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Iraq – Saudi Arabia Boundary

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

No. 111

IRAQ - SAUDI ARABIA BOUNDARY

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IRAQ - SAUDI ARABIA BOUNDARY

I. BRIEF

The Iraq - Saudi Arabia boundary is about 426 miles long and is delimited. The additional "Neutral Zone" segment between Iraq and the "Neutral Zone" is about 119 miles long; the southern boundary of the commonly held area, between the "Neutral Zone" and Saudi Arabia is about 125 miles long. The boundary proper traverses desert throughout its entire length. Beginning from Bir Ansab at the junction with the "Neutral Zone," the boundary follows in a generally northwest direction in straight line segments a distance of about 426 miles to the Jordanian tripoint on Jabal 'Anazah at 32°13'51" north latitude and 39°18'09" east longitude.

II. GEOPOLITICAL BACKGROUND

The Iraq - Saudi Arabia boundary like many other boundaries in the Near East, reflects the historic difficulty of drawing a boundary in the desert, like drawing a boundary in the ocean. In addition to the technical geographic problems, there are substantial impediments to delimitation of a boundary on the ground, based on the way of life of the Nomad and Islamic tradition. The present boundary between Iraq and Saudi Arabia, delimited in 1922, is the first international boundary that ever has been defined in this area.

In earliest historic times, the boundary area was located across what is said to have been a traditional route where early nomadic man migrated across the desert in search of the more fertile lands of the Tigris - Euphrates rivers. There empires rose and fell while in the Arabian Peninsula the barren desert sustained a relatively unchanged nomadic pattern of life until the recent discovery of oil.

Early Islamic Period. The singularly outstanding historical event in the Arabian Peninsula was the coming of the Prophet Muhammad and the introduction of Islam in the 7th Century, A.D. Until that time, most of Arabia was fragmented by warring, pagan, bedouin tribes.

By the time of Muhammad's death in 632 A.D.,¹ most of the Arabian Peninsula had been consolidated or conquered by Muslim forces. Almost immediately Muslim Arabs surged eastward in successive waves across the boundary area through Mesopotamia and the Persian Empire to central Asia. Damascus and Jerusalem fell in 636 and Ctesiphon, (south of present-day Baghdad), was captured in 637. Westward, Arab conquest reached as far as southern France.

¹ Muslims measure time from 622 A.D., the date of Muhammad's flight to Medina (Hijra) and refer to the pagan past as Al-Waqt al Jahiliyah, or Period of Ignorance.

With the establishment of the Umayyad Caliphate in Damascus (661 - 750), and the later shift of the center of power to Baghdad² under the Abassids (750 - 1258), of whom Harun ar-Rashid is famed, the Islamic Empire achieved prosperity and cultural brilliance, until destroyed by the Mongol invasions.³

Ottoman Period. The Mongol invasions which broke up the Abbasid Caliphate in Baghdad in 1258, also destroyed the Seljuk Turkish Dynasty in Asia Minor.

Later the Ottomans gained control of all Syria, Mesopotamia, Arabia, Egypt and North Africa. By the end of the 17th century, the Ottoman Empire extended over Southeastern Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, and North Africa, and ranked with the greatest of Western powers in importance and influence. During the early period of Ottoman power, administration and organization improved significantly over that of the earlier Caliphates. Before Ottoman supremacy was established in the boundary area, however, about two centuries of conflict, rooted in political and religious differences among the Turks, Persians, Arabs, and others elapsed. The Tigris - Euphrates was not only the frontier where Arab bedouin tribes encroached on the settled land but was also the site of clashes between Shi'i Persia and Sunni Ottoman Turkey.

The 19th Century. At the turn of the 18th century the puritannical Wahhabi movement, backed by the ancestors of the present ruling Saudi family established firm control of the Sultanate of Najd centered at Riyadh in central Arabia.

The Wahhabi threatened the urban riverine centers of Mesopotamia. In 1801 they sacked the Shi'i Holy City of Karbala, later raided Najaf and assailed Basra many times beginning in 1804. Two years later, most of Arabia, including Mecca, Medina and Jiddah, were under Wahhabi control.

