CHAPTER - III

IRAQ-IRAN HISTORICAL ANTAGONISM
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The chief cause of Iraq-Iran war centralized over the territorial conflict and frontier security issues between the two countries. In addition a multitude of factors had also fuelled the outbreak of hostilities which ranges from personal animosity between Iraq’s President Saddam Hussein and Iran’s Ayatollah Khomeini, to century old, Sunni Vs. Shi’ite Muslim religious differences and Arabs Vs Persian ethnic disputes between the two sovereign nations.

During 1980’s Iraq had accumulated potential to play a leadership role in the Middle East. The orientation of Iraq’s foreign policy was shaped and influenced by many historical factors. Iraq’s governing elites have always believed that their country had great potential for economic development and political influence in the countries of the middle east. In early period Iraq’s power potential was deeply rooted in its water resources and its strategic location. In modern age its power have originated from Iraq’s rich oil resources. Despite the fact that the west has had little contact with Iraq, after the revolution of 1958, the Ba’ath party ever since it took control in 1968, have clearly redefined its strategic concerns and its role in the region.
The roots of origin of Iraq-Iran conflict had different spectrums. The deep differences between them in their conflict had originated long before even both has been shaped as sovereign states. Moreover, Iraq-Iran conflicts had mix of social and economic and religious and political factors. The religious divide between the two countries have had greatest impact in the Middle East region. It continued to shape and influence interstate politics of all the states in the middle east region. The strategic importance of Iran and Iraq, mainly because of their location and oil reserves made this conflict central not only to the Middle East and Persian Gulf countries but to the rest of the world². Therefore, their conflicts were interwoven in combination of ethnic hostility, religious schism, communal conflict and latter frontier disputes.

Sunni Shia Conflict:

Both Iraq and Iran have formed the eastern part of the early Islamic empire, and were occupied in the early stage of the Islam’s expansion beyond Arabian Peninsula in the seventh century. Both have not contributed to the Islamic civilisation. However, Iraq was assimilated and identified with the early Arab conquerers, who established the Islamic empire and became integral part of the empire, due to the vanishing of its ancient civilisation and early settlement of Arabs migrants, in the southern part. This migration took place long before Islam arose. It was in a large number and was ruled by Arab rulers. On the other hand Persia was different in ethno-cultural background who
had resisted the wave of Islamic expansion which was clunged to its language and historical traditions.

The majority of its people were converted to the Islamic faith, mostly forcibly, by militant Arabs subversion. Persia was indeed one of the first ancient civilization to fall to Islam\(^3\). Though Persians reluctantly submitted to Islamic rule but they have resisted assimilation. They were often accused by Arabs of supporting heterodox movements and of consciously introducing unorthodox elements into the creed hoping to alter the structure of Islamic society. The Arab writers in particular had blamed their peers of cultural bias, who were often denounced as ethnicists (Shu`ubiyyun) in Arabic because they sought to glorify Persian history and culture at the expense of the Arab heritage. They were accused of espousing Shi`ism, a heterodox division of Islam in which they had injected Persian notion and practices either to undermine the Sunni creed, to which the majority belonged or claimed Shi`ism as their religion.

Shi`ism was neither founded by Persians nor did it spread widely into their country until the sixteenth century. In 1502, when the Safauids, a Turkish speaking dynasty from central Asia was founded in Persia\(^4\). Under the leadership of Shah Isam`i, majority of Persian were forcibly converted to the Shi`a Gult who latter became instrumental in the separation of the country from Islamic unity. Shi`ism originally as a movement originated not in Persia but in southern Iraq. Their center was in Kufa, at town on the lower Euphrates to which `Ali` the fourth Calipha had a seat
of the government to rally support from its Arab settlers in his struggle against Mu'awiya Governor of Syria. The Arab supporters came to be known as the Shi'a (partisans) of Ali. After Ali's assassination Mu'awiya assumed the Caliphate, and his two sons Hassan and Hussein, returned to Medina, the first Capital of Islam. Until the death of Mu'awiya in 680, even before Shi'ism had gathered momentum because of repression and persecution of Arabs who were suspected of Ali's sympathy in southern Iraq at whose hands governors were appointed as Calipha from Damascus.

