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## Analytical Perspective of the Omani Approach to Preventing and Counterturning Terrorism

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## منظور تحليلي للنهج العماني في منع الإرهاب ومكافحته

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### ملخص:

هدف الدراسة: تقدم هذه الدراسة تحليلاً للإستراتيجية الوطنية العمانية لمكافحة الإرهاب والنهج الأمني العماني والسياسات والسلطات والقوى المختلفة العاملة في سلطنة عمان في مجال مكافحة الإرهاب. المنهجية: تعتمد البيانات التي تم جمعها على المقابلات الشخصية وتحليل السياسات الحكومية، ومراجعة التشريعات والسياسات ذات الصلة. وتعتمد هذه الدراسة على الشفافية والفهم الدقيق والتحليل لإستراتيجية الدولة الوطنية لمكافحة الإرهاب. النتائج: كشفت الدراسة عن مصادر جديدة يمكن استخدامها في دراسات أمنية أخرى؛ لأنها توفر فرصة لوضع السياسات لمراجعة السياسات ذات الصلة في الدولة أو استبدالها أو تعديلها. توصي الدراسة بأن تولي الحكومة مزيداً من الاهتمام في مسألة الإرهاب الأيديولوجي؛ لأنها تشكل تهديداً خطيراً على الاستقرار الأمني. الخلاصة: وتؤكد الدراسة ضرورة إصدار المزيد من التشريعات الرادعة التي تفرض عقوبات تتناسب مع حجم التهديدات. فضلاً عن الحاجة إلى مزيد من البحث من أجل زيادة المعرفة بالإرهاب الأيديولوجي وتثقيف المجتمع على نطاق أوسع، وتأكيد الأساليب التي يمكن من خلالها توعية الجمهور وشرح الأبعاد المختلفة للتهديدات.

المصطلحات الأساسية: عُمان، مكافحة الإرهاب، الوقاية، منظور تحليلي.

## Analytical Perspective of the Omani Approach to Preventing and Counterturning Terrorism

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### **Abstract:**

**Objectives:** The exploration and analysis of the Omani national counterterrorism approach underline the Omani security approach and the different policies, authorities, and forces operating in the Sultanate of Oman in the field of counter terrorism.

**Methodology:** The collected data was based on personal interviews, analysis of government policies, and review of the relevant legislations and policies. This research relies on transparency and accurate understanding and analysis of the country's national counter-terrorism approach. **Results:** This research gives transparency and better understanding of the state's national counterterrorism approach and the theoretical approach. It reveals new sources that can be utilized in other security studies and provides a chance for policymakers to review, replace, or amend the related policies in the state. This research recommends that the government pays more attention to ideological terrorism as it poses a dangerous threat to security stability. **Conclusion:** Deterrent legislations should be issued with penalties that are compatible with the size of the threats. In addition, more profound research is needed to enlighten the society and increase their knowledge of ideological terrorism and the methods by which it can spread to the public along with the different dimensions of the threats.

**Keywords:** Oman, Counterterrorism, Prevention, Analytical Perspective

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## **1. Introduction:**

This research is designed to explore the methods that the Sultanate of Oman adopt in its national counterterrorism approach through analyzing the relevant policies and interviewing specialists in related fields. It provides an understanding of the Omani perspective on terrorism as a crime, not an act of war, and its view of terrorists as criminals, not enemies of the state. It also examines the Omani national counter terrorism approach, including the state's policies and the authorities and forces that plan and execute counterterrorism procedures. Finally, it imparts transparency on how the approach is managed and practically applied through its three phases, namely pre-attack phase, attack phase, and post-attack phase. The phases are defined depending on the level of security stability at any given time. The Omani national counterterrorism approach is orchestrated based on a defensive approach that predominantly applies defensive methods to counter terrorism and achieve the state's goal of maintaining its security stability. Nevertheless, the Omani national counterterrorism approach sometimes requires the use of specific offensive methods. The defensive approach is visible through the state's non-aggression towards terrorism and terrorists and its effort to maintain its status quo while never letting down its guard and acknowledging that the threat of terrorism is always present.

