



Foreword by
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Chairman and Founder
FIRST

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Official Publication to commemorate the life of His late Majesty Sultan Qaboos, to celebrate the accession of His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik and to mark both the 220th Anniversary of Anglo-Omani relations and the 50th Anniversary of Oman's renaissance. Lord Astor, Lord Hurd and I are extremely grateful to His Excellency Abdulaziz Abdullah Zahir Al Hinai, the Ambassador of Oman and his Embassy staff for all their help and guidance in the preparation of this publication as well as HE Hamish Cowell CMG and the staff at the British Embassy in Muscat for all their invaluable support. We are also especially grateful to Her Majesty The Queen and His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik for contributing such important and personal messages.

The United Kingdom and Oman have a broad and longstanding bilateral relationship extending back to the Anglo-Omani Agreement signed on 12th October 1798. The subsequent Treaty of 1800 declared that the bond between the two nations would be *'unshook till the end of time.'* The vital, deep and remarkable bilateral relationship is testament to the fulfilment of the ambitious aims of this treaty.

We commemorate the life of His late Majesty Sultan Qaboos. He was an exceptionally wise and respected leader who will be remembered for his devotion to the development of Oman into a stable and prosperous nation and for dramatically improving the lives of the Omani people. He leaves a profound legacy and a commitment to peace and understanding between nations.

His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik ascended to the throne on January 11th 2020. His Majesty has considerable leadership experience and has confirmed that Oman *'will continue along the path of development and we will continue the blessed renaissance march as the late Sultan wished it be.'* His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik has also reaffirmed Oman's

foreign policy that promotes *'peace among nations and peoples, respecting national sovereignty and supporting international cooperation.'*

The United Kingdom and Oman enjoy a close and enduring relationship built on strong economic ties and shared defence and security interests. There are also important links in education and the arts. The two nations also cooperate closely on regional issues to promote peace and stability. As part of this friendship both nations have held large joint military exercises called *Saif Sareea* or *Swift Sword*. The Joint Defence Agreement signed on 21st February 2019 is further demonstration of the close bond in the military sphere.

The bilateral relationship has been much enhanced by the many reciprocal official and State Visits. Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh made a very successful State Visit to Oman in 1979. Her Majesty The Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh returned to Oman on a State Visit in November 2010 to commemorate Oman's 40th National Day.

On the 22nd May 2019 the UK-Oman Comprehensive Agreement on Enduring Friendship was signed, committing both nations to promote cooperation, share expertise and enhance links in technology, science, education, health, innovation, prosperity, fisheries and agriculture. With its strategic location Oman offers significant trade and investment opportunities.

This important moment in Oman's history gives us all an opportunity to study the important developments in both our countries and to weigh carefully the many opportunities to work together even more closely.

We at FIRST are delighted to have been asked to produce this official publication and hope that it contributes, in a small way, to the increasing development of this important bilateral relationship. We wish His Majesty Sultan Haitham bin Tarik our very best wishes in the knowledge that Oman will enjoy further progress and prosperity under His Majesty's wise and experienced leadership.

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