The power of Wahhabi was finally suppressed by Ottoman Egyptian forces under Ibrahim Pasha (1811 - 1818), thus inflicting a major setback on the Saudi Dynasty. The Ottoman Sultan regained control of Mecca and Medina in the Hijaz, and in the Najd the Saudis accepted Ottoman suzerainty. Nevertheless, the question of power and control in Arabia, throughout the 19th century, and until after World War I, remained one of tribal rivalries and conflict.

In what was to become Iraq, however, (as in Syria and other parts of the far-reaching Ottoman Empire) maladministration and administrative decay became acute in the 19th century. Later administrative reforms including the creation of Vilayets, equivalent to provinces, and headed by a Vali or Governor, were designated for Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra.

² Baghdad was founded in 762 as Dar as-Salam.

³ Among examples of great contributions are listed, the preservation of classical Greek scientific achievements of Galen in Medicine, Ptolemy in Geography, Aristotle - Philosophy, Euclid - Geometry, the meta-physics of the Neo-Platonists, et al. many of which were lost in the original but translated into Arabic from Syriac by Syriac scholars encouraged by Arab Caliphs.

From the geopolitical view, the boundary area has never, throughout the history of the entire Near East, been insulated or isolated from international rivalries.⁴ Competition for political and economic advantage among the Great Powers sharpened significantly. Hardly a single European power had not volunteered to "aid" the "sick man of Europe."

It was Germany, however, the newest suitor of the Ottoman Empire, and the way it asserted self interest which challenged the other Great Powers. At the beginning of the 20th century, Germany was the only major European power that had acquired no Ottoman territory or established significant privileges. Subsequently, German aid to the Turkish Empire brought direct benefits to Germany. Germany trained the Turkish army and received many commercial concessions including the concession for the Anatolian Railway, thus extending the railway eastward from Constantinople, to become the "Berlin to Baghdad Railway."

During most of the 19th century, Britain's espousal of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was based on British determination to keep Russia out. But when new German inroads in the Near East (which the Drang nach osten policy typified) threatened her land communication link and "lifeline" to India, Britain turned to ally herself with Russia, a shift of allegiance which led to the line-up of military forces in World War I.

Rise of Nationalism and World War I Initially, the Arab nationalism of the late 19th century looked not so much to separation from the Ottoman Empire as to the institution of a democratic constitution, decentralization, and some form of autonomy with special concessions to the Arabic language. For the most part, the objectives of the Arab reformers were not dissimilar to the demands of the Young Turks, whom the Arabs supported in the Revolution of 1908.

But no sooner did the Young Turks gain control, when it became clear that Arab nationalist aspirations would receive no more recognition than under the absolute rule of the Sultan. After 1908, therefore, Arab nationalism took another direction, toward separation and independence. Secret Arab political societies soon were organized, many of which included officers of the Ottoman Army. The Mosul and Baghdad Vilayets, as well as Damascus Aleppo, Jerusalem and other urban centers, became key areas for nationalist independence movements.

In the boundary area itself, however, as well as in other parts of Arabia, tribal "authority" continued to prevail relatively immune to Turkish authority (despite Ottoman reforms). By the end of the 19th century two major tribal factions -- the Rashid Shaykhs of Hail and Jabal Shammar and the Al-Saud Shaykhs of Riyadh were paramount in the boundary area as well as in most of the plateau area of Central Arabia. In 1891 the Rashidis defeated the head of the Saudi family, Abd ar-Rahman, who fled with his young son Abd al-Aziz to

⁴ For more information on other boundaries of Arab countries see IBS 94, Jordan - Syria Boundary, December 30, 1969, IBS 98, Iraq - Jordan Boundary, April 15, 1970, IBS 100, Iraq - Syria Boundary, May 15, 1970.

Kuwait. In 1902, Abd al-Aziz, (who became better known as Ibn Saud), then about 21 years old with a few followers recaptured Riyadh. Rashidi power subsequently declined while the Saudis gradually gained control in the south and the north with only the Al-Hashimi family in the Hijaz as rivals.