### **1. 1 Research Objectives:**

This research endeavors to understand the different phases of the Omani counterterrorism approach. Thus, it is transparent and provides an understanding of the state national counterterrorism approach in Oman. This provides a chance to review, replace, or amend the related policies in the state. It also contributes to understanding the public policy and decision-making process and provides politicians with a clear approach that is comprehensively summarized throughout the research stages.

## **1. 2 Research Hypothesis:**

There is a positive correlation between Oman's adoption of a realistic defense approach to coordinate its anti-terrorism approach and ensuring its security stability

## **1. 3 Research Problem**

The reasons underlying Oman's ability to stay terrorism-free through its collection of authorities and forces are worth uncovering. Maras (2013) argued for the efficient utilization of existing knowledge to clearly understand the Omani approach and its procedures. Despite some acknowledged authorities and forces, there is presently no clear overarching understanding of the Omani national counterterrorism approach, including the policies it has embraced and which it would apply in the event of a terrorist attack. Moreover, the role that each authority plays individually and collectively to counterterrorism is still opaque. Moreover, the ever-increasing number of terrorist attacks and incidents in the Arabian Gulf region and terrorist groups' appearance in nearby states to the Sultanate of Oman produce a growing need to adjust to the security situation, revise and revisit the national counterterrorism approach.

Some states have adopted an aggressive, offensive approach towards terrorism, and some even declared war against terrorism, such as the United States of America's crackdown on Al-Qaeda organized by the George W. Bush's administration after the events of 9/11 (ABC News, 2001). This is an example of a preventive war, which refers to military campaigns launched against enemies representing a potential threat to the state (Walt, 2005). By contrast, other countries have adopted a less aggressive approach against terrorism; they have maintained a moderate policy built on more defensive and less offensive measures to counterterrorism (Stigall, Miller & Donatucci, 2019).

## **1. 4 Research Methodology:**

The central assumption that guided the way this research was designed was that Oman's strategic plan in facing terrorism was more significant than reported in the literature (Crotty, 1998: 3). The case study approach constitutes a substantial part of the research methodology to study all aspects related to the core value of this paper. A set of foundations must be considered to achieve an accurate and proper diagnosis of terrorist threats in Oman. This includes adequate knowledge, providing sufficient and necessary data and information, determining how to deal with the situation and the nature of communications and tools required for successful prevention and counterterrorism.

In this study, the exploration of security stability was addressed by reviewing the literature of Oman's national attempts to counterterrorism based on a data collection phase of interviews and policy analysis to identify the Omani security approach. Thus, this study utilized research tools to gain in-depth insights into the topic involving interviews and policy analysis. Data was collected and inductively analyzed to reach conclusions based on observation.

Findings from interviews and analysis of state policies were used to extract new and emerging factors, if any, that had not been mentioned in the literature. And as it was required to enhance the understanding of the Omani national security approach, open-ended questions and interviews, and observation were best used to meet this requirement. An interview is a robust tool in exploration and confirmation as it can provide an intense level of information. (Hadji-Janev & Bogdanoski, 2016). Thus, the data collected for this research was extracted from interviews, government policies, and legal document analysis. The paper also depended on the institutional approach, where the focus was on the state's political institutions and structure, considering significant political and social aspects. The interviews were conducted in a semi-structured style; the policy analysis was achieved by observing the procedures in

the Sultanate of Oman relating to the maintenance of security stability and counterterrorism and reviewing the legislation that dictated these practices. Such legislations include Royal Decrees, laws, and regulations that make the state policies and any explanatory reports as per the approach suggested by Freedman (2015).

