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ing and compromise. There is little doubt that most of the ed. Several delegations have made it clear that their willingness of the claims and proposals are dependent upon the other claims and proposals. There is a general tendency to nsive treaty or what is called a "package deal".⁵⁷ As the f State, Henry Kissinger, said recently:

nselves, these various issues are interrelated parts of a ut agreement on all the issues, agreement on any will be ill not accept a partial solution—all the less so as some hat have been made were based on the expectation of s which are not yet solved.⁵⁸

ital interests will have to be made to achieve such a the details of the law that will ultimately emerge is uncer- hat the old law of *laissez-faire* in the sea is gone and gone tion of that law was to reconcile the freedom of one state he recent technological revolution has transformed the to a world community. The changes in the technological, sociological structure of the international society must be s in the law. International law is a living discipline evolving t of new situations. New law is taking the place of old w must be in accordance with the needs of the new socie- a mere navigation route, a recreation centre, or dumping- ase of man's expansion on the earth and must become an orderly, progressive world development in which all will bly.

SYRIAN-IRAQI DISPUTE OVER THE EUPHRATES WATERS

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Disputes over the distribution of the waters of international rivers are a frequent phenomenon of the present century, and stem from efforts by riparian countries to control the natural flow of water with the help of modern technology. They also arise from endeavours to secure greater exploitation of water resources. There have been bilateral and even multilateral treaties to resolve such disputes, but so far no set system of international law on water resources has been evolved.

As a number of varied factors—human, economic, and even political—are involved in these disputes, and the practices of the various states differ, it is especially difficult to solve these disputes unless bilateral considerations are taken into due account and a greater understanding of the interests involved is brought to bear.

The purpose of this study is not to discuss the dispute between Iraq and Syria over the waters of the Euphrates within any legal framework of international law, particularly in view of lack of any standard statistics on the river relating to the present dispute.¹ Our aim here is just to look at the dispute in its geographical, economic, and also political perspectives, and to examine the efforts of each state to create situations conducive to a settlement of the dispute to its own advantage.

We could divide this study into four parts: (1) Geographical positions of Syria and Iraq in relation to the Euphrates; (2) topography of the river basin and the efforts made to secure greater exploitation of its water resources by the two states; (3) the dispute as such; and (4) the attempts made towards a settlement of the dispute.

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITIONS

For the purpose of the present study, Syria could be divided into three regions.

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¹Two sources of information on the dispute, though arbitrary in nature, would have been of much use if they had been made public, viz the World Bank Report of 1965 and the report prepared by Soviet experts in 1972. Both were submitted to the Governments concerned. Though each Government has been referring to such parts of the reports as are favourable to it, none has deemed it fit to release them in full.

The first region is the one which is traditionally the main area of cultivation and which includes (i) a strip of land along the Mediterranean coast from the Lebanese border in the south to the Turkish in the north and (ii) the 100-mile-wide steppe plain in Central Syria which runs north-eastwards from the Jordanian borders towards the Euphrates Valley. The principal cities of Syria, Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, are located in this plain. This region enjoys the Mediterranean climate and is fairly fertile. It has two well-marked seasons—a moist cool winter and a dry hot summer, with rainfall confined to winter. The pattern of rainfall is influenced by proximity to the Mediterranean Sea, and varies according to the distance from it. Whereas the region in Category (i) gets twenty-four to forty inches of rain, i.e. enough for the cultivation of cereals, citrus fruits, and other commercial crops, the region in Category (ii) is dry, with most of it receiving less than fifteen inches of rainfall a year. Irrigation is also practised in the region along the Orontes and other small rivers. Besides wheat, which is the traditional crop grown throughout Syria, cotton and tobacco are the principal crops in the area.

The second region, in the north-east along and east of the Euphrates, is known as al-Jazira ("island"). It is a low-lying plateau and also consists of plains. The population was sparse before the Second World War. But it is now expected to have reached 18 per cent of the country's total, thanks to the introduction of mechanized dry farming, recent discoveries of crude, and agricultural expansion made possible by the construction of the Euphrates Dam. The annual rainfall ranges from twelve to twenty-four inches. A variety of crops, including rice, are now being grown in the area, but wheat and cotton, especially cotton, are the major crops.

The third region comprises most of the area south of the Euphrates and forms part of the vast desert that stretches into Jordan, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.

Iraq likewise could be divided agriculturally into two regions: (i) rain-fed and (ii) arid. Iraq's north and north-eastern region, a large part of which is known as Kurdistan, has fifteen to twenty-five inches of rain that comfortably supports agriculture in the low land. Here barley, wheat, and Mediterranean fruits are the main agricultural products. Moving further down from the mountains, one passes from a wet zone of climate to a desert one. This area has two principal seasons—a long, hot, rainless summer extending from May to October, and a short, not-so-cool, winter from December to February, with spring and autumn filling in the short intervals between the two. Rainfall, which averages not more than five inches, occurs wholly in winter and is due to the depression crossing the region from the Mediterranean.

This region could be subdivided into three parts. The area north and north-east of Baghdad between the two great rivers of Iraq, the Tigris and the Euphrates, is called al-Jazira, which also extends to Syria as described earlier. Though essentially a fertile area, most of it remains unused for agriculture. Then there is Central and Southern Iraq from the region around Baghdad and south of it. This

VOL. 16 No. 2



is an alluvial plain with saline soil deposited by recurring floods. This is the principal agricultural zone of the country, with its life-giving rivers being the only source of agriculture. Here barley, rice, and dates are the staple food. Finally, there is almost all the rest of Iraq—more than half of it—which is desert.

The Euphrates, along with its sister river the Tigris, has contributed to the prosperity of the country from time immemorial, and has seen the rise and fall of many civilizations in the valley between them. The Sumerians were the first to establish (c. 3000 B.C.) a rich civilization in the area below present Baghdad on the Gulf. Here they had a highly developed agricultural economy, supported by a remarkable irrigation system based on the two rivers. Skilful and scientific use of the rivers for irrigation reached a high stage of development during the Abbasid period (A.D. 850-1000). Then, during the Mongol invasions of Baghdad in the thirteenth century, there was a large-scale destruction of dams, dykes, and irrigation canals. This caused salinity in the soil in the following centuries, and most of the lands formerly irrigated were abandoned or left fallow. Agriculture deteriorated to an extent that it was unable to provide an average Iraqi farmer with more than a bare subsistence, and both quality and quantity of products went down.