However, after Mu'awiya's death succession of power was taken by his son. Yazid. Ali's second son, Hussein, whose elder brother Hassan died in 669, began to claim his right to the Caliphate. His father's followers sent messages to Hussein, urging him to come to Kufa, his father's seat of Government, hoping that he would lead the opposition against Yazid, who had been proclaimed Calipha. As he approached Kufa, Hussein was intercepted on the outskirts of Karbala near the river Euphrates, by a small force sent by the Governor of Iraq to prevent him from proceeding to Kufa. Upon refusing to return to Medina as the Governor's men commanded, he fell in his encounter with the intercepting force and was put to death at Karbala on October 680. His death is commemorated every year by Shi'a followers on the tenth month of Muharram as an occasion of mourning and repentance for the fall of Hussein.

The tragedy of Karbala, is considered the cause célèbre of justice to the Shi'a all over Islamic lands in their struggle to
achieve power under the banner of Ash'ia Imam (ruler) against their opponents Sunni who claimed that the Caliphate should be nominated and enthroned not by legitimate right but by the consent of people. Under Umayyad’s rule increased the number of Persian converts, who were discriminated in taxes and services in the state and began to support the Shi’ia movement. Their support contributed in small measure to the downfall of the Umayyad rule. The descendants of Ali and the descendants of Ibn Abbas (Ali’s uncle), cooperated in the destruction of the Umayyad Dynasty. So, presumably the power was entrusted to Ash’ia candidate. At Umayyad Clipha’s fall, power was seized by one of the descendants of Ibn Abbas, called Al-Safah, who became the founder of a new Dynasty. Abbasid, and Shi’ia followers were deprived of the fruits of their endeavors. Persian supporters were amply rewarded, not only by the office of the first Minister (Wazir), but also by other high offices which were earlier denied to them.

However, Shi’ia never abandoned their support to the claim of Hussein’s descendants to the imamate the increasing of their number towards the decline of Abbasid Dynasty, Shi’ia cause gained popularity and prestige. Their propaganda was so effective that they succeeded in establishing three Shi’ia dynasties before the fall of the Abbasid regime to the Mongol invaders in 1258. One was in Egypt, called the Fatimid dynasty, which lasted from the tenth to the twelfth century. The second was Hamdanid, who ruled over southern Syria and Iraq in the tenth century, and the third, was Bhwayhid, who ruled over southern Iraq and west
Persia (Daylam), in the tenth century. The Buwahid Dynasty had preferred to rule over majority of Sunni followers in the name of the Sunni Caliph rather than to impose Shi'ia rule.  

The increasing infiltration into Persia and Asia minor of Saljuk and Turkish tribes who were recent converts to Sunni Islam from central Asia not to speak of Sunni Mamluk rule in Egypt. Syria too had contributed in no small measure to the consolidation of Sunnism. It was, however, to establishment of the Ottoman dynasty in Asia minor at the opening of the fourteenth century and its adoption of the Hanafi School of law, as the official school of the state, which consolidated Sunnism in areas where Shi'ism had became firmly established. No less important was the spread of Sunni Islam westward by Ottoman conquests, at the expense of the Byzantine empire, and of Christian princes in central Europe, which aroused the Sunni circles admiration for the achievements of the Ottomans Sultans. As they had taken pride in the early Calphias who founded the Islamic empire in the seventh century.  

When the Ottoman Sultan turned eastward to extend their control over the Arab provinces, they were welcomed by the majority of the people, though not by their mamluk rulers, who did not consider the Ottoman Sultans foreign conquerers. They rather hailed them as their legitimate rulers and bearers of the banner of Islam against infidels at the end of the fifteenth century. The resurgence of Shi'ism in Persia had a far-reaching effect as Shi'ia followers in other lands. The establishment of
erstwhile Shi’ia dynasties in Arab lands proved to be of relatively short duration. Indeed Shi’ism followers had never given up their claim to the legitimate immate, even after their twelfth Imam had suddenly disappeared in 874, when he was still an infant. In their eyes his absence (Ghayba), was only in body, since his spirit was considered still with the fold, it was believed he would eventually return in the capacity of Mahdi (Messiah), to re-establish Shi’a ascendancy and justice. The messianic notion fostered, in Shi’ia circles. They expected that eventually the time would come when their position would be enhanced and justices re-established. The emergence of Persia as a Shi’ia state was thus hailed as a sign that the start of Shi’ism had again risen and that power at last had been restored to them. The people as a whole took pride in the historical memory that their country was once great empire.

