you. Here is the English translation:

"So, border disputes emerged between them, highlighting the great importance of border planning between the Gulf states in the first half of the twentieth century. As a result, the issue of border planning between Oman and Aden emerged, with a length of about 600 miles[xxxv], between the Omani Dhofar region and Aden. The arrival of Western oil companies in the Arabian Gulf region to conduct oil exploration prompted Sultan Muscat at that time to work on identifying his country's border territories on the Omani-Yemeni border in order to grant oil concessions to the oil companies operating in the region to obtain financial returns. Therefore, he requested the British government's approval to demarcate the borders between his country and Aden as a British protectorate governed by a British ruler at that time. The British government commissioned a committee to be sent to the Omani-Aden border region to study the matter and informed the Indian Ministry of Lunkrick[xxxvi] that the Sultan of Oman had agreed to allow the two Britons to travel to any area of the Dhofar coast and pledged to take security responsibility for this visit, and that he was considering providing protection for the Omani-Aden border region. He feared the intervention of the Mahra tribe, which is settled in the region. The British Indian Ministry said that the Sultan could not exactly determine the land areas that he could protect or provide security in, and that he was waiting for the British representatives to meet with them and provide detailed information for all the areas they wish to visit. The Indian Ministry added that the political agent in Muscat believes that security can be arranged or provided in several places on December 28, 1946." the British political resident in Bahrain sent a message to the political agent in Muscat, trying to determine the boundaries of the Mahra region and whether it is part of Aden or part of the Dhofar region. The question arises as to whether it is possible to provide any confirmation of the western boundaries of the Dhofar region and whether the political agent can appoint the portion that cannot access the oil privileges due to his residence in the Mahra tribe. It appears that the political agent in Muscat requested British institutions in the Middle East to provide

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information about the Mahra tribe and the areas it resides in, before the arrival of European oil investors to the region. However, the information provided did not help the British authorities know where the authorities of the Sultanate of Oman end and where the authorities of the Aden government begin[xxxvii], in order to deal with the main point, which is granting oil exploration privileges and also the responsibility for security on the Omani-Adenese border. However, the Ministry of Colonies deemed that the governor of Aden is responsible for the region and is more knowledgeable about it and its boundaries than others, therefore his opinion must be taken into account in the final border planning. However, Sultan Oman considered that the western borders are somewhat located at a further distance to the east. On the 13th of April, 1956.The governor of Aden sent a message to the Ministry of Colonies in London regarding the topography of the eastern regional borders of Aden. The governor mentioned that the limited oil privileges produced a new map of the area. He stated that he does not see the need to draw any lines on the maps at that time, as he takes into account the photographic representation. He suggested that a distance of twenty miles east of the proposed line would be sufficient to determine the Aden-Omani borders. It appears that the Ministry of Colonies has taken into consideration the governor's proposal and consulted with the Sultan of Oman, who agreed to the modification. Based on the information provided by the governor, which relied on the maps presented by the Survey Directorate of the Ministry of Colonies and the limited oil privileges map, the final borders between Oman and Aden have been demarcated after overcoming the conflicts between the two parties[xxxviii].

3. The military institution's evolution:

In the 1980s, Oman emerged from the economically exhausting Dhofar War and found itself facing the repercussions of the Iraq-Iran War. This led to tension, mobilization, and the need for the Gulf countries to fortify their defenses, support their armies, and reorganize their military institutions. Since the early 1980s, Oman had been increasing its military expenditure to fortify and develop its armed forces, import weapons and equipment. The military expenses reached approximately $879 million in 1980 and continued to increase, reaching around $1937 million in 1985(xxxix). This demonstrates the impact of the Iraq-Iran War on the perception of Arab Gulf countries, making them realize that they are not immune to danger. The war also highlighted the weaknesses in Oman's military preparedness and equipment, which required intervention from the Gulf Cooperation Council. In September 1983, the council pledged approximately $1.8 billion to be disbursed over 12 years to support the Sultanate of Oman. However, military spending declined after 1985 due to decreasing oil prices, causing Oman's military expenditure to be around $1731 million in 1986. It continued to decrease until 1990 before rising again to reach $1.39 billion, accounting for 20% of the national income spent on the military institution. Looking at Oman's arsenal, the primary source of Omani weapons was Britain, followed by the United States, France, and Italy, indicating the dominance of the Western camp in the Omani arms market(xl). Oman's forces are considered one of the most effective Gulf forces, thanks to their close historical association, having fought in various historical battles in Dhofar and the Green Mountain.

