

process, the reforming and centralizing *tanzimat* brought into being a class of young Westernized officials and officers who became increasingly disaffected towards the Ottoman Sultan whom they considered a despot. These Young Turks were moved by European ideologies, which they believed to hold the key to freedom, prosperity and happiness. They also came to believe that the promise which these ideologies held could not be realized unless the Sultan's power were destroyed. In the circumstances of the Ottoman Empire, this could be done not by constitutional, but by conspiratorial means. Hence the Young Turk *coups d'état* of 1908-9. These *coups d'état*, and the political style of the Young Turk officers who succeeded to the Sultan's power, were most familiar to Nuri al-Sa'id, Ja'far al-'Askari, Yasin al-Hashimi, Bakr Sidqi and the many other officers in the Ottoman army who were to exercise power in Iraq. It was they who set up and ran the political, administrative, military and educational institutions which produced and fostered the conspiratorial officers and the politicized school and college teachers who between them were to destroy the monarchy. If we are looking for the antecedents which may explain such phenomena as Qasim, Arif and their successors, we would not be straying too far if we were to look upon Niazi, Enver and Talat as their precursors and heralds.

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THE IRAQI-PERSIAN FRONTIER: Part II, Summary 1639-1938

1475, 147-54

C. J. EDMONDS

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I 1639-1842

THE OLD Turco-Persian boundary from the Persian Gulf to Ararat measured about 1,180 miles, of which Iraq inherited from the Ottoman Empire about 920 miles, including 440 in Kurdistan. The earliest surviving document defining the boundary is the treaty concluded at Zuhab between the two Empires in 1639. It is couched in the flowery and grandiloquent style, studded with quotations from the Koran, favoured by the oriental diplomatic draftsmen of the time, and concludes: "This happy peace will last and be maintained till the day of resurrection, and whoever shall alter it after having heard it, verily this sin shall be upon those who have altered it."

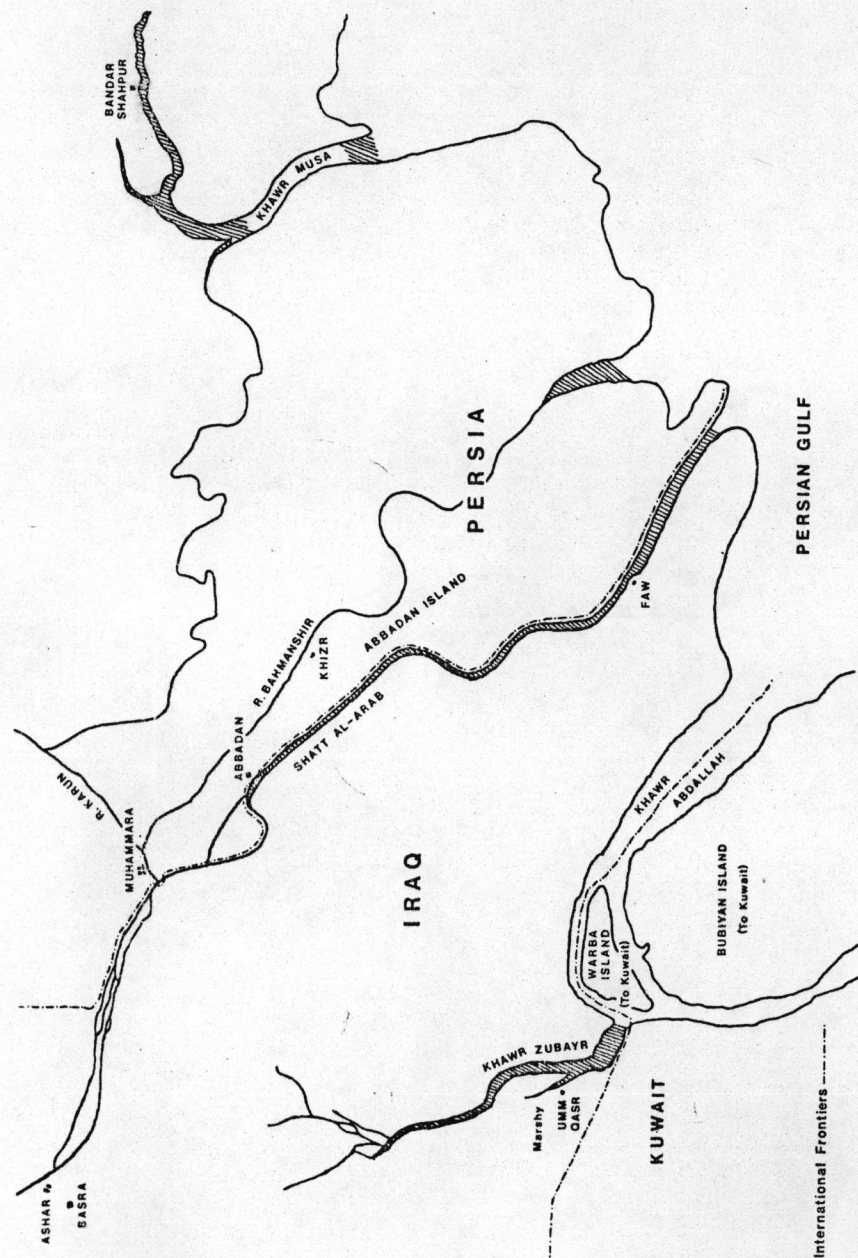
In spite of the noble sentiments so eloquently expressed and the high authority of Holy Writ, hostilities were constantly renewed when either side felt strong enough to take the offensive, and were only temporarily interrupted by fresh treaties concluded in 1727 (Hamadan), 1736 (Constantinople), 1746 (Mughan) and 1823 (Erzurum). The treaty of 1746 specifically reaffirmed the frontier laid down in the treaty of 1639, and the treaty of 1823 reaffirmed "the stipulations of the treaty of 1746 respecting the ancient boundaries of the two Empires". A series of major acts of aggression by one side or the other between 1833 and 1842, as well as countless minor incidents, brought the two States once more to the brink of open war.

