CHAPTER III

Power Struggle in the Area During the Colonial Period
(a) Arabian Sea during Mesopotamian Campaign

Modern Iraq was known as Mesopotamia in ancient period. Boundaries of Mesopotamia were unlimited till 1914, but the boundaries of Iraq have been demarcated after 1914. Mesopotamia was included with the area of Arab sub-continent in west and western limit of Iran's Plateau. It is surrounded with Armenia in north and mountains of Asia Minor and Persian Gulf in south. The lower area of Euphrates and Tigris rivers basin known as Mesopotamia. In the north of Iraq is Turkey, Iran in East Persian Gulf is and some portion of Arab States in the south and Arab, Israel and Syria are in the west. Mesopotamia was divided in upper and lower Mesopotamia. Northern part of it is called upper Mesopotamia and extended in south till Baghdad. Its length is about 300 miles and about 100 miles wide in north. Its northern part is greenish and southern part is mostly desert. The area of Lower Mesopotamia is expanded downward from Baghdad to Persian Gulf. In Mesopotamia there are some important lakes and narrow waterways. Desert area of Mesopotamia is difficult for military observers of air and Artillery. Mesopotamia and Persian Gulf are most hot places of the world. Climate is not suitable for military activities in Mesopotamia. Minerals and alloys are not present in proper amount. Communication means are very poor in Mesopotamia, only one railway line is passing through Samara to Baghdad. Roads are not therefore the water ways are important there. Water supply is not properly arranged. There are so many difficulties in military activities. Communication was mainly performed by rivers. Sat-al-Arab strait was important
because through this the merchant ships were passed and got entry into Arabian sea from where they proceeded towards East. Important harbour of Mesopotamia is Basara. It is used in 1914 for military actions but faced more difficulties there. Shore of this harbour is not suitable for loading and unloading.

All military problems therein, whether strategical, tactical or administrative are affected by local conditions to an extent rarely met with in any theatre of War. Nearly all the conditions combine to create difficulties, there is little to alleviate them, and most may be ascribed either to a lack of water or surfeit of it. Far away from the rivers want of water makes operations impossible, while near them the excess of water is almost as great a source of trouble.

In 1914 the population of Mesopotamia was about 20 or 25 lakhs. Mostly Arabs were established in plains and others were either in cities or in northern and Eastern plains. Arabs were very dense and expert in Guilla tactics and followers of Islam.

Under the turkey Administration Mesopotamia was divided in many vilayaton or provinces. Administration was not much more successful and some times revolts had been taken place there. Persia, Bakhtari Pradesh, Mohamira, Kuwait, Alhasa and Najd were situated around the Mesopotamia. Although the Arabs hated the Turks, but on the time of war they fought with Turks against Britishers because of Islam. Turks never believed in Arabs mostly in time of war because they attacked by them when they defeated or retreated.
Many super nations had benefited from this rich area in the Ancient period. Turkey occupied Mausul and Bagdad between 1520 and 1586 A.D. From that time Dazala and Farat rivers had been used as a boundary of Persia. In 1603 Persia again attacked the Mesopotamia and occupied Bagdad again after twenty years. But in 1638 Turkey again captured Bagdad from Persia and then till 1917 Bagdad remained under the possession of Turkey.

Turkey revolution in 1908 was welcomed by the Public of Mesopotamia but further it was not remain constant. Because it was influenced by Jermans. Jerman Officers and Ambassadors had got much more rights in Provincial & Central Administration. Therefore no reforms were prevailed in Mesopotamia. War with Italy in 1911 and Balkan in 1912-13 had made Mesopotamia very poor and critical in position. People of Mesopotamia revolted against Turkey and waterway between Bagdad & Persian Gulf had not remained secure due to these agitations against Turkey Govt. From the Arabs of southern Mesopotamia had created the situation of revolution in that area and many Sardars had interested to make pact with Russia. At the time of European war, the situation of Mesopotamia was not satisfactory but people were worried there.

In this time Pan-Islamic agitation had taken place there and it was used as a political weapon. Turkey, Persia and Afghanistan had established a group to conduct this agitation. But it remained unsuccessful due to the participation of Turkey. Because Arabs were not pleased with Turkey. Its objectives and aims remained unfulfilled.
From the coming of Turkey Party in power and till the period of Balkan war, the Policy of Turkey remained dangerous to the interests of Britishers in Mesopotamia and Persian Gulf areas. German were most powerful in these areas and busy to strengthen their trade position in these areas. Turkey was trying to impose political pressure on the authorities of these areas as they compelled to Shekh of Kuwait to adopt the nationality of Turkey and this was the voilation of agreement between the Governments of Turkey and British. This situation was terminated from the political pressure of British and Russian Governments. Turkey had tried much to get possession on Qatar and some sea parts of Trucial side. In 1912 there had been some liberal change in the views of Turkeys in favour of Britishers, therefore in 1913-14 many agreements and treaties had been made between Turkey and British countries.

Germany was in the view thinking from the beginning to create hate against Britishers in the minds of Turkish.

Aim of this was to stand the Turkish against Britishers in war and damage their trade in the east. German's interfere was continued in the Turkish affairs from 1875 A.D. Germans were eager to get superiority in Turkish territory. In the beginning she was trying to create hate and differences between British and Russia taking the affairs of Turkey, Persia and India. After that she also tried to create differences between Turkey and British empire to take the affairs of Egypt, Arabia, Mesopotamia
and Persian Gulf. Germany was always in the view of capturing Turkey, so she was trying to weaken the Turkey. Germany was eager to establish a great empire from north sea to the Gulf of Persia and Astria, Balkan states and Turkey could remain under it. This created a fear in the security system of Egypt and the eastern areas of British empire. They had started a construction of railway line from Asia minor to Mesopotamia and got a proposal to link Mediterranean sea and Persian Gulf by railway line. These railway lines had been constructed from political and strategical point of views. Another railway was constructed from Koniya to Persian Gulf. Here it is important that the Germany had got the permission for extension of railway till Persian Gulf at that time when Britain was busy in South Africa.

Turkey's relations with their neighbours were not satisfactory in Mesopotamia. There was a fear of war between Persia and Turkey in 1842 due to border affairs. Agreements had remained fail there and status quo prevailed till 1905. Urmia was attacked by Turkey, therefore, a new problem had taken place and till 1913 no decision could be done. On account of these problems & disputes Turkey had lost Persian's sympathy. Turkey also started hate to Russians after sometimes of I.W.W. outbreak and Persia was also against Russia. Therefore after sometimes Persia had sympathetic attitude towards Turkey. Persia and Turkey were agreed with the ideas of Germany. So Persia became an important centre for Propaganda and other activities to the Turkey and Germany. But Sheikh of Mohmira had favoured the Britishers. Although
Arabs were not pleased with Turkey but supported them against Britain. At the time of war, Sheikh of Kuwait revolted against Turkey.

Turkey army was again organized in 1882 by Germany. Lt. Col. Von der Goltz made all possible reforms in Turkey army. Army service had made compulsory to all the peoples of country. But this process became unsuccessful due to the opposition of the peoples of some classes.

Sultan of Turkey was the supreme commander of army assisted by a supreme military council and its dupty head was Field Marshal Von der Goltz. Turkey military was devided in active army, active army reserve, and territorial army. In 1914 its strength was 70 Divisions (2,850,000 soldiers). Air force was not adequate therefore supported by Germans. For weapons & supply etc. they were depended upon Germans.

Arrangement of modern fortification was absent in Mesopotamia. Only Turkey Gunboats and warships were available to take action on waterways. Mesopotamia provided an straight way to the troops from Middle Europe to South-west Asia. Mesopotamia in one side has sandy platue of Arabia, Armenia and mountains of Kurdistan and in the other side Persia.

North-east Flank of Baghdad gave an entrance to the invaders. Through this any one could reached to Persia and then Afghanistan. There were some difficulties in Mesopotamia for military activities as follows:
(a) More distance;
(b) Incomplete Bagdad railway and wanteness of land ways;
(c) Local made things and scarcity of foodgrains;
(d) Unsufficient ships and difficulty in navigation in the rivers of Dajala and Farat;
(e) Unsuitable climate;
(f) Basara could be attacked easily by waterway;
(g) There was no place of surprise and concealment activities.

Besides these, there were some advantages as to harrass the Britain, it could be compelled to keep her military force in middle-east, otherwise that could be used in other places. Britain felt more difficulties in directing and conducting the campaign in Mesopotamia because of the above critical situation and obstacles, but Turkey having a small army-force could be easily opposed them.

In east, India was a good base for Britain. So Mesopotamia was easily attacked from the side of North and North-west through the deserts of Persia and mountains of Afghanistan. Safety of Britain's front was depended upon the maintenance of superiority in the Arabian sea. Britain was interested in the Persian Gulf, therefore she remained conscious always when any interference taken place there.

