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STRATEGIC VISION OF HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN

by

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ABSTRACT

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This paper will talk about the strategic vision of a leader which, translated into reality. This leader inspired me by his vision, leadership, skills, generosity, hard work, and his strong belief in the values of consultation and consensus, in contrast to confrontation.

This extraordinary man is Sheikh Zayed the ruler of Abu Dhabi, the Supreme Commander of the Armed Forces and President of the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

He inherited an impoverished and unknown Emirate in the desert with no schools, no hospitals, and no infrastructure. Within three decades, he has transformed my country, the UAE, into a modern state with all the latest infrastructure which is the envy of the Arab and Muslim countries.

Sheikh Zayed unified seven tribal Emirates, and played a constructive role in bringing about the Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council, (AGCC) another Unitarian step, without raising slogans and unleashing propaganda.

I will articulate about the exceptional strategic leader competencies of Sheikh Zayed derived from, THE NOBLE QURAN that formulated his inspiring vision and long term planning and patience, and enabled the UAE to stand against all domestic and external challenges. The UAE established itself firmly on the international stage, as a democratic country and the only successful federation in the Arab world, and the citizens of the UAE enjoy security, freedom of worship and a high standard of living.

His Highness is a man who took exceptional care to protect wildlife in the UAE and beyond, who got old manuscripts edited, published and distributed all over the world, and who took care to repair Muslim and Christian monuments in Jerusalem.

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STRATEGIC VISION OF HIS HIGHNESS SHEIKH ZAYED BIN SULTAN AL NAHYAN

"My philosophy of life is that I believe that everything in this universe is in God's hands. Man, inspired by his faith in the Almighty, must work hard. Therefore, if, I was successful I would thank Him, but if I failed I would think matters over and try again. Everything in this life is dependent on the will of God, who disposes as he thinks fit, under God's will who disposes it the way he likes. God bestows peace of mind upon whoever believes devoutly in Him. That is the ultimate happiness".

—Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan

The success of a leader is a success of a country, having a vision and the will to translate this vision to reality are essential elements to achieve triumph, we thank almighty God for giving us this greatest yet modest leader in the Islamic nation. This leader is Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan. Two distinct features, his own personality as a leader who sets an example of how responsibilities be discharged, and his belief in the principle of "Shura," democratic consultation, characterize Sheikh Zayed's style of leadership. This approach is drawn from his profound faith in the Islamic values and creed.

"Born around 1918 (the date is uncertain) in Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed is the youngest of the four sons of Sheikh Sultan bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Ruler of Abu Dhabi from 1922 to 1926. He was named after his grandfather, Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa, who ruled the emirate from 1855 to 1909, the longest reign in the three centuries since the Al Nahyan family emerged as leaders of the Emirate of Abu Dhabi"¹. (See Figure 1 Sheikh Zayed Family Tree) "Born in a drafty fortress in the oasis to a family made virtually penniless by collapse of the pearl trade, Zayed received only basic education, and grew up in a world without roads, schools, hospitals, motorcars or electric light"².

The basic academic education did not limit Sheikh Zayed from having a vision; he displayed an early thirst for knowledge, the harsh desert realities promoted him as natural leader, who listens for his countrymen and during the falconry seasons, he developed better understanding, of the people and the environment. He wrote a book titled: "Falconry: Our Arab Heritage," he noted that " the companionship of a hunting party permits each and every member of the expedition to speak freely and express his ideas and viewpoints without inhibition and restraint, and allows the one responsible to acquaint himself with the wishes of his people, to know their problems and perceive their views accurately, and thus to be in a position to help and improve their situation"³.