II 1843-1914

THE MODERN history of the dispute begins with the acceptance by the two governments of an offer of mediation from Great Britain and Russia. In 1843 a Commission composed of representatives of the four powers met at Erzurum. But, according to the British member, "the discussions were protracted by every conceivable difficulty which was thrown in the way of the Commissioners, principally by the Turks", and by "perpetual struggles of the Mediating Commissioners to keep the peace and explain the simplest transactions with our colleagues". Nevertheless, with many interruptions and more violent and bloody incidents, two in Erzurum

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mediation



itself, the negotiations continued, in Erzurum and in Europe, until finally the second Treaty of Erzurum was signed on 31 May 1847.

Although quarrels over several parts of the land frontier have continued to flare up until the present day, for our present purpose only part of Article 2 and the whole of Article 9 need be quoted textually.

Article 2. . . . The Ottoman Government formally recognizes the unrestricted sovereignty of the Persian Government over the city and port of Muhammara [now Khurramshahr], the island of Khizr [now Abbadan], the anchorage, and the lands on the eastern bank – that is to say, the left bank – of the Shatt al-Arab which are in the possession of tribes recognized as belonging to Persia. Further, Persian vessels shall have the right to navigate freely without let or hindrance on the Shatt al-Arab from the mouth of the same to the point of contact of the frontier of the two Parties.

Article 9. All points or articles of previous treaties, and especially of the Treaty concluded at Erzurum in 1238 [1823], which are not specifically amended or annulled by the present Treaty, are hereby reaffirmed in respect of any and all of their provisions, as if they were reproduced in their entirety in the present Treaty.

The question of sovereignty over the Shatt was not raised during these negotiations, the lines at issue being: the old channel of the Karun a few miles farther east, a line bisecting Khizr Island, and "the actual boundary" along the left bank; eventually the third, the most favourable to Persia, prevailed. After further last minute objections and delays, ratifications of the Treaty were exchanged on 21 March 1848.

The Demarcation Commission provided for by the Treaty started work at Muhammara in January 1850, but once more, "the spirit of chicane, dispute and encroachment" vitiated every attempt to get on. Work was interrupted by the Crimean War (1854-56) and the Anglo-Persian War of 1856-57, and more time was lost when discrepancies in the British and Russian surveys had to be reconciled in a *carte identique*, which was not completed till 1869. In the meantime further disputes had led the principals themselves to negotiate another convention (also 1869), which only served to "introduce a new element of discord, the *status quo* (scil. of 1848) therein prescribed being differently appreciated by either litigant", and yet another, equally abortive, in 1874.

And so things went on with mutual complaints of trespass, the Persians constantly appealing to the mediating powers to put an end to persistent violations of the Treaty by the Turks, and those powers emphasizing, to the Turks in particular, "the necessity of putting into effect the explicit stipulations of the Treaty of Erzurum which are tantamount to the restoration of the *status quo* of 1848". After another bipartite Protocol of Tehran had come to nothing, the mediating powers again intervened, and in 1913 the Protocol of Constantinople was signed by the representatives of all four powers. In it the boundary line was described in considerable detail; a Delimitation Commission, in addition to its duties of demarcation, would be charged with the task of establishing the *status quo* of 1848 for those parts not precisely defined in the Protocol, the mediating commis-

sioners would be vested with arbitral powers to decide all disputes, and as soon as any section had been demarcated, that part was to be considered as definitely and unalterably fixed.