### **1. 5 The Importance of the Study**

There is a lack of literature written by Arab, Gulf, and Omani writers regarding security in the Gulf region, especially counterterrorism. Most literature written about the Gulf region was published after the Arab Spring uprisings in 2010. Furthermore, out of the literature written on security in the Gulf region, only little targeted Omani security, and almost none covered the field of counterterrorism. Most of the sources regarding the Sultanate of Oman in counterterrorism are official documents such as decrees, laws, and regulations. Attested international treaties on terrorism, terrorists, and countering terrorism can be found in specific governmental documents.

### **2. Omani Approach to Preventing and Counterturning Terrorism**

The national counterterrorism approach of the Sultanate of Oman adopts a defensive approach to maintain its security stability using as little aggression as possible, and it considers that the terrorist threat is always present but does not need to be eliminated. Based on this aim, the National Security Council orchestrated the Omani national counterterrorism approach using the information, suggestions, and specialized plans and policies provided by different government bodies. The Omani national counterterrorism approach is divided into three phases based on the status of the terrorist threat, the level of state security stability, and the action required during the phase. Each stage contains specific policies that are followed by respective authorities, or a collection of authorities based on the requirements at the time. The three phases of the approach are the pre-attack phase, the attack phase, and the post-attack phase.

## ***2.1 First: The Pre-Attack Phase:***

The pre-attack phase occurs at the time of security stability, when the Sultanate of Oman does not face a direct terrorist attack, but the threat of terrorism is present. This is the most critical phase in the national counterterrorism approach (Gaddis, 1982); given that the success of this phase will provide protection, prevent, and deter any terrorist threats and, accordingly, keep the state free of terrorism. However, if the government is open to terrorism, the other phases will not be reached. The pre-attack phase depends primarily on intelligence and data analysis, planning, and compliance with protective and preventive policies.

During peace times, states tend to prepare and upgrade their security policies by assessing their performance and success (Posen, 2001). In the same way, during the pre-attack phase the state's counter terrorism policies are enacted, reviewed and revisited by the National Security Committee of the National Security Council based on the information and recommendations provided by the Internal Security Service, the National Committee for Countering Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism, the National Centre for Financial Information, the Sultan's Armed Forces and Royal Oman Police, all of which gather information, data and intelligence, and work on analyzing, conducting studies, identifying and assessing the risks of terrorism on different fronts, identifying the challenges and planning the best procedures and mechanisms to counterterrorism. The National Security Council is the most appropriate authority to do so given that it contains the membership of the Minister of the Royal Office, the General Inspector of Police and Customs, the Head of the Internal Security Agency, and the Chief of Staff of the Sultan's Armed Forces (Alfarsi, 2019), the highest executive officials of the authorities and forces working in the field of counterterrorism in the state. The National Security Council could, therefore, best understand all aspects of a terrorist threat facing the

Sultanate of Oman and would additionally know all the available capabilities within the different authorities and forces, leading it to set the best policies that could be used to counter terrorist threats and attacks.

All protective and preventive procedures are taken to deter terrorists and maintain state security stability during the pre-attack phase (Mera-ri, 1993). The Sultanate of Oman regulates the entrance of foreigners; it requires identification of any foreigner prior to his/her entry to the state territories with clarification of the purpose and duration of their stay through Omani embassies, consulates, or competent authorities, together with detailed information about the date and point of entry through border checkpoints. The General Inspector of Police and Customs has the authority to consider specific situations and permit or prevent entry to state territories for some instances as may be deemed appropriate (Royal Decree no.16, 1995).

Moreover, the Sultanate of Oman safely protects its territories, borders, airports, and ports from terrorist or terrorism threats during the pre-attack phase through the efforts of the Royal Oman Police and the Sultan's Armed Forces. It is essential to follow any force's changes and the surrounding circumstances and status to better understand the state approach and policy towards a specific matter (Ali, 2012). Therefore, it is essential to understand the circumstances in which the state forces have developed and see how those changes serve to elucidate the state's approach, leading to the current counterterrorism approach. One example is the development of the Coast Guard Police Command. It started as a unit with limited capabilities and equipment and responsibility for securing the maritime borders of the Governorate of Muscat only because Muscat was the capital and the center of trade and development in the country during that time. Therefore, its security was an essential factor in the state's development and growth. While previously the rest of the coasts were not significantly exposed to outsiders given that they were not positioned on main maritime trade routes, keeping them safe