The Persian language though diluted with innumerable Arabic words and written in Arabic script, continued to serve as the national language and had even became the lingua franca in northern and eastern Islamic lands.

What set all of these forces in motion was the founder of a new Persian dynasty, who seized power in the name of Imam and established Persia as a separate state on the political map of Islam with Shi’ism as its official religion. The rise of Persia became a challenge first to the Sunnism under Ottoman rule and later to Sunni rulers in Iraq and beyond in other Arab lands.
Shah Isma‘il al-Safawl, the founder of the new dynasty, exploited at early age of thirteen, the fanaticism of a group of Qizil Bashi (red heads) which his father had organized at Gilan in the northern Persia, to spread Shi‘a teaching. He possessed prudent judgement and qualities of a charismatic leader. He exploited the rivalry among Sunni leaders and was able not only to establish control over the whole of Persia but also extended it into central Asia. In his drive to reassert Shi‘ism which spread beyond Persia. He instructed his followers to course not only the Caliph’s Abu Bakr and Umar, but all Sunni Caliphs to venerate Hussein who died in his struggle to region the imamate from Sunni ruler in 680, in the cities of Najaf and Karbala. About 60 miles south of Baghdad, lie the tombs of the Imams Ali, Hussein and Abbas, whose struggle for the leadership of the Muslim world after the death of the prophet led to their martyrdom.

This in turn eventually had created the permanent schism between their followers Shi‘ia and Sunni. The pilgrimates to the holy cities of Najaf and Karbala owe duty for all pious Shi‘ia who were buried in the grave around Najaf which was regarded as a means of insuring residence in paradise(7). Shah Ismail was initially successful in establishing control cover Persia. He controlled Asia because of the absence of a powerful rival from the political stage.

The policy of the Ottoman empire had been not to extend its rule eastward into Islamic lands, but to penetrate westward into
Europe at the expense of Christian Princes. Under the instigation
from Persia there surfaced rebellion against Sunni dominations.
Sultan Salim, who had just seized power from his father in 1514.
Afterward, he turned eastward not only to suppress Shi’ia
rebellion in his own dominations, but also, to reestablish Sunnis
in the areas of Islamic lands where Shi’ism had prevailed. He
crushed Shi’ia rebellion in eastern Asia minor from there he
proceed eastward and captured Tabriz, capital of Shah Ismail, and
defeated his force at the battle of Chaldiran 1514.

But Shah forces retreated to the interior of Persia. Sultan
Salim occupied the whole of Al-Jazira northern Iraq, Syria and
Egypt, in 1515-1517, leaving Baghdad, Najaf, Karbala, which Shah
Ismail occupied in 1508, under Persian control. Because of harsh
winter, this gave Shal Ismail an opportunity to regroup and
enlarge his military forces to recover not only Tabriz but whole
area. The house of Islam was virtually divided into two
communities based on territorial segregation. A vast central
strip between the two territories consisting mainly of central
and southern Iraq became the bone of contention between Persian
Shah and Ottoman Sultans. Before he could recover the Arab
provinces which Shah Ismail had occupied, Sultan Salim died
suddenly, shortly after his return from Egypt in 1520. He was
succeeded by his son Sultan Sulayman, known as the magnificent in
the west, and Al-Kanooni in Arab world, Shah Ismail died four
year later in 1524, without realizing his dream of extending his
control over the entire Gulf region.

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The circumstances for recovering Baghdad and the middle Euphrates area from Persian control were not favourable Sultan Sulayman’s preoccupation with his European Campaigns kept him from pursuing his father’s policy of extending Ottoman control eastward for almost a decade. It was in response to Sunni appeals, after Abu Hanifa’s Mosque and other sanctuaries in northern Iraq had been pillaged by Shi’ia followers, that Sultan Sulayman was finally stirred and turned his operations eastward. In brilliant campaign, beginning with Tabriz, he marched southward toward Baghdad and quickly recovered the whole area from Azirbayjan to the middle Euphrates from Persian domination in 1534. For over two centuries, the Shi’ia sanctuaries in Najaf, Karbala, Kazimaya and Samarra, to which Shi’ia followers performed their visitations were in Sunnis hands Persian attempted to recover control over Baghdad, Karbala, and Najaf by Shah Abbas.