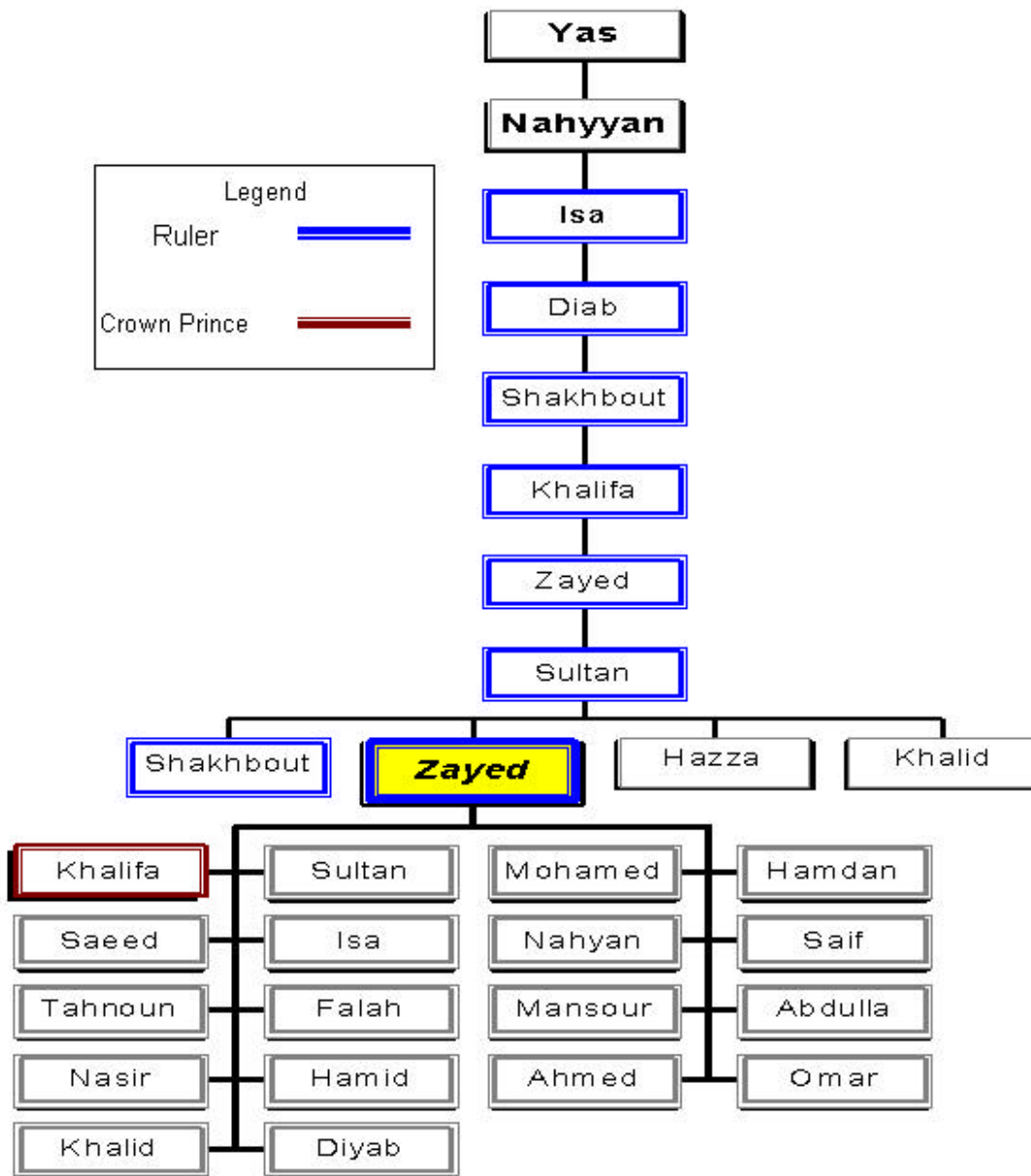


FIGURE 1 SHEIKH ZAYED FAMILY TREE

In 1953 after his return from his visit abroad, to the United Kingdom and France, he commented about his visit to the hospitals, schools and gardens, after closing sessions of the international arbitration tribunal on the legality of offshore oil concessions in the Emirate of Abu Dhabi. He wished that the people of Abu Dhabi should enjoy similar facilities in their country by

utilizing the possible future discovery of oil: "There were a lot of dreams. I was dreaming about our land catching up with the modern world, but I was not able to do anything because I did not have the wherewithal in my hands to achieve these dreams. I was sure, however, that one day they would become true".

This is truly a vision consistent with the modern definition by William E. Rosenbach and Robert L. Taylor : "Is the ability to create a mental image of the possible and to identify a desirable future state of affairs"⁴. It also agrees with the definition by General Gordon Sullivan, former Chief of the staff of the US Army, "Vision is a sense of the future. It is an imagined possibility, stretching beyond today's capability, providing an intellectual bridge from today to tomorrow, and forming a basis for looking ahead, not for affirming the past or the status quo"⁵.

In his program of building the country, Sheikh Zayed has ensured that priority is given to human resources, believing that the people are the fundamental component of, and motive for, development. Thus, the UAE government has focused expenditure on the educational sector, from schools to a wide variety of higher-level academic establishments. "Human resources, and not money, are the real wealth of which we are proud," Sheikh Zayed believes: "It was because of such beliefs that we were able to exert all our efforts to build the human being and to mobilize all the resources God has bestowed on us in the best interest of our countrymen".

The purpose of this paper is to illustrate that vision is not restricted to those persons with high academic degrees, but vision can be learned from religious teaching, coupled with the willingness to create a change and to lead by example. I will articulate about the exceptional strategic leader competencies posed by Sheikh Zayed derived from THE NOBLE QURAN that, formulated his inspiring vision, and long term planning and patience, and enabled the UAE to stand against all the domestic and external challenges. The UAE established itself firmly on the international stage, as a democratic country and the only successful federation in the Arab world. The citizens of the UAE enjoy security, freedom to worship and a high standard of living.

THE ROLE OF THE HOLY QURAN AND SUNNAH

Sheikh Zayed was born in Al Hisn Palace, in Abu Dhabi. Werner Forman described the conditions, in which Zayed grew up in as "a world without roads, schools, hospitals motorcars or electric light"⁶. When he was seven, he used to chatter in his father's court grasping knowledge from all. He was always asking questions when something was not clear. He was raised in a house filled with religious beliefs, based on the major sources of Islamic faith, the Holy Quran and the Sunnah (the sayings and deeds of the prophet Mohamed Peace and Blessing Be Upon Him). "In the early years of Zayed's life, the first chapter of the Holy Quran,

Al-Fatihah, was the earliest text to catch his ears⁷. The reader of this verse of the Holy Quran asks God for : "Guide us to the straight way"⁸, the guidance of Allah that opens one's heart to receive the truth from disbelief to belief in Islamic Monotheism.

Each Muslim recites this verse 17 times in the five main prayer times every 24 hours. There are great benefits for praying, such as, but not limited to, cleanness for washing before the prayer, the standing of all people in a straight line next to each other, regardless of rank, race, wealth, and the importance of meeting everybody in the mosque. If any one is missing from the prayers some one will ask about him; he might be sick or out of the city, that teaches care and unity.

His father died when Sheikh Zayed was 7 years old, thus his mother, fulfilling her duties as a mother, raised him to be very grateful for his mother. He always speaks of her very highly because of his love and gratitude. Almighty God said in the Holy Quran And We have enjoined on man to be dutiful and kind to his parents. His mother bears him with hardship. And she brings him forth with hardship, and the bearing of him, and the weaning of him is thirty months, till when he attains full strength and reaches forty years, he says: My Lord! Grant me the power and ability that I may be grateful for your favor which you have bestowed upon me and upon my parents, and that I may do righteous good deeds, such as please you, and make my offering good. Truly, I have turned to you in repentance, and truly, I am on of the Muslims (submitting to Your Will)"⁹. This shows us that the Holy Quran teaches the person to appreciate his parents, throughout his or her life, and to continue to do good deeds.

"Gradually, he increased his learning of other chapters and verses, and soon realized that the Holy Quran is not simply a book of religion, but an overall system of discipline for all facts of life, weather, economic, social, political or moral"¹⁰.

"Zayed grew up amidst Bedouin traditions. Characterized by Arab nobility, thus we find him a good listener to his elders whom he respects. He was very close to his mother, Sheikha Sallamah daughter of the Chieftain of Al-Qubaisat tribe, who is renowned for her sagacity, and gained a lot from her, particularly after his father's death when he was only eight"¹¹.

Sheikha Sallamah was the lady behind this great man. We gather from the last sentence that women played, and they still play, a great role in the development and progress of the UAE.