They have also had close encounters with foreign forces, such as the British, Iranian, and American forces, which have received facilities in Oman. It is essential to mention the special attention given by Sultan Qaboos since 1970 to the Omani forces, understanding the strategic importance of the Strait of Hormuz and the dangers it poses in case navigation is disrupted(xli). Considering that a significant portion of the West's oil passes through it, the Omani Navy is tasked with monitoring the strait and protecting up to 370 km of Omani coastline. The Omani government has made significant efforts to enhance the combat readiness of the Omani forces despite limited resources and human

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capabilities(xlii).

The Omani army remained on alert throughout the 1980s along its border with Democratic Yemen due to the perceived communist threat to the Gulf, as well as Yemen's support for the Dhofar rebels in the 1970s. The dispute between the two countries was eventually resolved in 1987 through the exchange of ambassadors. By the end of the 1980s, the cost of Oman's defense budget had nearly reached one billion dollars, not accounting for the assistance received from the Gulf Cooperation Council for defense matters, which lasted for only two years(xliii). Oman prioritized collective security more than the other Gulf Arab countries and proposed the formation of a Gulf army consisting of 100,000 men, under the administration of the Gulf Cooperation Council, ready to respond to any external aggression against any member of the Council. However, the proposal was not taken seriously(xliv).

In the early 1980s, the size of the Omani Army was 12,000 soldiers, which increased with government support to 20,000 soldiers in the mid-1980s, accounting for 85% of the total Omani forces. At the time, the Navy and Air Force each had 2,000 soldiers. It is worth mentioning that in 1984, the Chief of the Omani Army was still British General Timothy Creasy(xlv). There were approximately 200 British officers and a significant number of Pakistanis holding various positions as officers and enlisted personnel. Additionally, many Balochis served in the Omani military, considering that their homeland in Gwadar on the Pakistani coast was part of the Sultanate of Oman until 1958. However, the Omani government made continuous efforts to replace them with Omani officers and personnel. By the late 1980s, the Omani forces had reached a total of 35,700 soldiers, with 20,000 in the Army alone(xlvi).

It is noticeable that the Omani government managed to enhance the military capabilities of its armed forces through the development of the military institution. This was necessitated by the regional and global challenges faced by the country, including border conflicts, regional wars, and advancements in global military technology. Consequently, the Omani military saw great diversity.

A: The Omani ground forces

have gradually developed since their establishment. The government has placed great importance on these forces as they serve as a strong defensive line against any external aggression or threat. The distribution of the Omani ground forces can be included in the table below.

T	Unit	Number	Notes
1	Armored Brigade	2	Each brigade consists of three tank battalions
2	Armored Reconnaissance Brigade	1	
3	Infantry Brigade	8	
4	Artillery Brigade	4	
5	Air Defense Brigade	1	consisting of two batteries
6	Infantry Reconnaissance Brigade	1	consisting of three companies
7	Reconnaissance Company	2	independent of any

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			brigade
8	**Field Engineering Brigade**	**1**	**consisting of three companies**
9	**Parachute Brigade**	**1**	
10	**Special Royal Guard Brigade**	**1**	

We can observe from the table that the labeling may not always correspond to reality, as some units only consist of what equals a platoon if compared to Western armies, which is evidence of the problem of personnel shortages suffered by all Gulf Arab countries including the Sultanate of Oman. Additionally[(xlvii)], we find that this military force is managed by a division-level command under a brigade command, with all units subject to overall command. This hierarchical structure allows commanders to easily and smoothly assemble forces[(xlviii)]. As for the armament of these forces, it varies depending on the specialization, and it can also be divided into light and heavy weapons, as shown in the table below.