If environmental criteria, independent of political boundaries, are adopted, the valley of the Euphrates and the Tigris between the plateau of Asia Minor and the Gulf could be divided into two regions, with the area around Baghdad forming the boundary between the two. North of this area was called al-Jazira by the Arabs, and Mesopotamia by the Romans; whereas the southern alluvial plain was called Iraq by the Arabs, and Babylonia by the Romans.² Part of the territory called al-Jazira by the Arabs now forms Northern and Eastern Syria, whereas another part lies inside Northern and North-Western Iraq. Yet another part lies in Turkish territory. This includes Diyarbakir. The plateau of al-Jazira includes certain groups of hills like Jabal Abdel Aziz between the Balikh and the Khabour inside present-day Syria, and Jabal Sinjar between the Khabour and the Tigris inside present-day Iraq. The Balikh and the Khabour, the two important left-bank tributaries of the Euphrates, rise beyond these hills in the Turkish part of the Jazira, towards the north. The Balikh joins the Euphrates between Jarablus, on the Syrian-Turkish border, and Deir-ez-Zor; whereas the Khabour joins it twenty miles below Deir-ez-Zor—the Khabour being the last tributary. In Jabal Sinjar, in Iraqi territory, are the sources of Nahr Tharthar (Tharthar River), which flows southwards into the desert and disappears in Wadi Tharthar (Tharthar Valley), between the two rivers.

²See Hans J. Guterbock, "Mesopotamia", *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, edn of 1969, vol. 15, p. 203. The author describes this division in what he calls a narrow sense of the terms used to denote the two halves of the region. He says that the term "Mesopotamia" is also used in a much wider sense to include the entire area from the foot of the mountains of Asia Minor to the Gulf. Likewise "al-Jazira" also is sometimes used to denote a wider area.

Not only was Jazira an area of historic importance, serving as a link between Iraq and Anatolia on the one hand and between Iraq and Syria on the other, but it was also a relatively rich and fertile region. Besides large-scale agriculture along the Balikh and the Khabour, the triangle enclosed by the Armenian mountains, Jabal Abdel Aziz, and Jabal Sinjar was a highly cultivated area. Arab geographers have given a detailed account of the agricultural products of the area during the mediaeval period.³

TOPOGRAPHY AND EFFORTS AT GREATER EXPLOITATION OF THE RIVER

The Euphrates, like the Tigris, rises in the Armenian mountains of Turkey, but unlike the Tigris (1,850 kilometres), which enters Iraq directly from Turkey, making a 20-kilometre-long border between North-Eastern Syria and Turkey, the Euphrates (2,333 kilometres) flows first through Syria (675 kilometres) and then Iraq (1,200 kilometres) till it joins the Tigris at Qurana to form the Shatt-el-Arab estuary on the Gulf (185 kilometres).

The Euphrates drains an enormous basin. Besides its two wings in Turkey, the Karasu (21,500 square kilometres) and the Murat Suyu (39,700 square kilometres), whose confluence at Keban forms the Euphrates, it drains an area of 96,000 square kilometres between Keban and Jarablus, the place where it enters Syria. From Jarablus to Anah, where it enters Iraq, it drains 229,000 square kilometres, and from Anah to the point where it enters the Gulf, it drains 444,000 square kilometres. Nevertheless the area from which the Euphrates is fed is confined to the mountains in the north, which consist of 82,330 square kilometres only, i.e. some 20 per cent of the total area of the basin. Eighty per cent of the area is made up of steppe and desert.⁴

An important feature of the river is the striking variations both in terms of the average annual and monthly flow of water, and also in terms of the countries the river flows through. For example, the average annual flow at Hit is 838 cubic metres per second. In 1941, a very high year, it rose to 1,140 cubic metres, whereas in 1930, a very low year, it fell to 382 cubic metres per second.⁵ The flow during the various months of a year is determined by the rainfall in winter in the source region, or by the melting of snow at the mountains in spring and summer. It thus begins to rise with the first rain in November. It rises still further in march due to the melting of snow. It reaches its maximum rise in May at the end of the season. For the same reason it is at the lowest at the end of summer in September and October. Two phenomena are especially striking. First,

³See, for a detailed description of al-Jazira and its rich agriculture, Abu al-Qasim Ibn Hawqal, *Kitab Surat al-Ardh* (Leyden, 1938), pp. 208-30. Ibn Hawqal, who was born in Nasibin (Nisibis) in upper al-Jazira in the first half of the tenth century, is considered to be one of those great Arab geographers who based their works on travel and direct observation.

⁴See E. de Vaumas, "Al-Furat", *Encyclopaedia of Islam* (1965), vol. 2, p. 947.

⁵Ibid.

63 per cent of the water flows during a span of four months, March to June, and in May the flow of water is seven-and-a-half times as great as in September. Second, the flow takes only two months—July and August—to reach the minimum, whereas it takes as many as nine months to attain the maximum.⁶

A fairly wide variation is also found in the countries through which the river flows. From the mountains of Turkey, where the river is more or less torrential, it emerges at the Syrian steppe of al-Jazira, where it is slightly sunk below the level of the surrounding plateau and where the slope averages 30 centimetres per kilometre between Jarablus and Hit. But between Hit and Shinafiya the slope remains 10 centimetres per kilometre. After Shinafiya and Nasiriya the slope is never more than 3 centimetres per kilometre. Indeed it almost disappears.⁷ Navigation is common in the lower Euphrates. But because of the steep slope and the fast current, upstream navigation is difficult in the middle and upper reaches. In fact, at Hit the river suddenly suffers decline in both volume and velocity, and this rapid decline is the main cause of widespread deposition of sediment on the delta plain, as a result of high heat, heavy evaporation, and extensive channellization.⁸

As the river decreases at Hit, and the slope is slight in the region below, large areas used to be regularly inundated due to annual floods in May before the construction of the dams in Iraq and Syria. During the flood season the Euphrates carries a great quantity of silt. According to the available data, the maximum flood discharge of 2,733 cubic metres per second is enough to cover 600 acres of land with a layer of silt 0.25 centimetre thick (in a day).⁹ This silt, with the accumulation of sodium and magnesium chlorides and the stagnant flood water, is prone to salinity under the conditions that have existed for ages in the area.

The *Baghdad Observer* attributes the increase of salinity in Iraqi soil to the rise of subterranean water, the non-availability of taping network, bad utilization of water, a high degree of heat which causes widespread evaporation of water and leaving of salt in the soil, and absence of canals to drain the subterranean water.¹⁰ The High Commission of 1949¹¹ estimated that in about 60 per cent of the observations perhaps 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the cultivated land in the irrigated areas has been abandoned during recent decades owing to the accumulation of salt, and that yield in the area still being tilled may have declined by 20 per cent to 50 per cent.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Ibid.