Early in April 1914, Amir Abdullah Al-Hashimi, second son of Sharif Husayn of Mecca, asked the British High Commissioner in Cairo what would be the British attitude if the Arab provinces revolted against the Sultan. The British response, based on its traditional policy of preserving "the integrity of the Ottoman Empire" was negative. The entry, however, of Turkey on Germany's side in World War I in November 1914, brought about an abrupt shift of political interests in the Arab provinces of the Ottoman state. Britain, now believing that her land communication link through Mesopotamia as well as the water link through Suez to India and the Far East were threatened, encouraged the Arabs to revolt. As a result of the Great War, the Iraq - Saudi Arabia boundary became one of many completely new delineations in the Near East.

Negotiations between the British Foreign Office and the Arabs were embodied in the protracted exchange of letters between the High Commissioner in Egypt and the Sharif of Mecca July 14, 1915, to March 1916, known as the McMahon - Husayn Correspondence.⁵ The question of boundaries from the Arab viewpoint, was essential to the discussions of an independent Arab Kingdom.

Husayn's demands as expressed in the first letter, asked for independence of "the whole of the Arab Nation" which included Syria, Mesopotamia and Arabia proper. The frontiers claimed were those specified in a Damascus Protocol of the Arab Nationalists:

North: The line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37° N. and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midyat-Jazirat (Ibn 'Umar)-Amadia to the Persian frontier;

East: The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf;

South: The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden, whose status was to be maintained);

West: The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin.

Other provisions included abolition of Capitulations, a defensive alliance between Great Britain and the Arab state, and economic preference to Great Britain.

The British Government replied on October 24, 1915, as follows:

⁵ Cmd 5957, Correspondence between Sir Henry McMahon His Majesty's High Commissioner at Cairo and the Sherif Hussayn of Mecca, London, 1939.

"Subject to modifications, Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the Arabs in all regions within the limits demanded by the Sherif of Mecca."

These modifications excluded from the Arab State (a) "the two districts of Mersina and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, and (b) the area lying within those frontiers in which Great Britain was not to free to act 'without detriment to the interests of her ally, France....'"

On May 16, 1916, Great Britain and France, after an exchange of letters over a period of several months, reached a secret understanding commonly known as the "Sykes - Picot Agreement" governing the post-war divisions of Ottoman Arab territory in effect, into British and French spheres of influence.

Provisions of the "Sykes - Picot Agreement" included the partition of the independent Arab State or Confederation of Arab States into several zones which included most of the Ottoman Arab lands and which influenced directly the eventual delineation of the Iraq - Saudi Arabia boundary. For all practical purposes, (a) France assumed control of northern geographical Syria, which was to become Lebanon, and Syria including Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo and also Mosul in what was to be Northern Iraq.⁶ (b) Britain assumed the Baghdad Vilayet (c) Syria to the east of Homs, Hama and Damascus came directly under French influence. (d) South Syria, in what was to become Trans-Jordan extending northeasterly making a direct land connection across the Syrian Desert to the Tigris - Euphrates was to British administration.⁷

Meanwhile British diplomacy had been very active in the boundary area. On November 3, 1914, the Shaykh of Kuwait was promised recognition of Kuwait's independence under British protection providing that the Shaykh cooperated in the attack and liberation of Basra, a condition which he promptly fulfilled. In December 1915, a treaty of friendship was signed between Britain and Ibn Saud by which Britain recognized the independence and territorial integrity of the Najd, and granted Ibn Saud a monthly subsidy.⁸

The Arab Revolt. Neither the "Sykes - Picot Agreement," nor the rather arbitrary delineations on maps affixed to the Agreement was known to the Arabs when the Arab Revolt with the military and financial support of Great Britain began on June 5, 1916.

Full texts of the Sykes - Picot Agreements were released by Izvestia and Pravda on November 23, 1917; the Manchester Guardian printed the texts on November 26, 1917.⁹ The publication of this "secret" agreement startled the Arab nationalists. Doubt and anxiety concerning Allied intentions soon spread. The Arab leadership, however, whose fears

⁶ Essentially, the Ottoman Vilayets of Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul.

