



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 October 1981

Dear Michael,

Qaboos University

As you know, when the Prime Minister was in Oman in April, the question of Qaboos University was discussed and opportunities arose for the Omanis to be urged to award the contract for building the university to a British firm.

An agreement was subsequently reached for the contract to be awarded to Cementation. A contract has been signed, although this in effect does not constitute much more than an agreement in principle between the Omani Government and Cementation for Cementation to do work up to a certain figure, since preparatory work on the design of the university has not yet been completed and it is therefore not possible to draw up a detailed contract.

Our Ambassador in Oman has reported that the Qaboos University project is the subject of a good deal of political in-fighting in Oman. The Minister of Education and his Under-Secretary have fallen out over the project and it is possible that this may lead to recriminations by those worsted in this in-fighting about the way the Omani Government has been proceeding with the project.

The purpose of this letter is to warn you that, as a result of this, HM Ambassador in Muscat fears that there may be ill-informed or malicious gossip in Oman related to the award of the contract to Cementation. Since the Prime Minister is known to have taken a personal interest, it seems to us possible that publicity in Oman may spill over into the British press and that the Prime Minister's involvement may be mentioned. You may wish to draw the attention of the Prime Minister's Press Secretary to this possibility.

Yours ever,

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street



Prime Minister

Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 May 1981

Dear Michael

PM will now not be able to see for Ismail.

Oman: Qaboos UniversityVisit of Project Co-Ordinator, 1-6 June

In your letter of 6 May you said that the Prime Minister would like to see Dr S J Ismail, the Project Co-Ordinator for the academic aspects of the new university in Oman, during his forthcoming visit as guest of the British Council. The Prime Minister also asked to see details of the programme.

The British Council tell us that they have been in direct touch with your office and that you thought it would be convenient for Dr Ismail to call at 18.30 hours on Wednesday 3 June for half an hour. I should be grateful if you could confirm this appointment.

A copy of the Council's draft programme for Dr Ismail is attached. As you will see this is consistent with the Prime Minister's view that Dr Ismail should not confine his contacts to Oxford and Cambridge. Various other universities (London, York, Southampton and Nottingham) have already been involved in the project and will feature in his programme. He has also asked to see the Institute of Science and Technology at Manchester University. It may in future be appropriate to involve other institutions but the programme now planned reflects the Omanis' objectives and interests at this stage in the project's development.

The Prime Minister also asked whether we should invite the Omani Minister of Education here to visit some of our universities. The British Council have this in mind and will probably invite the Minister on a future occasion. However the Minister is very much a figurehead and it is the Under-Secretary in the Ministry of Education who has so far been the leading light in getting the university project under way. The Under-Secretary came here in 1980 for exploratory discussions with universities in this country and the British Council remain in close touch with him.

The Prime Minister will wish to be aware of the excellent news that the Sultan has directed that the construction contract for the university should be awarded to the British firm, Cementation. This decision has not yet been announced in Muscat and our Ambassador has advised that no publicity be given to it here until it becomes official.

/If I



If I may turn briefly to the other matters covered in your letter under reference: the Ministry of Defence are reviewing the question of LSP costs and will be writing to you separately in due course; the ODA have now made provision for our aid programme to continue at its previous level.

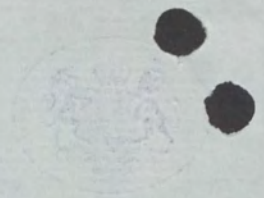
I am copying this letter to Brian Norbury (Ministry of Defence), John Rhodes (Dept of Trade) and to Mr Marten's Private Secretary (ODA).

*Yours ever,
J.P.*

(B J P Fall)
Private Secretary

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

20 MAY 1987



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THE BRITISH COUNCIL

DRAFT

PROGRAMME FOR

DR SADEQ JAFFAR ISMAIL
COORDINATOR
QABOOS UNIVERSITY PROJECT

- Purposes of Visit:
- (i) to discuss with British Academic staff curricula for the Colleges of Science, Engineering and Medicine at Qaboos University; within that to discuss the formation of links and arrangements for visits to Oman by British academics for detailed work on curricula
 - (ii) to meet people responsible for short and long term university planning; to look at procedures for recruiting and dismissing university staff; to look at budgeting, resource allocation and control (including salary scales)
 - (iii) to meet people responsible for post-graduate students in universities and particularly for the admission of Omani postgraduate students to British universities

Monday 1 June

1100

Meeting at British Council to include academic staff of the Universities of Cambridge, London, Manchester, Oxford and York involved in initial consultancy stage:-

Professor F G J Hayhoe
Lukaemia Research Fund Professor
of Haematological Medicine
University of Cambridge

Sir John Butterfield
Regius Professor of Medicine
University of Cambridge

Mr J P West-Taylor
retired but recently
Registrar
University of York

Mr I A M Lucas
Principal
Wye College
University of London

(2)

Dr C S G Phillips
Lecturer
Department of Inorganic Chemistry
University of Oxford

+ 3 colleagues who went to Oman with him

1230

Working lunch at Café Royal with the above
hosted by:-

Dr Frank Thistlethwaite
Chairman
Committee for International
Cooperation in Higher Education

pm

If there is time, Mr Lucas will take Dr Ismail
back to Wye College with him, otherwise they
will have a meeting at the British Council

Tuesday 2 June

To University of Nottingham to meet:-

Professor A D M Greenfield
Dean
The Medical School

Wednesday 3 June

To University of Southampton to meet:-

Professor G A Kerkut
Dean of Science
Professor P B Morice
Department of Civil Engineering

1830

Appointment with the Prime Minister

Thursday 4 June

Visit to University of Manchester Institute
of Science and Technology - probably to see
the Dean of the College of Science

(3)

Friday 5 June

am

Free

pm

Round-up Meeting at British Council with
British Council staff; also attending, if
he is free, will be:-

Mr Yusuf Alawi
Under-Secretary
Ministry of Foreign Affairs
Oman,

who will probably be in London on that day

Dr Ismail will be accompanied by Mr C G Housden,
the British Council Representative in Oman



26 MAY 1981
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NOTE FOR THE FILE

Oman

I spoke to Miss Moss of the British Council (930-8466, ext. 2404) about the visit of Dr. S.J. Ismail. We have agreed between us that he will pay a courtesy call on the Prime Minister on Wednesday 3 June at 1830 for half an hour. Miss Moss is writing officially. I did not mention briefing to her.

es.

13 May 1981