⁸The Euphrates loses 46 per cent of its water between Hit and Nasiriyah, a distance of 680 kilometres. Ibid.

⁹Nuri K. al-Barazi, *The Geography of Agriculture in Irrigated Areas of the Middle Euphrates Valley* (Baghdad, 1961), p. 62.

¹⁰"Strategy of Agricultural Development in Iraq", *Baghdad Observer*, 26 August 1975, p. 7.

¹¹*Report on the Control of the Rivers of Iraq and the Utilization of Their Waters, 1951*, p. 175. Cited by al-Barazi, n. 9, p. 134.

Thus, so far as the utilization of the Euphrates in Iraqi territory is concerned, two separate problems are involved: (1) control of floods in order to prevent recurring large-scale destruction and (2) utilization of river water for both irrigation and desalination.

Flood control schemes on the Euphrates involve two basins: Habbaniya and Abu Dibbis. Originally water is diverted to the Habbaniya Lake to avert the danger of flood in the Euphrates. A barrage across the river at Ramadi raises the river level so as to allow diversion into the Habbaniya Depression Lake. This barrage was constructed in 1955-56, and ever since it has been possible, whenever the water level is very high, to divert 2,800 cubic metres of water per second in the direction of Lake Habbaniya along a canal on the right side of the Euphrates 3 kilometres from Ramadi Town—called the Warrar Stream. This canal is 8.5 kilometres long and 210 metres wide. In addition, another canal leads to the Abu Dibbis Reservoir, a depression west of Karbla Town. At present this depression is used only to receive surplus water from Habbaniya during the flood season in an emergency.

In this connexion the importance of the Tigris in relation to the Euphrates cannot be overlooked. Above the region of Baghdad both the rivers flow in distinct and well-defined valleys. At Baghdad they come closest, the two flowing at a distance of 40 kilometres only from each other. They get separated again below Baghdad, though the valley walls disappear. Because of greater volume, the largest flood control scheme of Iraq is located on the Tigris. This scheme involves Wadi Tharthar north-west of Baghdad between the Euphrates and the Tigris. A barrage, similar to the one at Ramadi, was completed on the Tigris at Samara in 1955-56. This barrage is capable of diverting 9,000 cubic metres of water per second towards the depression of Wadi Tharthar along a canal 65 kilometres long. Tharthar is a natural depression, and its storage capacity is 72.84 billion cubic metres. After the completion of these two projects, Iraq for the first time in its history was protected from the catastrophe of regular floods.

Now desalination poses a problem for Iraq more serious than irrigation. In the olden days a simple but effective system of canals was created to perform the dual function of watering arid areas and draining water-logged zones with a view to removing salinity. Skilful use was made of the variation in level between the Tigris and the Euphrates. A large number of canals were constructed on both sides of the Tigris from Tikrit southwards. Five major channels led water from the Euphrates to the Tigris in the region of Baghdad and Babylon.

Some of these canals have now been cleared and are again being used. Efforts have also been made to establish a well-co-ordinated scheme of large-scale perennial irrigation on the Tigris-Euphrates plain below Samara and Ramadi. A barrage at Hindiya on the Euphrates was constructed in 1913. Its aim was (1) to divert water from the Euphrates into a canal that was an old channel of the river; and (2) to raise the general level of the Euphrates and thus allow irrigation in the region of Karbla on the right bank of the river, as also upstream on the

left bank as far north as Ramadi. Other schemes include: (1) the Greater Musayyib Project (1956); (2) regulator in the lowest part of the river just before it enters Lake Hammar; and (3) similar regulators at Shamiya to maintain river level.¹²

But Iraq now is concentrating its efforts on desalination of soil. The Iraqi Minister of Irrigation, Mukarram Talebani, has said that 70 per cent of all the agricultural projects being carried out by the Government of Iraq at present, are desalination schemes and that Iraq is spending a billion dinars every year (100 Iraqi dinars=\$337.78 at the 1974 exchange rates) on such schemes.¹³ The Iraqis also say that according to expert estimates, the elimination of salinity from Iraqi soil needs more than 1,500 million dinars, the elimination of salinity from Iraq a period of about twenty years.¹⁴

As the land in the delta area has suffered from wasteful and inefficient use of water for irrigation, desalination is directly connected with the establishment of a better and more scientific irrigation network. Iraq has embarked upon several projects especially to deal with the desalination problem. There is, first of all, the Haditha Dam (cost: \$50 million) between Ramadi and the Iraqi-Syrian border. Iraq is at present busy working on the Tharthar-Euphrates Outlet Canal. Both the projects are now being carried out with Soviet assistance. The Tharthar-Euphrates Outlet Canal, which is 25 to 37 metres wide and 37.5 kilometres long, connects the Euphrates with the Tigris. Work on the project is fast being completed.¹⁵ Iraq is building another canal, particularly under the desalination scheme, which will be 600 kilometres long from Baghdad to the Gulf.¹⁶

Though the sparsely populated Iraqi part of the Jazira has been part of the scheme of the Development Board for establishing new project areas,¹⁷ Iraq seems to have no active agricultural planning for it except the southernmost part of Wadi Tharthar, which would naturally be covered once the Tharthar-Euphrates Outlet Canal is complete. In the Syrian part of the territory, however, the situation is different. Syria has now completed work on the first stage of a huge dam on its share of the Euphrates at Tabqa, a town 150 kilometres east of Aleppo, and expects to complete the final stage by the end of this year. It is engaged in an effort to develop the area into the agricultural bowl of the country through exploitation of the waters of the Euphrates.

¹²The information on the flood-control schemes, irrigation canals, and barrages on both the Euphrates and the Tigris has been collected from the following sources: W. B. Fisher, *The Middle East* (London, 1971); de Vaumas, n. 4, p. 947; Leonard M. Cantor, *A World Geography of Irrigation* (London, 1967), pp. 136-8; and Z. Al-Khalidi, "Dams and Reservoirs in Iraq", *Baghdad Observer*, 19 and 21 September 1975.

¹³Mukarram al-Talebani, in an interview to *Al-Hawadith* (Beirut), 22 August 1975, p. 31.

¹⁴"Strategy of Agricultural Development in Iraq", *Baghdad Observer*, 26 August 1975, p. 6.

¹⁵Mukarram al-Talebani, in an interview to *Al-Hawadith*, 22 August 1975, p. 27.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 31.

¹⁷Al-Barazi, n. 9, p. 84.