T	Weapon	type	number
1	**anti-armor**	**Tau**	
2	**carried on Milan's shoulders**	**Missiles**	
3	**Batteries**	**Hawk**	
4	**types of mortars**	**There are different**	
5	**British cannon**	**British 105 mm**	**36**
6	**British cannon**	**25-pounder**	**23**
7	**Soviet Unioncannon**	**130 mm**	**12**
8	**USA cannon**	**155 mm**	**12**

As the light weapons of the ground army differed, so did the heavy weapons. We can mention the types of these weapons and their quantities according to the table below:

T	Weapon	Type Pink	Floyd	Notes
1	**Tanks**	**M60A1**	**America**	**10**
2	**Tanks**	**M60A3**	**America**	**10**
3	**Chevantine tanks**	**Chieftains**	**British**	**23**
4	**Light armored vehicle**	**Scorpion**	**British**	**20**
5	**vehicle**	**VBS-90s**	**French**	**Light combat vehicle**
6	**vehicle**	**Steyr**	**Austrian**	**For pedestrians in rugged areas**

B: The maritime forces

were part of the support directed by the Omani government towards the military establishment. This support resulted in an increase in the number of fighters. In the 1970s, the number of fighters did not exceed 800, but by the early 1980s, it reached 100 fighters. At the end of the 1980s, the number of fighters reached 3,000. The maritime forces were of great importance. Sultan Qaboos dedicated his yacht to the maritime forces and it was rehabilitated to become a warship belonging to the Omani fleet[(xlix)]. A naval base was established in Muscat, called Said bin Sultan Base, which was completed in

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1987. It was the largest engineering project in Muscat in the 1980s and included all the Omani fleet ships, training facilities, and maintenance workshops. Oman relied on many British officers and Pakistani individuals, but by the end of the 1980s, Omanis occupied all military positions except for some technical specializations[(1)]. Omani warships were armed with various types of weapons, including the Province-class missile boats, equipped with French-made Exocet missiles, 76mm MelaraOto cannons, and 40mm Breda dual-purpose anti-aircraft guns. The table below provides a summarized overview of the weapons owned by the Sultanate:

T	Weapon	Floyd	Type Pink	number	Notes
1	Missile boats	(Province-class)	British	4	Main combat weapon
2	Fast boats	(Brook Marine)	British	4	Equipped with 56 mm cannons
3	Patrol boats		British	4	
4	Landing ship	2500	British	1	Capable of carrying tanks
5	Landing ships	LCM	British	3	

C: The air force

of Oman has received support from the Omani government, resulting in its development over the years. Although the growth has been limited, it has involved an increase in the number of personnel. In 1970, there were approximately 1200 fighters, then the number rose to 1800 by the end of the 1970s. By the end of the 1980s and early 1990, the number of fighters reached 3500[(li)]. The Omani air force currently owns around 44 aircraft, the majority of which are British-made. These include the Jaguar and Hunter aircraft for ground attack and reconnaissance missions, as well as the Strike Master and Defender aircraft for maritime patrols and training purposes. There are also three squadrons of transport aircraft and two helicopter squadrons. The Omani air defense is equipped with Martello radar and command system. Additionally, Oman possesses a Skyvan radar aircraft. Omani air bases are located in Thumrait in the south, Masirah Island, and Muscat International Airport in the Al-Seeb Governorate[(lii)]. However, upon careful examination of the types of military aircraft used at that time, it becomes evident that the Omani air force suffers from a clear weakness in this regard due to the age of the retired aircraft, which were not only British-made but also served in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in the early 1970s. It can be said that Oman had the least armed air force among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries in the 1980s. This may have prompted Oman to propose a unified military structure supported by the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, in order to provide the necessary assistance for arming its disciplined and organized military personnel, making it easier to integrate military life among them, in addition to the great legacy left by the Omani empire, which extended from Oman to the Persian Gulf coast and East Africa[(liii)]. The table below presents the types of aircraft belonging to the Omani air force, their numbers, country of origin, and assigned tasks.

