



International Boundary Study

No. 94 – December 30, 1969

Jordan – Syria Boundary

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JORDAN - SYRIA BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Jordan - Syria boundary is 233 miles in length and is delimited. Beginning in the Yarmuk River (Nahr al-Yarmuk) above Al-Hammah, the boundary follows eastward primarily in the river and its tributaries, Wadi Zayzun and Wadi Maydan, a distance of about 24 miles where it leaves the river. The boundary then trends southeastward a distance of about 80 miles to a point 1.99 miles (3 kilometers, 200 meters) north of the summit of Tall Rimah (Tall Rumah) at which point the boundary turns northeastward in a straight line for a distance of about 129 miles to the Iraqi tripoint at approximately 33° 22' 29" North Latitude and 38° 47' 33" East Longitude.¹

II. GEOGRAPHIC BACKGROUND

A. Physiography

The salient physiography features of the Jordan - Syria boundary area are: (1) a line of mountains generally parallel to the Mediterranean, the northern end of which merges with the Taurus Mountains. In the south, the mountains gradually descend to the Gulf of 'Aqaba, then along the Red Sea to the southern tip of the Arabian Peninsula. (2) A central depression, east of the maritime line of mountains, which extends roughly from the Orontes Valley in the north, to the Biqa' Plain between the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon Mountains, through which the Litani River flows to the Mediterranean, and descends southward to Lake Tiberius. This remarkable depression is particularly well defined from North of Lake Tiberius southward through the Jordan River valley which cleaves the land between the West and East Banks, to the Dead Sea, 1,290 feet below sea level, and again southward through the wide sandy trench known as the Great Rift, or Wadi al-'Araba, which extends to the Gulf of 'Aqaba. (3) A third physiographic feature is a vast plateau area, lying south of the Taurus mountains and east of the mountains and depressions that are parallel to the Mediterranean. The plateau falls from broken ridges of about 4,000 feet in the north to an altitude of about 1,200 feet at Halab (Aleppo), gradually descending to about 900 feet at Dayr az Zor on the Euphrates River. South and eastward from Aleppo, the plateau lowers in rolling hills to the Great Syrian Desert beginning near Tadmur, ancient Palmyra.² The desert area continues to the southeast across Jordan deep into the Arabian Peninsula.

The Jordan - Syria boundary itself, begins on the Yarmuk River (Nahr al-Yarmuk) at about 12 miles from its confluence with the Jordan River. The boundary from the Israeli tripoint follows upstream a distance of about 24 miles to Dar'a where it leaves the river, follows in straight lines southeastward a distance of about 80 miles, thence northeastward a distance

¹ Since June 1967, the Israeli Army has occupied Syrian territory north of the Yarmuk River. The River, east of the Al-Hammah railroad bridge nevertheless is considered a segment of the Jordan - Syria international boundary.

² The Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC) pipeline passes from Tadmur about 90 miles westward to Hims [Homs] before it reaches its outlet on the Syrian Coast at Baniyas.

of about 129 miles to the Iraqi tripoint at 33° 22' 29.023" North Latitude and 38° 47' 33.212" East Longitude.

North of the Yarmuk on the Syrian side of the boundary is the Jabal ad-Duruz, (Mountain of the Druze), whose main ridge rises to an average height of 4,000 feet and includes higher peaks of which, the highest, Tal al-Jino reaches 5,910 feet. The Jabal ad-Duruz consists of broad domed lava formations as much as 4,000 feet thick. Parts show recent lava flow but very little since historic times. The entire Jabal area beginning south of Damascus extends into Jordan where it merges into the desert, east of Mafraq. It covers about 3,000 square miles.

South of the Yarmuk, on the Jordanian side of the boundary, the topography is essentially the same as that on the Syrian side. The mountains rise into a lofty fissured tableland, the western flank of which reaches the southern end of the Dead Sea, while on the east it merges into the plateau of the steppe and desert. The high tablelands south of Amman and east of the Dead Sea, known biblically as the Mountains of Moab (highest summit 3,470 feet) and containing perennial streams, are a relatively fertile (wheat growing) land.