After the conquest of Bagdad in 1638 by the Turkish Sultan Murad IV, the first border settlement with Persia was arrived at as early as possible. Since both in the north (Kurds,
Armenians) and in the south (Arabs) the boundary cut through traditional settlement areas of tribes which regarded as their natural masters neither the Turks nor the Persians, the course of border was not laid down exactly or in any detail, but conformed, for the most part, to tribal loyalties and toponyms. This was short time settlement. Although boundary disputes flared up there after, in the Kurdish-Armenian boundary district, they could be settled on the basis of the 1639 agreement but proved insufficient. Shatt-al-Arab constituted a natural border, belonged to the Ottoman Empire. In 1823 Persia occupied it, Britain and Russia offered their good offices. On 15 May, 1843 a Turkish-Persian-British-Russian boundary commission met in the Turkish city of Erzurum to try to reach a final border settlement based on the agreement of 1639 but after four years they reached to a final settlement which was also remained unapplicable because of some short comings and dropped for the time being. Policies of Britain and Russia had been at cross-exacerbating Anglo-Russian tensions. Russia's interests centred on the Persian Provinces of Azerbaijan, due to economic and strategic considerations related to Turkey. Britain's position on the boundary question differed from that of Russia. They interested in the Shatt-al-Arab for their policy towards the Gulf, which became important owing to growing British influence in Mesopotamia and Arabistan.

Russia pursued maritime interests in the Shatt and the Gulf, was surprised by Britain's unilateral action and rejected
the Anglo-Turkish agreement. But after Britain's assurance for supporting their interests Russia accepted it. In the Shatt-al-Arab region, the course of border was settled in accordance with the Treaty of Erzerum of 1847, and the Shatt remained Turkish waters for its entire expanse except for the restrictions at Muhammarah and Abadan. The fixing of the entire boundary was assigned to a four power commission, which was to mark the border on location, based on the 'carte identique' of 1869. Early in 1914 the work was began but the outbreak of war prevented the recognition of the border by Turkey and Persia.

Mesopotamian campaign was fought only strategical causes. It was inspired by Germany and started by Turkey against Britain but lastly Britain had got victory. To examine the causes of Mesopotamian campaign, a study of interests of many countries is essential here. Russia was interested to enhance her influence in Middle Asia. Therefore Russia was eager to occupy Basra harbour after capturing the Mesopotamia Russia advanced towards Darn Deleez and Persian Gulf and worried the Britain in regard to the attack on India through Arabian sea. To check the Russia, Britain established relations with Afghanistan and in 1878, Britain helped the Turkey against Russia and got Sypres island from Turkey.

Germany was also eager to establish a great empire, for that purpose Germany advanced towards Africa and Middle-Asia and established relations with Turkey.
Britain captured the Sypres island at the time of Russian-Turkish war. Britishers also captured her ally Egypt. Russia was Turkey’s enemy and Britain made an agreement with Russia, so all these were the causes of her unhappiness. Turkey wanted ownership on the oil of Middle Asia and also wanted to establish impact on the Muslims of that area.

The construction of railway line to Bagdad increased the strategical importance of Mesopotamia for the Britishers. Germany and Turkey both were interested in the area of Persian Gulf. This area was in the influence of Britishers from a very long time. Britain was worried about the security of India due to the activities of opponents. The religious movement inspired by Germany & Turkey was dangerous for the Britain, therefore the defence from that, had become most essential to them. Defenders of oil pipe lines from sustar to Abadan, were pressurised by the Turkey and could be attacked at any time. Therefore it was also necessary for Britain to help them. All the four powers had their interests in Mesopotamia. France, Britain and Russia were in one side and Turkey, Germany and Austria were at another side. On the beg of war Turkey was compelled to recapture the Three province and told to block the oil supply way of Britishers in Mesopotamia.

Britain was ready to protect her interests in Mesopotamia and sent her forces there. India Government was made in charge of this campaign. India Government was ordered to send army immediately in Shatt-al-Arab area by British cabinet at 2 oct.
1914. Following units of 6th Pune Div. under Brig. Gen. W.S. Delamere were got orders of preparedness to go across the Arabian sea tell 10th Oct. 1914 : 1. 16th Inf.Brigade; 2. 22nd Saperas and Minoras companies. 3. One Lee Indian Mountain Artillery with some units of Medical, supply and Transport. This was called 'D' Force'. Britishers were interested in the areas around the Persian Gulf. They supported and helped the Sheikh of Mohamira and started their campaign in Mesopotamia against Turkey and Germany plans had been made and military & Political rights had been given to Gen. W.S. Delamere to strengthen the British position and capture the Basara in Mesopotamia. Sheikhs of Kuwait & Mohmira were in the favour of Britishers. Sir Piyarsi Kox and Captain Hamilton were appointed to help Gen. Delamere there. 'D' Force was advanced from Bombay Port to Bahrain island on 16th Oct. under the escort of four naval ships. This was propagated that British Govt. was compelled to send army in Mesopotamia to protect the interests of Arab peoples and their Allies and she was not in a mood to attack. 'D' Force was sent from Bahrain to Shatt-al-Arab on 3rd November. Fao Fort was destroyed by Turkish. British D force was landed near Fao village to check the opponents and ultimately captured the Fort. Leaving 117th Maratha Battalion as a garrison troop in Fao, remaining troops proceeded towards Abadan oil refinery and camped in Sanniya. Beside facing some small attacks by Arab Kabaylis Gen. Delimere completed his planning of land forces on the opponents area. But after two days (11 Nov.) British advance gaurd faced counter attack by Turkish and made it fail.
Gen. Delaman's aim was to advance through land way till Shamsha-miya area. But due to the information of Turkish possibility of attack, protection responsibility of oil refinery and some stakness in sending military from India, compelled him to stay there. Mesopotamia campaign had also suffered due to heavy rain, it was first experience to them.

Gen. Barret reached at Shatt-al-Arab in 13th Nov. with another troop and on 14th Nov. reaching in Sanniya camp he accepted the charge of Mesopotamia command. He was ordered to capture Basra by India Government. First he ordered Gen Delomen to the enemy from Sehan. For this he deployed his army in adequate positions, then attacked on the second position of the enemy and pushed it towards north. After this battle he established his possession on the Turkish camp. Many casualties and arrests had been made in this activity. British troops felt some difficult experiences in this working area, but were superior than Turkish.

On the information of Turkish advance towards Basra for the purpose of attack, Gen. Barret directed his troops to advance towards sahil. After some close combats, British troops got success on the enemy.

A brief telegraphic message was sent to India Government on 20th Nov. about the situation and made a plan to attack on Basra. After some difficulties he became success in capturing
Basra on 23th Nov. 1914 and Union Jack was hoisted in a main building of Basra. In this way the Britain got many advantages from this victory as there was no fear in protection of oil fields and refinaries, security of British interests in Persian Gulf and adjacent areas had become more strengthen, relations with Sheikh of Mohamira became strong & firm and first decided aim of Mesopotamia campaign to be fulfilled.

By sending a brief appreciation of the situation, Sir P. Kox suggested viceray to attack quickly on the Bagdad, and Gen Barret also accepted this. But some re-suggestions were given to the Sir P. Kox & Gen. Barret in this reference by India Government and suggested to attack first on Kurna. Because Kurna was a strategical place, situated at the bank of Shatt-al-Arab. It was important for the control of whole Gulf water ways. Entire Persian-Arbistan could be protected from the Turkish attacks, and communication lines could be protected. Therefore Kurna was attacked and captured on 19th Dec. according to the secretary of state and military secretary in India Government. In this way the first part of Mesopotamia campaign had been completed.

Being defeated in Amara & Muzayra, the remaining Turkish troops, reorganised near Nasiriya and Shuk-Ash-Shiyukh. It was suggested and emphasised on the importance of keeping control in the triangle of Basra-Kurna-Nasiriya. Turkey was prepared to do counter attack. For this purpose some auxiliary forces were sent to Basra from Masul and constantnopole. Turkish Troops were collected in the south of Israel tomb till the end of Dec.
and then camped near Muzalibla. They wanted to attack on Basra after advancing from Nasiriya. But at that time an information was collected that Turkish were defeated badly by Russia in Kadeshun. Therefore some part of that auxiliary force was sent in Arminia or Kurdistan to help them and this affected the Mesopotamia campaign. Turkish intensified their movements near Kurna and captured sand hills-posts. But after some time British commander Gen. Barret snatched the Sand wills poss from Turkish and returned back to Muzaira. Changed situations compelled Gen. Barret to demand auxiliary force for the purpose of protecting Basra and Mohmira till 26th Jan. Sheik Ghazan and Jehad were eager to attack on Ahwaz and oil fields, and Turkish troops with Arab-Kabylies were advancing to attack on Basra from western desert areas.