The Commission started work at the southern end in January 1914 and finished its task at Ararat in October, a few weeks after the outbreak of the First World War. As regards the river, the Protocol of 1913 had expressly stated: "The frontier follows the course of the Shatt al-Arab down to the sea leaving under Ottoman sovereignty the river and all the islands in it" with the exception only of certain named islands (including Abbadan) and "the modern port and anchorage of Muhammara above and below the confluence of the river Karun". The description annexed to the Proceedings of the Delimitation Commission is even more precise as: "following low-water level of the left bank, departing from it only to the extent necessary to leave in Persia the islands named and the anchorage".*

III 1915-1938

AT THE END of October 1914 the Ottoman Empire entered the war on the side of Germany. Early in November British forces landed at the mouth of the Shatt al-Arab and, as they advanced northwards, took over responsibility for the administration of the occupied territory up to the newly demarcated frontier. The rights to water from a number of streams rising in Persia and crossing into Iraq had been an age-long cause of local friction, and it was hardly to be expected that these, or the many chronic squabbles over grazing or farming rights which had only been settled by the arbitral awards of the recent Demarcation Commission, would remain quiescent for long. But it was not until 1931 that they began once more to attract serious attention.

For Iraq, with the end of the British Mandate promised for November 1932, a newly formed Ministry for Foreign Affairs was dealing with relations with the limitrophe neighbours. In Persia a rejuvenated administration under the robust leadership of Riza Shah Pahlavi was establishing its authority in regions where the writ of the central government had not run for decades. Early in 1932 King Faysal I of Iraq, accompanied by Ministers, paid a courtesy visit to Riza Shah in Tehran. Frontier relations were of course discussed and, according to a communiqué issued at the end of the visit, the Ministers of the two parties "found themselves in complete agreement on all the principles on which their policies should proceed" and had decided to begin at once with negotiations for the conclusion of the necessary treaties and conventions.

In the north, however, the new Turkish Republic had been showing itself no more accommodating than its Ottoman predecessor, and met Persian demands for the observance of the frontier demarcated in 1914 with the blunt declaration that the Protocol of 1913 "could not be regarded as a valid political instrument since it was neither approved by the Chamber of Deputies nor ratified by the Sultan". Faced by the prospect of being left with the worst of both worlds, Persia decided to reverse its attitude towards the various agreements leading up to the demarcation of 1914.

* For a fuller account of the story from 1639 to 1914, the interested reader may refer to the writer's *Kurds, Turks and Arabs* (OUP, 1957), pp. 125-39.

By the end of 1932 all the old quarrels were showing signs of flaring up again, and by 1934 friction had become so serious that the Iraqi government, taking its stand on the various instruments signed by the two Parties up to 1914, complained to the League of Nations* of a series of "flagrant acts of aggression in the last two years". Of the examples quoted the most serious was the persistent flouting, "clearly under orders", by Persian naval officers (two sloops and four gunboats had appeared on the Shatt for the first time in November 1932) of the rules and by-laws of the Port of Basra, with great consequent danger to navigation. Complaints of "aggression" on land included the building of four police-posts on the Iraqi side of the frontier, and interference with the waters of a stream, the Gunjan Cham, near the little town of Zurbatiya.†

In reply the Persian government, in a long and elaborate legal argument, maintained that "the Treaty of Erzurum of 1847, the Protocol of Constantinople of 1913, and consequently the delimitation . . . of 1914 have no force, either in law or in equity, to determine the frontier".

The case came up at Geneva in January 1935. Somewhat ironically the delegate of Italy (then itself in the dock for aggression against Abyssinia) was appointed rapporteur. The protracted proceedings there and, in February, at Rome, whither the rapporteur insisted on transferring the negotiations, need not detain us for long. Of all the numerous draft Resolutions setting out a procedure for settling the dispute, which the members of the League Secretariat and the rapporteur's Italian assistants carried industriously to and fro, the only article on which the parties could agree read "*Le Conseil rend hommage à l'esprit de modération et d'amitié dont ont fait preuve les deux Gouvernements.*"

Finally the Iraqi Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nuri Pasha, despairing of obtaining a settlement through the League, decided to fall back on direct negotiations, a proposal to which everybody was glad to agree. But even for this it took many hours of discussion before a formula could be found for the requisite Resolution, owing to the Persian objection to the word "adjourn" with its suggestion that the complaint of "aggression" was still on the table.