"His travels in the remoter areas of Abu Dhabi provided Sheikh Zayed with deep understanding both of the country and of its people. In the early 1930s, when the first oil company teams arrived to carry out preliminary surface geological surveys, he was assigned by his brother the task of guiding them around the desert. At the same time, he obtained his first exposure to the industry that was later to have such a great impact upon the country"¹². Sheikh

Zayed lived the hard life as the people of Abu Dhabi did. He realized that bearing the responsibility of future generations is a very serious task that needs a special type of a leader.

Sheikh Zayed, followed the guidance of God in the Holy Quran to improve the knowledge base by reading, as is very clear in this verse, “ Read! In the name of your Lord Who has created (all that exists). He has created man from a clot (a piece of thick coagulated blood). Read! and your Lord is the most Generous. Who has taught (the writing) by the pen. He has taught man that which he Knew not”¹³.

Sheikh Zayed developed his leadership frame of reference and conceptual competency through his interest in reading and studying the historical events of the region and the whole of Arabian Peninsula. Most of the Emirate’s history was not documented, thus Zayed’s most trusted source of history was from his elders who would relate what they gathered from their ancestors. Werner Forman said, “By the late 1930s, Western oil companies had begun to turn their hungry gaze to the potentially oil-rich hinterlands and waters of the Trucial Coast. Dubai signed its first concession for oil exploration in 1937, and Abu Dhabi two years later, in 1939. These concessions inevitably fostered conflict”¹⁴.

The second leadership, conceptual competency his Highness exhibited during this period was problem management. It started on his first exposure to political experiences with border conflicts and tribal disputes, which directly attributed to his appointment as the Ruler’s representative in Al Ain.

RULER’S REPRESENTATIVE IN AL AIN

When he was 28, Sheikh Zayed was appointed as the Ruler’s Representative in the Eastern Region of Abu Dhabi in Al Ain 160 kilometers East of Abu Dhabi, (see figure 2 UAE major cites), by his elder brother Sheikh, Shakhbout Bin Sultan Al Nahyan, the Ruler Abu-Dhabi.

He was chosen for this job because, he was very wise, strong, loved and admired by most of the tribes for his informality and friendliness. His job involved not only the task of administering the six villages but also the whole of the adjacent desert region, enabling Sheikh Zayed to learn the techniques of government as well as deepening his knowledge of the tribes. Sheikh Zayed learned from the Holy Quran that water is a source of life, “Do not the Unbelievers see that the heavens and the earth were joined together (as one unit of creation), before we clove them asunder? We made from water every living thing. Will they not then believe?”¹⁵.



FIGURE 2: MAP OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES WITH MAJOR CITIES

The life in Al Ain was based on agriculture. The water resources came by way of ancient subterranean water canals that brings the water from aquifers in the mountains to the farms, locally known as (falaj), (Figure 3). The canals had long been abandoned, and ruined by tribal disputes. He ordered cleaning the old ones and personally participated and financed the construction of the AL Saruj canal. As Hamdi Tammam said "Al Saruj, one of the largest canals in Al Ain, took eighteen years to dig owing to the limited means then available"¹⁶.

Another reform was the revision of local water ownership rights to ensure adequate distribution, surrendering the rights of his own family as an example to others. As a result of this reform, more wealth has been generated for the people of Al Ain.

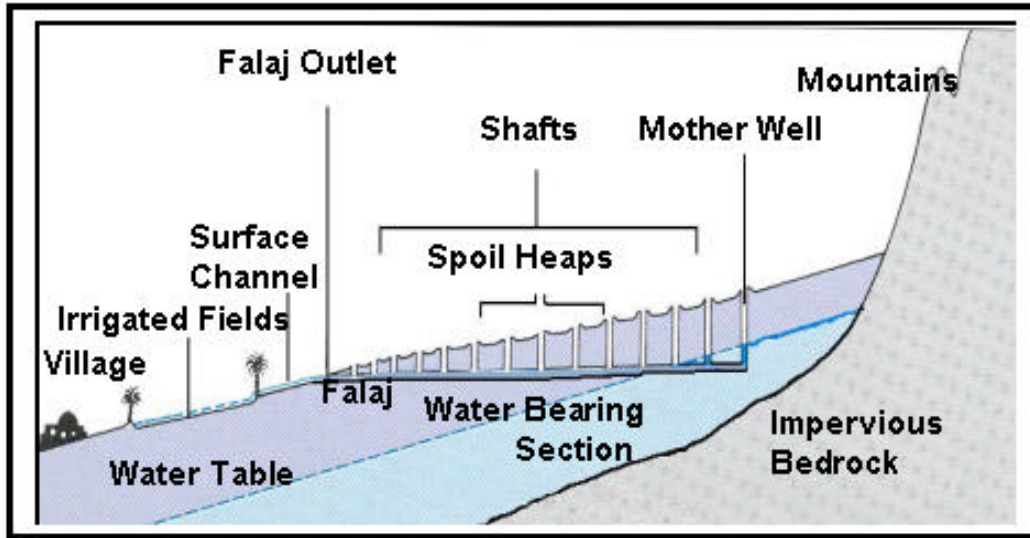


FIGURE 3 CROSS-SECTIONAL DIAGRAM OF A FALAJ

“In the late 1940s and early 1950s, Saudi Arabia’s territorial claims to Buraimi provided Sheikh Zayed the opportunity to gain political experience on a broader scale”¹⁷. The real test of Sheikh Zayed’s negotiation skills occurred when the Saudi- Arabian troops occupied part of Al Ain and Buraimi oasis in 1952. The negotiations took three years, without any successes, until the backing of the British –officered Trucial Oman Scouts, helped convince the Saudi- Arabian troops to withdraw. Sheikh Zayed learned the wisdom of arbitration, from the Holy Quran, according to this verse “If two parties among the Believers fall into a quarrel, make ye peace between them: but if one of them transgresses beyond bounds against the other then fight ye (all) against the one that transgresses until it complies with the command of Allah; but if it complies then make peace between them with justice and be fair: for Allah loves those who are fair (and just)”¹⁸. Zayed followed this verse in dealing with this political test. As a result of this success, Werner Forman wrote “Zayed’s reputation enlarged manifold following the Buraimi crisis”¹⁹.