Therefore on the request of Gen. Barret, India Government arranged to send 12th Inf. Bn. under Maj. Gen. Davison till 1st February to Basra. Kurna was attacked in 29-30 Jan. but remained fail. It was informed that a major part of public had revolted in Ahwaz and Persian Government remained fail to give any security to the Europeans there but soon Gen. Barret controlled the situation by sending Kumuk. Till this time Turkish had become strong in Arbistan, Lower Farat and Basra was badly affected due to the public revolt. The entire area of working was badly affected from flood and unrest. So every military movement and fortification remained unsuccessful and Britishers were worried about the reorganisation of Turkish and local melitia. Still
this the Britishers had captured Shaiba and Ahwaz after facing some difficulties and casualties. Opponent forces had left their idea to advance or attack further and stayed in Gadir Camp. India Govt. decided to increase the strength of 'D' force by sending 33rd Inf. Brigade and Hampshayer Howitzer Battery in Mesopotamia on 7th March. Lord Crue informed that 30th Inf. Brigade was sent from Egypt to increase the strength of 'D' force in Mesopotamia on 10th March. In this way the decided target of keeping two Divisions in Mesopotamia was completed, but still there was wantness of Artillery, Sapiars and Poineers.

Turkish counter attack efforts had remained fail and with the possession of Shaiba and Ahwaz, Britishers had become strong. This was strengthen more by reaching Gen. Nixon to take over the Mesopotamia command and rearrangeing the 'D' force. Arbian and Amara were also captured by Gen. Garinz consequently in 16th May 1915 and 3rd June 1915. Defeated Turkey troops had been pursued to the Kut-al-Amara. Gen Garinz decided to advance towards Kuwait. They felt some difficulties in sand hills operation but became success in capturing Nasiriya on 24th July 1915. Turkish adopted defensive policy and defeated by Britishers here. After this Britishers captured Kut under Gen. Nixon and Gen. Townsend in 29th Sept. 1915 and at pursued Turkish till the Aseziya.

After capturing Basra, they again advanced towards Baghdad in March 1915, under the Indian C-in-C Gen Nixon. Britishers were in advantageous positions because they had captured all the
strategical places related to their advance to Baghdad. Baghdad was also captured in Sept. 1915 and eastern countries had to be effected by this possession of Baghdad in Asia. Gen Nixon appreciated Baghdad as political, commercial and strategical bases and sent a message to the Indian C-in-C of this reference. In this reference a cabinet committee was formed and this was learnt by the committee that what were the consequences after advance and capturing the Baghdad, therefore one Division and some cavalry and Artillery batteries were sent to support the Gen Nixon and Gen. Hobdins in Mesopotamia through Arabian sea from India. British troops had been made so strong by sending force that they could maintain this possession in future. Gen. Nixon and Gen. Townsend discussed this matter carefully and advanced from the right bank of the river through the small ships. Although Turkish tried to do a counter attack against British troops but remained unsuccesful and faced heavy casulaties and loss of supply and communication system. British troops two faced some difficulties in this action but succeeded in their aim.

Kut fortification was strengthen and German Gen. Vonder Coltz's could be stopped by this activity. Reorganization process could be completed and actions to be started for freeing the Kut. But Turkey Troops, with firm intention, made an attack on the incomplete fortification of Kut and continued it and lastly they remained fail and surrendered before British troops. British interest was fulfilled and Mesopotamia campaign had been ended. But problems remained alive there and disputes continued in that area till today either by super powers or by local powers.
Because of these problems the Arabian sea region and their littorals are under tension till today. Arabian sea had played an important role in Mesopotamia campaign because India was in charge of this campaign and resuffling was completed from India through this sea.
B. Arab Oil Embargo & British Policy in Arabian Sea

Each of the European powers wished to obtain as strong an influence as possible in an empire that appeared to be on the point of importance in the world. The Russia was an obstacle blocking her south wards expansion and preventing her from having free access to the Mediterranean. Simply her expansionist ambitions were to some extent frustrated by Britain's influence in this Arabian sea region.\(^1\) France was interested in securing predominance in Syria and some states of this region. Italy and Germany were also rapidly overtaking Britain's previously paramount influence in Arabian sea area. With the Baghdad railways her main instrument check British predominance in the Persian Gulf and beyond, India. If British interests were maintained and strengthened at sea by control of the Suez canal and the Persian Gulf, then it was considered that the British empire would be safe against both Russia & Germany threats.

Oil had become important and an area of such promising oil potential as the Middle East and Arabian sea region would have attracted attention for this reason alone. In the early years of this century oil was coming gradually to achieve a more important position in the British economy. Oil had many advantages over coal as a fuel and on a weight for weight basis, provided more power used less space and was considerably cleaner and easier to handle than coal was.

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1. Marienkent, Oil & Empire, P. 4.
However, at this time virtually all Britain's oil came from the U.S.A. and Russia and from the Dutch East Indies and Roumania, but except Mexico, all those countries were outside Britian's control; indeed the world's largest oil concerns were of American, Russian and Dutch nationality. As a result Mesopotamia and Persia acquired even wider significance than the strategic and commercial considerations already indicated would suggest. British companies could hope to obtain them only if they had at least the tacit support of their government. In the Arabian sea region an Anglo Persian oil company was clearly a purely British company.

British oil policy had two major steps, first was the Govt's decision to buy a majority shareholding in D'Arey's Anglo-Persian oil company. The public was told to help ensure adequate and reliable oil supplies for the Navy in time of war or peace. The oil was valuable not only for propelling ships, lorries and aeroplanes, but also on account of the fact that some varieties contain a significant proportion to toluol a basic constituent of explosives. It was therefore essential to create an efficient machinery for planning and coordination of oil supplies.

The formulation of oil policy was Britain's strategic requirements. British Govt. wanted to control the Mesopotamian oil-fields.²

¹ Britains basic aims were, the maintenance of her paramount

² Ibid. p. 9.
influence in Mesopotamia and the Gulf states and the upholding of her special commercial interests in Mesopotamia. In short, strategic, commercial and balance of power considerations were basic components of the British Government attitude towards the Mesopotamian region. The chief diplomatic question involving Britain's strategic, political and commercial interests in Mesopotamia was the negotiations over the Baghdad railway. Britain was also interested in constructing ports at Baghdad, Basra and the terminal point on the Persian Gulf. The Baghdad railway was to pass through a region long dominated by British Indian trade, passing important Shia religious shrines visited each year by increasing thousands of British Indian subjects. Railway company's its ports rights at Baghdad and Basra threatened the long held British monopoly of the steam navigation company were to create considerable difficulties for British oil hopes in the Mosul and Baghdad provinces. Apart from its threatened competition with British transport interests, through provision of a much more direct route to India, the Railway was seen by Britain as a strategic threat. Britain had long held supremacy on the shores and waters of the Persian Gulf greatly reduced piracy, slaving and tribal feuding. Britain's paramountcy in the Gulf region, which she saw as essential for the defence of her empire, be threatened and superseded. Thus the implications of the Baghdad railway for British interests in Mesopotamia were great. According to the

compromise any railway beyond Basra to the Gulf must have prior agreements from and be on conditions acceptable to the British Government. British interests were guaranteed equality of treatment on all railways in Asiatic Turkey, while the sole remaining British railway in the region i.e. the Smyrna-Aydin railway.