B. Climate

The similarities pertaining to physiography and land utilization relate also to climate. Summers are very hot and dry, winters are mild except on higher altitudes. Temperatures vary from the intense heat of the Jordan Trench (The Ghor) to the near Alpine temperatures of the Lebanon and anti-Lebanon Mountains north of the boundary area. The mean annual temperatures of the Jordan depression averages 73° F. in January to as high as 130° F. in the shade in August. The mean annual temperature of Jerusalem is 48° in January to 76° F. in August. Damascus varies from 45° F. in the coldest month of January to 82° F. in the hottest month of August. At Amman temperatures range from 47° F. in January to 78° F. in August.

Practically all precipitation takes place during the winter half of the year. At Amman the annual rainfall is 10.9 inches; Jerusalem receives 20.8 inches; and Damascus 8.6 inches. Summer rains amount to less than 0.5 inches at the three locations.

C. Land Use

As topography and land structure are similar in Syria and Jordan, so is land use north and south of the boundary area. Along the entire 66-mile length of the Yarmuk River the land is relatively fertile. Considerable cultivation of wheat, barley, maize, lentils, and legumes take place; on the hills vine and olive culture is an important economic activity.

D. Political Geography

Not unlike other parts of the Near East, the Jordan - Syrian region is saturated in history. At both ends of a crescent shaped fringe of fertile land, along the eastern shore of the

Mediterranean, the earliest civilizations of the Tigris - Euphrates and Nile Valleys developed. In between the two riverine centers, the ancient region of Syria and Palestine, flourished, competed, and was influenced by its older neighbors.

The fact that the boundary area is situated across the main lines of communication along the "Fertile Crescent" led readily to flourishing trade and commerce. In later centuries, the highly developed caravan trade included intercontinental traffic from Europe and Africa, interrupted, however, by not infrequent periods of tribal conflict and other political and military turmoil. The "crossroads" character of its geographic posture is thus reflected. As trade and commerce developed early in history because of geography, so also did this region become a route for the movement of armies and peoples. From earliest historic times, the impact of the land and the peoples imposed challenges and conflicts which took form in varied streams of influence affecting the entire globe.

But without doubt the most remarkable contribution of the environs is the fact that the western monotheistic religions of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam are rooted in, and spread from this area. The impact of this historical fact on western civilization can hardly be overestimated.

1. Early History. In biblical times Southern Syria (Jordan) was the scene of the wanderings of the Hebrew tribes. The northern part of the east bank of the Jordan, then known as Gilead, was attached to Solomon's kingdom. Ancient Ammon was also on the east bank, as were Moab and Edom. West of the Jordan River was the Land of Canaan and Philistia (from which the word Palestine is derived), as well as Phoenician city-states engaged in highly developed commerce.

2. Syriac Period. A listing of the procession of nations and peoples who have interacted, influenced, and wrought the many political transformations on the boundary area itself is like a caravan. The defeat of the Persians by Alexander in the fourth century B.C. ushered in the Greeks followed by the Romans beginning with the defeat of the Seleucids in Syria by Pompey in 64 B.C. During that time considerable Hellenic influence took place, however, the entire area was essentially Syriac (Aramaic)³ in culture and language. A wide use of Greek is seen in the naming of some cities by Greek names. Beginning with Damascus, a chain of 10 cities including Gerasa (Jerash), Philadelphia (Amman), Hippos, Dion, Pella (now Tabaqat Fahl) Scythopolis (now Beisan and the only city west of the Jordan), formed the Decapolis, whose colonies joined in mutual defense against marauding Jewish and Arab tribes.