⁷ As was Palestine, also to Britain.

⁸ L5000 per month; in almost every case "gifts of gold" were placed "at the service of the Arab chiefs," Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1925, Vol. 1, p. 273.

⁹ At about the same time another event, the "Balfour Declaration" of November 2, 1917, was to have momentous impact on the geopolitical structure of the entire Near East.

were allayed somewhat by renewed assurances, seemed persuaded of the good faith of Britain. A British Foreign Office expert stated: "The discovery did not affect their loyal cooperation with their British Ally."¹⁰

Most of the fighting provoked by the Revolt took place in the Hijaz and in Syria, while in Iraq there was little organized challenge to the Turkish Army on the part of the Arabs. Many of Faysal's best officers, however, were Iraqi Arabs who had left the Turkish Army. After the Armistice, the Iraqi leaders returned to Iraq to foment Iraqi nationalism.¹¹

In the Arabian Peninsula tribal loyalties were divided. The Amir Ibn Rashid sided with Turkey, as did the Imam of Yemen. Abd al-Aziz Al-Saud, while officially neutral, served the Arab and Allied cause by harassing the Rashidi from time to time. In November 1916, Husayn proclaimed himself King of the Arab Nation, a fact that did not endear the Al-Hashimi to the Al-Saudi. Britain and France recognized Husayn only as King of the Hijaz.

The Arab Revolt, it is said, immobilized some 30,000 Turkish troops along the railway from Amman to Medina, and included guerrilla operations, aided by the legendary exploits of British Colonel T.E. Lawrence (Lawrence of Arabia), on the right flank of the British Army in Palestine.

In the Iraqi area, the capture of Baghdad on March 11, 1917, by British Indian troops advancing from Basra in the south under General Maude was a major success. At the time of the Armistice, Turkish troops were well entrenched in the northern highlands east of the Tigris. A column of British troops was on its way to occupy Mosul, which had been evacuated by Turkish troops, when news of the Mudros Armistice was received on October 31, 1918.

The signing of the Mudros Armistice on October 30, 1918, marked the end of Ottoman rule in Arab lands. The entire Fertile Crescent area was occupied by Allied troops. British troops located throughout the area had secured the vaunted land connection to India. A small French force was on the Syrian coast, and the Arab Army of King Husayn was in the interior.

¹⁰ Temperley, H.W.V., A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, p. 137.

¹¹ E.g., Yasin Pasha al-Hashimi, Ja'far al Askari and Nuri as-Sa'id, later many times Prime Minister of Iraq.

The Problems of Peace and Territorial Arrangements. Conflicting claims and rivalries previously submerged were revived by the Allied victory. On January 1, 1919, Amir Faysal submitted to the Paris Peace Conference a Memorandum of the Arab nationalist movement which expressed the desire "to unite the Arabs eventually into one Nation" ... and further hoped that the Powers would "find better means to give fuller effect to the aims of our national movement." "I came to Europe," he wrote, "on behalf of my father (King Husayn) and the Arabs of Asia... They expect the Powers to think of

them as one potential people, jealous of their language and liberty, and ask that no steps be taken inconsistent with the prospect of an eventual union of these areas under one sovereign government." On January 30, the Conference decided that the Arab provinces should be wholly separated from the Ottoman Empire and the newly conceived mandate-system applied to them.

On February 6, Faysal, addressing the Conference, recalled Allied promises. He demanded independence of the whole of Arab Asia and suggested the establishment of a confederation. He stated that the Arabs needed help but not at the price of independence. Subsequently, a dispute between Great Britain and France relating to the spheres of influence established by the "Sykes - Picot Agreement" delayed decision on various claims.

President Woodrow Wilson then recommended an international commission of inquiry to ascertain the wishes of the inhabitants. The Commission first accepted by Great Britain and France, was later rejected, and finally became the purely American King-Crane Commission. It toured all Syria including Palestine in the summer of 1919. Its report, presented to President Wilson, recommended a Mandate for Iraq and another for geographic Syria to be treated as a single unit. In both Iraq and Syria, it recommended that a constitutional monarchy be set up with Amir Faysal as King of Syria. In accordance with the wishes of the people, it further recommended that the United States be asked to undertake the single Mandate for Syria and Great Britain be offered Iraq. The Commission opposed a French mandate; the final report was ignored.