On river navigation, an Anglo-Turkish navigation commission was established for the Turkish-owned Shatt-al-Arab. The outlet to the Persian Gulf from the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. The commission was to ensure that this key waterway would be better conserved than previously and be open to all nations. The Turco-Persian Frontier Protocol of Nov. 1913, annex the border running through the oil bearing territory worked by the Anglo-Persian oil company under its concession from the Persian Govt was settled in such a way that the company lost nothing. Britain had already influence in Kuwait and her agreement of Jan 1899 with the Sheikh, supplemented by the secret agreement of Oct. 1907 securing British control over the Sheikh's land, was designed specifically to prevent the Baghdad railway from reaching the shores of the Persian Gulf except under conditions agreeable to Britain. By the end of 1913 Britain controlled river access and aegress between the Gulf and Basra, and she had secured participation in port construction at Baghdad and as the upstream

4. Ibid. P. 11.

5. Ibid. P. 12.
railway terminus of Basra. British prestige and Britain's need to maintain her strategic hold on the Persian Gulf region and protect her other interests in Mesopotamia were all seen to be dependent on the Turkish Mesopotamia. Mesopotamia and the Persia n Gulf were the key to what really mattered to Britain. Commercial interests, prestige and maintenance of Turkish territorial integrity all played a part in British officials calculations, but in basic analysis what mattered above all else was strategy. The Mesopotamia-Persian Gulf region was a crucial region for British strategical thinking, which underlay not only the complicated Mesopotamian oil negotiations, but also all significant British Government involvement in Turkish affairs.6

During the war British policy evolved, not surprisingly, somewhat differently. Britain was involved in fighting in the Middle East for a variety of reasons. These included to protect her routes to India & her interests in Egypt and Mesopotamia, to open up the Dardanelles for supplies to Russia and once that campaign was failing to conduct a successful Mesopotamian campaign, so to regain face in the eyes of her Muslim subjects in India, who had already been stirred up against their British overlords through a call to religious war by the Turks. But the war situation meant that Britain had to integrate strategic objectives with practical considerations. It was wartime pragmatism that

more than anything else led Britain to abandon her former concern for Turkish Territorial integrity, to agree to Russian claims for Turkish territory and then to join in the paper division of the Ottoman Empire with France and later, other allies. But under the Kykes - Picot Agreement, Mesopotamia was granted to France not Britain. But by the end of the war, the British Policy makers realised that the giving up the Mesopotamia to France where Britain might have had unlimited oil potential under her own control was a serious error. Therefore the British foreign policy towards Mesopotamia provided a fairly consistent pattern against which British oil policy could evolve. British Policy sought to secure recognition of Britain's paramount position in Mesopotamian affairs and sought to uphold British commercial and other interests in the area. Above all, it sought all these things in the interests of the British Empire at large, to which this region was a key.

In Mesopotamia certain areas had for thousand of years been known to contain oil. Springs and surjages, but apart from primitive local uses, there was no developed industry. British interest in the possibility of exploiting Mesopotamian oil commercially had been manifested since the last quarter of the nineteenth century. It is a place of oil potential.

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1. Ibid. P. 13.
Iran was able to acquire a composite land/air and sea/air capability due to the help of U.S.A. till the reign of Shah and now due to the others. It had forged ahead of Iraq in terms of weapons in land/air confrontation. In terms of sea/air confrontation, Iran was the strongest naval power in the Gulf after the British departure in Dec. 1971. Because of its growing military power Iran started to flex its muscles. As early as April 1969 it unilaterally abrogated the shahi-al-Arab treaty of 1937 and escorted its ships in the disputed waterways, there by daring Iraq to stop them. Iraq did not. In Dec. 1971, on the eve of the British departure, Iran forcibly occupied the three disputed Arab islands-Abu-Musa and the two Tumbas. No Arab state in the Gulf dared to stop Iran. Iran had emerged as the dominant power in the Gulf, but the visions of the Shah were not to be limited to that small area alone. The spiral of arms purchase needed yet more justifications, which were provided in the fourth phase.

During this phase, that began in 1972 and ended with the face of the Pahlavi dynasty, the Iranian armed forces acquired yet larger amounts of the latest weapons. Not only did the Shah order more and more arms but there seemed to be a competition between arms suppliers to furnish him with what he had asked for and offer him even more. A new set of events provided justifications to the

Iranian monarchy to demand these arms and also a rationable for the arms suppliers to comply with them.

The year 1971, which ended with the British withdrawal, also witnessed the Bangla Desh war, which once again proved to Iran that it could not rely upon its western allies in case of a regional conflict. Two years later, in Oct. 1973, the Arab-Israeli war was fought; it not only brought home the tactical advantages of newly developed precision-guided munition but also the need to over stock supplies list the pipeline from suppliers become choked during a war. Hence, there was a mad rush to buy more of every thing list Iran fall short of supplies during a shooting war. That period also witnessed an intensifications of super power and big powers rivalry in the Arabian sea, projecting an image that Iran was being encircled. The Indo-Soviet treaty of 1971, the Soviet-Iraqi treaty of 1972, the threat of revolt in Baluchistan, the insurgency in Oman and the soviet presence in the north and in the Arabian sea was used to prove that Iran was being deliberately encircled and that it needed sufficient military power to handle that combined threat. 9

This period also coincided with the growing energy crisis, and Iran was not only supposed to be an assured supplier of petroleum in the face of a possible Arab oil embargo, but also considered

to be a potential guardian of the oil lanes and the Gulf oil resources. Iran even used the possibility of Guerrilla attack on tankers in and around the Gulf as an excuse for maintaining full surveillance on vessels in that area. The bazooka attack in the Bab-al-Mandeb by a motor boat on an oil tanker carrying oil (probably Iranian) to Israel was used to prove that point. 10

The threat of radicalism, especially from Oman and the Cuban presence in South Yemen, was also used to explain an Iranian presence not only in Dhofar but throughout the coast of southern Arabia. Nixon administration gave the green light making Iran a store house of modern weapons.

In this response the Iraqi arms buildup has had a checkered history. Iraq had obtained arms from practically all sources including U.S.A. The west is always being interested in searching strategic places in the Arabian sea region to maintain their supremacy and market and also to launch a worldwide campaign if necessary. 11

The super powers are trying to deposit more and more weapons in these states in return to the oil. Because nowadays oil has become an important weapon or mean to wage the war and this region is full of this oil, so it is the point of attraction to

10. Ibid. P. 39.
11. Ibid. P. 40.
the countries who are interested in waging war to capture the market and establishing the supremacy. In this regard U.S.S.R. cannot remain silent, therefore U.S.S.R. has also interfered in the region through some pacts, treaties, markets and arms supplies, influencing the countries towards him.
C. British Govt. and Control of Sources of Supply through this Region

Though the outbreak of war meant that the quest for the Mesopotamian oil concession had temporarily to be abandoned, war brought home forcibly to the Government its almost complete dependence on foreign supplies and obliged it to develop a policy and obliged an organisation for ensuring that oil supplies were adequate, both for its wartime activities and for afterwards. Persian Gulf oil became a question of military strategy and post-war territorial ambitions. The wartime inter-dependence of strategy and supply thus meant that Persian Gulf oil played an important part in the evolution of British Government oil policy.

The basis of this policy had already been laid, through the Government’s purchase of a majority shareholding in the Anglo-Persian oil company. This action, which was intended by the Admiralty to insure the Navy against oil shortages and high prices, did, however, greatly upset two parties with a particular interest in Government oil policy. One of these was the Anglo-Persian Company’s great rival, Shell, on behalf of which Sir Samuel protested bitterly. He took a line that if a business was sound these was no difficulty in raising additional capital through public subscription, and that by becoming financially involved in the Anglo-Persian, the Government was itself entering into competition with other commercial companies. Such competition was indeed very different from the free competition the Admiralty publicly declared
it was assisting, because the company enjoying Government financial and diplomatic support would have an unfair advantage.

The other party to which the Government's purchase caused particular upset was the Government of India. When it and the India office heard of the action they were extremely perturbed, fearing additional military responsibilities in defending the Anglo-Persian company's installations from attack. It was, however, pointed out that protection of the oil installations was only one of a number of objectives behind the landing of the Expeditionary force in the Persian Gulf Port of Fao on 6 Nov. 1914. Although before the outbreak of war, Admiral Slade, a Government appointed member of the Company's board of directors, had strongly urged the defence of the Abadan refinery and the Anglo-Persian Company's pipelines, Churchill did not appear to agree. He was content to note on a naval staff memorandum that pressed such a move, that European and Arabian Defence had priority and that Britain could buy her oil from elsewhere. The viceroy and Govt. of India agreed with him. Only the fact that it was expected that Basra would be regained permanently for the Empire finally persuaded India to support the maintaining of troops at Abadan.

During the early part of the campaign, Mesopotamia was clearly not a major battleground, and oil, whether Persian or Mesopotamian, was not a major factor in planning military strategy. But, despite Churchill's attitude of Sept. 1914, six months later the Admiralty began to increase its pressure on India to defend the
Admiralty began to increase its pressure on India to defend the Persian Gulf oil installations. In addition to its need for marine fuel oil, there was another important reason why the Admiralty wished these installations to be working fully. Britain at this time had a shortage of explosives, and the Admiralty was supporting experiments aimed at distilling toluol, a basic ingredient of explosives, from Persian oil. As it was not until autumn 1915 that it was seen that the cost of extracting toluol from Persian oil was prohibitive and that Borneo oil was far more satisfactory, and as the Persian pipeline had already been damaged by Arab saboteurs, the Admiralty continued to impress on India, the importance of deploying Indian troops to defend the pipeline.