AT THIS STAGE it may be helpful to try to analyse, very briefly, the thinking behind the apparently mulish behaviour of the parties.

Memories in Persia are long, and there no doubt subsisted some rankling sense of grievance over certain withdrawals imposed by the awards of 1914, withdrawals which had not been matched by recoveries of territory in the northern, Turkish, sector. But far more important was

* At this point the writer must declare a personal involvement. From 1925 to 1945 he was attached in an advisory capacity to the Iraqi Ministry of the Interior. It fell to him to prepare the Iraqi case for the complaint to the League, and in 1935 to accompany the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Nuri Pasha, three times to Geneva, and once each to Rome and Tehran, on business connected with the dispute. This part of the narrative is thus based on his own first-hand knowledge of the events chronicled. He trusts that he has succeeded in setting out the facts without *parti pris*.

† This hardy annual has flared up again quite recently, in February 1974, and again in February 1975, when the Iraqis were accused of seeking to destroy by artillery bombardment a dam built across the Cham up-stream of the frontier.

Persia
declares
Erzurum II
not in 1934

the resentment at what was felt to be an anomalous and inequitable situation on the Shatt al-Arab, intolerably wounding to the national pride, and now becoming daily more unbearable with the development of the oil port at Abbadan. The validity of the numerous treaties and agreements by which the river had been recognized as Ottoman, and so now Iraqi, property must therefore be challenged.

The new men of Iraq had no such memories, going back over the long history of the frontier. The Shatt was their life-line, their only means of access to the open sea (the possibility of a deep-water harbour at the mud flats of Umm Qasr near the Kuwait border had then hardly been thought of, still less explored), whereas Persia, in addition to rights of unhindered navigation on the Shatt, had some 1,250 miles of coastline with numerous ports and anchorages, as well as a deep-water harbour, Bandar Shahpur, on the Khawr Musa, where they had already established the terminus of the Trans-Persia railway. The Iraqis therefore felt that recognition of the existence of a known, legal, frontier line must be the starting-point for the discussion of practical measures for dealing with frontier problems and overcoming difficulties.

As agreed at Geneva the representatives of the two sides met in August 1935 at Tehran, and discussions were resumed more or less at the point at which they had been left in 1932 after the visit of King Faysal to the Shah. Drafts were exchanged of special conventions, one to cover a Joint Board to deal with all aspects of the administration of the Shatt including conservancy, navigation, police, customs, quarantine, etc., and another, a Bon-Voisinage Agreement, to include machinery to deal with the various all-too-familiar problems of the land frontier. At one moment agreement appeared to be in sight, with hints that Persia might drop all demands regarding the land frontier in exchange for satisfaction on the Shatt, and that Iraq was ready to concede some special arrangement for Abbadan. But once again the talks broke down on the question of any mention of the line of 1914 and the instruments on which it was based. At Nuri Pasha's farewell audience, however, the Shah said that he was ready to accept the existing frontier, land and river, and that he only wanted "one or two kilometres" at Abbadan. The Council of the League was due to meet in 10 days' time, and a joint communiqué was issued stating that "most of the misunderstandings which had existed between the two countries had been removed and complete agreement between the two Parties was now in sight"; it added that negotiations were to be continued at Geneva. But again, for the usual reasons, no progress had been made by the end of the session.

The *coup d'état* of 29 October 1936 in Iraq hardly interrupted the negotiations, which were continuing at Baghdad. The new Prime Minister, Hikmat Sulayman, was as hard-headed and pragmatic a politician as the Shah now again showed himself to be. On 4 July 1937, at Tehran, the two Foreign Ministers signed a short, businesslike Frontier Treaty of six articles. By the first the parties confirmed, except for one modification, the validity of the Protocol signed at Constantinople in 1913 and the Proceedings of the Commission of Delimitation of 1914, and bound themselves to observe them. Article 2 defined the modification, altering

rect. Shatt
to be at
Abbadan

the frontier line so as to leave on the Persian side the anchorage of Abbadan, about five miles long and extending out to the thalweg.* Article 3 provided for the immediate formation of a Demarcation Commission to re-erect the 1914 pillars and erect additional new ones as necessary. Article 4 provided *inter alia* that all dues levied on shipping in the Shatt should be devoted solely to expenditure in the interests of conservancy and navigation, and continued: "(c) The fact that in the Shatt al-Arab the boundary line sometimes follows low-water mark and sometimes the *thalweg* or the *medium filum aquae* does not prejudice in any way the right of user of the two High Contracting Parties in the whole course of the river." Article 5 provided for the conclusion of a Convention to cover all matters relating to conservancy and navigation, as well as to sanitation, smuggling, etc.

not
implemented

There was also signed a few days later a Treaty of Friendship by which the parties undertook to conclude a number of agreements, among them a "Convention of Bon Voisinage, concerning security in the frontier zone and the settlement of disputes arising in the said zone".