It ought to be noted that the Commission did not consider it necessary to visit Mesopotamia because "it was well known that the people of Iraq wanted Great Britain as the mandatory."¹² Whatever the merits of the decision not to visit Iraq, Gertrude Bell, then Oriental Secretary to the acting Civilian Commissioner of Baghdad had written on December 1918 "About Arab rule. In Mesopotamia they want us and no one else, because they know well we'll govern in accordance with the customs of the country."¹³ On November 30, 1918, Sir (Col.) Arnold T. Wilson, acting Civilian Commissioner received instructions from the India Office which stated: "In our opinion it is of great importance to get a genuine expression of local opinion on these points, and one of such a kind that could be announced to the world as the unbiased pronouncement of the population of

¹² Yale, William, The Near East, Ann Arbor, 1958, p. 316.

¹³ Ibid.

Mesopotamia." The plebiscite taken the following month gave an overwhelming majority in favor of Great Britain.¹⁴

Faysal returned to Syria, disappointed but hopeful that Great Britain would use her influence with France in favor of the Arabs. However, the Anglo - French Agreement of September 1919, which provided for the withdrawal of British Troops from Syria and from Cilicia, dismayed Faysal. Subsequently, the rise of the Kemalist movement which directly threatened French ambition in Cilicia, and the Turkish headwaters of the Tigris - Euphrates, led France to be even less amenable to concessions to the Arab Nationalists.

The Conference of San Remo decided on April 24, 1920, to assign the mandates for "Syria and Lebanon" to France and for Palestine and Mesopotamia to the UK. The declaration of the Mandates was rejected by Faysal and the Arabs and French prepared for war. On July 14, 1920, the French Commander-in-Chief, and High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon, General Gouraud, issued an ultimatum demanding unconditional acceptance of the Mandate. Faysal accepted, reportedly, against the wishes of a majority of his supporters. The answer to the ultimatum was delayed until after the time limit set by General Gouraud, who earlier had ordered French forces to advance on Damascus. On July 24, the French forces routed the hastily collected Arab forces at Maysalun near Damascus. The following day the city was occupied by the French Army and Faysal was forced into exile.

With nationalist activity frustrated by the French in Syria, agitation shifted to Iraq. Most of Faysal's Iraqi officers were members of a society, called Al Ahd (The Covenant), whose object was Iraqi independence from foreign control with a connection with an independent Syria. When the Syrian Congress proclaimed Faysal King of Syria in March, a council of Iraqi officers proclaimed his brother 'Abdullah as King of Iraq.

On May 3, 1920, Great Britain announced that she had accepted the Mandate for Iraq. Almost immediately in July, nationalist agitation increased to open rebellion which required considerable force and expense to suppress. On the arrival of the new High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, in October 1920, martial law was terminated and an Arab Council of State established. Pacification was completed in 1921. Amir Faysal's nomination as king, with British support, was approved by the Council of State and confirmed in a referendum. He was enthroned on August 23, 1921.

There was as yet no boundary in the south with Arabia nor in Kuwait. As stated earlier, after 1902, Saudi power with the recapture of Riyadh increased at the expense of the rival Rashidi tribes further north. Before the outbreak of World War I, Abd al-Aziz had consolidated his power in the Najd, in Hasa further south, and by the Treaty of Qatif (December 26, 1915) with Britain received a subsidy and recognition as Ruler of Najd and Hasa.

¹⁴ Ibid.

Meanwhile growing Al-Hashimi assertion of power in the Hijaz and in other parts of Arabia led to conflict and a disastrous defeat by the Saudis at Turaba in 1919. By 1921 and 1922, Ibn Saud having defeated the Rashidi in Jabal Shammar, invaded the northern oases of Hail and Jauf and extended his frontiers to Trans-Jordan and Iraq. Ibn Saud had now encompassed the Kingdom of the Hejaz on three sides. In the northeast, on the Iraqi side of the boundary area, the Saudis posed another threat to Iraqi and British interests.