Colonel Boustead who served in the region at that time, in his book titled (The Wind of Morning), wrote, “I was greatly impressed by the crowds surrounding Zayed in Al Buraimi. He is a noted man who is respected by all. He talks gently with every one, and is generous with his money”.²⁰

Zayed the man of vision, climbed the hills of Al Ain and said in confidence, "Here we shall build the school, here the hospital and there the university".²¹ This image of the future was a vision as defined by James M Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner: "an ideal and unique image of the future for the common good".²² Sheikh Zayed's vision was fulfilled when he set up the Emirates University in Al Ain in 1975, and hundreds of schools in contrast to the one That existed in 1959. This is the third element of sheikh Zayed's conceptual competencies envisioning the future.

After years of seismic surveys, fruitless drilling and endless negotiations, Abu Dhabi exported its first oil shipment from DAS Island in July 3^d 1962. This was an excellent enabler for Sheikh Zayed's visions to become reality.

"The economic hardships experienced by Abu Dhabi since the 1930s had accustomed the Ruler, Sheikh Shakhbout, to cautious frugality. Despite the growing aspiration of his people for progress, he was reluctant to invest the new oil revenues in development. Attempts by members of his family, including Sheikh Zayed, and by the leaders of the other tribes in the emirate to persuade him to move with the times were unsuccessful, and eventually the Al Nahyan family decided that the time had come for him to step down. The record of Sheikh Zayed over the previous 20 years in Al Ain and his popularity among the people made him the obvious choice as successor".²³

THE RULER OF ABU DHABI

On August 6th 1966, the historic moment came for a bright future for the Emirate of Abu Dhabi and the UAE in the coming years. I think that the essence of successful leadership brought Zayed to be the Ruler of Abu Dhabi. It is important to know that vision is characterized by both continuity and change, so the coming years will be marked by further advancement of Zayed's vision. Of his first few weeks as a Ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed said, "All the picture was prepared. It was not a matter of fresh thinking, but of simply putting into effect the thoughts of years and years. First, I knew we had to concentrate on Abu Dhabi and public welfare. In short, we had to obey the circumstances: the needs of the people as a whole. Second, I wanted to approach other Emirates to work with us. In harmony, in some sort of federation, we could follow the example of other developing countries".²⁴

One of the attributes of a strategic leader is power, which enables the leader to meet the challenges that confront his vision. Power is important for the achievement of any vision. Warren Bennie and Burt Nanus described power as "the basic energy to initiate and sustain action translating intention into reality".²⁵ Clearly, Sheikh Zayed as a ruler exercised his power to bring about his vision of the enhancement of the standard of living and prosperity of the people

of Abu Dhabi. In discharging this responsibility, he has devoted all his efforts to serve his land and people, utilizing the country's oil resources to this end.

Sheikh Zayed said: " Since Almighty God has bestowed his bounty on us, the first thing we have to do in his praise is to utilize such a resource in the best interests of the country and people," This approach agrees with this verse of the Holy Quran: "and whatever you spend in good, it is for yourselves, when you spend not except seeking Allah's, Countenance. And whatever you spend in good, it will be repaid to you in full, and you shall not be wronged"²⁶. The following verse also applies: "And (also) those who spend of their substance to be seen of men, and believe not in Allah and the Last Day they are the friends of Shaitan (Satan), and whoever takes Shaitan (Satan) as an intimate; then what a dreadful intimate he has!"²⁷.

Sheikh Zayed was deeply concerned, by the poor economic and social situation of his people. As he said, "I was always contemplating as to how to serve my countrymen and bring them happiness well before I assumed power and even before oil was discovered. My people were then destitute of services and amenities which others were enjoying," From the outset, he promised his people that he would make use of all the resources available to build a modern state and to improve the standard of living of his people.

"Zayed laid down his targets and determined his perspective as regards oil revenues, treating them as a means rather than an end. In a few consistent words, he outlined the function of money, when he brought forward the saying: " money is worthless unless dedicated for the interest of the people". To him money is means to an end, and that end is the welfare of his people. Money should be the servant of man, not his master"²⁸.

Sheikh Zayed, the man of vision and execution, began to implement his plans in phases that includes calculated risks. As Hamdi Tammam, wrote "his plan at that time was:

- Execution of short and long-term projects in the various domains of life.
- Realization of national gains in the Gulf area and, eventually, in the Arab World.
- Appointment of number of men who were willing to share his aspirations for great achievements, In the responsibilities of local administration.
- Ordered the planning of the first budget in history of Abu Dhabi.
- Approved the first 5 year development plan in the country to be carried out between 1968 –1972, and allocated the sum of 396 million Dinars for its execution"²⁹.

Sheikh Zayed believed that the active participation of the citizens in the government is very important for a democratic society. This is very similar in the tribal system but in a larger

scale for a modern state. He issued an order to form the Consultative Council of Abu Dhabi in July 1971, this council convened in September. Sheikh Zayed addressed the members and said: "The duty of the members of the Consultative Council is to take part in the building of the country and to set its rule on a sound basis of true democracy, ensuring for our people a free and dignified life. My faith in you is great. I trust that you will be able to realize the people's hopes and aspirations in progress, dignity and prosperity"³⁰

He believed that helping other Emirates is an important thing to do " One of Sheikh Zayed's early steps was to increase contributions to the Trucial States Development Fund, established a few years earlier by the British. Abu Dhabi soon became its largest donor"³¹.

As a strong believer in implementing the guidance of almighty God toward cooperation and unity, Sheikh Zayed's vision for unity is derived from the Holy Quran in this verse: "And hold fast, all of you together, to the rope of Allah (i.e. this Quran), and be not divided, among yourselves, and remember Allah's favor on you, for you were enemies one to another but He joined your hearts together, so that, by His Grace, you became brethren (in Islamic faith) and you were on the brink of a pit of Fire, and He saved you from it. Thus Allah makes his Ayat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) clear to you, that you may be guided"³².

In the second source of the Islamic Faith, Abu Hurairah narrated in the Hadith Books (At-tirmidhi, Ibn Majah and Abu Dawud) that the Prophet Peace and Blessings Be Upon Him (PBBUH) said, "The Jews and Christians were divided into seventy-one or seventy two religious sects, and this nation will be divided into seventy-three religious sects all in Hell, except one, and that one is: The one on which I and my Companions are today (i.e. following the Quran and the Prophet Sunnah (legal ways, orders, Acts of worship and Statements of the Prophet, PBBUH.)"³³.