Though Baghdad and the middle Euphrates areas were occupied by the Persian forces (the former in 1623 and the latter in 1743-44), Persian occupation proved temporary. At the time of Ottoman control over the three provinces of Maosul, Baghdad (in which the middle Euphrates areas was included, and Basra was firmly established, several treaties, intended to established peace and delimit frontiers

The problem created by Shi’ism, has peculiar blend of Islam and Iranianism that easily assumed fanatical intensity. However, the brief historical background of the deep division in
the House of Islam, inherited by both Iraq and Iran, throw sufficient light on the events that were taking place in the Gulf region and beyond.

THE CONFLICT DURING INTER-WARS YEARS:

The dissolution of the Ottoman empire was followed by the outbreak of First World War. This changed significantly the political map not only Turkey the mother country, but also other countries were created. The new nation states were created on the basis of national rather than a cumenial, (Ottoman) identity, which recognized the individual as a citizen, due to his religion affiliation. After the treaty of Lausanne 1924, Turkey renounced its claims to territories that were inhabited by non-Turkish population. This resulted in the detachment of all Arab countries, the land inhabited by a majority of Arab speaking peoples, which either emerged as independent states, such as Najid (later Saudia Arabia), and Yemen or passed under temporary foreign control, like those in northern Arab lands, before they become independent states. But Turkey still controlled small portion of the Ottoman territory.

Iraq one of the Arab successor states, was only country that inherited the rest of the frontier between Persia and the Ottoman empire. Not only did it inherit that portion which had not yet been fully demarcted, but it also inherited the former provinces of Maosul, Baghdad, and Basra, which had became the battle ground of almost continuous military operations since the sixteenth century. Before the two countries agreed to put an end to
hostilities and settle their differences peacefully. Perhaps no less important was the Shi‘a community, which had been under Ottoman rule, as a part of the Baghdad province, which became integral part of the people of Iraq. Therefore, the land frontier between Persia and the Ottoman empire was roughly what it is today.

Holy places of Shi‘ias in Najif, Karbala, Kazimyan, to which the Shi‘ia used to perform periodic visitations, from all over the world possed under Iraqi control. The Shi‘ia community was minority under Ottoman rule, which had suffered discrimination and repression and failed to enjoy an equal status with their Sunni Arab compatriots. Although the Sunni Arabs of Iraq were not in practice granted all the privileges enjoyed by their Turkish co-relationists, but the Sunni Arab had access to public education and service in the army and civil administration, which the Shi‘ia were denied, therefore, Shi‘ia fall back on private religious school to educate their children. The well to do people were engaged in business. The majority of Shi‘ia community remained illiterate The Shi‘ia of the middle Euphrates area were still leading a nomadic life in the desert. Some of the Shi‘ia in urban centres of Iraq were of Persian descent and they normally resided in or around Karbala and Kazimay.

The majority of Shi‘ia were of Arab descent so inter marriage was common. The commercial relations between Iraq and Iran were almost monopolized by Shi‘ia business community who constituted about 50% of the total population. Hence, Shi‘ia felt
relieved under the British rule to whom Iraq had passed from the domination of the Ottoman. British latter made a numer of statements and promising self-government and independence. The Shi‘ia, who formed largest single confessional community, naturally sought to improve their condition to play a more meaningful role in the countries politics.

But the British policy ran contrary to the Shi‘ia expectations, when British occupied southern Iraq shortly after break of the First World War. No clear policy had been formulated regarding the country’s future. By the end of the war gradually Iraq was passed under British control. There came two schools of thought concerning the future of Iraq and the Gulf region. The first, called the colonial office school, argued that since British expeditionary force which occupied Iraq was dispatched and controlled from India, so Iraq’s future should be determined largely by the colonial office, as a part of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The second called the foreign office school, maintained that the increasing British influence in the eastern mediterranian and Red Sea required the support of leaders in areas where Arab nationalism had already begun to develop. This school saw in the Sharif Hussein of Makka, and his son the potential rulers, who could provide leadership for the Arab nationalist movement.