from threats; however, when the state started developing the rest of the governorates and operating other ports to exploit state resources, it became mandatory to expand the Coast Guard to secure all the state's maritime borders and ports from terrorist threats that may target them. The need for a qualified workforce and sophisticated modern boats also increased to confront the developed methods of threats and terrorism. This example applies to most of the forces and authorities in the state. The type of development and expansion they have undergone reflects the state's development plans and strategies and the potential terrorist threats that the government faces and expects to meet.

Adopting a concept expressed by Ali (2012), the establishment of border checkpoints could be attributed to the need to balance the needs of the state and the people on the one hand, and security threats and state capabilities, on the other. For example, the large number of border checkpoints with the United Arab Emirates is due to the historical relationship between the two states. They were one state before the United Arab Emirates declared its separation in 1971 to become an independent state (Valeri, 2009). The social geography of the lands on which the border lines were established also plays a major role since both land pieces were inhabited before the separation. However, the separation left many families parted, living on both sides of the border. That social challenge was overcome by providing many entry points along the border, especially in inhabited areas. Another factor determining the number of checkpoints is the extent of the economic relations and logistical requirements relating to trade. The greater the economic ties between the states, the more checkpoints are required to fulfill those needs. The demography is another factor that determines the number of checkpoints since the need for more border checkpoints arises where areas around the borderlines are populated. The need for these many border checkpoints, in turn, creates the need for more forces from the Royal Oman Police to monitor and control the entrance to state territories from the United Arab Emirates and to ensure that

anyone attempting to enter is first reviewed and then permitted so that no known or potential terrorist or undesired person can enter the state. By comparison, the Omani-Saudi borders, though more extended than the Omani Emirati ones, have only one border checkpoint due to the terrain's geographic nature. The borderline lies in the Empty Quarter desert and mountains. This entails a reduced need for forces from the Royal Oman Police and a greater need for troops from the Royal Army of Oman Border Guard to guard the borders and prevent any terrorist infiltration and penetration.

The state considers Omani nationalism to be an essential line of defense. Therefore, it promotes social integration and raises public awareness (Peterson, 2004) among the population of Omanis and foreigners living in the state's territories during the pre-attack phase. This is a preventive procedure, effected through spreading a culture of peaceful living and tolerance of the others within the society. The Sultanate also works on countering the financing of terrorism through the National Committee for Countering Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism in coordination with the National Committee for Countering Terrorism in the National Security Council and the National Centre for Financial Information (Royal Decree no.30, 2016). The National Committee for Countering Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism works during the pre-attack phase on developing the national policy to prevent and combat the financing of terrorism through identifying and assessing associated risks facing the state, receiving and analyzing statistics from competent authorities, keeping abreast of international developments in the field of countering the financing of terrorism, promoting awareness regarding the risks associated with the financing of terrorism among related institutions and bodies, and finally determining countries that are considered a high risk in the area of financing terrorism and the measures to be taken against them (Royal Decree no.30, 2016).

The military display is a robust method of deterrence (Van Evera, 1998). Therefore, state forces play an essential role in deterring terrorist

threats by imposing security through constant combat readiness and positioning themselves in vital and strategic locations to demonstrate the difficulty in penetrating Omani security barriers (Alhamadani, 2019). The greater the demonstration of the state's security and military capabilities, the lesser threats due to the impression that the government is heavily protected against terrorist attacks or breaches. Therefore, the Royal Oman Police are always present at all entry points to the state at the border checkpoints, ports, and airports. And the Royal Army of Oman still guards and protects the borderlines between the Sultanate of Oman and the United Arab Emirates, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the Republic of Yemen. Besides, the Royal Navy of Oman and the Coast Guard Police regularly patrol regional waters and the maritime domain and guard the ports and harbors. Moreover, the Royal Air Force of Oman has air bases in different locations around the state and near each international airport. Regarding ideological terrorism, the Royal Oman Police work hard to investigate and locate any security breaches related to terrorist or violent thoughts expressed openly within the state territories. The state also works on equipping and training its forces and raising its authorities' efficiency in counterterrorism during the pre-attack phase (Alfarsi, 2019); this is to prepare them for confronting terrorism and terrorists during the other stages of the approach. The training is either done by the state unilaterally or in collaboration with other countries bilaterally, regionally, or internationally.