The idea of building a dam on the river in Syria was originally prompted by a realization of the fact that the river had not been adequately utilized in a region known to have a highly fertile soil. It was this realization that induced the Government of Syria in 1947 to carry out the first scientific study of the possibility of exploiting the Euphrates River. No significant development, however, came until, on 22 April 1966, Syria and the Soviet Union signed a protocol, with the Soviet Union agreeing to provide Syria with equipment and technical assistance of the value of 500 million Syrian pounds (100 Syrian pounds = \$27.21, at the 1974 exchange rates) at an interest of 2.5 per cent per annum and on easy terms of repayment. Thus, on 7 March 1968, work on the Euphrates Dam was officially inaugurated.

The high priority which the Government of Syria accords to this project is apparent from the establishment of several organizations totally devoted to the project. Though the Syrians say that ever since 1947 this project has received active consideration of the authorities and that one Government organization or another has always looked after it, it was only in 1961 that the first General Organization of the Euphrates Dam was set up. This was followed by the establishment of the Higher Authority for the Euphrates Project directly under the Prime Minister. The General Administration for the Development of the Euphrates Basin was set up in 1968. A full-fledged Ministry of the Euphrates Dam was created in 1970 to look after the various works connected with the project. The Syrian Arab Company for Construction is worth mentioning here. This company also comes under the direct supervision of the Euphrates Ministry. The construction of Tabqa City (now renamed Al-Thawrah City), the model villages around the newly irrigated areas to encourage the growth of population in the region, and the construction work in the project area are the primary concern of the company at present.

The Euphrates Dam (cost: \$300 million) is the second largest dam in the Middle East—second after the Aswan High Dam—to be built with Soviet assistance. The dam took its full shape when construction on the first stage was completed in 1973. It is an earthen dam built of gravel and sand. The basic structure is 4.5 kilometres in length and 60 metres in height. The base is 512 metres wide. The dam controls the flow of water. The water forms an artificial lake (named the Assad Lake) 80 kilometres in length and 630 square kilometres in area, with a storage capacity of 11.9 billion cubic metres of water.¹⁸ The project consists of the dam proper, a high voltage power station consisting of eight units, and an electric network of lines to supply power to the various parts of the country.

The course of the river was diverted on 5 July 1973 at the completion of the

¹⁸According to reported disclosures by reliable sources, there were 1,000 Soviet experts, engineers, technicians, and others working on the project, all on the pay-roll of the Syrian Government, their Syrian counterparts reportedly numbering about 12,000. *Arab World Weekly* (New York, N. Y.), 30 June 1973, p. 12.

first stage of the dam. The Euphrates Dam will contribute substantially to the supply of power, as also the irrigation facilities in the country. It is expected that power production from the Euphrates in Syria will reach two-and-a-half billion kilowatts per hour. (Power production at present is not more than three-fourths of a billion kilowatts per hour.) The dam will irrigate about 640,000 hectares of land,¹⁹ which is more than the present total irrigated area in Syria (estimated to be 550,000 hectares). This will be in addition to the 400,000 hectares to be irrigated under a separate project on the Khabour River. According to Syrian estimates, reclamation and development of the land is expected to be achieved at the rate of 20,000 hectares a year after 1975. This means that it will take about thirty-two years to develop 640,000 hectares of land along the Euphrates in Syria. Once this is done, the project will help accommodate about two million people in the area; and, according to some studies, increase in the annual national income will be of the order of 700 million Syrian lira (£ 7 million) directly from agriculture alone.²⁰

The Bath Government in Syria thinks that the project will help in establishing an economic base wide enough to constitute the foundation of a Socialist transformation in the country. In the words of the former Syrian Minister of Industry, Nureddin al-Rifai: "The Syrian Euphrates project is Syria's future. The Euphrates region is the new Syria, and Syria will not be able to stand on its own feet and to ensure a stable and prosperous economy in future unless it is capable of benefiting from its share of the Euphrates water. There is no other way."²¹

THE DISPUTE

The dispute arose in the wake of the Syrian plan to construct a dam on the Euphrates. Both Syria and Iraq are traditionally agricultural countries. Despite the existence of a traditionally strong trading sector and efforts at industrialization in recent years, agriculture in Syria continues to be the backbone of the country's economy. Likewise, in Iraq discoveries of oil are unable to reduce the importance

¹⁹The Syrians split this irrigable land into the following regions: (1) The Balikh basin—185,000 hectares; (2) the Euphrates Valley—240,000 hectares; (3) the Rasafeh basin—25,000 hectares; (4) the Mayadin plains—40,000 hectares; and (5) the Western Meskene plains—150,000 hectares.

²⁰Details relating to the Euphrates Dam and other related issues above have been collected from two booklets published by the Syrian Information Ministry, viz *Sadd al-Furat*, nos 15-16. These two booklets, which deal with the technical aspects of the dam and the development of the Euphrates basin respectively, were published under the Corrective Movement launched by the Bath Government. The year of publication is not mentioned, but they cover events up to 1975. See also *Suriya al-Thawrah* (1974), pp. 33-48. Two articles on the Euphrates Dam appeared in the *Arab World Weekly*, one on 27 September 1969 and the other on 30 July 1973.

²¹Nureddin al-Rifai, statement to *An-Nahar* (Beirut), 17 May 1975, p. 9.

of the agricultural sector to the economy.²² However, as compared with Iraq, Syria's dependence on the Euphrates has been marginal. Traditionally it is Iraq that has prospered on the river banks. Now the Iraqis say that they must have their established right to the water of the river according to international law. They also emphasize that a distinction should be made between the areas by the Euphrates irrigated at present in the two countries and the planned expansion of irrigation, with priority to those lands which are under irrigation at present, for the purpose of distribution of the water of the river. They say that this distinction is essential to sustain the existing population in the river basin.²³

In fact, technically speaking, the Syrians have not denied Iraq's established right to the water of the Euphrates, but they say that the Iraqi claim in this respect is exaggerated. The Syrians try to draw a line between the average water consumption in Iraq, which defines the real requirement, and what the Iraqis had facilities to use in view of the huge amount of water that used to be wasted along the river before the dam on the other side of the border was built.

As we have seen, the dispute arose primarily as a result of the efforts by a riparian nation, that is Syria,²⁴ for greater exploitation of the river water in its area, which had remained unexploited. The main point put forward by the Syrian side is that Syria has little water resources as compared with Iraq and Turkey and that, therefore, it should be allowed a proportionate use of the river water for developmental purposes. Nureddin al-Rifai, in his statement to *An-Nahar*,²⁵

²²Food and Agriculture Organization, *Production Year Book* (Rome, 1974), vol. 28-1, p. 12. This provides the following Table of agricultural population and population economically active in agriculture in Iraq and Syria for the years 1960 and 1970.