The outcome of the direct negotiations was duly reported to the League by the Iraqi government, and at the meeting of the Council on 10 September 1937 the Persian delegate expressed the concurrence of his government without reservation: "It gives me great pleasure, in my turn, to confirm this satisfactory information. . . . The dispute has just been ended in an agreement satisfactory to the interests of both Parties, and this agreement will undoubtedly be ratified in the near future by the Parliaments of the two friendly neighbouring countries." In thanking the members of the Council he again described the agreement "as one which will bring to an end a long-standing dispute and will ensure for all time the friendly relations which should at all times exist between the two neighbouring countries". The treaties were duly ratified in 1938.

A member of the British team on the Demarcation Commission of 1914,† commenting on what he thought was, "with the erection of pillar No. CXXXVII on the col between Great and Little Ararat, the culminating act of seventy years of diplomatic pourparlers, international conferences and special commissions", calls the whole story "a phenomenon of procrastination unparalleled in the chronicles of oriental diplomacy". He little guessed that 60 years later, in spite of references to the League of Nations, two more treaties and several commissions, the parties would again be bickering in the same old way.

Postscript. Just as this paper was going to press, on 6 March 1975, at the end of a conference of Oil Exporting Countries at Algiers, it was announced that yet another agreement had been concluded between the Parties, and that "the ancient differences between the two countries were finally over". From the meagre press reports it would seem that the new Agreement closely followed precedent in that it (a) reaffirmed the validity of the Protocol of 1913 and the Delimitation of 1914 with one modifica-

* Although the intention is clear, the drafting of this article is amateurish and may not have proved quibble-proof.

† G. E. Hubbard, *From the Gulf to Ararat* (Edinburgh, 1916).

tion, the substitution of the thalweg for the low-water line in the whole length of the Shatt al-Arab down to the sea, and (b) provided for commissions to elaborate the instruments necessary for its implementation. Mention of the compulsory use of Iraqi pilots in tankers seems to indicate that the Convention for the joint control of conservancy and navigation provided for under the 1937 Treaty, which for all practical purposes would have obscured the existence of a legal frontier at all in the river (negotiations had been plodding along slowly until interrupted by the War of 1939-45), had never taken shape. Iraq's concession of the thalweg line thus seems to have been a cheap price to pay for the cessation of all Persian aid, military and humanitarian, to the Kurdish autonomists and so for the sudden end of a crippling civil war.

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EUROPEAN AND ASIAN INFLUENCES ON THE PERSIAN REVOLUTION OF 1906

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THE ORIGINS of modernization and Westernization in Persia may be traced back to the last years of the eighteenth century. Although contacts between the Persian rulers and Europe had originated in the Safavid period, they did not result in any modernizing influences in Persian society. It was only in the last decade of the eighteenth century that intellectuals began to pay particular attention to European social and political institutions. The first eye-witness account of European society seems to be *Masir-i Talibi* (The Travel of Talib) by Mirza Abu Talib Khan Isfahani, a Persian émigré in India.¹ Another early Persian account of Western social and political institutions belongs to 'Abd al-Latif Ibn Abi Talib al-Musawi al-Shushtari al-Jaza'iri who migrated from Persia to India at the age of 30. While there, in 1801, Jaza'iri wrote his *Tuhfah al-'Alam* (The Gift of the World) which is based on the information he acquired in India.²

These works, however thought-provoking, do not seem to have exerted any noticeable influence on the Persian ruling circles. Modernization on the European pattern began to present itself as something vital only during the first decade of the nineteenth century. Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798, and his dream of a joint overland invasion of India with Russia, made Persia a centre of attention for the Powers - France, Great Britain and Russia. 'Abbas Mirza, the distinguished Qajar Crown Prince, and his assistant, Mirza Abu al-Qasim Qa'immaqam, realized that the development of modern technology in war and in other aspects of life made Europe superior to Persia, and that if Persia were to continue to exist, measures would have to be taken to modernize the country.³ By modernization we mean the introduction among the Persian people of a modern administration, a modern army, centralized government, a modern system of taxation, modern education, modern transportation, modern values, and so on. The term "Westernization" is used because attempts were made to introduce Persia to the modernism which originated from Western Europe.⁴

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