On the international level, during the pre-attack phase, the state is committed to collective security with its strategic partners and other countries that share the same interest in countering terrorism to maintain the states' security stability, the region, and the world (Jervis, 1978). This is achieved through adopting unified counterterrorism measures to prevent any terrorist threat or respond to any terrorist attack by prohibiting the creation or establishment of terrorist entities either as an organization or agency or political party or association, exchanging necessary information that may enhance counterterrorism in the Sultanate of Oman or the

other states, assisting in investigation proceedings and facilitating legal procedures, denying transportation of weapons and material that could be used for terrorist purposes against the Sultanate of Oman or the other states through the Omani territories, freezing accounts and assets upon supported evident request by other countries or relevant intergovernmental organizations or non-governmental organizations, creating an early warning system to assist in preventing commission of any terrorist acts against the Sultanate of Oman or the other states, as well as preventing terrorists from acting against other countries from inside Omani territory. These policies are based on bilateral, regional, or international agreements and conventions. The significance of the ratifications is that ratifying a way or an agreement is done by a Royal Decree. Therefore, such convention or agreement provisions are integrated within the state's legislation and form a part of the state's laws making them binding to the state and the population (Alismaïli, 2018).

The Sultanate of Oman joined the UN Convention against Corruption by virtue of the Royal Decree No. 64/2013 on 20 November 2013. The Sultanate is committed to implementing international initiatives to combat money laundering and terrorist financing as one of the first countries to abide by the UN Convention against Illicit Trade in Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances of 1988 and the UN Convention against Organized Crime Across Countries for the year 2000. It is also a member of the Financial Action Group through its membership of the Gulf Cooperation Council seeking to modernize its laws and meet the required institutional and procedural requirements. The GCC countries approved the "Security Approach to Combat Extremism Accompanied by Terrorism" in 2002, and in the same year they issued the "Muscat Declaration on Combating Terrorism". In 2004, the GCC states became signatories of the agreement "GCC for Combating Terrorism." Accordingly, the Sultanate enacted the Law on Combating Money Laundering and Financing of Terrorism (Royal Decree No. 30/2016). Oman is a founding member of the Middle East and North Africa Financial Action Task Force.

## ***2.2 Second: The Attack Phase***

The attack phase is launched at the time of security breaches and instability, in which the Sultanate of Oman faces a direct terrorist attack within its territories, whether the attack was against the state itself or another state. This phase primarily involves the efficient implementation of the defending and responding policies by state authorities and forces. According to Addington (1994), during a time of insecurity and war, the state concentrates on responding to the attack and excluding the enemy without much damage to the state's assets. Therefore, the main aim of the Omani national counterterrorism approach during the attack phase is to respond to the terrorist attack and manage the situation, so it ends in the state's favor by reducing losses and arresting terrorists. During the attack phase and in the event of a terrorist attack taking place in the territories of the Sultanate of Oman, the success of the national security approach highly depends on the counterterrorism authorities and forces' performance and efficiency. Those forces and authorities bear the responsibility of defending the attack targets, were they state territories and assets or private lives and belongings, and combating the terrorists. The forces and authorities to be engaged and the equipment and weapons to be used would vary depending on the targeted locations of the attack (RAND Europe, n.d).