Year	Total population	Agricultural population	Economically active population			
			Total	In agriculture	Percentage	
Iraq	1960	6,945,000	3,691,000	1,839,000	977,000	53.2
	1970	9,690,000	4,516,000	2,395,000	1,116,000	46.6
Syria	1960	4,561,000	2,474,000	1,263,000	685,000	54.3
	1970	6,182,000	3,017,000	1,574,000	768,000	48.3

The population of Iraq and Syria in 1974 rose to 11,161,000 and 7,080,000 respectively. *Ibid.*

²³For a detailed Iraqi point of view on the subject and also for Iraq's official version of the history of the negotiations between Syria and Iraq in the matter, see the Iraqi Information Ministry's publication *Azmat al-Furat: Tarikh wa Arqam*. Although the date of publication is not mentioned, the publication covers events up to 1975.

²⁴Though the source of the river lies in Turkey, which also has built its most ambitious hydro-electric dam at Keban and has plans to build three more dams, both Syria and Iraq have been pretending that they do not have any serious problem with Turkey. Perhaps they think that at least for the near future Turkey would not be able to consume more water than what they both consider to be its due. The Keban Dam, which is 670 feet high and forms a 70-mile-long lake, has been operational since 1973.

²⁵Among the available explanations of the Syrian viewpoint, the one forwarded by the former Syrian Industry Minister, Nureddin al-Rifai, is the most comprehensive and analytical. Nureddin al-Rifai is considered in Syria to be one of those to have had the closest association with the Euphrates project and related issues since the beginning. *An-Nahar* was directed by

emphasizes that in fact Iraq has no water shortage even though Syria uses what he calls its "share" of the waters of the river. He points out that Turkey has vast water resources of more than 100 billion cubic metres a year, whereas Iraq's annual water resources are, on an average, about 35.5 billion cubic metres, excluding the Euphrates. In comparison the water resources of Syria, excluding the Euphrates, amount to just about 3.5 billion cubic metres a year. According to him, the idea of using the Tigris as a twin river to the Euphrates to cover the water shortage in the latter once came up during negotiations. He says that a water project that would connect the Euphrates with the Tigris through the Tharthar Depression Canal "with a storage capacity of 80 billion cubic metres of water".²⁶ Another point of importance, according to al-Rifai, is that in most cases Syrian agriculture depends only on rainfall, which is variable and uncertain. If, in any year, rainfall is not enough, Syria faces serious economic difficulties. Basically, with its agricultural economy, Syria depends on irrigation, and in future, with an increased population, which is estimated to be about 15 to 16 million by the end of this century, and decreased water resources, it cannot ensure a stable and prosperous economy if it does not exploit the Euphrates and expand its irrigated agriculture.²⁷ Al-Rifai's reply to the Iraqi claim of established right to the water of the Euphrates is that international legal practices also give every country its "rightful share" in the water flowing in its region, and that Syria has so far not taken its share of the water of the river.²⁸

But what is this "established right" that Iraq claims? And what is the "rightful share" that Syria speaks of? According to the data provided by the Syrian side, the average annual flow of water in the Euphrates, provided there is no obstacle in the upper reaches, is about 28 billion cubic metres on the Syrian-Iraqi border. This becomes 29 billion cubic metres as a result of the additional water (estimated to be 4 billion cubic metres a year) that the Balikh and the Khabour bring in when they join the Euphrates (and consumption of some of

the present Information Minister to get further information on the subject from Nureddin al-Rifai. *An-Nahar*, 17 May 1975, p. 9.

²⁶*Ibid.*

The following Table of land use and irrigation in Iraq and Syria as provided by the *Production Year Book* of the Food and Agriculture Organization (n. 22) might be of some interest:

Country	Year	Total area (In thousands of hectares)	Agricultural area		Irrigation	
			Arable land	Land under permanent crop	Year	Area (In thousands of hectares)
Iraq	1971	43,492	4,848	151	1963	3,675
					1973	619
Syria	1973	18,541	5,546	328		

²⁷*An-Nahar*, 17 May 1975, p. 9.

²⁸*Ibid.*

this water in Syria).²⁹ Al-Rifai says that during a tripartite meeting held in Baghdad in September 1965, Iraq demanded 18 billion cubic metres as its share of water, Turkey demanded 14 billion cubic metres, and Syria asked for 13 billion cubic metres. The total is more than what the river carries. Hence the problem.³⁰

The Iraqis base their argument by and large on the reports submitted by the World Bank and the Soviet experts. According to them, the World Bank report for 1965 states that agricultural land in the Euphrates basin in Turkey is 153,000 hectares; in Syria, 212,500 hectares, and in Iraq, 1,231,000 hectares. The report says, further, that there are possibilities of expansion in the areas under agriculture in all the three countries. It estimates that the expansion of the area under agriculture would be 1,100,000 hectares in Turkey; 413,000 hectares in Syria; and 710,000 hectares in Iraq. It also states that water needed for irrigation in Turkey is estimated to be a billion cubic metres; in Syria, 3.30 billion cubic metres; and in Iraq, 8.6 billion cubic metres. If the flow of water in the river rises to 35 billion cubic metres a year the expected future requirements of the three countries would be: 11.9 billion cubic metres for Turkey; 7 billion cubic metres for Syria; 16.1 billion cubic metres for Iraq.³¹

It is also said that the Soviet experts who came out in 1972 with a detailed report on each country's requirements of water based their report on the World Bank statistics. The Soviet report suggests two time-tables. One is connected with the expansion of the area under agriculture in the three countries (viz Turkey, Syria, and Iraq) in such a way as not to affect the established right of Iraq.³² The report wants Iraq to reduce its share of water after twenty years. The second time-table, according to Iraq, is connected with the filling up of the two reservoirs, one in Turkey (Keban) and the other in Syria (Tabqa), to a level that would not affect the irrigated lands in Iraq. The Iraqis claim to agree with the content of the Soviet report. They also demand that the established right should be placed at 13 billion cubic metres a year for Iraq and at 4 billion cubic metres a year for Syria and that the surplus water should be distributed between Syria and Iraq in the ratio of 7:3, provided that this ratio is reversed in the event of the

²⁹Ibid. This average is accepted by Iraq as well. Iraq is more precise in explaining the point. It says that the annual flow of water in the river, as recorded between 1925 and 1969, was 29.4 billion cubic metres. The flow was highest in 1969 (63.4 billion cubic metres) and lowest in 1930 (12.5 billion cubic metres). See *Azmat al-Furat*, n. 23, p. 5.