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T	Namber	Floyd	Type Pink	Notes	the use
1	Jaguar plane	Jaguar	British	14	Fighter
2	Hawker Hunter plane	Hawker Hunter	British	15	Fighter
3	Mystery Falcon plane	MystereFaicon	British	12	Training
4	De Havilland bird	De Havilland	British	1	For transportation
5	Strikemaster plane	Strike Master	British	2	For transportation
6	Hercules plane	C-130	British	2	For transportation
7	PAC-111 aircraft	BAC-111	British	3	For transportation
8	Defender plane	Defender	British	7	For transportation
9	Airplane Sky Fan Shorts	Short Skyvan	British	15	For transportation
10	Agustable helicopter	Agusta Bell	British	7	Patrols
11	Heliocopter super pioma	Super Pumma	British	6	Patrols

The Omani Air Force's weapons are observed to lack the capability to compete with the armament in the region, suffering from a shortage of aircraft types and numbers. Consequently, Oman has entered into agreements with Britain and the United States. The country's location on the Gulf of Oman and the Strait of Hormuz necessitates the protection of this vital maritime passage, given its significance in securing the Gulf. Oman recognizes the importance of its position and sees the necessity of supporting its stance. It has historically shared this passageway with Iran, with whom it had a positive relationship in the 1980s. However, the tanker war and Iran's installation of Chinese Silkworm missiles near the Strait of Hormuz prompted the Omanis to reinforce their forces in the Musandam Peninsula, which is only 60 kilometers away from Iranian territory. Hence, cooperation with the United States and Britain was inevitable, which often placed Oman in contrasting positions with the rest of the Arab Gulf states. In 1980, Oman signed a ten-year agreement granting limited facilities to the US Navy and US Air Force on its territory. The agreement stipulates that Oman should be informed in advance of any naval or aerial unit wishing to utilize the facilities. Moreover, these services are provided for specified short periods, including the American aircraft responsible for monitoring the Gulf and refueling the aircraft carrier during the Iraq-Iran war[(liv)].

4. The military colleges

play a crucial role in the Omani military institution. They provide the institution with leaders and field officers while also shaping the main military capabilities. Additionally, they support and enhance the military's abilities. If we consider the military capabilities, the colleges are not less important than the military resources themselves. They produce both administrative and field leaders and supply the country with officers to lead various types of armies. The progress of a country's armies is measured

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by the military colleges it possesses. The successful preparation of field leadership and commanders for battle management and safeguarding the nation is equally important, if not more, than having weapons. To illustrate the types of military colleges in the Sultanate, they are listed in the following table:

T	the college	Year Founded	Governorate
1	College of Medical Services	1920	Muscat
2	Air Technical College	1959	Muscat
3	Sultan Qaboos Maritime Academy	1960	Muscat
4	Sultan Qaboos Military Academy	1971	Dhofar
5	Sultan Qaboos Air Academy	1974	Muscat
6	College of Command and Staff	1984	Muscat
7	Air Force Technical College	2000	Muscat
8	Oman College of Air Surveillance and Control	2000	Muscat
9	Military Technical College	2013	Muscat
10	National Defense College	2013	Muscat