Since, Iraq was considered the Arab country so, it was most affected by the Arab nationalist movement. Though the general promise of independence was given to Sharif Hussein, when he
entered the war as an ally to British in 1916. Before Iraq was entrusted to Sharif, the Shi‘ia community in the middle Euphrates at first responded favourably to the British administration hoping to control at least their area. After British withdrawal the people’s choice was for Faysal as head of state in 1921. It was felt that he could maintain a balance between the traditional Sunni leadership and Shi‘ia aspirations to participate in the country’s governance. Since, Faysal was the great grand son of Ali the first Imam, therefore, he was agreeable to the Shi‘ia community as head of the state.

As Faysal’s family had accepted the Sunni creed of the Sunni community he was not only agreeable, on the ground of his Sunni affiliation, but also because of the leadership quality which he and his father had provided to the Arab nationalist movement. After Faysal’s ascendance to the throne the Shi‘ia community have had mixed feelings about Faysal’s attitude, as he facilitated between British policy supported by moderate Sunni leaders, and the Shia‘ia pressure to follow an independent policy. The Shi‘ia ministers in the cabinet were confined to one portfolio. The British policy was responsible for subordination of Shi‘ia to the Sunni domination.

The events in Iraq were not affected by political developments in Persia. Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, had envisaged the establishment of a chain of buffer states, (Turkey, Persia, Afghanistan, Iraq and others around the Gulf) to reduce Russian influence in the region to protect India
and Gulf countries. Since Curzon’s policy failed in Persia, British policy towards Iraq was reshaped by Winston Churchill the colonial Secretary, who had succeeded in establishing a nationalist regime (often called in England and "Arab Facade"). The Shah of Persia, supported by Shia’a Mujtahids, took a critical attitude towards British policy and refused to recognize the Iraqi regime until it achieved independence. The Shi’ia leaders in Iraq sought to enhance their position by support they received from Persia**.

Following the establishment of national regime in Iraq, both Iraq and Iran sought through negotiations to resolve the problems they had inherited from the past such as Sunni-Shi’ia tension, dispute over frontiers, and the Kurdish problem**. Non of these issues were yet resolved. After Iraq was detached from the Ottoman empire, the Shi’ia assert their claim to leadership. But in reality, they had never tried to validate the claim by participating constructively in the political processes, which was made under the Arab regime. In 1923, the Mujtahids issued fatwas (religious decrees) to boycott the elections, and turned down, appointment to high political officers on the grounds that the regime was dominated by foreign influence. Thus their rejection of election meant denial of legitimacy of the regime which rested on religious grounds. Not only they restored to violent acts, which had aggravated sectarian tensions, and led to unrest in the tribal areas of the middle Euphrates. In fact Iraq had been transformed to serve as the Shi’ia base, in their sanctuaries in the cities of Najaf, Karbala, Samarra and Kazmya.

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The Shi’ia paid always a visit to Najaf where the tomb of Ali was founded.

However, these places in addition to their holy nature in the view of Shi’ia, had acquired important dimension as great learning centres. Many Mujtahids, who distinguished themselves as high spiritual leaders had studied there. The Persian Mujtahids studied in Najaf or other centres of learning, such as Gum and Mashhad which were close to Iraq. They had retained their Persian nationality, which had afforded them greater security under the Ottoman regime. Their number later increased as result of their inter marriage with Shi’ia followers of Arab descent.

The new regime in Iraq declared that the children of Persian nationals born in Iraq could claim both Iraqi citizenship by virtue of their birth in Iraqi territory and Persian nationality by descent. Their parents could retain their Persian nationality without adopting Iraqi citizenship. Even some of the Mujtahids reached to highest rank of spiritual leadership often issued fatwas to Shi’ia followers on political questions of the day. Like Mirza Tagi Al-Shirazi, the Mujtahid of Karbala, and Shaykh Abu-al- Hassan al-Isfhani, the Mujtahid al-Isfhani, the Mujtahid of Najaf, whose fatwas proved instrumental in stirring the tribes of the middle Euphrates during Iraq revolt of 1920. The Persian nationals such as Ayat-Allah Khomayni, had openly supported the Mussadiq government 1953. Ayat Allah Khomayni the spiritual leader of the Islamic revolution in Iran 1979 had resided in Najaf before he returned to Tehran. Gum had taken active part in
his country's revolution. Therefore, the Shi'ia Mujtahids, whether in Iraq or Iran, they have served the larger interests of the Shi'ia communities irrespective of geographical segregation or national identity. The differences between these religious groups and other secular groups in either country reflect itself in their great influence.