³ The two terms are often used synonymously; the Syriac language is modern, or neo-Aramaic, and dates from about the beginning of the Christian era. The older Aramaic flourished about 1000 B.C. and persisted in its ancient form perhaps as recently as about 500 B.C. In a broader sense, Syriac describes the indigenous semitic civilization that competed with Hellenic - Roman intrusions, and through Islam was successful. During its height the Syriac language was the lingua Franca of the Near East; in Syria - Palestine, especially in the few centuries before and after Christ, it was the vulgar language.

East of the Wadi al-Arabah the Nabataean Arabs, who use Aramaic, established their kingdom where the Moabites had located several centuries earlier. At the outset of Roman rule, the Nabataeans submitted to Rome. While retaining autonomy, they continued to control the western Arabian caravan routes and considerable territory north of the Yarmuk River, from their fortress capital of Petra.

Shortly thereafter, a Syriac-speaking semitic kingdom, that of Palmyra (now Tadmur) centered at an oasis in the Syrian desert northeast of Damascus, spread its influence throughout Syria, occupied Egypt (270 A.D.) and established garrisons in Asia Minor as far as Chalcedon near Byzantium. Emperor Aurelian, on taking office in 270, recognized the threat to Roman rule that Queen Zenobia interposed. The Roman General, Probus, quickly restored Egypt to Roman authority. By the end of 271, Aurelian led his armies through Asia Minor, overthrowing the Palmyrene garrisons, and defeated the main army at Antioch.

The Ghassanids, a tribal group from the Arabian Peninsula, also settled in the boundary area. This Christian Arab group, whose language was Syriac, soon adapted itself to Hellenistic society. By the 5th and 6th centuries, the Ghassanid State dominated the fertile area south of Damascus known as the Hauran, the Yarmuk Valley, as well as the land east of the Jordan River.

In the early centuries of efficient Roman rule, the boundary area, for that matter "Syria" in general, attained great economic strength, as an integral part of the Mediterranean world. But more important than the flow of goods were the ideas whose impact via Christianity spread from the boundary area, first to subvert, and then to supplant older Greco - Roman social traditions.

The universality, characteristic of the early centuries of Roman rule, gradually gave way to administrative decay and later disintegration. Almost as soon as Christianity was established as the official state religion of the entire Roman Empire by Constantine in 321 A.D., then local separatist and divisive forces commenced agitation for rival and conflicting claims.

3. Early Islamic Period. By the time of the Prophet Muhammad's death in 632, the Roman Empire, long divided between West and East, was also rent by internal Christological controversy. Much of this controversy was political in nature and emanated from Syria where it foreshadowed actual separation. Damascus and Jerusalem fell to Arab conquest following the Battle of the Yarmuk in 636. Islam thus spread rapidly in successive waves, eastward through the Byzantine and Persian Empires to Central Asia; and westward to Southern France, all accomplished within a hundred years.

With the establishment of the Caliphate in Damascus under the Umayyads (661 - 750), and the shifting of the center of power to Baghdad under the 'Abassids (750 - 1258), of whom Harun ar-Rashid is famed, the Islamic Empire achieved prosperity and a cultural brilliance, until its devastation by the Mongol invasions.

4. Ottoman Period. The boundary area itself during both the Umayyad and the 'Abbasid Caliphates was a part of Syria and administered from Damascus. Later the Ottomans, following the Mongol destruction of the Seljuk Dynasty in Asia Minor, controlled all Syria, Palestine, Egypt and North Africa. By the end of the 17th century, perhaps the zenith of Ottoman Turkish domination of the Islamic world, the Empire controlled Southeastern Europe, the Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa, and ranked with the greatest of western powers.

During the ascendancy of Ottoman power, administration and organization were improved significantly in comparison to the earlier Arab Caliphates. The boundary area was entirely within the Damascus Vilayet (Province), headed by a Vali or Governor whose jurisdiction included both the east and west banks of the Jordan. In 1887, Palestine was separated from Damascus and decreed a Sanjak⁴ directly under the Turkish Sultan.