It was the Admiralty that in mid 1915 opposed further troop advances northwards, since this would imply the withdrawal of some troops from along the pipeline, at Ahwaj. The Viceroy, on the other hand, in writing to the king, made it quite clear that this was only an Admiralty fear, and in Oct. 1915 he wrote jubilantly and, as it turned out, somewhat prematurely to the king's Private Secretary that my little show in Mesopotamia in still going strong and I hope that Baghdad will soon be comprised within the British Empire.

Such a triumph was, from some points of view, becoming a necessity, because of the unsatisfactory north-west Asian operations. In addition, there were signs that Russia too might be intending to advance to Baghdad from the north. To forestall Russia and among
other reasons, to raise British prestige in the eyes of the Muslim world, it was eventually decided that the British force would advance to Baghdad. The conclusion must be drawn that oil, whether from Persia or from north of Baghdad, played very little part in the considerations. The military movements have taken place of military campaign.

The Mesopotamian military strategy was clearly limited and only secondary; the question arises of whether it played any larger part in the Government's political considerations. These considerations concerned the future of the Gulf Empire which was divided in two blocs, and affected the whole region of the sea.

It may seem that after so many years of hard international struggle to support the claims of British nationals to oil rights in Mesopotamia the British Government had suddenly given up its resolve in the matter. This was hardly the case, for the future of Mesopotamia and the importance of British interests there and in Persia, the Persian Gulf and India were central considerations for Britain in her military involvement in the war. Oil was one aspect of the question. Persian Gulf having special importance as an outlet for the oil supplies of S.E. Asia through Arabian Sea in view of Lord Fisher. But Lord Kitchener and Admiral Sir Henry Jackson while feeling that British occupation of Mesopotamia and its hinterland would indeed facilitate the working of minerals in Asia Minor and protect British interests in Persia, saw this as
only one aspect among many. In any event, the scheme met opposition from other members of the war committee and was dropped, partly through fear of French hostility to it in time of war.

The view of Kitchener on the possession of Mesopotamia was not contrary. In view of France's claims to extensive areas of the Ottoman Empire and the areas of the Arabian sea region, following Russia's demand for Basra and the Straits, the British Government began serious investigations into which parts of the Ottoman Empire and the sea region, it, in its own interests, would desire to retain at the end of the war. The northern Mesopotamia between Baghdađ and Amida-zaikho was to be divided between Britain and France in such a way that Britain received Kiekuk and French Mosul. The War office held that from military point of view, the principle of inserting a wedge of French territory between any British zone and the Russian Caucasus would seem in every way desirable. Brigadier General G.M.W. Macdonogh commented on this that it seems to me that we are rather in the position of the hunters who divided up the skin of the bear before they had killed it.¹² The Admiralty had to agree with the last statement but all the same sharply criticised the proposed agreement. Britain and France gave reciprocal assurances to maintain, in their respective regions, each other's existing concessions, rights and privileges.

¹². Marian Kent, Oil and Empire, p. 122.
The Mesopotamian oil concession was indeed to become a most useful bargaining counter between the two governments in their immediate post-war territorial negotiations.

The Mesopotamian oil continued to be an important background consideration for the British Government and remained so for the rest of the war. Britain's interests in the Mesopotamia and the Arabian sea region have have great importance strategically and Geo-politically. There was a great value of immense oil areas of this whole region that it possess. It was believed that the area from point of view of oil might decide the battle, what France was fighting for was this region. At other hand the Germany was also eager to occupy this region to impose her influence on the eastward nations of British Empire, an important objective of German military operations in the region. 13

Admiral Slade emphasised the importance of oil to the Admiralty in 31 Oct. 1916 and of securing control of all the oil rights in Mesopotamia (Iraq), Kuwait, Bahrain and Arabia. 14 Late in the war, when the question of defining war aims was coming up for discussion, Slade brought all his ideas together in a long paper entitled 'The Petroleum Situation in the British Empire', which he wrote for the Admiralty on 29 July 1916. In this paper


he examined the problems and sources of British oil fuel supplies, and concluded that "it is evident that the power that controls the oil lands of Persia and Mesopotamia will control the source of supply of the majority of the liquid fuel of the future...."\(^{15}\) Britain must therefore 'at all costs retain hold on the Persian and Mesopotamian oil fields and any other fields which may exist in the British Empire and she must not allow the intrusion in any form of any foreign interests, however much disguised they may be'.

He went on to declare that "the interest that is most inimical to British control at the present time is the Royal Dutch Company', with its controlling interest in one of the most important so-called British companies'. This company was in intimate relations with -- Germany, and to allow it an interest in Persia and Mesopotamia would be synonymous with assisting Britain's enemies.

Glade's paper, which was endorsed strongly by the Admiralty as a useful contribution to both the general discussion of oil fuel sources, and the discussion on war aims, was circulated by Sir Maurice Hankey, secretary to the Imperial War Cabinet. He regarded the retention of the oil-bearing regions in Mesopotamia and Persia in British hands as well as a proper strategic boundary to cover them as a British war aim.\(^{16}\) He also recommended that before peace was discussed Britain should obtain possession of all

15. Ibid. P. 125.
16. Ibid. P. 125.
the oil-bearing regions in Mesopotamia and Persia, wherever they may be....' The chief of the Air Staff, Major-General F. H. Sykes endorsed Slade's views and recommendations 'with all possible emphasis'. Sykes considered that 'the very existence of the Empire will depend in the first instance upon aerial supremacy'. Slade had shown that Persia and Mesopotamia held the world's largest oil reserves. Thus it is essential that steps shall be taken to monopolise all possible supplies. Further, the area in which it is contained must be safeguarded by a very wide belt of territory between it and potential enemies.

Balfour, saw Slade's recommendations as representing an entirely imperialistic war aim. This would give Britain most of the oil-bearing regions. The Foreign Secretary Balfour declared that there were passages in Slade's memorandum which dealt with contentious questions of oil company politics, and thought that Slade's open hostility towards the Royal Dutch Shell group led to be read as an ex parte statement on behalf of the Anglo-Persian Company. He earlier referred that the oil-bearing districts of Mesopotamia and Persia are of very great national importance to Britain.17

Balfour also declared that the Britain's Chief diplomatic difficulties were created by Sykes which though still remaining as a diplomatic instrument, was historically out of date, and by

17. Ibid. P. 126.
the jealously of France and Italy. He pointed out also that there was a vital necessity for the British Empire to secure the Mesopotamian settlement which would not endanger our facilities for obtaining oil from this region.

The British Government could not afford to estrange its ally and thus had to secure a mutually acceptable revision of the agreement of Sykes-Picot or any other made in this context. But obviously it was desirable to do so from as strong a position as possible. In addition, the matter was urgent, for there now seemed to be a good chance of making peace with her opponent. It was undertaken also to put Britain in as strong a bargaining position as possible for negotiating peace with Turkey and a reorganisation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement with France. Oil was not specifically mentioned but the succeeding negotiations with France took place, make it plain that it was an important factor in Britain's wish to maintain influence over this region of Arabian sea.
D. British War Time Oil-Administration Problems in the Region

Despite the Government's pre-war attempt at ensuring national interests by taking over the more than willing Anglo-Persian Oil Company, British Government-Oil Company relations during the war were essentially a matter of British versus foreign interests. War made the problem of finding a general British oil policy more acute, for the dependence of the British Empire on foreign, and particularly on American, oil became more marked and disquieting. It seemed therefore to the British Government that the most suitable way of solving the problem would be to attempt to bring important foreign oil interests under British control. Allied to this question, for it was an important basic factor in any British consideration of inter-company relations at this time, was the old matter of the Mesopotamian oil concession.

It was in the summer of 1943 that the question of amalgamating the companies supplying Britain's oil first arose. In July or earlier, in conjunction with its plans for supplying to the Admiralty a large quantity of forma oil, valuable for toluol extraction, Shell had made an important proposal to the Admiralty. Extracting toluol from crude oil left a large residue (some 98.5%) of by-products to be disposed of in the market, and tankers for transporting the oil to Britain for toluol extraction were acutely short, the Government using those belonging to Shell. 18 The company

18. Marian Kant, Oil and Empire (The Mac-Millan Press Ltd., Madras) P. 127.
proposed, therefore, that an amalgamation be arranged with the Burmah oil company, the chief supplier of the Indian Kerosene market, so as to provide the necessary tank storage and refining facilities and a market for the by-products.

The Admiralty, however, together with the foreign office and India though this proposal merely a pretext for a general extension of shell's activities, in particular over the Persian and Baluchistan markets, and saw in it also a disguised threat to British interests in Mesopotamia. Ever since shell's first approaches to the Government, in 1902, the Admiralty had in fact consistently blocked its applications for oil concessions in Burma, on the grounds of the company's susceptibility to foreign influence, and thies the rejection of its latest proposal was hardly a surprise. A compromise solution was reached by the end of the year, and, though not entirely satisfactory either to shell or to the Admiralty, had at least the merit to the Admiralty of avoiding a shell-Burma oil company amalgamation.