After end of First World War, the Mujtahids, were very active in both new emerging states. In their bid for power in Iran the Mujtahids, through their participation in the nationalist movement had succeeded in reducing British influence. They enabled Riza Khan the founder of the Pahlawi (Pahlavi) dynasty, to rise to the throne and replace the Gajar dynasty in 1925[43]. Later the Mujtahids led Islamic revolution and over threw Pahlawi dynasty. However, there had always been mutual suspicion and each were trying to destabilize the other through Shi'ia religious group.

The Mujtahids in Iran became more powerful, especially after the Islamic revolution of 1979. The Iraqi part which was never ruled by religious group. The existing Persian-Iraqi relations were often complicated by sectarian tensions. While relations between the Shi'ia community in Iraq and the government began to improve, relations between Persia and Iraq remained cool, Iran had refused to recognize the Iraqi government. So, its official diplomatic relations were conducted through the British diplomatic mission in Tehran which passed its message to Iraq through the British High Commissioner in Baghdad. About the
mistratment of its national, the Persian delegate to the League of Nations had blamed that Persians nationals were discriminated on confessional (Shia’a) grounds, Persia had insisted of its right to equal treatment. Despite offers to negotiate the differences, its refusal to recognize Iraq have continued until 1929. Britain and Iraq finally agreed to terminate the judicial agreement and abolished the special privileges granted to foreigners in 1929.

The British delegate informed the Council of the League of Nations that the special privileges were to be abolished, and were to be replaced by a uniform system of justice in Iraq. After the League of Nations approved the British proposal to abolish the special privileges Persia and Iraq moved quickly to initiate direct negotiations and finally established normal diplomatic relations in 1929. The Shah of Persia and the King of Iraq exchanged telegrams of congratulations. Therefore, this was the real constructive step taken for the first time in history by both country to create a chance for negotiations to resolve their historical and deep rooted conflict.

COLONIAL LEGATHY’S BARRIERS :

Eversince the recognition of Iraq by Persia in 1929, relations between the two neighbours were conducted directly by their governments. But before Iraq could attain independence till the end of the mandate in 1932, Britain continued to provide guidance for the conduct of Iraq foreign relations, and consulted on all major issues with regard to Persia. The issues on which
the UK had played important roles covered such as dual citizenship, demarcation of border and migration of tribes across borders, etc.

The status of persons possessing dual nationality was one of perennial problems that had forced the authorities in both countries to compromise. According to Iraqi nationality law enacted in 1924, the existence of large numbers of Persian nationals residing in Iraq were estimated over 250,000 people who possessed dual nationality. They were Iraqi under Iraqi national law, and Persians under the Persian nationality law. The problem arising from the bordering tribes like Muhaysin tribesmen in Basra province, who were Arabs living on both sides of Shatt Al-Arab.

The Iraqi government maintained that the tribesmen living in the right bank in Iraqi territory, where they had been in residence for many generation, were Iraqi subject. Because of fear of the possibility of conscription as they have held Persian nationality no attempt was made by the census officials for their registration. Because of this anomaly several persons were prosecuted for one regularity or another and were find or imprisoned. This and other similar situations were confronted by town-dwellers and tribesmen living on both sides of the river Euphrates. Especially, in such cities and towns such as Brasa, and Muhammara (later Khurumashahr) were the cause of almost continued friction and conflicts between Persian and Iraq. After establishment of formal diplomatic relations, the major issues
centred on the crossing of frontiers by tribes and rebels seeking asylum. Both countries had failed to settle completely these issues as the boundary was not clearly demarcated.

After the termination of the mandate over Iraq in 1932, all defence and foreign policy matters had fallen in its jurisdiction with exception of Basra port, which had its own budget. This part owed to the British government debt to be paid annually. Therefore, the British interest in Basra served as a means of involving her in domestic affairs of Iraq. Although Persia had exercised self-restraint still the issue of navigation in shatt al-Arab in which Basra port involved had created great controversy. The issue of frontiers line between Basra and the Gulf were often raised by Persia. The Basra port in fact was constructed by Britain during First World War. It was administered by a separate unit by Britain before it was passed to Iraqi jurisdiction.