Under Ottoman Islamic rule the Millet (Turkish: people united by a common faith; fr. Arabic: Millah, creed) System, predominately Christian, non-Muslim subjects were organized into separate communities under an ecclesiastical leader who had some temporal powers. It was also during the same period when the first formal treaty relations were signed between Sulayman (The Magnificent) and Francis I of France. The Treaty of 1535 which signaled the ranking of the Ottoman Empire with the greatest of Western powers, is also the first formal capitulation obtained from the Sublime Porte. It also marks, other than the period of the Crusades some 400 years earlier, the onset of Great Power competition for commercial advantages which in later centuries developed into economic and political exploitation.

5. Great Power Rivalry in the 19th Century. In the 19th century competition among the Great Powers for political and economic advantage in Ottoman lands sharpened. Hardly a single European power had not volunteered to "aid" the "sick man of Europe." Before the turn of the century, Germany, the only power that had by then acquired no Ottoman territory, gained benefits from Kaiser Wilhelm II's special efforts to favor the Sultan. Germany now trained the Turkish army and received the concession to extend the railway eastward from Constantinople which was to become the "Berlin to Baghdad Railway." During most of the century, Britain's espousal of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was based on her determination to keep Russia out. With new German inroads in the Near East, Britain now turned to ally herself with Russia, leading to the line-up of military forces in World War I.

At the same time, in the boundary area itself, as in other Arab parts of Ottoman lands, administrative decay and maladministration became acute in the 19th century. The Egyptian occupation of Syria (1831 - 1840) shook the boundary area from its torpor. In addition to sowing seeds of reform, western influence through trade, political and religious rivalries also stimulated more unrest. Following the Crimean War of 1856, which included Franco - Russian competition for control of the Holy Places of Palestine as a cause of the

⁴ A centrally administered Ottoman district.

war, Sultan 'Abd al-Majid was forced to issue a Firman⁵ guaranteeing non-Muslim communities spiritual and temporal privileges and civil rights. A few years later administrative reforms in Syria divided the Vilayet between Damascus, with administrative jurisdiction over the west banks of the Jordan River, and Aleppo with jurisdiction over northern Syria. Finally in 1876, the Midhat Pasha Constitution although revoked shortly thereafter, served to arouse rising expectations of more local rule in the Arab provinces.

Furthermore, increased economic activity in the form of varied public works, particularly the building of the Hijaz Railway (or the "Pilgrims Railway") from Damascus southward to Medina, with connections to Jerusalem and the Palestine coast, aimed at strengthened geopolitical control by the Sultan, stimulated even more political unrest. South of Damascus near the boundary region and especially in the trans-Jordan area. The Sultan achieved little success either in his attempts toward settlement of the Arab bedouin, or of asserting administrative control under his Vali in Damascus.

In order to assert direct control over Palestine and the West Bank, now rapidly becoming an increasing source of revenue from European political and religious interests, the Holy Land was separated from the Damascus Vilayet (1887) as the Sanjak of Jerusalem and placed directly under the authority of the Sultan at Constantinople. Early settlements of Jews took place in the latter years of the 19th century.

6. Rise of Nationalism and World War I. Initially, the Arab nationalism and liberalism of the late 19th century looked not so much to separation from the Ottoman Empire as to the reinstatement 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 Turkish Committee of Union and Progress. It was therefore to be expected that the Arabs would support the Young Turk Revolt 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 that under 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. Their efforts aimed at complete independence. The Damascus Vilayet and the Jerusalem Sanjak became key centers for the nationalists.

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 Ottomans revolted. 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 shifting of political interests in Arab Ottoman lands. Britain now exerted direct effort to encourage the Arabs to revolt.⁶ Before the Great War was to end

⁵ A decree, or edict having effect of civil law.

⁶ "It was natural and logical that the British should "attack the Turkish Empire through its Arab subjects," the elimination of Turkey from the ranks of our enemies was essential... The importance of a speedy

the Jordan - Syria boundary would be one of many completely new delineations in the Near East.