The third axis: Military spending

1- Budget allocations

Military spending is the main factor in the success of the military institution. It depends on the economic capabilities and material resources of the state. It varies generally between years, and what affects it the most is the oil prices, as Oman is an oil-producing country. The fluctuation in oil prices affects imports, and this naturally reflects on the expenses. However, military allocations in the Omani budget have generally increased during the period from 1979 to 1990, for various reasons, including the urgent need to develop the military institution to face regional and international challenges, as well as to keep up with the evolution in armament witnessed by the world. Another reason is the increase in material capabilities after the discovery and start of oil production. Therefore, we notice an increase in Omani military spending. Military spending accounted for 18.2% of the total general budget at the beginning of the 1970s and the percentage of military spending in the budget continued to increase, reaching 23.3% in the early 1980s. The defense military expenditures also increased to 5.7%[(lv)]. In 1990, military spending increased to 33.8%, and defense military expenditures also increased to 33%. During the Iraq-Iran war, military spending for the Sultanate of Oman and the entire Arab Gulf countries increased significantly. In two years (1984-1988), Arab countries spent billions of dollars on weapons purchases and military infrastructure, with a total military spending in the 1980s reaching $46.7 billion, making them the largest and sole buyer in the international arms market[(lvi)].The Gulf Cooperation Council countries are among the countries in the world that top the list in terms of their relative defense burdens. During the 1980s, Saudi Arabia, Oman, and Qatar allocated 10% or more on average of their gross national product to defense, followed by Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates at a rate of 5.9%. By comparison, no country in the world, except the United States, spent more than 5% of their gross national product on defense during this period, except for Iraq and the Zionist entity, which estimated defense spending at 21% and 12% of their gross national product in 1990, respectively. Iran remained one of the relatively lowest countries in terms of spending, which reached 5.3% of the gross national product in 1990, but this changed when its defense spending increased to

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7.1%[lvii]. in 1991 One of the most significant events was the Gulf War and the questions it raised about the benefits of such expenditures in enhancing defense capabilities in the region, and as indicators of the ability of Oman and the Gulf Cooperation Council countries to deter any aggression or assault. Nevertheless, the Gulf Cooperation Council plans include major expenses for arms purchases, infrastructure for the military institution, and expansion of local defense capabilities. Therefore, Oman has increased its military institution expenditures to become one of the most modern and well-trained fighting forces among the Gulf Cooperation Council countries, recognizing its strategic importance in monitoring the Strait of Hormuz and the Arabian Sea. Oman has struggled to maintain a high level of military readiness and has tested the capabilities of its armed forces by participating in joint exercises with foreign forces, especially regular exercises with the British armed forces[lviii]. Oman has taken the initiative in efforts to enhance regional collective security through the Gulf Cooperation Council, proposing the development of a regional security force for the Gulf Cooperation Council estimated at 100,000 fighters. However, the Sultanate's proposal has not been taken seriously. But what the Gulf War has affected is an increase in military spending for all Arab Gulf countries, including Oman, the subject of this study.

2. The economic restrictions

have had a significant impact on the state budget, which in turn affected the distribution of the budget. However, it did not have a substantial impact on the purchase of weapons in the Sultanate, although it did affect their size and quantity[lix]. Nevertheless, it is expected that the issue of cost-effectiveness and appropriate distribution of resources will become more important in future government decisions, especially in light of the limited effectiveness of the Sultanate's defenses and its challenges in issuing the required legislation regarding defense expenditures. Expanding the human resources base of the Sultanate of Oman cannot be achieved without significant social and economic costs, including the costs of alternative opportunities and the need for a high degree of specialization that may not easily transfer to the civil sector, for example, training advanced fighter pilots. Recent experience suggests that some of this can be achieved at a relatively acceptable social cost, but achieving substantial expansion may not be a viable long-term option[lx]. The Gulf Cooperation Council has emphasized the need to implement a collective defense policy, and therefore, the establishment of an intervention force under the Gulf Cooperation Council that includes elements from all member states has been considered a first step towards a collective deterrence capability[lxi]. The Peninsula Shield Force was established with the main objective of maintaining internal security and stability in the Gulf Cooperation Council region rather than addressing external threats, and although its foundations were not sufficient to handle any emergency situations, it was aimed at achieving public security and peace in the region[lxii].The Sultanate continued to purchase weapons to secure the Strait of Hormuz and to support the military institution. One of the Sultanate's goals is to increase the number of fighters, which has been a long-standing issue. However, with the increasing population, the number of fighters has also increased, reaching 121,477 well-trained Omani forces. This is higher than many neighboring countries. The Sultanate has also strengthened its forces with British equipment, such as the Challenger tank and the M-60 Patton tank. Additionally, it has acquired amphibious armored vehicles and VBL armored vehicles from France, which have enhanced the capabilities of the ground forces. In 1990, Oman purchased 6-caliber Howitzer Dhanush from South Africa to enhance its anti-tank capabilities. During this time, the Omani military received training from British officers[lxiii]. The Omani military's budget for the military institution has increased to 7.7% of the gross domestic product, and it has signed arms deals worth 2.1 billion dollars with the United States to supply air defense systems. The number of fighters in the Omani army has also increased to 142,000 personnel