However, the question had not been settled, only introduced. The basic issue was that of ensuring the British character of the firms supplying Britain's oil. In meetings in January 1916 with the two main British companies involved, the government, as represented by the Foreign office and the Admiralty, sought more detailed views on how an "all-British oil company" might be set

up. Greenway, for the Anglo-Persian oil company, suggested a purely imperial company with priority in Government contracts and in obtaining concessions in Britain and all her dependencies and spheres of influence, and receiving fiscal protection in return for price control. The shell representatives, Samuel and Waley Cohen, however, clung to their scheme of an amalgamation with the Burmah oil company. They had put this scheme forward again in December and in mid January, in response to a strongly expressed desire of the British Government that Shell's subsidiary, the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, 'might be brought entirely under British control'. Waley Cohen was able to repeat his company's belief (frequently declared since the Government's purchase of a shareholding in the Anglo-Persian) that fiscal protection, through either a subsidy or a protective tariff, was inadvisable ....... and would lead to a conflict of interest with other powers, which is not in the interests of the state. 20 He asserted that a purely British oil company could not provide the advantages, particularly that of security of supplies, that were proffered in his scheme. If the British Government would mellow its attitude towards his Dutch colleagues he was sure they would accept his scheme, which would go on to be a great success.

 Later events were to show that this was rather too large a pill for the Government to swallow. The Government was still sus-

picious of and grudging in any praise it bestowed on the English side of the Royal Dutch-Shell group, let alone the Dutch side; also, its guardianship of the Anglo-Persian oil company was too recent for it to be anything but protective of its new dependant which in Feb. 1916, choosing its moment carefully, emitted a cry of joy. The company wrote to the Foreign Office that during the cold weather its geological staff in Mesopotamia had found favourable indications of oil in the Basra vilayet. The company was not, however, intending to file an application for the area, since in view of the Foreign Office's letter of 15 November last, the company understood that it would be given the complete oil rights over any portion of the Turkish Empire which may come under British influence. But, as a guide to its present and future exploration work in Mesopotamia for the Admiralty, the company wished to be advised if the above understanding of the position is correct.

However sympathetic the Foreign Office may have appeared to the Anglo-Persian interests, the latter could hardly have expected a simple, affirmative answer to their query. Their letter was clearly a less than subtle attempt to acquire, as an authority to which they could subsequently appeal, written Government sanction to larger claims than the company had ever been granted. This letter sparked off an inter-departmental correspondence that was to last for three months, and the issue of post-war Foreign policy that it raised was to pervade all subsequent Government thinking on relations with the oil companies.
Greenway's letter was indeed instrumental in changing the foreign office's mind—though in the opposite direction to that he knew had intended. The foreign office felt that it was important that the company's assumption should at once be controverted, and pointed out to the other departments that the D'Arcy group, interested in Mesopotamian oil through the Turkish Petroleum company, was separate from the Anglo-Persian oil company, and that the D'Arcy group's claim to a monopoly was quite another question. In any case, neither the group nor the company had any claims recognised by the foreign office to other parts of the Turkish Empire, concerning which, the department considered, other British groups were entitled to careful and probably to preferential consideration.

Sir Edward Grey felt strongly that it was essential that the whole attitude of this Majesty's Government towards the oil question should be reviewed at an early date. There were two main reasons for this view. The first was that, apart from the American companies, shell was Britain's main supplier. Shell also controlled the marketing of the oil produced by the Anglo-Persian and the Burmah companies—two British, but weak and local, companies. Hence the foreign secretary felt that it was desirable to examine whether the Royal Dutch Shell group can not be brought


22. Ibid, p. 129.
under British control, by an amalgamation with the Burmah and Anglo-Persian companies, or otherwise. The present moment, he felt, was extremely opportune for pursuing such a development, shell favoured the idea and the government should take advantage of the company's present patriotic and self-sacrificing frame of mind. The pre-war Mesopotamian negotiations afforded an example of the embarrassment which was caused to this department in dealing with a company like the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum company limited which, though British in domicile, is in fact controlled by the Royal Dutch company. Once the war was over, and in order to avoid German economic penetration of the region, concessions should be handled by a British group. But added Grey, Neither the Burmah nor the Anglo-Persian oil company appear to dispose of the economic independence, the areas of supply, or the commercial ability to enable them to fulfil the necessary conditions.

Parker's private views on the matter are even more illuminating. As can be seen from a departmental minute he wrote, he held strongly that the Foreign Office could not allow either the Anglo-Persian or the D'Arcy group an oil monopoly, even in Baghdad and elsewhere. Parker pointed out that Admiral Slade, who is a director of the Anglo-Persian oil company, is unable to see anything but perfection in that company and he contrasted this with the opinion of Lord Inchcape, who said that the best thing we could do would be to get the whole thing taken over, on terms, by the shell and run on sound commercial lines'.

23. Ibid. P. 130.
24. Ibid. P. 130.
Parker was not wrong, for at this time both the Board of Trade and the Admiralty saw no advantage for British interests in the only sort of amalgamation scheme that the Shell interests favoured. Further the Board of trade together with the India Office, felt that the Anglo-Persian company had good grounds for claiming priority for oil rights in Mesopotamia, though not in other parts of the Ottoman Empire.

The Admiralty's views are worth quoting in some details. Concerning Greenway's claims, the department declared that it appreciated the importance of giving provisional consideration to the Mesopotamian oil question, and agreed that support of the D'Arcy group in the sphere to which the promised concessions relate should not extend to other territories......where other British interests have previously been supported. It maintained, more strongly than ever, its 1914 attitude towards the rival companies and did not hesitate to point out the change that had taken place in foreign office thinking since the previous December. The Admiralty stressed that oil fuel is of such vital importance to the British Navy that My Lords are not prepared to trust entirely to the good will and self-interest of commercial companies for the necessary exploitation on which supplies depend. Further the department thought that it does not seem possible that any concessions to H.M. Government which the shareholders interest in their vast capital would permit the Dutch-Shell group to make would be in the slightest degree commensurate with the giving over to them of a privileged position and rights of immense commercial
value in India, Persia and Mesopotamia. The maintenance of a strong independent group in these regions appears to be a cardinal act of policy.

The sort of company reorganisation that would best serve Britain's interests, suggested the Admiralty, would be that combining a closer union of British groups with strengthened Government influence the acquisition of a controlling share in the Burmah oil company by the Indian Government.

Since all the other departments concerned seemed to be taking the opposite line to its own, the Foreign Office pressed for an interdepartmental conference where the whole matter could be thrashed out. But the Board of Trade, into whose area of activity the question of oil company reorganisation fell, preferred that the two main aspects of the matter, of Mesopotamian oil claims and Royal Dutch-Shell reorganisation should be dealt with separately. The Foreign Office was obliged, therefore, to send an interim reply to the Anglo-Persian oil Company. It informed the company that the Government was not prepared to express unqualified assent in the wide claims advanced in the company's letter, but that the whole question would be considered at a later date when political conditions are altered and more settled. Political conditions meant the arrangements included in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. On that ground alone, even had these been no other reasons, it was necessary that the Anglo-Persian oil company's broad claim be treated with great circumspection. The company, predictably, was not satisfied with the answer it was given but
could obtain nothing firmer. It was on this note that the inter-
departmental correspondence on Mesopotamia ended for the time
being. Admiralty 20 June 1916, recognised that no settlement of
this question, which regard as of the very greatest importance,
can be effected until the political situation in that region is
more defined. Although separate consideration of the claims of
the D' Arcy group had thus temporarily to be set aside, the gove-
ernment continued to examine the possibility of reorganising the
oil companies. However, Mesopotamian oil claims could never be
completely excluded from these discussions, since Mesopotamia and
Persia were fundamental to the Admiralty's attitude towards the
rival oil companies.

The Board of Trade considered that a purely British Company
or combination could not provide sufficient supplies or facilities
to meet the empire's needs. Any effective combination must include
the Royal Dutch Shell, although British control in the capital and
management of the new undertaking must be ensured. By this scheme
imperial oil company, as a combination of Anglo-Persian Petroleum
and Persian oil company, emerged, which would be 51% British and
49% Royal Dutch. Dominance of the British membership would be
ensured through the creation of British voting trust. The Govern-
ment must decide, not whether something more advantageous could
not be drafted, but whether on the whole the scheme.....presents

greater advantages than the alternative policy of declining to make any arrangement at all, and risking the consequences.