³⁰*An-Nahar*, 17 May 1975, p. 9.

³¹*Azmat al-Furat*, n. 23, p. 6.

³²Ibid., p. 15. Mukrām al-Talebani, in an interview to *Al-Hawadith*, explained that in view of the high rate of salinity and bad soil conditions in its territory, Iraq needed more water to wash away the salt and reclaim the land. He argued that if the three countries had followed the time-table suggested by the Soviet experts, Iraq would have been able, with 10 billion cubic metres of additional water at its disposal, to wash its soil in the Euphrates basin in about twenty years. See *Al-Hawadith*, 22 August 1975, pp. 31-32.

water being less than the fixed amount.³³ The Iraqis also claim that they have suggested several modified schemes more favourable to Syria.³⁴

Syria has not come out so far with the details of the negotiations it has had with Iraq. Nor has it revealed the suggestions and proposals that it would put forward. It claims that the data provided by the Iraqi side are not correct, and also that Iraq itself has expressed reservations about the Soviet report of 1972.³⁵ Thus, neither of the two countries unreservedly accept the contents of the World Bank report or the Soviet report.

When the explanations and counter-explanations are put in the proper perspective, it would appear that the Iraqis have been asking for time to improve their soil conditions and build a truly scientific irrigation and desalination system along the Euphrates in their country before introducing radical change in the water distribution system between their country and Syria.³⁶ On the other hand, having embarked on ambitious planning and invested a good deal of their resources and labour, the Syrians have no patience to wait.

ATTEMPTS TOWARDS SETTLEMENT OF THE DISPUTE

Negotiations between the two countries on the subject have been in progress since 1962, when Syria announced its intention to build the dam at Tabqa. Turkey also sometimes joined these negotiations as a party that controls the sources of the river. Iraq has a treaty of friendship with Turkey concluded on 29 March 1946. Article 5 of the protocol of this treaty says: "Turkey shall keep Iraq informed of her plans for construction of conservation works on either of the two rivers [the Euphrates and the Tigris] or their tributaries, in order that these works may as far as possible be adapted, by common agreement, to the interests of both Iraq and Turkey."³⁷

³³*Azmat al-Furat*, n. 23, p. 15.

³⁴Ibid., p. 16-18.

³⁵Sobhi Kahaleh (Euphrates Dam Minister), statement, June 1975. The typed Arabic text of the statement was provided to the present writer by the Syrian Embassy in New Delhi.

³⁶This is obvious from demands made by Iraq on the basis of its acceptance of the Soviet proposal for time-tables. Also, the Iraqi Minister of Irrigation, replying apparently to the Syrian argument that water from the Tigris could be diverted into the Euphrates, said that the Euphrates level was higher than that of the Tigris by seven metres and that diversion of water was, therefore, a problem calling for exceptional expertise and sophistication. See *Al-Hawadith*, 22 August 1975, pp. 31-32. What he was trying to explain was that Iraq should be given the time needed to acquire that sophistication.

³⁷*United Nations Treaties Series*, vol. 37, p. 291. Despite many ups and downs in the relations between the two countries in the past, both countries pretend that the treaty still exists. After talks between the Iraqi Irrigation Minister and the Turkish Minister of Power and Natural Resources on the use of the Euphrates River early in July 1975, a joint communique was issued. This communique said that the two Ministers agreed to re-activate the provisions of the Turkish-Iraqi friendship accord signed in 1946 in order to meet present needs and maintain its validity. *Summary of World Broadcasts (SWB)* (Reading, England), (ME/4953), 12 July 1975, A/9.

Iraq claims that in 1962 it agreed with Syria to exchange hydrological and other technical information concerning the dams that would be built on the river in future, and to recognize the established rights of the two countries.³⁸ There is, however, no formal agreement yet between Syria and Iraq on the subject. Turkey participated because it was also planning to build dams on the rivers, and Iraq was understandably anxious to evolve a formula for the distribution of water that would protect its interests. It would appear that serious differences arose between Syria and Iraq and that, after crucial tripartite negotiations in September 1965 in Baghdad, it was decided that it would be better for Syria and Iraq to hold talks on a bilateral basis. Thus a series of bilateral negotiations took place both in Baghdad and in Damascus. 1972 proved to be a particularly anxious year for Iraq, for work on the Tabqa dam was fast nearing completion and there seemed no possibility of the dispute being resolved.

The Iraqi team for the bilateral negotiations held in March 1972 was headed by Saddam Hussein, Iraq's strongman and Vice-President of the Revolution Command Council.³⁹ The Iraqi Minister of Irrigation, Taha Ibrahim, arrived in Damascus on 22 March and held separate talks with the Syrian Minister of the Euphrates Dam⁴⁰ a day after Saddam Hussein had met President Assad of Syria and held high-level talks with the Syrian delegation. Topics of major importance that came up for discussion during Saddam Hussein's 6-day visit were economic co-operation and the building of an additional oil pipeline from the Iraqi oil-fields to the Mediterranean through Syria. The talks were comprehensive. An Iraqi proposal for urgent union between Iraq, Syria, and Egypt for countering King Hussein's announced plan for the creation of a United Hashimite Kingdom⁴¹ was the most important item discussed in Damascus before Saddam Hussein proceeded to Cairo.⁴² Obviously, Iraqi views did not find positive response in Syria, and nothing concrete came out of the negotiations. Though in the same year the two sides agreed on Soviet arbitration, the talks proved to be a turning-point in the behaviour of the two countries towards the dispute.

Here we could draw a clear line between the two phases of the relations between the two countries, especially as regards the Euphrates issue, the turning-point being March 1972. We could call the first the accommodative phase, as attempts at a settlement of the dispute during this period (1962-72) were confined to the technical aspects. The negotiations of March 1972 introduced

³⁸*Azmat al-Furat*, n. 23, pp. 35 and 37.

³⁹*Ibid.*, pp. 12-13, for the importance that Iraq gave to these negotiations, as also for the Iraqi version of the proposals presented.

⁴⁰*SWB* (ME/3931), 25 March 1972, p. A/14.

⁴¹For the text of the statement of the unity plan by the Iraqi Revolution Command Council, see *SWB* (ME 3942), 17 March 1972, p. A/11.