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from all branches, in addition to 5,000 fighters who belong to similar forces in some countries, equipped with light and medium weapons, some artillery pieces, and light vehicles. The Omani army consists of an armored brigade, two infantry brigades, two armored companies, an armored reconnaissance company, four artillery battalions, eight infantry battalions, an infantry reconnaissance company, an airborne company, and an engineering company. In addition, there is the Royal Guard Brigade with 5,000 fighters and the Special Forces Company with 1,000 fighters, which are affiliated with the Royal Guard[(lxiv)].Due to the supervision of the Sultanate over one of the most important waterways in the world, the Strait of Hormuz, the construction of a modern naval force was intended to play an active role in the Omani seas. This force includes a fleet equipped with relatively advanced armament capabilities, a variety of artillery, missile ships, support and training ships, as well as maritime reconnaissance ships to support patrol vessels in protecting Omani shores, securing regional waters, monitoring maritime transit of ships and oil tankers, and ensuring maritime transportation for the armed forces units along the Sultanate's coasts, supporting them in defensive and maritime transport operations. The Sultan's Guard, which consists of infantry, armored vehicles, artillery, as well as its advanced technical and administrative educational units, has contributed to this effort. It is considered a highly combat-effective force in terms of performance and efficiency[(lxv)]. The military spending of the Sultanate during the study period can be determined by the following tables, which illustrate the types of weapons imported by the Sultanate, their types, and their countries of origin.

A: Tanks and combat vehicles.[(lxvi)]

T	Number	Ailment	Country	Governorate
1	tank	Challenger 2	British	Major fight
2	tank	Armored repair vehicle	British	Major fight
3	tank	Chieftain	British	Major fight
4	tank	M-60 Patton	British	Major fight
5	tank	M728 combat engineer vehicle	British	Major fight
6	tank	Piranha 2	Switzerland	Major fight
7	tank	CENTAURO	Italy	Major fight
8	tank	WZ551	China	Major fight
9	tank	AlvisStormer	British	Major fight
10	armored vehicle	Alvis Saladin	British	Combat
11	armored vehicle	FV101 Scorpion	British	reconnaissance
12	armored vehicle	Cadillac Gage Commando	British	Combat
13	armored vehicle	Fahad	Egypt	soldier carrier

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B: Artillery.[lxvii]

T	Number	Ailment	Country	Governorate
1	launcher	Type 90	China	Missiles
2	Artillery	Daniel G6 howitzer	South Africa	Self-propelled
3	Artillery	M109 howitzer	United States of America	Self-propelled
4	Artillery	L118 light gun	British	Self-propelled
5	Artillery	(M1954 (M-46	Soviet Union	Field
6	Artillery	FH70 howitzer	British	Self-propelled
7	Artillery	Howitzer M102	United States of America	Self-propelled
8	Artillery	(Dragon Fire (mortar	United States of America	Self-propelled
9	Artillery	Oerlikon 35 mm	Switzerland	Field
10	Artillery	Bofors 40 mm gun	Sweden	Field
11	launcher	(Crotale (missile	France	Missiles
12	launcher	(Blowpipe (missile	British	Missiles
13	launcher	BGM-71 TOW	United States of America	Missiles
14	launcher	(Rapier (missile	British	Missiles
15	launcher	Cymbeline (radar	British	Missiles
16	launcher	NASAMS	Norway	Missiles

C: Small arms.[lxviii]