In January 16th 1968, during the meeting of the House of Commons, the British Prime minister Mr. Harold Wilson announced that the British Government desired to withdraw its Forces from the Arabian Gulf Trucial Coast States before 1971. This announcement was an motive for Sheikh Zayed and the other Rulers of on the Trucial Coast States to unify their small states to a large and strong state.

"The most critical step in this direction was the signing of a Joint Declaration between Sheikh Zayed the Ruler of Abu Dhabi and, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum the Ruler of Dubai for the establishment of Federation between Abu Dhabi and Dubai, with an extended invitation, to the other Trucial Coast including the States Of Bahrain and Qatar to join"³⁴.

It is understood that the unity must be aimed at good deeds for the common good, unity is a natural desire of the willing, and it is not a change from outside! Sheikh Zayed created, and clearly communicated, his vision for unity with his fellow rulers of the Trucial Coast Emirates, and the states of Bahrain and Qatar.

“The first step was a meeting for the Rulers of the Trucial Coast Emirates, The Emir of Bahrain, and The Emir of Qatar, in Dubai from 25 to 27 February, 1968. This meeting concluded with the Joint Declaration of Unity among the nine participating countries. The name of this union is: Union of Arab Emirates. This Union came as a desire of the people of the region, for the common-peace, prosperity and security in compliance with the principles of the United Nations and the Charter of the Arab League.”³⁵

This Union did not come to existence because of some deference’s regarding, constitutional principles, the authorities of the Federal Government, the location of the Capital, the number of Representatives in the National Council and the voting process in the Supreme Council. Bahrain and Qatar chose to proceed to separate independence. Bahrain announced its independence on May 11 and Qatar announced its independence on September, 3 1971. As a strong believer of unity, Sheikh Zayed continued his effort within the seven Trucial Coast Emirates.

“On July 18, 1971, the Rulers of seven Emirates convened for talks,, Zayed appealed to his brethren, the Rulers of the Emirates, to initiate serious and fruitful talks which would realize the hopes attached to the people of the gulf. In his speech Zayed said: This is an opportunity offered to us by God Almighty, bringing us together in one place. Our hearts are dedicated to unity, so let us make this meeting a historic event towards the fulfillment of our common target.”³⁶ This past paragraph clearly indicates, the influence of the religious teaching in forming of Sheikh Zayed is thinking process and convincing appeal.

“Sheikh Zayed acted rapidly to initiate moves towards establishing closer ties with the Emirates. Along with the late Ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed Al Maktoum, who was to become Vice-President and Prime Minister of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed took the lead in calling for a federation that would include not only the seven emirates that made up the Trucial States, but also Qatar and Bahrain. When early hopes of a federation of nine states eventually foundered, Sheikh Zayed led his fellow rulers in achieving agreement on the establishment of the UAE, which formally emerged on the international stage on 2 December 1971”³⁷. UAE joined the League of Arab Nations on the same day, and in the beginning of the next year became 132nd member of the United Nations.

THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Because of his tremendous efforts, which started in 1966, to bring this unity into existence, Sheikh Zayed was chosen by the Rulers to be the first President of the UAE. Sheikh Zayed applied two of his strongest interpersonal competencies (consensus building and negotiation abilities) internally within the Emirates and externally with the Gulf states, Arabian countries and friendly nations, to gain their support for the new State the UAE. "Sheikh Zayed also won support for the way in which he sought consensus and agreement among his fellow rulers: (I am not imposing change on anyone. That is tyranny. All of us have our opinions, and these opinions can change. Sometimes we put all opinions together and then extract from them a single point of view. This is our democracy)"³⁸.

"The new state came into being at a time of political turmoil in the region. A couple of days earlier, on the night of 30 November and the early morning of 1 December, Iran had forcibly and unlawfully seized the islands of Greater and Lesser Tunb, part of Ra's al-Khaimah, and had landed troops on Abu Musa, part of Sharjah"³⁹.

One of the greatest, challenges, that faced the UAE and its leadership, was land demarcation of the borders between the individual Emirates. One hundred and fifty years of British colonial rule, created strange and unique political phenomena, by dividing each Emirate into deferent, isolated and overlapping sections between the Emirates i. e. (Abu Dhabi, divided in 2 parts, Dubai, divided in 2 parts, Ras AL Khaimah, divided in 2 parts, Ajman, divided in 3 parts and Sharjah, divided in 5 parts). The British strengthened the tribal disputes within each Emirate and among other Emirates.

The new discoveries of more petroleum areas increased border disputes between the Emirates, but thanks to the great wisdom of Sheikh Zayed ability to shape and influence the external environments of the gulf countries and selected friendly countries, they were solved. He also communicated internally with the members of the UAE supreme council to resolve those border demarcation issues. Finally, they were resolved because Sheikh Zayed stood very firm on this non-negotiable national security affair.

The democratic approach that is essential to Shura (consultations) is deeply rooted in UAE society, as, indeed, it has been since the people of the Emirates accepted the revelation of Islam. This verse of the Holy Quran addresses consultations and relationships " And by the Mercy of Allah, you dealt with them gently. And had you been severe and harsh-hearted, they would have broken away from about you; so pass over (their faults), and ask (Allah's) forgiveness for them; and consult them in the affairs. Then when you have taken a decision, put your trust in Allah, certainly, Allah loves those who put their trust (in Him)."⁴⁰ In this verse God

links, consultations with the prayer. ([Salat]) prayer is the second pillar and [Zakat] charity is the third pillar of Muslim Duties). This means that consultation is essential for those who answer the call of their Lord (i.e. to believe that He is the only One Lord, [Allah], and to worship none but Him Alone), and perform As-Salat (Iqamat-as-Salat [Prayer]), and who conduct their affairs by mutual consultation, and who spend of what We have bestowed on them"⁴¹

In implementing it, Sheikh Zayed has displayed his keenness to meet with the people, through tours of both urban and rural areas, and to converse with them. "Our doors are open and will Always remain so" he says He also invites the people to participate themselves in the sharing of national responsibilities. "A confident and assured ruler should delegate some powers to other officials to assist him in his quest for achieving whatever is best for his country" says, Sheikh Zayed adding that the ultimate goal is to achieve justice and right and support for the weak.