The responding and defending forces involved in the attack phase are the Royal Oman Police, the Royal Army of Oman, the Royal Navy of Oman, the Royal Air Force of Oman, and the Internal Security Service. All these forces work collectively to ensure the best management of the situation and the least losses possible. During the attack phase, the highest authority is the National Security Council, which bears the responsibility of organizing the dynamic forces and uniting all efforts during the terrorist attack. Although none of the troops are specialized in countering terrorism and dealing with terrorists, the specialized commands and different military forces cover most areas that could be

targets of terrorist attacks. Therefore, the Sultan's Armed Forces, the Royal Oman Police, and the Internal Security Service have the authority to engage in the event of a terrorist attack.

The response tactics, equipment, and weapons used to combat the terrorist attack would be determined based on the attack's targeted locations (Coaffee, 2010). Therefore, if the terrorist attack took place in a desert or a remote area that was not populated, the military forces' use of heavy weapons and artillery would be possible; however, if the terrorist attack took place in a highly populated city, the use of heavy weapons and artillery would not be possible. Instead, the Royal Oman Police Force and the Internal Security Service would need to use light arms and weapons to reduce damage and loss of lives and assets. Nevertheless, if the terrorist attack took place in essential installations or vital facilities, then the use of certain weapons and explosives would not be possible, and the Royal Oman Police Force or the military forces would need to use special weapons depending on the situation (Posen, 2001). After resolving the problem and completing the management part of the approach, the state's aim will be to arrest the terrorists, their associates and assistants in preparation for the third and final phase of the national counterterrorism approach. Suppose no perpetrators were caught during the attack, then in this case, the state will resort to the first phase to track down the terrorists and arrest them according to the rules of procedure of the pre-attack phase.

### ***2.3 Third: The Post-Attack Phase***

The post-attack phase occurs after a terrorist attack or a security breach, in the event of having arrested a terrorist or terrorists. It could occur immediately after the terrorist attack upon arresting the perpetrators in the act at the scene of the attack, or later when fugitive terrorists are arrested by the Internal Security Service, Oman Public Prosecution, or the Royal Oman Police. The associated prosecution will include the terrorists, their associates, and their assistants, as well as anyone who

illicitly conspires to protect or conceal any information or knowledge about the perpetrators' acts (Albalushi, 2019). The execution of the post-attack phase is done by the Internal Security Service, Oman Public Prosecution, the Royal Oman Police, and the judiciary courts. All these bodies enjoy the judicial authority to counterterrorism and implement the applicable legislations. The Sultanate of Oman's main aim during this phase is to convict terrorists and punish them for their actions by imposing heavy sentences on them to deter others.

The first observation from a review of the Omani Counterterrorism law (Royal Decree no.8, 2007) is that the Sultanate of Oman considers terrorist acts as crimes. Based on this observation, it can be concluded that Oman considers terrorists to be criminals. Therefore, all procedures of investigation and their detention should be carried out by the relevant authorities; all are treated in accordance with the legal principle of presumption of innocence, which states that any offender is considered innocent until proven guilty (Royal Decree no.7, 2018), and therefore any person accused of committing terrorist acts is considered innocent until proven otherwise at a court of law and should always be treated as such (Royal Decree no.97, 1999). Moreover, the prosecution and trial of those accused of committing terrorist acts should be at the relevant courts of law, and those convicted should be punished for their crimes in official penal institutions or other appropriate institutions (Alismaili, 2018). From this perspective, the Sultanate of Oman is seen to protect the civil and human rights of terrorists, which only confirms the defensive approach that the state adopts. The government only defends itself, its territories, and its people against an attack, but does not maintain an antagonistic or aggressive position towards the terrorists themselves and treat them fairly (Masferrer & Walker, 2013). This contrasts with states that adopt an offensive approach to countering terrorism who consider terrorists to be enemies of the country, declaring war against them and potentially killing them on sight.