T	Number	Type	Country
1	Assault rifle	Insas	India
2	Assault rifle	M16 rifle	United States of America
3	Assault rifle	SIG SG 540	Switzerland
4	Assault rifle	Carbon 15	United States of America
5	Submachine gun	Heckler & Koch MP7	Germany
6	Submachine gun	L2A3	British
7	Semi-automatic pistol	Browning High Power	Belgium
8	Grenade launcher	M79	United States of America
9	Assault rifle	Steyrog	Austria
10	A machine gun	Steyrog	Austria
11	Submachine gun	Browning M2	United States of America

Conclusion

The Conclusion Through the study, we can conclude the following points:

1. That the geographical location of the Sultanate of Oman was one of the reasons for the Sultanate's interest in the military establishment, as its location on the Strait of Hormuz and Iran's competition for sovereignty over this important waterway controlling the waters of the Arabian Gulf made it aspire to build a military establishment capable of facing these challenges.

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2. The Omani military establishment has a long history and great achievements achieved by the naval forces alone, controlling navigation in the region and those forces managed to expel the Portuguese and compete with the global power in the region, not only by controlling navigation, but also having various colonies.
3. Oman gained independence in 1950, and it is thus of recent formation, which reflected on the military establishment, despite its long history, its institutions are modern in formation, soBy doing so, you do not have the managerial experience or the leadership capabilities that you can develop and enhance, and draw its future policies. The military institution used to be managed by a British officer, but the Omani government has taken on this role and has been responsible for drawing up those policies.
4. The Omani military institution suffered from a shortage of human resources at the beginning, as the Omani army suffered from a lack of fighters due to the small population. Since the military institution is based on (quantity and quality), even if military equipment is available, there is still a need for fighters. However, in the mid-1980s, the number of Omani fighters began to increase, but it did not reach the required level.
5. The Omani economy relied on oil exports in organizing its budget, so military spending was affected by economic crises. The resources decreased, and relying on a single resource that is affected by crises made military spending unstable, sometimes increasing and other times decreasing. However, it always had a place in the budget.
6. The Omani military institution evolved in terms of capabilities during the study period, as evidenced by the increasing number of fighters and the diversification and increase in military equipment. However, this development did not reach the capabilities of some regional countries, whose military institutions are more capable and advanced than the Omani military institution.
7. The Omani military relied heavily on British military equipment, and the military system is British, with the commander of the armed forces being a British officer (Timothy Gris). Most of the weapons are from Britain, followed by the United States, and then the rest of the European countries, which received only small quantities.
8. The regional events in the Arabian Gulf, especially the (Iraqi-Iranian) war, had a significant impact on the Omani military institution, which faced a challenge as it had to be ready. The Iranian forces, which share the administration of the Strait of Hormuz, became a point of contention between Oman and Iran. These events revealed the weaknesses in the Omani military institution.

In the face of regional challenges, Oman turned to the Gulf Cooperation Council and proposed the formation of a unified force led by the Gulf Cooperation Council due to the Sultanate's limited financial and human resources compared to the regional challenges in the area.

9. Oman was able to achieve its proposal by obtaining the council's approval to form the "Peninsula Shield" force.
10. Oman signed military agreements with the United States to enhance its military capabilities and elevate the level of the Omani military institution, as well as to strengthen the naval forces. It also allowed American military ships to pass through the Strait of Hormuz to provide a form of protection for the Sultanate against the Iranian forces.

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11. Some of the Omani military equipment has become outdated, as some of the aircraft and armored vehicles owned by the Sultanate have been decommissioned in the countries where they were manufactured. Despite the renewal of some weapons, the older ones were still considered part of the arsenal, despite their limited effectiveness and capabilities, which had a negative impact on the military institution's capabilities.
12. The Omani military institution was affected by the political decision of the state, as the decision-maker is the Sultan of the country, who does not have extensive military experience, and his political decisions are influenced by the reality of regional and global events. Therefore, the decision to unify the military capabilities of the country with the Gulf Cooperation Council countries came as a political decision, not a military one. The integration of the military institution weakens its potential and capabilities. Additionally, we notice the impact of international political relations on arms imports, making the Sultanate heavily reliant on the United Kingdom and the United States.

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