"We have no reservation over having our countrymen shoulder the responsibility of governance so long as our objectives are the ones I have just outlined," he explains. "We feel it is our duty to apportion responsibilities among our countrymen and to this end we have been working very hard since Islam calls for the application of true Shura (consultations) and justice".

Sheikh Zayed, as a strategic leader with vision, advised in the development and formulation of the UAE foreign policy war. This was clear in this address to UAE National Assembly in 1973 whom he said: "The strategic and economic importance of the UAE's geographic location guided our foreign policy toward the following principles:

- The National interest of the people of the UAE as part of the Arab Nation.
- The freedom of action for the Arab nation, for its Unity and legitimate support to brethren.
- Palestinian struggle to create their homeland in Palestine.
- Promote the ties with the Islamic world in Asia and Africa.
- Support the international peace, friendship, and cooperation's with all nations of the world, on the bases of mutual respect, and protection of their legitimate interests"⁴².

In his support to this foreign policy Sheikh Zayed secured the human and financial resources for its proper implementation and success.

One of the continuing unfulfilled national objectives is the return of the islands (Abu Mosa, the Greater and lesser Tunb), occupied by Iran since 1971. Despite many attempts by the UAE and other countries, Iran refused to come to an acceptable agreement, even after referral to the International Court of Justice Sheikh Zayed commented, "We still call upon Iran to accept the principle of arbitration, or the holding of serious negotiations with a fixed agenda and a specified

timetable . . . We have dealt with this issue patiently because we believe that intra-Muslim relations constitute an important part of our foreign policy, and because we are always eager to keep the door open for interaction, communication, and serious, dialogue⁴³.

This is not strange for Sheikh Zayed, he is following, the guidance of God regarding the this dispute, as it is addressed in this verse of the Holy Quran: "The good deed and the evil deed cannot be equal. Repel (the evil) with one which is better (i.e. Allah orders the faithful believers to be patient at all time of anger, and to excuse those who treat them badly) then verily he, between whom and you there was enmity, (will become) as though he was a close friend"⁴⁴. God almighty added in the next verse on the same Surah, "But none is granted it (the above quality) except those who are patient and none is granted it except the owner of the great portion (of happiness in the Hereafter i.e. Paradise and of high moral character) in this world"⁴⁵.

Sheikh Zayed realized the importance of protecting this new federation with a strong Army to deter any aggression as he said, " We are building an Army not with the purpose of aggression or fighting another country, not for eventual expansion, but merely for self defense". This approach is driven from the Holy Quran in this verse: "And make ready against them all you can of power, including steeds of war (tanks, planes, missiles, artillery) to threaten the enemy of Allah and your enemy, and others besides whom you may not know but whom Allah does know. And whatever shall be repaid unto you, and you shall not be treated unjustly"⁴⁶.

On another occasion of the unification of the separate defense powers of each Emirate into the unified Armed Forces Sheikh Zayed said, "The building of Armed Forces in any country in an endeavor most cherished by its people. Under the pressure of urgent need, we were, induced to mete our Armed forces into the UAE Army. This has been our hope from the very start because it meant oneness of decision, unity of hearts and mutual support among brethren having common bonds of kinship and neighborhood"⁴⁷. Currently the UAE Armed Forces is one of the most advanced Armed Forces in the Arab World, ready to protect and preserve the peace and property of the UAE.

In his program of building the country, Sheikh Zayed has ensured that priority is given to human resources, believing that people are the fundamental component of, and motive for, development. Thus, the UAE government has focused expenditures on the educational sector, from schools to a wide variety of higher-level academic establishments. "Human resources, and not money, are the real wealth of which we are proud," Sheikh Zayed believes. "It was because of such beliefs that we were able to exert all our efforts to build the human being and to mobilize all the resources God has bestowed on us in the best interest of our countrymen."

One of the most important national Objective in Sheikh Zayed's vision is utilization of the country's wealth in the development and investment in younger generations. He said, "Wealth is not money. Wealth lies in men. This is where true power lies, the power that we value. They are the shield, behind which we seek protection. This is what has convinced us to direct all our resources to building the individual and to using the wealth with which God has provided us in the service of the nation, so that it may grow and prosper"⁴⁸.

Sheikh Zayed goes on to describe the way wealth should be preserved with knowledge, "Unless wealth is used in conjunction with knowledge to plan for its use, and Unless, there are enlightened intellects to direct it, its fate is to diminish and to disappear. The greatest use that can be made of wealth is to invest it in creating generations of educated and trained people"⁴⁹.

"According to the Central Bank, UAE gross domestic product at factor cost and current prices (GDP) grew by 20.4 per cent in 2000, compared to Dh201 billion in 1999, to reach Dh241.9 billion. Non-oil sectors, which were valued at Dh159.9 billion in 2000, accounted for 66.1 per cent of the GDP, compared to Dh151.1 billion and a ratio of 75.2 per cent in 1999. The fall of the non-oil sector as a percentage of total GDP was attributable to the strong oil prices that were sustained throughout the year. The value of the overall output of the commodity sectors reached Dh140.4 billion in 2000, accounting for 58.0 per cent of GDP, against Dh104.4 billion and a ratio of 52.1 per cent in 1999"⁵⁰. See figure 4, UAE Gross Domestic Product and Figure 5, Selected Economic Indicators.