At the beginning of the post-attack phase, the Royal Oman Police will hold in custody the perpetrators and any of their associates and accomplices as well as anyone who illicitly conspires to conceal information or knowledge about their acts. At the same time, the Royal Oman Police and the Internal Security Service will gather evidence of the crime either from the scene of the attack or any other site that could contain any material, equipment, or tools used by the perpetrators to plan, prepare or commit the attack. After gathering all the evidence, the Royal Oman Police and Internal Security Service will refer the case with its findings to the Oman Public Prosecution while keeping the arrested suspects in custody (Royal Decree no.97, 1999). Once the Public Prosecution has received the case, the first thing to consider is the nature of the terrorist act and its perpetrators to determine which administration has jurisdiction over the case. If any of the perpetrators are younger than 18 years old, they are considered juveniles, and they are referred to the Public Prosecution's juvenile administration, which will follow up on the investigation with them (Royal Decree no.30, 2008). If the actions are related to drugs, traffic, or economic crimes, the case is referred to the specialized administration of the Public Prosecution (Alismaili, 2018). Otherwise, the case will be referred to the regional administration in which the attack has taken place to investigate the perpetrators and build a case against the accused. Once the case is ready with supporting evidence, confessions, and statements, the Public Prosecution refers the case file to the court according to the Omani Counterterrorism Law or any other relevant law (Albalushi, 2019).

Following the dissolution of the State Security Court, the judicial courts currently have jurisdiction over terrorism cases. The court with spatial jurisdiction over any terrorist claim is that of the region where the attack has taken place. The court hearings are public unless the court considers otherwise for personal or security reasons (Royal Decree no.97, 1999). However, the judgment should be passed in a public hearing where anyone can attend in all cases. The Public Prosecution is the authority in charge of initiating criminal case proceedings and defen-

ding the public rights through providing proof of conviction (Albalushi, 2019). Once a final judgment has been passed by the courts, and the perpetrators have been declared guilty of committing terrorist acts, the sentence must be served in the central prison or any relevant institution. The post-attack phase, therefore, concludes the state's response to any terrorist attack. Public hearings and hefty penalties for terrorist acts are considered mechanisms of deterrence to others who would ever think of breaching the security stability of the Sultanate of Oman by attempting to commit terrorist acts.

### **3. Results, Conclusion, and Future Studies:**

#### **3.1 The Results:**

- The Omani national counterterrorism approach is in the hands of the National Security Council, while at the same time it gives considerable powers and authority to its counterterrorism authorities and forces.
- The border and ports control policies have been set to detect and prevent terrorist threats by regulating and managing the entrance to Omani territories as well as by protecting and defending the state internally and at its maritime borders, checkpoints, airports, ports, establishments, and installations related to them, against any terrorist attack.
- The Sultanate of Oman continues to have constructive dialogue and working relationships with the United Nations and other organizations and states, showing collective security and international cooperation, and emphasizing that terrorist threats, which are transnational, can only be countered by peaceful means and with a comprehensive and integrated approach.
- On the social level, the Omani national counterterrorism approach considers Omani nationalism and affiliation a vital defense line against terrorism.

- The Omani social integration policy follows five methods for countering terrorism: First, promoting and maintaining multi-ethnicism to prevent terrorist ideology from spreading within the Omani social fabric; second, keeping a unified social fabric and preventing external influences from negatively affecting the society; third, integrating foreigners into the community and ensuring that they benefit from the security stability and terrorism-free environment to encourage them to help maintain this status; fourth, using the media; and fifth, relying on influential figures to assist in countering ideological terrorism.
- It was revealed that the Internal Security Service plays a vital role in countering terrorism as it operates directly under the Sultan of Oman and is the only sovereign authority with judicial powers. The Internal Security Service is responsible for collecting, analyzing, and evaluating information related to terrorism and conducting the necessary research and investigation to uncover any facts, activities, or elements related to terrorism that may affect the security stability of the Sultanate of Oman. It is also responsible for supporting the National Security Council in exercising its tasks by studying terrorism-related issues to be presented to the Council, adding their recommendations to them, and working to implement the Council's decisions related to countering terrorism. Also, the Internal Security Service provides support and coordinates as deemed necessary with military and security authorities and forces in the Sultanate of Oman and cooperates and exchanges information with other states' authorities to counterterrorism. Moreover, it provides expert opinions and advice to the other state bodies on the best practices for countering terrorism.
- The Sultan's Armed Forces are the sovereign military forces in the Sultanate of Oman that aim to protect the state and defend it against any armed threat.