It is not difficult to appreciate the extreme complexity of the territorial problem to Britain, whose chief client was being defeated by resurgent Wahhabi power under Ibn Saud, who himself also, was receiving British subsidy. Furthermore within the British Government, factions in the Foreign Office vied with others in the India Office in backing different Arab groups.

As a result of the Treaty of Muhammarah (Khorramshahr) May 5, 1922, between the British High Commissioner for Iraq and Ibn Saud, the potential for conflict was forestalled, even though a definite boundary between Iraq and Najd was not agreed upon. There was, however, an agreement on the assignment of certain tribes and both sides agreed to the mutual prevention of tribal aggression. A subsequent Protocol of Uqayr, December 2, 1922, appended to the Muhammarah Treaty, defined a boundary between the Saudi realm and Iraq.¹⁵

In the Treaty of Muhammarah, Ibn Saud had not agreed to fix a definite boundary. He objected to the attempt "to curb, by an imaginary line in the open desert, the movement of tribes who are accustomed to roam widely in search of pasturage and water." He was persuaded finally to agree to the delimitation of a boundary in the Protocol of Uqayr on condition that there would be no fortifications or troop concentration by either party at wells or watering places and there would be free movement of Najdi tribes to watering places on the Iraqi side of the boundary.

Problems other than those relating to the boundary required attention both in Iraq and in Arabia. King Husayn in March 1924 proclaimed himself Caliph upon the abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate by the new Republic of Turkey. This was immediately rejected by Ibn Saud who resumed hostilities. The British subsidy to Ibn Saud ended the same year. By December 1925, the Wahhabi army had conquered the Hejaz and on January 8, 1926 Ibn Saud was proclaimed King of the Hejaz. The first Power to recognize him was the Soviet Union on February 11, 1926; British recognition followed in the Treaty of Jiddah May 20, 1927. In 1932 the dual Kingdom of Hejaz and Nejd was designated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The same year Iraq was admitted to the League of Nations as an independent state.

¹⁵ The same Protocol also delimited the Najdi (later Saudi) boundary with Kuwait, See IBS-103, [Kuwait - Saudi Arabia Boundary](#), September 15, 1970.

III. ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

The Iraq - Saudi Arabia boundary is based on the Treaty of Muhammarah (Khorramshahr) May 5, 1922, and the subsequent Protocol of Uqayr, December 2, 1922, which delimited the boundary. This delimitation of a boundary was the first in this desert area. Although, in the past, there have been reports that actual demarcation on the ground would be undertaken, it has not been accomplished. There are no known disputes pertaining to the alignment of the boundary itself. However, if more precise data and mapping information based on fixes and measurement on the ground were available, it is probable that some of the actual locations of sites that are noted in these agreements would differ from those shown in the limited maps and technical data that are available.

The text of the Treaty of Muhammarah, May 5, 1922, with regard to the boundary is as follows:

Article 1.

(a) The tribes known as the Muntafiq, Dhafir and Amarat will belong to Iraq. Both Governments, that is to say the Government of Iraq and the Government of Najd, guarantee mutually that they will prevent aggression by their tribes on the tribes of the other, and will punish their tribes for any such aggression, and should the circumstances not permit of such punishment, the two Governments will discuss the question of taking combined action according to the good relations prevailing between them.

(b) The Najd delegate having refused to accept the boundaries asked for by the Iraq Government, the following principle was laid down:--

According to Article 1 (a) the Muntafiq, Dhafir and Amarat tribes belong to Iraq; similarly the Shammar Najd belong to Najd. The wells and lands used from old times by the Iraq tribes shall belong to Iraq and the wells and lands used from old times by the Shammar Najd shall belong to Najd. In order to determine the location of these lands and wells and to fix a boundary line in accordance with this principle a committee shall be formed consisting of two persons with local knowledge from each Government, and presided over by a British official selected by the High Commissioner; the committee will meet in Baghdad to fix the final boundaries, and both parties will accept these boundaries without any objection.