7. McMahon - Sharif Husayn Correspondence and the Sykes - Picot Agreement.

Negotiations between the British Foreign Office and the Arabs were embodied in the protracted exchange of letters between The High Commissioner in Egypt and in Egypt and The Sharif of Mecca, from July 14, 1915 to January 30, 1916, are known as the McMahon - Sharif Husayn Correspondence. The question of boundaries was essential to the discussions of an independent Arab Kingdom. Pressed by Sharif Husayn, the British Government replied on October 24, 1915 as follows:

"Great Britain is prepared to recognize and support the Arabs in all regions within the limits demanded by the Sharif of Mecca" subject to certain modifications.

These modifications were: (a) the exclusion of "the two districts of Mersin and Alexandretta and portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo, and (b) that of certain regions lying within those frontiers in which Great Britain was not free to act "without detriment to the interest of her ally France."

As to the matter of French interests, the Sharif stated on January 1, 1916, that he would for the time being avoid anything which might possibly injure the Alliance of Great Britain and France, but that "at the first opportunity after the war is finished, we shall ask you (what we avert our eyes from today) for what we now leave to France in Beirut and its coasts.... It is impossible to allow any derogation that gives France, or any other power, a span of land in those regions."

Meanwhile the French Government was informed of the tenor of the negotiations with the Sharif. On May 16, 1916, Great Britain and France concluded a secret agreement commonly, though unofficially, known as the "Sykes - Picot Agreement." Embodied in notes exchanged between Great Britain, France and Russia, the Agreement actually delimited Ottoman territory into British and French spheres of influence.

Without detailing the "Sykes - Picot Agreement," key provisions included the partition of the entire Fertile Crescent into several zones, which influenced directly, the eventual delineation of not only the Jordan - Syria boundary but also included most of the other areas of former Ottoman Arab lands. For all practical purposes, (a) France assumed control of northern Syria which became Lebanon and Syria including "Damascus, Homs, Hama and Aleppo, but also Mosul in Northern Iraq.⁷ (b) Britain assumed the Baghdad Vilayet. (c) Syria to the east of Homs, Hamah and Damascus became an "independent Arab State or Confederation" but directly under French influence. (d) South Syria, in what

victory on the Turks for the security of the British Empire was undeniable.... Our agents among them (the Arabs), who included men long skilled in the arts of Oriental diplomacy, encouraged this attitude of rebellion, and promised them arms and ammunition...." David Lloyd George, War Memoirs.

⁷ Essentially, the Ottoman Vilayets of Damascus, Aleppo, and Mosul.

was to become Trans-Jordan, in the general area of the present Jordan - Syria boundary was assigned to be directly under British influence.

8. The Arab Revolt. Neither the British - French Agreement, nor the rather arbitrary delineations on maps affixed to the Treaty were known to the Arabs when the Arab Revolt began, with the military and financial support of Great Britain, on June 10, 1916. The Bolshevik Government revealed full texts in Izvestia and Pravda on November 23, 1917 and subsequently the Manchester Guardian printed the texts on November 26, 1917. Another event which was to have momentous impact on the geopolitical structure of the entire area was the "Balfour Declaration" of November 2, 1917.⁸

The publication of the secret agreements startled the Arab nationalists. Doubt and anxiety concerning allied intentions soon spread. The Arab leadership, however, allayed somewhat by renewed British assurances, seemed persuaded on balance, in the good faith of Great Britain. "The discovery did not effect their loyal cooperation with their British Ally."⁹

The Northern Arab Army commanded by Faysal, as an autonomous Arab army under the control of General Allenby, captured 'Aqaba on July 6, 1917. Moving northeastward of the Dead Sea, its guerrilla units, aided by Colonel T.E. Lawrence, effectively disrupted the recently built Hijaz Railway. Early on October 1, 1918, Damascus was occupied by Arab troops under the command of Nuri (Pasha) al-Sa'id, followed at 6:00 a.m. by the 3rd Australian Light Horse Brigade under General Wilson. Upon Lawrence's arrival a few hours later an Arab Government was formed headed by Shukri Pasha al-Ayyubi as Military Governor of Damascus. On October 3rd, Faysal led 1,500 Arab horsemen in a triumphal entry into Damascus in the midst of great jubilation. British troops under General Allenby occupied Beirut on October 8.