- Due to the practical nature and roles of the authorities and forces in different aspects of security stability in the state and due to the administrative nature of the authorities, the Sultanate of Oman has not assigned exclusive roles to authorities or forces in terms of planning, protecting, and preventing or responding and defending. Still, somewhat different authorities and forces share these roles within the approach.
- The counterterrorism authorities and forces practice interagency cooperation in view of the overlap in their responsibilities since there is no authority or force works exclusively in countering terrorism. However, this gives the authorities and forces the advantage of specializing in different fields that include terrorist targets. This gives them more focus and provides for better-trained forces equipped with skills to handle terrorist groups or actions at every location, each according to its own specialty.
- The National Security Council plans the national counterterrorism approach based on the information, data, and suggestions provided by all counterterrorism-related authorities and forces through the Council members. In contrast, the counterterrorism authorities and forces are responsible for detailing the counter terrorism policies within this national approach. Every authority or force has the power to formulate policies related to their field, based on the specialization and the data collected during their work within the general principles laid out by the National Security Council.
- The Omani national counterterrorism approach is not publicized or officially issued by the state, although its right parts can be seen within published policies. This gives the government more flexibility and ease in managing and changing the approach without the official restriction of amending and changing state documents. This reflects the broad powers and discretion given to the state authorities and forces, each in its own field. It provides the state with the

advantage and freedom to choose which policies to put into action according to the type and location of the terrorist threat or the persons involved. Besides, giving the counterterrorism authority the power to formulate policies makes the policies more flexible to change as per requirements and more applicable and realistic since each authority knows its potential best.

### **3. 2 Conclusion :**

The success and efficiency of the Omani national counterterrorism approach are supported by the findings which show the absence of any confirmed terrorist activity in the Sultanate of Oman through national and international reports, along with a drop in the number of suspected terrorist transactions and a lack of convictions regarding the initiation of terrorist transactions. This research has shown that Omani counterterrorism policies aim to prevent the terrorists, their ideology, weapons, and equipment that could be used, from entering the state; also, to deter and prevent terrorists from committing terrorist acts against the Sultanate of Oman, from inside or outside of its territory, and from committing terrorist acts against other states directed from the Omani territories; and finally, to protect the country, assets, and people from terrorism in the event of a terrorist attack taking place and to manage the situation in the best way possible in an attack. However, the policies do not advocate following terrorists wherever they are to eliminate them before they strike. The methods of defensive policies adopted by Oman are dependent on collecting and analyzing information and data, international collaboration, military display, and deterrence using the national forces at a time of security stability, and the use of counterterrorism authorities and forces in the event of a terrorist attack occurring.

### 3.3 Future Studies

The significance of the findings is that they extend the understanding of policy and decision makers in the state, providing them with an opportunity to review, replace or amend the relevant policies. This research recommended that the state of Oman should pay more attention to ideological terrorism as it poses a dangerous threat to security stability. More deterrent legislation should be issued with penalties that match the size of the threat and the act. More broadly, greater research is needed to further our knowledge of ideological terrorism and the methods by which it can spread to the public along with the different dimensions of the threat. Given the dangerous nature of terrorists and their mentality, there is a definite need for further study on the effect on other prisoners of imprisoning terrorists in normal state institutions, and the option of establishing separate imprisonment institutions for terrorists should be further investigated.

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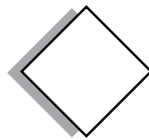
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## منظور تحليلي للنهج العماني في منع الإرهاب ومكافحته

هاني عمر البسوس - العنود محمد الفارسي

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