The pertinent provisions of the Protocol of Uqayr, December 1922 is as follows:

Article 1.

(a) The frontier from the East begins at the junction of the Wadi al Aujah (W. el Audja) with Al Batin and from this point the Najd frontier passes in a straight line to the well called Al Wuqubah (El Ukabba) leaving Al Dulaimiyah (Dulaimiya) and Al

Wuqubah (El Ukabba) north of the line and from Al Wuqubah (El Ukabba) it continues N.W. to Bir Ansab (Bir Unsab).

(b) Starting from the point mentioned above, i.e., from the point of the junction of the Wadi al Aujah (W. el Audja) with Al Batin (El Batin) the Iraq boundary continues in a straight line N.W. to Al Amghar (El Amghar) leaving this place to the south of the line and from thence proceeds S.W. in a straight line until it joins the Najd frontier at Bir Ansab (Bir Unsab).

(c) The area delimited by the points enumerated above which includes all these points will remain neutral and common to the two Governments of Iraq and Najd who will enjoy equal rights in it for all purposes.

(d) From Bir Ansab (Bir Unsab) the boundary between the two states proceeds N.W. to Birkat al Jumaimah (Birkat el Djumeima) and from thence northwards to Bir al Uqbah (Bir el Akaba) and Qasr Uthaimin (Kasr Athmin) from there westwards in a straight line passing through the centre of Jal al Batn (Djal el Batn) to Bir Lifiyah (Bir Lifa) and then to Bir al Manaiyah (Bir al Maniya) and from there to Jadidat Arar (Djadaidat el Arar) from there to Mukur and from Mukur to the Jabal Anazan (Anaza) situated in the neighbourhood of the intersection of latitude 32 degrees north with longitude 39 degrees east where the Iraq - Najd boundary terminates.

Article 2.

Whereas many of the wells fall within the Iraq boundaries and the Najd side is deprived of them, the Iraq Government pledges itself not to interfere with those Najd tribes living in the vicinity of the border should it be necessary for them to resort to the neighbouring Iraq wells for water, provided that these wells are nearer to them than those within the Najd boundaries.

Article 3

The two Governments mutually agree not to use the watering places and wells situated in the vicinity of the border for any military purpose, such as building forts on them, and not to concentrate troops in their vicinity.

IV. SUMMARY

The Iraq - Saudi Arabia boundary is about 426 miles in length and is delimited. The additional "Neutral Zone," which begins at the Kuwait boundary at the junction of the Wadi al-'Awja' with the Wadi al-Batin at 29°06'05" North Latitude and 46°33'19" East Longitude, is about 119 miles long in the northern segment and about 125 miles in length between the "Neutral Zone" and Saudi Arabia in the south.

This desert boundary is essentially artificial and, historically, the first, defined delimitation in the land between Mesopotamia and the Arabian Peninsula. It is a result of direct British influence in Iraq and Arabia following World War I. The boundary also reflects the realization of a long-time British diplomatic objective of securing a "land connection" to India and the Far East.

There are no active disputes between Iraq and Saudi Arabia regarding the specific alignment of the boundary itself. Grazing and watering practice traditionally conducted by tribes crossing the boundary remain undisturbed. There have been a number of disputes among the tribes since the delimitation of the boundary in 1922. In recent years, however, the improvement of the economy as a result of the exploitation of oil in both countries, along with administrative controls by the respective governments, have reduced tribal conflict. Whatever potential for disputes exists between the Republic of Iraq and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia does not relate to the boundary itself.

The limited availability of more precise cartographic data based on accurate measurements on the ground and other technical information lends weight to the possibility that some of the mapping data is subject to correction. A representation of the boundary on a medium scale is found on Army Map Service 1:250,000 scale (Series 1301), Sheets NH 38-12, NH 38-11, NH 38-10, NH 38-6, NH 38-5, NH 38-1, NH 37-4, NH 37-3, and NI 37-15. A small scale depiction of the boundary is found on Army Map Service 1:1,000,000 scale (Series 1301) Sheets NH-38, NH-37, and NI-37. It is also suggested that the map accompanying this study be used as reference.

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