The Admiralty issued an alternative scheme drawn up by Slade. The Admiralty objected that the Board of Trade's scheme neither excluded foreign influence from the new company's policy and management, nor protected the consumer. A huge monopoly would be created that the Shell interests would dominate. It suggested the formation of a national oil company, through amalgamation of the Anglo-Persian and Bumah oil companies. Distributing facilities would be provided by reconstituting the British Petroleum Company so as to bring it under British Government control. The Admiralty declared that as a result of such a reorganisation the British Companies would absorb Shell, instead of Shell in effect absorbing the British companies. The Anglo-Persian oil company would then proceed to develop the Persian, Mesopotamian and other British oilfields and generally make the British Empire and its dependencies self-supporting with regard to oil supplies and distribution. But through the memorandum of 19 October the Admiralty declared its support of the principle of a Bumah-Shell amalgamation on the basis of the Board of Trade's scheme. It warned that any attempt to push the goods of any one company in preference to those of the Anglo-Persian oil company can not, under any circumstances, be tolerated. However, the cabinet committee in its meeting on 1 Nov., approved the Board of Trade's scheme.

26. Ibid. p. 132.
and authorised that department to continue its negotiations, these broke down over the question of cancelling the marketing agreement between the Anglo Persian oil company and the Asiatic Petroleum company.

There was one small flurry over the question of an 'all-British oil company' at the end of 1917. 27 This was sparked off by Greenway's speech at the annual meeting of the Anglo-Persian oil company on 3 Dec. 1917. This, he said, should be government controlled, like the Anglo-Persian and free from foreign taint of any kind to develop oilfields outside the British Isles and absorb all the existing British oil producing companies. But the government denied the formation of such a company was being considered. In fact the Government was interested in investing a large finance (money) in their company to unduly influence trade connections and seek priority for materials. In May 1918, Government investigations into the question of oil company amalgamation were resumed, along the lines of the Board of Trade's 1916 recommendations. 28 These investigations were part of a definite attempt by the Government to evolve a general oil policy.

In 1917 a special organisation had been formed under the direction of Sir Gaetan. Until that time each government department had run its own oil affairs; but the wartime pressure of competing claims on a constantly depleted tanker tonnage meant that

27. Ibid. P. 132.
28. Ibid. P. 133.
Co-ordination was becoming essential. These efforts were made to co-ordinate oil matters by reducing and recasting the various existing oil committees and as a result the Petroleum executive was brought into being in December and given advisory powers and powers of executive action. But it was found difficult to work satisfactorily without some sort of national policy guide. This was so particularly in relation to the government's attitude to oil companies, British and foreign. It was decided to set up a special committee to consider questions of national policy and re-open the oil company negotiations.

The investigations were undertaken by a committee set up in May 1918 by Walter Long (Colonial Secretary, and Minister in charge of Petroleum Affairs). Meeting under the chairmanship of Lord Harcourt was instructed to enquire into and advise his Majesty's Government on the policy to be followed to ensure adequate supplies of oil for naval, military and industrial purposes. Walter Long pointed out Britain's present dependence on the USA for about 80% of her oil supplies, and the consequent power America would have over Britain if she decided to be unfriendly. The most important factor was the Britain's 1917 oil shortage, resulting from enemy submarine action against tankers.

29. Ibid, P. 133.
30. Ibid, P. 134.
Walter Long advised the committee that the oil situation must be most carefully reviewed and that ways and means must be devised by which we can attain a reasonably self-supporting position for the future. Therefore the committee will find it necessary to consider what steps should be taken to secure control of as much as possible of the world supply of natural petroleum and in this connection it will be important to examine the share which British capital is now taking in the exploitation of oil fields in His Majesty's dominions and in foreign countries, and to consider how far the operations and policy of the great oil groups are in accord with imperial interests.

The committee examined closely that all British oil holdings in the effort should be evolved by a broad British Policy. It was absolutely vital to the British Empire to get a firm hold of all possible sources of Petroleum supply and the Government would welcome the introduction of any such measures in the dominions as may tend to this end. Production in the Empire was small and unlikely ever to be able to meet the demands of Britain's expanding oil technology. An effort was made through the negotiations with the Royal Dutch Shell group (the only great oil group) to bring this under British Government control. It seemed already that in acceptable terms the group might be willing to come under British control. In time the negotiations brought about an agreement to transfer the group from Dutch to British Control.
The British Government was very much conscious about shell offer from security point of view, of 51% voting power in the British companies of the group, and willing of control of that company shares. 32 British Government policy was working in her interest not for others. Greenway and sleda declared that government control of a company was a drawback, as their company had found out; but, if this control was to be retained and British companies reorganised, then they would prefer this to be achieved through a purely British National Oil Company, as the Admiralty had earlier suggested. It is thus not surprising that these negotiations foundered. There could perhaps, have been an accommodation with Royal Dutch interests. Samuel, and Cargil (A director of the Anglo-Persian and Chairman of the Burmah oil Company) were more anxious for a settlement, even on reduced terms, because of the attitude of Green way and sleda to the Royal Dutch-shell Group.

By the end of 1918, therefore, considerable progress had been made towards evolving an oil policy, and it was one in which Mesopotamia was to play a major part. 33 The exigencies of war had brought Mesopotamia much more to the fore, in terms both of military and of political activity than could have been predicted. British Government had tried to rectifying the situation and a national oil policy began to be sought. Even in

32. Ibid, P. 136.
the early stages of working this out, it seemed undeniable that the twin objectives must be to obtain control over both supplies and suppliers of British oil. The realisation that departmental oil policy committees needed to be streamlined and coordinated led to the setting up of the Petroleum Executive and the Petroleum Imperial policy Committee. Oil policy makers came up with the solution of trying to obtain British control over the Royal Dutch-Shell Group of Companies. Initial efforts at securing this control were unsuccessful, but by Oct-Nov. 1918, with peace imminent, conditions were favourable for a resumed effort.

(E) Arabian Sea as a Part of British Lake

The aim of the British policy in the Arabian sea region was to enforce Britain's authority on India and its surrounding areas, against other European contenders. Britain was the only naval power in the world after French defeat in 1805 at Trafalgar. To make her strategy more effective, England spread her naval bases during this century (19th century) from Aden to Bombay. The Arabian sea became virtually a British lake and almost every piece of land within it was occupied to prevent the hostile European powers from establishing bases. Upto

World War II Britain continued to be a predominant colonial and military power in most areas of the Arabian sea. It was the period in which it could legitimately be said that Britannia ruled the waves. The presence of British Gunboats anywhere in the Arabian sea had decisive effects both for maintenance of peace and enforcement of policy. No European nation had any interest in that sea surface, nor in the lands adjacent to it.

Both the Dutch and the French lost their main possessions in the Arabian sea, the English on the other hand made extraordinary gains at the cost of their rivals. One development in the 19th century which affected the Arabian sea, the construction of the Suez Canal, only strengthened British hold on the sea. The Mediterranean route to India became a private subway for Britain with her unchallenged supremacy in the Mediterranean and in the Arabian Sea also, with controls at different stages - Gibraltar, Malta, Aden and Bombay. The Red sea became an exclusively British sea lane, bolted and barred at both entrances. Aden assumed the importance it possessed during the time of Egyptian and Arabian navigation in the Arabian sea and it may be well said that the Suez Canal became, as events developed, the strongest link in the Chain which bound India to Britain.

Britain's supremacy which remained unquestioned for long, began to be challenged by Germany. Germany planned to create a navy strong enough to make a conflict on the sea a dangerous proposition for Britain by causing economic paralysis and effective blockades. The construction of the canal had strategic aspect also. It restored the importance of the traditional Red Sea Route to Europe. That was a famous highway over which practically the entire trade of India with Europe had passed till Vasco Da Gama arrived at Calicut and opened the Cape route. With the opening of the Canal, India and the Arabian sea became many thousands of miles nearer to the European bases of power and consequently, along with an unprecedented development of trade, it also witnessed more effective control of the Arabian sea routes.

Earlier, the English had no territory on the shores of the Persian Gulf; but since they had almost a monopoly of the maritime commerce in the Gulf and were responsible for the security of navigation, they claimed political supremacy there. The Britain tried to resist by all means in her power the attempt of any other nation to establish itself on the shores of the Gulf. The visit of Lord Curzon to the Gulf in 1903 was meant to demonstrate Britain's political control over it. At the time of the Anglo-Russian convention of 1907.

Lord Grey stated that the Russians had acknowledged the British interests in that region of the sea and that these interests were to be maintained by Britain as before.