10. In the absence of 'Ali Rida Pasha al-Rikabi, General Allenby's appointee.

The signing of the Mudros Armistice, on October 30, 1918 marked the complete Turkish defeat in Arab Ottoman lands. All of geographic Syria was occupied by Allied troops. British troops were located throughout the area, a small French force on the coast and the Arab Army of King Husayn in the interior. Although General Allenby was ultimately responsible for the military government throughout Syria, the British established a provisional administration only in Palestine to the west of the Jordan River. A French provisional government controlled the coastal regions north of Palestine, and subsequently Cilicia. An Arab administration under Amir Faysal, with a small number of British and

⁸ "His Majesty's Government view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people, and will use their best endeavours to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country."

⁹ Temperley, H.W.V., A History of the Peace Conference of Paris, Vol. VI, p. 137.

French officers on his staff, assumed control of the cities of Aleppo, Homs, Hamah and Damascus as well as the Trans-Jordan area, both north and south of the boundary.

9. The Problems of Peace and Territorial Arrangements. The Allied victory exposed rivalries, and conflicting claims previously submerged. While problems of peace and the final boundary settlements are too involved for this study, some aspects relating to the partition of lands ought to be mentioned. Faysal had submitted to the Paris Peace Conference a Memorandum of the Arab nationalist movements "to unite the Arabs eventually into one Nation" that Syria was "sufficiently advanced politically to manage her own internal affairs" and further hoped that the Powers would "find better means to give fuller effect to the aims of our national movement." 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 6th Faysal addressing the Conference recalled Allied promises, 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 concerning geographical Syria and 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 which 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 each of the two counties a constitutional monarchy should be set up with Amir Faysal as King of Syria. In accordance with the wishes of the people, the United States should be asked to accept the Mandate for Syria and Great Britain should be offered Iraq. The Commission opposed a French Mandate; the final report was ignored.

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 (excluding Palestine) and from Cilicia, replaced by Arab troops in the interior and by French troops on the coast and in Cilicia, dismayed Faysal. When he protested, the British Government invited him to come again to Europe to try to reach an understanding with the French Prime Minister Clemenceau. A provisional agreement was made which acknowledged the rights of the Syrian Arabs to independence and unity, with defense and foreign affairs to be maintained by France.

The agreement was never put into practice. The Clemenceau Government fell, succeeded by one with a more hardened policy. Furthermore the rise of the Kemal Ataturk movement which directly threatened French ambition in Cilicia led France to be less amenable to concessions to the Arab nationalist.

On March 20, 1920, a Congress of Syrian notables offered the crown of Syria and Palestine to Faysal who accepted it. This action was repudiated immediately by the British and French Governments.

The Conference of San Remo, on April 24, 1920, by establishing the mandates, France for "Syria and Lebanon," Britain for Palestine with Transjordan, in effect became the reality of the "Skyles - Picot Agreement." The declaration of the Mandates was rejected by Faysal and the Arabs and both sides prepared for war. On July 14, 1920 the French Commander in Chief and High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon, General Gouraud, issued an ultimatum which demanded unconditional acceptance of the Mandate. Faysal accepted reportedly against the wishes of a greater number of his supporters. The answer to the ultimatum was delayed until after the time limit set by General Gouraud, who had earlier 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 left for exile. Later he became King of Iraq.

In 1922, Transjordan became a semi-autonomous Arab principality, under mandate to the British High Commissioner in Jerusalem. In 1946, Transjordan became independent. In 1950 with that part of the west bank of the Jordan River under Jordanian control, the country's name was changed to the Hashimite Kingdom of Jordan.