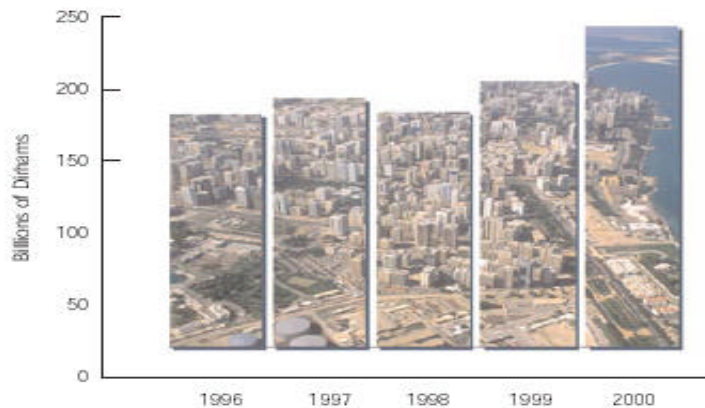


FIGURE 4 UAE GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT 1996 - 2000 BILLIONS OF DIRHAMS 3.68 (\$1= DIRHAM)

INDICATOR	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Population (thousands)	2,479	2,624	2,776	2,938	3,108
GDP in current prices (Bn. Dh)	175.8	187.6	-177.4	200.9	241.9
GDP growth rate in %	12.05	6.72	-5.43	13.25	20.41
Employees in thousands	1,274	1,346	1,437	1,564	1,624
Total exports & re-exports (Bn. Dh)	137.06	148.40	124.26	133.95	166.21
Crude oil exports (Bn. Dh)	53.55	50.35	34.49	45.19	73.35
Total re-exports (Bn. Dh)	38.42	39.68	42.55	43.46	44.44
Trade balance (Bn. Dh)	24.86	23.19	4.58	17.46	46.72
Balance of payments overall (Bn. Dh)	+2.28	+1.20	+2.76	+5.62	+10.41
Average oil price (US\$ per barrel)	19.70	18.80	12.40	17.60	27.20
Dh exchange rate for each US dollar	3.671	3.671	3.6725	3.6725	3.6725
Source: Central Bank of the UAE					

FIGURE 5 SELECTED UAE ECONOMIC INDICATORS 1996-2000 (\$1= 3.68 DIRHAM)

In his vision for progress of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed paid special attention to women's issues. He affirmed that women are an integral part of society. Since the early days of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed believed that development can only be attained through sustaining Islamic norms. That was very clear in this statement in 1974: "I am looking forward to a time when UAE women will fulfill their obligations towards upgrading our society as their peers in many Arab countries have already done. They should also contribute to the development of individuals in line with the teachings of Islam and preserve the UAE's heritage and tradition, for it will lead us to prosperity"⁵¹.

On another occasion, Sheikh Zayed addressed, a gathering of woman: "Islam had rescued women from oppression, slavery, and Ignorance, and guaranteed all their rights in various fields. For instance, it has given them the right to deal with their own money and do business themselves"⁵². Looking back to this vision, the words Sheikh Zayed spoke were followed by deeds to achieve the vision "The number of working women has more than tripled in ten years, jumping from 5.3 % to 16.3% of the total work force between 1980 and 1990. Many of them were absorbed in the public sector. In some traditional areas, female employees are in the majority, representing 100% of nursery school teachers and 65% of intermediate, and secondary school teachers. In health services, women are also playing a major role, accounting for 54.3% of the total number of employees, both UAE citizens and expatriates"⁵³.

Sheikh Zayed supported all the efforts to educate women in the UAE. He ordered, allocation of a separate budget for the establishment of the Women's Federation. In addition he allocated the land and personally financed the cost of the federation's building. His Highness

said, "The participation of women in the development and revitalization of society is significant since Islam venerates and respects women.... We praise God that the role of women in society has become more prominent, so that they may achieve good things for our present and future generations."⁵⁴ UAE women are now working in all private and public sectors. The UAE was the first AGCC country to have the women working in the military, thanks to Sheikh Zayed's vision.

Zayed is a man who believed in preserving the culture of the nation. On every occasion he stresses the importance of learning from the past. He said: "History is a continuous chain of events. The present is only an extension of the past. He who does not know his past cannot make the best of his present and future, for it is from the past that we learn. We gain experience and we take advantage of the lessons and results [of the past]. Then we adopt the best and that which suits our present needs, while avoiding the mistakes made by our fathers and grandfathers. The new generation should have a proper appreciation of the role played by their forefathers. They should adopt their model and the supreme ideal of patience, fortitude, hard work and dedication to doing their duty"⁵⁵.

The environment is a daily concern to Sheikh Zayed. He devoted time and resources to preserve the natural habitat and, he established a day for observing the environment to be celebrated annually starting in 1998. He said, "We cherish our environment because it is an integral part of our country, our history and our heritage. On land and in the sea, our forefathers lived and survived in this environment. They were able to do so only because they recognized the need to conserve it, to take from it only what they needed to live, and to preserve it for succeeding generations. With God's will, we shall continue to work to protect our environment and our wildlife, as did our forefathers before us. It is a duty, and, if we fail, our children, rightly, will reproach us for squandering an essential part of their inheritance, and of our heritage"⁵⁶.

THE ARABIAN GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL DIMENSION

At the regional level, and drawing upon the success of the UAE's experiment in the federation, President Sheikh Zayed has committed the country to the broader Arabian Gulf Cooperation Council, AGCC, which was born at a summit in Abu Dhabi on May 22 1981. This idea started before the unification of the UAE. In 1972 Sheikh Zayed said, "There are common interests and, other matters which are more suitable to be discussed mutually as they concern the security and stability of the Gulf region. I believe if the summit is convened, it will achieve a consensus not only about a single political plan but also economic gains which will be shared by

all including non gulf countries as well.” This vision proved itself, because most of the complicated issues were resolved through the AGCC summits.

Reflecting his recent views about the, AGCC Sheikh Zayed Said: ” We feel that the AGCC has become much stronger and much more solid than it used to be, as it took important strides to reinforce and strengthen solidarity among the countries of the region that have contributed to the good of the Arab and Muslim Ummah (Nation). Unity and cooperation among the Gulf countries are reflected positively on the rest of the Arab Countries”. He has also played an important role in the search for greater unity within the Arab world as a whole. He has, been, for more than thirty years, a powerful proponent of the need for consultation, discussion, and reconciliation among the Arab states.