In the Arabian sea itself there were signs of a change. Since the occupation of Mauritius during the wars of the French Revolution, France had no position in the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean. French had no bases in the Arabian sea but tried regularly for this aim. British Empire also had got success to hold the Germany out side the Arabian sea till the historical war broken. For this purpose to scape the Arabian sea from the control of contenders, Britain thought essentially on the occupation of Egypt and got this (Egypt) to secure the route and maintain the hold at Arabian sea continuously. Britain had blocked every entrance to Arabian sea through west and east sides. Thus the Britain's presence in Egypt was deemed to be vital for her interests. Britain also warned Russia during Russo-Turkish war in 1877 that any attempt to blockade the canal route be regarded by her as a menace to Indian and a grave injury to the commerce of the world. The Canal had become indispensable to the British Empire in the Arabian sea region. Britain declared Egypt a protectorate on 18 Dec. 1914. Thus, the British acquired a full control over the vital Suez route to India through Arabian sea and accomplished her long-cherished aim of complete security of her trade routes passing through the Arabian sea and Indian ocean also.
To safeguard her interests in the region, she considered it essential to maintain a large naval force in Aden, as in other places of strategic importance in the Arabian sea. The British power did fight among other western powers and Indians also to get control of Persian Gulf they had made several fights with Arabs supported by other western powers against to the Britishers in this region. They won victory after victory. British had moved fast enough to give the entire defense ring a cast iron character. All the vantage points in east Africa and South west Asia and southern coast of Indian Ocean had been captured by the British. The new rival, Germans never acquired anything like a menacing stature, after the old rivals were either eliminated or cut to size. When by a master stroke, the British turned the Suez Canal into a British highway, the Indian Ocean became almost a British lake and Arabian sea was a part of that lake. Britain's command of the Ocean and of the Sea was undisputed and now became unchallenged also after the defeat of all rivals in the region. That was just the time for India to become an 'empire' and for the British Crown to acquire the title of 'emperor'.

But just at the opening of 20th century British sea power became challengable and Japan, Russia, America and Germany entered the naval race and during the W.W. I the German submarines managed to penetrate through the defence rings that Britain had established around the ocean and sea. 38

there was rivalry started among various powers for positions of control or influence in the Ocean. The lake had been seemed to go away from the control of British and some pieces of land in the sea had been captured by the rivals. The nations who now make a bid to be dominating are more resourceful than Britain who carried out conquests in the past and pursue much wider objectives there.

Italy was also eager to dominate the Indian Ocean, whose Arabian sea was a part and put in her claim for what ever the future may unfold. International rivalry had begun to show and capture the this strategically important ocean bearing a most important trade route and a link for East and West. For this purpose France established herself at Jibuti in the Red sea region, just across Aden. Italy developed the colony of Eritrea and began examining the possibilities of developing a naval base at Massawa.\footnote{K.M. Pannikar, India & The Indian Ocean, P. 74.} She also claimed political interests in the territory of Yemen on the Arabian side of the Red sea, thereby threatening the safety of the vital British centre of Aden. Germany, not through the Atlantic and African coast, wanted to enter into Indian Ocean and Arabian sea but thought the other route which was the Red sea route.

Mediterranean and Red sea both were secured and controlled in any case by Britain, so through this side also she had
no chance of getting entry. Therefore from the side of land, she approached to get direct entry into the Persian Gulf. She made a direct rail route connected Berlin with Baghdad and an attempt to outflank the sea. 40 This rail route would have enabled it to regain the importance it had lost and provided Germany with a safe backdoor entrance into the Arabian sea.

The Mesopotamia valley has been a strategic centre in Asiatic history. It had been the seat of powerful Empires like Ninevah and Babylon and Khalifas of Baghdad who has influenced the sea in the earlier days. Surprisingly the Persian Gulf had been converted into a protected naval area from which the mastery of the sea could be challenged was utterly impossible for a power like Germany whose home land was far away from there. The Turkish Empire was also not in a position to help the German allies to work through it. The attack on Mesopotamia, undertaken across the sea from bases in Indian could no doubt have been effectively prevented, if the scheme had materialised. But the aggressive action to challenge the mastery of the sea would have been impossible.

Great Britain sailed the seas of the Indian Ocean as an absolute mistress. Her power was overwhelming at every point and no nation could have contested her authority in the slightest degree, but the storms were gathering around it. The

40. Ibid, P. 75.
major European nations had acquired their interests in the sea area. Germany was developing schemes for a land route which would give her an independent entry into the Arabian sea. W.W. I eliminated Germany from the Arabian sea. The establishment of the independent state of Iraq considered adequate to threaten the Arabian sea from the side of the Persian Gulf.

The acquisition of Abyssinia was also a part of this scheme. It could meet any challenge coming from the sea and from Massawa, a great naval base, the Red sea can be controlled. But at the surrender of Massawa the dream of dominating the Red sea and controlling the Gulf of Aden disappeared. France, Italy and Germany had lost their bases and domination of their base had gone in the hands of Britain. But Japan and America grew as a new naval powers and threatened the further British naval activities in the Arabian sea and the Indian Ocean also. With this development Britain maintained Singapore with all the facilities and barred the entry of outsiders into the Indian Ocean and Arabian sea. Britain was legitimately proud of the Singapore that had arisen as a warning and as a threat to anyone who dared to question the supremacy of Britain in the Indian Ocean and its part Arabian sea.

41. Ibid, p. 77.
42. Ibid, p. 77.
43. Ibid, p. 77.
The other development was the creation of a small Royal Indian Navy. After the destruction of the Maratha naval power in 1751, Indians were sailing the seas for the first time in warships but symbolic of the resuscitation of the old forces which had for at least two millennia held the mastery of the sea.\(^{44}\) The British Crown assured the people of India that the Royal Navy would protect their shores and that they need not bother themselves about their sea routes. The British policy was to make India and its seas a large prison house guarded on three sides by the British troops. Japan was not interested in north-westward but she was interested in south-eastward in the Indian Ocean. The surrender of the Germans at the Fifth of Firth Meant that the Royal Navy had thereafter no serious rival at sea and that the British Empire could be considered safe against outside attacks. After W.W.I France became an ally, Germany was beaten and Russia lay in chaos, there was a little anxiety lest the United states, Japan too had been a British ally in the War. Britain Naval power had been proved thus superior in the world than others and it was in a position to dominate the world.\(^ {45}\)

In this time it was also believed Japan was interested in the construction of a canal across the Isthmus. Which would

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\(^{45}\) Ibid, P. 25.
have affected the dominant position of Singapore and given the safe entry into the Ocean. It was all false and rumours only but it was clear that Japan showed interest in a free access to the Ocean.\textsuperscript{46} The European War changed the entire situation in the Indian Waters. The Gate way to the Ocean was attacked from the land side. After a short siege Singapore surrendered and the safety and security of the Ocean, for 150 years a British lake, had vanished at one stroke.\textsuperscript{47} The mastery of the Britain in the Indian Ocean and the Arabian sea had affected after the entry of Japan and America in the Ocean with powerful jecture. Most of the island bases had gone in the enemy hands in the Indian seas. The commander-in-Chief in Indian openly confessed that there was nothing to stop Japan at that time from landing anywhere she pleased on the Indian coast line.

The Japanese battle fleet appeared in the Bay of Bengal in April 1942 and the British Navy was under aerial attack from carrier based planes, but the American fleet forced Japan to withdraw her fleet from the Indian Waters. Though deprived of the fruits of their mastery of the Bay, Japanese submarines began to appear in the Arabian sea and to take a heavy toll of mercantile shipping. Britain reacted with vigour by the

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid, P. 25.

\textsuperscript{47} Ibid, P. 26.
occupation of the French islands like Madagascar and the Diego Suarez. Though the line of communication was thus safeguarded, the Arabian sea could not be cleared of Japanese submarines, and the west as well as the east coast of India remained exposed to the depredations of the undersea craft for a considerable time. The British statesmen had never regarded America as a rival on the sea. After 1922, Britain abandoned her 300 years old policy of supremacy on sea and accepted equality with America. It was also thought that without a capability to command the world's sea routes, the scattered British empire could not be safeguarded.

Britain had either abandoned her policy of self-aggrandizement which she had pursued for several hundred years or to start building ships at a rapid pace to cope with America. The Americans realised that only those nations had acquired power in the past which had powerful navies and commercial marine. Through her naval expansion programme of 1916, she first subdued Germany, the second naval power in the world, and defeated Japan also. she also had got capability to check the British naval activities in her interest between the two great wars.


49; Ibid, P. 31.
Oceanic strategy has therefore entered into the consideration of the Indian question with a dramatic suddenness which could not have been foreseen before March 1942. The whole question of Indian and Arabian sea region defence, had, as a result, to be reconsidered, both in the light of history and of recent events. The era of protected sea communications ended for India and the Arabian sea area, and the question of the control of ocean and sea areas surrounding India has again become important.