⁴²See, for the items discussed, a report of the Press statement released at the end of the Damascus talks, in *Al-Ahram* (Cairo) of 27 March 1972.

political issues into the dispute at the initiative of Iraq. In spite of itself Syria responded favourably to save its Bathism from getting a bad name. This resulted in each country adopting a self-assertive posture against the other. Each country tried to maximize its individual gains at the expense of the other with the expansion of the scope of the dispute.

In the light of the historic rivalry between itself and Iraq, the weak and vulnerable Syria has always had a sort of fear complex *vis-a-vis* Iraq. This complex accounts for its behaviour towards Iraq in recent decades and its non-co-operative attitude towards Iraq despite geographical proximity, identity of interests and policies, and in recent years ideological affinity as well. It also explains its close co-operation with Egypt despite differences in terms of policies and interests.⁴³ Not only were vital economic interests involved in the exploitation of the Euphrates in Syria, but an urgency arose about it in view of the accumulation of petroleum resources in the neighbourhood. Syria's behaviour, as that of Iraq, during the first phase was characterized essentially by accommodation. This was why no untoward event took place during this phase in the Euphrates affair, although there was acute difference between the Syrian and Iraqi wings of the Bath Party ever since Bath took over power in Iraq in 1968. The advent of orthodox Bathis to power in Iraq, however, aggravated the situation, with Syria growing increasingly suspicious of Iraqi moves that might otherwise have been aimed at close co-operation. In fact, Iraq pinned its hopes on the then Defence Minister, Hafez Assad, who took over in Syria in 1970 by ousting Salah Jadid and other leaders of the 1966 *coup*. Saddam Hussein's visit to Syria was the culmination of all these hopes.⁴⁴

After Saddam Hussein's visit to Syria in March, two events took place that led to further misunderstanding. A crisis developed between the two countries when in June of the same year Iraq nationalized the Iraqi Petroleum Company (IPC). This was followed by the nationalization of the company's properties in

⁴³A more recent example was provided when, in November 1970, Syria joined Egypt in a federation that included Libya also, shortly after President Assad came to power in his country. The major aim of this union was formulation of a unified policy towards Israel. The two countries maintained co-operation until after the war of October 1973, when Egypt adopted a different peace policy and left Syria alone. The present Syrian regime is trying hard to get out of this situation of isolation by promoting the closest possible co-operation and co-ordination among the countries of the erstwhile historic region of Syria that included the Lebanon and Jordan also. Such co-operation and co-ordination will ultimately help in attaining sufficient strength to resist outside influence, and also in achieving greater capability for manoeuvre in carrying out policies in a local framework.

⁴⁴The present Iraqi view of the Syrian Bath regime is well demonstrated in Saddam Hussein's interview to *Al-Dastour* (Beirut). On the crisis between Iraq and Syria, Saddam Hussein said: "We shall always remain brethren to our people in Syria, but at the same time we shall never be brethren to the rulers. Even if the flow of the Euphrates returned to normal tomorrow, this attitude would never change. . . . Our attitude to the rulers of Syria will never change even if they try to patch up all the gaps they have created." Text of the interview is reproduced in the *Baghdad Observer* of 4 October 1975.

Syria and of a pipeline that extended from Iraqi oil-fields across Syria to the Mediterranean coast, and the consequent demand by the Government of Syria for a big hike in royalties and Iraq's rejection of the demand. This led to a sharp deterioration in the relations between the two countries. Indeed it appears to have caused drastic rethinking in Iraq on the whole structure of Iraqi-Syrian oil-water relations. Then, on 26 August 1973, Iraq concluded an agreement with Turkey for the construction of an oil pipeline from Iraqi oil-fields, across Turkey to the Mediterranean. Syria felt infuriated, for it felt that the agreement was a retaliation by Iraq and a direct attack on its interests relating to royalties from the oil pipeline extending across Syria. The Syrians said that Iraq had already agreed with Syria on a project aimed at increasing the capacity of the present pipeline across Syria by 10,000,000 tons a year⁴⁵ and that the agreed pipeline across Turkey was uneconomical, as it entailed an "exorbitant cost".⁴⁶ They accused Iraq of "reviving a British-Nuri project" "in addition to the conditions Turkey stipulated to Iraq under which Iraq should supply the US Sixth Fleet with Iraqi oil".⁴⁷

The last tripartite meeting to be held on the question of sharing the water of the Euphrates was the one that took place in Baghdad in May 1972. Since then Iraq appears to have made a point of distinguishing between a country with which it has a formal treaty relationship on the subject (Turkey) and a country with which it has no such treaty (Syria). It has tried to promote good will in

⁴⁵As indicated earlier, Iraq must have had some framework for broader co-operation with Syria in mind, making distribution of the Euphrates waters part of a package deal. During Saddam Hussein's visit to Damascus in March 1972, protocols concerning co-operation between Syria and Iraq relating to the three fields—namely the Euphrates waters, economic co-operation, and construction of new pipelines across Syria—were postponed to facilitate further discussions. See report of the statement at the end of the visit, in *Al-Ahram*, 27 March 1972. Apparently Iraq agreed during the intervening period for the new pipeline project across Syria. Embarrassed by the Syrian criticism, the official Iraqi Bath paper, *Ath-Thawrah*, said that Iraq still stood by its agreement. While it criticized Syria for what it called its "extortionate attitude which conflicts with all measures of unity and dealings among brothers, when they imposed tolls on the nationalized Iraqi oil", it also said that the agreement with Turkey was in line with the Government's policy of diversifying the outlets for pumping nationalized Iraqi oil to the world market instead of confining itself to just one outlet, "which, for one reason or another, could be blocked by the imperialists and their tools". The *Ath-Thawrah* article was released by the Iraqi News Agency and broadcast by Baghdad Radio. See *SWB* (ME/4413), 2 October 1973, p.A/3. There has been no news since then about the project for a new oil pipeline through Syria. The Iraqi explanation for the change introduced in Iraqi thinking in favour of diversification of the outlets for oil export as a result of the Syrian action of nationalization and the subsequent demand for an increase in royalties can be found in Saddam Hussein's speech inaugurating the "strategic oil pipeline" linking Haditha with Fua on the Gulf. *Iraq Today* (Baghdad), 15 January 1975, p. 7.

⁴⁶*SWB* (ME/4409), 27 September 1973, p.A/5.

⁴⁷*Ibid.* The accusation was contained in a statement allegedly issued by a so-called Iraqi national grouping and released by the Syrian Arab News Agency under the patronage of the Syrian Government.