In carrying out his day to day business in the running of the government of the UAE, Sheikh Zayed makes a reference to the Islamic way of doing business. He said, ”Our system of government does not derive its authority from man, but is enshrined in our religion, and is based on God’s book, the Holy Quran. What need have we of what others have conjured up? Its teachings are eternal and complete, while the systems conjured up by man are transitory and incomplete”⁵⁷. The following statement of Sheikh Zayed reflects that Islam is a religion of civilization “ Islam is a civilizing religion that gives mankind dignity. A Muslim is he who does not inflict evil upon others. Islam is the religion of tolerance and forgiveness, and not of war, but of dialogue and understanding. It is Islamic social justice, which, has asked every Muslim to respect the other. To treat every person, no matter what his creed, or race, as a special soul is a mark of Islam. It is just that point, embodied in the humanitarian tenets of Islam, that makes us so proud of it”⁵⁸.

THE ARABIAN, ISLAMIC, AND INTERNATIONAL DIMENSIONS

He sent a clear message to the heads of the members states of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), Russia and China on September 16th 2000, explaining to them the UAE government’s position regarding the September 11th Attacks against USA. He said, ”The UAE clearly and unequivocally condemns the criminal acts that took place last week in New York and Washington, resulting in the deaths and injuries of thousands . . . There should be a direct move and a strong international alliance to eradicate terrorism, and all those who provide assistance to it or harbor it . . . The UAE condemns all acts of terrorism everywhere”⁵⁹.

In another message, he sent to the President of the United States Of America (USA), Sheikh Zayed said, “At this time of tragedy, our hearts are filled with sadness and compassion for the victims of the terrible and criminal acts that took place in New York, and Washington . . .

and we send again our condolences to you, the people of the United States and, in particular, the families of the victims. He added, "We have noted your wise, resolute and timely remarks about the necessity for these tragic events not to be used as an excuse for, or reason for, any attacks against or hostility towards Arab Americans or Americans of the Muslim faith . . . We share with you the belief that the acts . . . are utterly repugnant in the eyes of Islam, and we thank you for your timely and appropriate statement, which so well reflects the values and traditions of the United States as a land where neither racial origin nor religious beliefs is a disqualification from full membership of the American nation"⁶⁰.

During the celebration UAE's 30th National Day anniversary on December 2, 2003 Sheikh Zayed made another statement regarding terrorism: "Terrorism is the enemy of all humanity . . . We support international legitimacy in every action and measure that it takes to combat terrorism and eradicate it and to close the way for terrorists . . . Terrorism is an international phenomenon that has no religion or race"⁶¹.

Regarding the Arab-Israeli conflict and the peace process Sheikh Zayed said many statements. The most recent one is, "The Arabs and the Islamic world cannot accept what is happening in the occupied Palestinian territories – the daily killings, deportations and destruction. All of this is politically and morally unacceptable.

We request all leaders to work in full frankness on the two tasks in parallel and at the same time, thus working for the achievement of a just and lasting solution to the Middle East conflict, based upon the application of international legitimacy and enabling the Palestinian people to exercise their right to self-determination, to an end of occupation, and to establish their own independent state on their territory with Jerusalem as its capital . . There will be no permanent peace unless this is done"⁶².

In July 2000 Sheikh Zayed told USA envoy, Mr. William Burns, that: "At a time when Israel unleashes its lethal weapons against the Palestinian people who have nothing else but stones, we see the US unable to rein in Israel, . . . The US, should stop the terrorism, aggression and barbaric crimes committed by Israel and should intensify its efforts to restore peace and security"⁶³.

In regard to the most recent development In the Middle East, concerning the crises between the Iraqi regime and USA, and the united Kingdom (UK), Sheikh Zayed called upon the Iraqi president Saddam Hussein to step-down from the presidency so the Iraqi people can avoid the imminent war and devastation, and he offered, Saddam Hussein, political asylum and protection in the UAE, if he did so. But Saddam refused. Many Arab heads of states welcomed this brave offer by Sheikh Zayed and called Sheikh Zayed the wise man of the Arab world.

CONCLUSION

His Highness (H.H). Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al Nahyan is the wisest Arab leader in the modern history.

This paper explained that vision is not restricted to those persons with high academic degrees, but vision can be learned from the religious teaching, coupled with the willingness to create a change and to lead by example.

I have articulated Sheikh Zayed's competencies. This exceptional strategic leader derived his competencies from, The Holy Quran, and The Sunnah, which provided him with unmatched guidance, in his private and official endeavors. What he said is true: "Our system of government does not derive its authority from man, but is enshrined in our religion, and is based on God's book, The Holy Quran. What need have we of what others have conjured up? Its teachings are eternal and complete, while the systems conjured up by man are transitory and incomplete."

Sheikh Zayed developed his frame of reference as one of leadership, conceptual competencies through reading and studying the historical events of the region and of the whole of Arabian Peninsula. Most of the Emirate's history, had not been documented. Thus Zayed's most trusted source of history was from his elders, who would relate what they gathered from their ancestors.

One of the most important national objectives in Sheikh Zayed's vision is utilization of the country's wealth in the development and investment in younger generations. He said, "Wealth is not money. Wealth lies in men. This is where true power lies, the power that we value. They are the shield, behind which we seek protection."

He added, "This is what has convinced us to direct all our resources to building the individual and to using the wealth with which God has provided us in the service of the nation, so that it may grow and prosper".

That he strongly supports the participation of women in the development, and revitalization of the society is significant since Islam venerates and respects women. His Highness says, "We praise God that the role of women in the society has become more prominent, so that they may achieve good things for our present and future generations."

He is a very strong believer in unity and has played an important role in the search for greater unity within the Arab world, as a whole. He has been for more than thirty years, a powerful proponent of the need for consultation, discussion, and reconciliation among the Arab states.

Sheikh Zayed is a strong believer in Shura (consultations) as a democratic approach that is deeply rooted in UAE society as, indeed, it has been since the people of the Emirates accepted the revelation of Islam. Two verses of the Holy Quran address consultations and relationships directly. God in The Holy Quran links the consultations with the prayer (Salat). Prayer is the second pillar and [Zakat] charity is the third pillar of Muslim duties. This means that consultation is essential and has a top priority in the Muslim Society.

WORD COUNT = 8,470

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- ⁹ Surah 46 Part 26 Verse 15 THE NOBLE QURAN (Riyadh, Saudi Arabia: Darussalam Publishers and Distributors, 1985), 910
- ¹⁰ Tammam Hamdi, Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahayyan The Leader and The March (Tokyo, Japan: Dai Nippon Printing Co. Limited, 1981), 50.
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