III. ANALYSIS OF BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

The Convention, which defined the boundaries of Syria and Jordan, is titled, the Franco - British Convention of December 23, 1920, on certain points connected with the Mandates for Syria and the Lebanon, Palestine, and Mesopotamia.¹⁰ It provided for the demarcation of the frontiers by an Anglo - French Boundary Commission but delimited the boundary only in general terms, subject to later determination. On February 3, 1922, the two powers signed another agreement which differed only slightly from the original delimitation.

No evidence has been uncovered on demarcation of the boundary. The international boundary as it is today is based on a Protocol between France and Great Britain signed in Paris on October 31, 1931. The text is as follows:

1. - Definition of the frontier.

1) - Yarmuk section.

¹⁰ CMD. 1195, 1921.

a) - From the point where the railway line crosses the Yarmuk above El Hamme to the point where the railway line crosses the river above El M'Khebi, the frontier follows the bed of the Yarmuk, it being understood that the section of the railway situated between these two points at the east of the Yarmuk is still placed, for the benefit of Syria, under the same regime of extra-territoriality as that defined by the Boundary Convention of February 3, 1922 (which fixed the last point where the boundary was marked) in so far as concerns the railway section formerly delimited up to the station of Semakh.

b) - From the aforesaid point above El M'Khebi to the point where the railway crosses for the last time the Quadi Meidan in the direction of Mzerib, the frontier is traced on the Transjordan side of the railway line to a distance marked by the bed itself of the Yarmuk and its tributaries, the Quadi Zeizoun and the Quadi Meidan, when these rivers flow south of the railway, and by the railway itself when the track passes on the Transjordan side south of these rivers.

In the latter case, the marking of the boundary will be made south of the track and parallel to it in such a way as to leave Syria, in addition to the railway itself and its permanent structures, the "emprise" (undertakings) borrow-pits, stations, outbuildings and ground necessary both for the technical protection of the railway track and its structures as well as for its exploitation. This same definition of the track applies to the section of the railway referred to in the preceding paragraph a).

c) Nothing in the preceding definition of the frontier shall have the effect of modifying the regime of the waters of the Yarmuk and its tributaries such as is stipulated in Article 8 or the Franco - British Convention of December 23, 1920.

2) - Deraa-Remthy Section. From the point defined above where the railway crosses the Quadi Meidan up to the point where it meets the railway line south of Nasib, the frontier is determined by the following indications and land marks:

From the bridge over the Quadi Meidan, the frontier rejoins the line which separates the territories of the Transjordan villages of Amraoua, Shejers, Turrah and Remthy on one part from the territories of the Syrian villages of Tel Cheab, Mzerib and Deraa on the other part.

This line crosses El Bueib on the route of Deraa to Remthy and from there follows the western ridge of the Jebel ez Zamla up to the landmark situated at the southern extremity of the line separating the territories of Deraa from those of Remthy.

From this last landmark the frontier goes up to the landmark situated approximately at 1500 meters south of the farm of Rahaya; then it passes to the landmark of Nahr Hamdan and continues towards the landmark situated at South Kerkur; from there it rejoins a point of the railway situated between the Syrian villages of Nasib and the

Transjordan village of Jaber in such a way as to leave to each of these villages the lands belonging to them.

It is understood that when, in this second section, the frontier follows a stream or Quadi, it is a question of the bed, and that when the frontier follows a ridge, it is a question of the watershed.

It is also understood that, whatever be the frontier line, the inhabitants of Turrah shall continue to have access, as in the past, to the head limits of the Quadi Meidan situated east of Jisr Meidan.