Turkey and has always contacted it separately over the head of Syria on questions concerning the water of the Euphrates. This policy on the part of Iraq has annoyed Syria further, and Turkey has not proved to be of much help either. Alongside the Syrian Euphrates Dam, the Turkish Keban dam also became operational in 1973, and the filling up of these dams with water automatically resulted in a heavy drop in the flow of water at the Syrian-Iraqi border. Though Syria consumed more water than Turkey, for it diverted the water for irrigation purposes also, it laid the blame at the door of Turkey and Iraq.⁴⁸

Though, with the drastic reduction in the flow of water towards Iraq during the following years (1974-75) the quarrel between Iraq and Syria over the water of the Euphrates took a violent turn, the issue became complicated in reality because of overambitious political planning, especially by the country to which it mattered most, viz Iraq. Further, elements of active conflict were introduced into the relationship between the two sides in the period after the war of October 1973, and the quarrel over the Euphrates assumed a multi-dimensional form, with political rivalry overshadowing everything else.

After the Arab-Israeli War of 1973, Iraq wanted a definite role for itself in the conflict. This would have been possible only through Syrian co-operation. Syria, however, pursued a different policy in collaboration with Egypt and ignored Iraq. It would, of course, have liked Iraq not to oppose its peace efforts. This was something unacceptable to Iraq: it was politically advantageous for Iraq to oppose.

If Iraq had opposed Syria and campaigned against it, Syria also had an easy target to hit by way of retaliation. In the spring of 1974 it slowed down further the flow of water towards Iraq. This played havoc in the Iraqi part of the Euphrates basin. Syria later released the water at Iraq's request. Iraq not only refused to accept the pressure but also criticized Syria more vehemently than its other partner Egypt, although Egypt was pursuing a more active peace policy towards Israel than Syria. Syria slowed the flow of water again in 1975 and did not release the water till the season was over.⁴⁹

⁴⁸A statement by a responsible source of the Syrian Foreign Ministry on 20 April 1975 criticized bilateral Iraqi-Turkish contacts on the subject without Syrian knowledge. It blamed Iraq for avoiding tripartite negotiations regarding setting a time-table for filling up the three reservoirs—Keban, Tabqa, and Habbaniyah. It also said that Turkey sometimes stopped the water completely as a result of what it called the "Iraqi refusal to co-operate with Syria". The typed Arabic text of this statement was provided to the present writer by the Syrian Embassy in New Delhi.

⁴⁹Iraq complained that as a result of this Syrian control over the flow of water, 70 per cent of the crop was damaged in the Euphrates basin in 1975. See *Al-Hawadith*, 22 August 1975, p. 28. It also claimed that in March 1975, March being a month when the Iraqi farmer requires water for both his standing winter crops and the summer crops yet to be sown, the average flow of water in the Euphrates on the Syrian-Iraqi border was about 258 cubic metres per second. But the "prevailing estimates" showed that in the beginning of March the average flow at the Turkish-Syrian border was 920 cubic metres per second, which, according to Iraq,

Despite the efforts of the two countries to iron out their differences with other neighbours, they have been unable to settle their bilateral differences. On the contrary their relations have indeed deteriorated. This is evident from the way violent elements were introduced into the Euphrates issue in 1975, after Iraq had signed the Algiers agreement with Iran. Though Syria also was on comparatively good terms with Iran, it criticized Iraq for selling out Arab rights in Arabistan or Ahwaz. Syria was afraid that Iraq might turn its attention to Syria more vigorously after Iraq's disputes with Iran, especially the Kurdish problem, were settled and large-scale arrests of pro-Iraqi elements in Syria were reported. Iraq's proposals in July 1975 for the creation of a "northern military front" against Israel and Syria's feeling of being offended⁵⁰ should be seen within this framework.

Now, with Saudi mediatory efforts since the middle of 1975, much of the heat and violence has gone out of the dispute. None the less an early settlement of the dispute is impossible without understanding between the two countries and without their full appreciation of the need for overall mutual co-operation in the coming years.

MAY 1976

was proof that Syria was storing more water at the Tabqa reservoir than it required. See *Azmat al-Furat*, n. 23, p. 22. Syria rejected the Iraqi allegation, and claimed that in 1974, with hardly any change in the situation in 1975, the amount of water reaching the Turkish-Syrian border was 12.8 billion cubic metres as against the usual average annual flow of 28 billion cubic metres. Statement by the Syrian Euphrates Dam Minister, n. 35. The fact remains then that a situation of water scarcity was created in the Iraqi part of the river and that Syria released water from its reservoir at will. Naturally Syria claimed that it gave water to Iraq from its own "share", which is otherwise still undecided.

⁵⁰For the message from Syria to Iraq on President Ahmed Hassan al-Bakr's speech of 16 July proposing creation of the front, and Iraq's reply, see the *Baghdad Observer* of 14 August 1975.

GREAT BRITAIN AND THE BIRTH OF SYRIAN AND LEBANESE INDEPENDENCE

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Though of major importance to the field of international studies, Britain's role in the devolution of the French mandate has not been thoroughly researched, nor adequately or thematically presented, at least in printed form.¹ Even the more detailed accounts by George Kirk and Howard Sachar have treated the subject in a rather general and sporadic fashion, serving merely as adjuncts to broader themes of Middle Eastern history.²

Prompted by these shortcomings and utilizing British archival material which has since become accessible, the present study will examine the birth of Syrian and Lebanese independence in the context of an inimical encounter—encounter not only between the Levantine nationalists and the French, but mainly between the French and the British, who, ironically, had been instrumental in the birth of the French mandate itself. Emphasis will also be placed upon the interplay of domestic, regional, and international politics in this, the last phase of historic Anglo-French rivalry in the Levant.

The resurgence of that dormant rivalry during the Second World War emanated basically from the circumstances and exigencies of the conflict. Britain's war effort in the Middle East demanded that it should pay close attention to the Levant states, partly because their nationalist ferment was sympathetically echoed in various Arab capitals, but largely because of their strategic proximity to other areas vital to British interests. Enemy bombers based in Syria, for instance, could, as British official quarters feared, threaten Egypt, the Suez Canal, the oil

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¹Cf. Abed al-Hafiz Mansur, "Anglo-French Rivalry in the Levant and the Question of Syro-Lebanese Independence, 1939-1943" (Unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of Oregon, 1964).

²George Kirk, *The Middle East in the War* (London, 1952), pp. 92ff. and 272ff.; and Howard M. Sachar, *Europe Leaves the Middle East, 1936-1954* (London, 1974), pp. 194ff. and 282ff.

APRIL-JUNE 1977