3) Section east of Nasib and Jaber. From the point specified above between Nasib and Jaber up to the meeting of the Transjordan and Iraq frontier in the neighborhood of Jebel Tenf, the frontier is thus defined:

a) From the point of the railway line specified above, the frontier rejoins the meeting point of the meridian of Semma with the line hereafter defined. Between the meridian of Semma and the meridian of Toll Romah, it passes north of a line marked out by the following points:

Samma, Qum est Surah, Shejera (point situated at about two kilometres south west of the isolated tree of the track from Qum el Djemal to Tisse (Subhiyo, Sabha, Qum el Kottein, Deir el Khaf and Toll Romah, those points being situated in the Transjordan.

The frontier will be indicated by landmarks placed at 3 kilometres 200 (that is two miles) to the North and parallel to the lines which join the centres of the places or localities mentioned above.

It is understood that, if the village of Kirbet Aouad or any part of this village were found to be south of the frontier line marked out as stated above, the frontier would bend to a point situated at sixty metres south and around the last group of houses at present existing; the junction with the general line being made east and west of the village by lines forming an angle of about 90 degrees with the point above indicated (60 metres south of the village) in such a way as to include in Druze territory all the inhabited part of this village as well as the territories situated in this angle reconnecting with the general line.

b) Starting from the point situated at 3 kilometres 200 north (meridian) of the highest summit of Tell Romah up to the frontier of Iraq situated in the neighborhood of Jebel Tenf, the frontier is prolonged in a straight line in the direction of Abou Kemal on the Euphrates, the geographical position of this village being calculated for the special purposes of this frontier line by taking the centre itself of the locality into account.

IV. TREATIES AND OTHER ACTS

The following treaties and other acts pertain to the present Jordan - Syria Boundary:

A. "Sykes - Picot Agreement", May 16, 1916

This is the commonly known title. The Agreement which divided Arab Ottoman territory into British and French spheres, was embodied in notes exchanged between Great Britain, France and Russia.

B. The Conference at San Remo, April 19 - 26, 1920

This Conference of the Allied Powers, assigned Mandates for Mesopotamia, Palestine and Syria to Great Britain and France. The principle of Mandates was prescribed in Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations.

C. Franco - British Convention of December 23, 1920, on certain points connected with the Mandates for Syria and the Lebanon, Palestine and Mesopotamia, Paris

This Convention defined the boundary in general terms and provided for demarcation by an Anglo - French Boundary Commission.

D. Protocol between France and Great Britain, Paris, October 31, 1931.

The basic document concerning the delimitation of the boundary as it is today. The Protocol also included a "Good Neighbors Agreement" guaranteeing rights to inhabitants on both sides of the frontier.

V. SUMMARY

The Jordan - Syria boundary, 233 miles in length, is comprised of 209 miles on land and 24 miles on water. The entire boundary is delimited. There is no available factual evidence of the existence of boundary markers and actual demarcation on the ground.

The boundary is essentially artificial, and a result of a division of British and French spheres of influence following Allied defeat of Ottoman Turkey in World War I. The delineation was later confirmed by the League of Nations. There are no active disputes between Jordan and Syria regarding the specific alignment of the boundary. Grazing and watering practice traditionally conducted by tribes crossing the boundary remain undisturbed.

In June 1967, the Israeli Army occupied Syrian territory north of the Yarmuk River and the area known as the Golan (Jawlan) Heights. The River east of the Al-Hammah railroad

bridge, nevertheless, is considered a segment of the Jordan - Syria international boundary. In recent years there has been considerable political friction between the Jordanian and Syrian Governments, the quarrels, however, do not relate to the specific alignment of the boundary.

An accurate representation of the boundary on a medium scale is found on Army Map Service 1:250,000 scale (series K-502), Sheets NI 37-10, NI 37-13, NI 37-14, and NI 37-16. A small scale depiction of the boundary is found on Army Map Service 1:1,000,000 scale (Series 1301) Sheets NI-36 and NI-37.

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Government agencies may obtain additional information and copies of the study by calling the Geographer, Room 8744, Department of State, Washington, D.C. 20520 (Telephone: 202 632-2021 or 632-2022).