After Iraqi national regime was established in 1921, it was administered by civil administration by a port director assisted by advisory committee which contained both British and Iraqi national. Still, King Faysal, aware of his country’s constrains and limited sources, sought to have friendship and peaceful relations with Persia, as the Shah had asserted the claim over Shatt al-Arab and other frontier issues. Both Iran and Iraq have alternately blamed British imperialism for inequitous provisions of the treaty of 1937, on the status of the Shatt Al-Arab water way.
Although formal relations between the two countries remained cordial, still they had confronted often increasing frontier violations prompted the foreign ministries to exchange notes and protests mutually. Both the countries were till today unable to resolve the conflicting claims over the boundary line of Shatt Al-Arab by direct negotiations. The direct negotiations between the two led nowhere because Persia contested Iraq’s claim to sovereignty, over the whole Shatt Al-Arab. In addition they had demanded the Thalweg, the navigable line of the river, to be the frontier line. In the past it was decided to bring the dispute to the conciliation of the League of Nations. As initiative Iraq had submitted the dispute in a letter dated 29 November, 1934 on which Persia had given its consent in a note in the same year.

Moreover, Iraq had inherited several treaties, that were signed by Persian and Ottoman empire. After long period of rivalry, they entered into agreement for maintenance of peace in their mutual interest. Despite sectarian differences with respect to their frontier questions, they concluded more than a half dozen treaties and instruments which were armistic in nature. The motto was to stop fighting between Persian and Ottoman empire. But it could not lay down permanent peace, the treaty of Zuhab in 1739, the first formal agreement, which in general terms made a broad division between the Persian plateau and the Mesopotamian plain.

To resolve their differences the two countries sought to identify the provinces that belong to each side. The frontier
line which was considered to separate the territory of Islam (Dar al-Islam) from the territory of unbelievers, called the agreement of Zuhab al-Sulh (Turce) and not Silm (peace), because the later set a permanent conditions of peace. However, both Sultan of Ottoman and Shah of Persia failed in their commitment, each trying to reestablish the unity of the house of Islam under their domain. The task for believers was possible only under Calipha or Imam.

The Shatt Al-Arab known to the ancient Iranians, as Arvand rud, was some 120 miles long, and was composed of the confluence of Tigris and Euphrates, which for greater part of the water way was joined by the Karun rivers originating in the Iran. The Shatt al-Arab assumed strategic importance in the days of European rivalry in the Gulf. During the First World War, the British occupied the Iraqi port of FAO and Basra and maintained their supply lines for Mesopotamian campaign through the Shatt Al-Arab™.

The two country’s realized that peace could not be achieved by war and hence both countries decided to enter another treaty without attempt to impose one of the two creeds e.g. Sunnism or Shi’ism, on each other. The initiative to conclude a treaty emodying the principle of unity and peace was first undertaken by Nadir Shah 1747, who had proposed to reduce Shi’ism into fifth school of law, called the J’fari school. This had provided that Sunni schools would recognize Shi’ism within Islamic super structure. The agreement signed by Nadir Shah and the Ottoman
Sultan in 1746, at Kurdon (a town near Tehran), which simply reaffirmed the Zahab (639).

The Sultan who accepted the principles of peace and territorial segregations, rejected the principles of reconciliation, by considering Shi‘ism as a fifth school of law. But the fate of the treaty was a typical to the previous, till 1823, when the first treaty of Arzurum (Ard al-Rum) was signed. This treaty reaffirmed the area belonging to the Ottoman empire and Persia. As laid down in Zuhab (639), and Kurdan (1746) treaties, defining frontier line and separating the territories of the two countries, the Kurdan treaty had not been ratified by Sultan. In this regard it is roots worthy to point out that for Shi‘ia-Sunni reconciliation and normalization of Persia-Ottoman relationship it was very necessary.

The very foundation of peace and non-interference in each other’s internal affairs, through diplomatic exchanges were very much needed. The Persian pilgrims needed access to travel without hindrance to the holy places in Makka and Madina or in Najaf and Karbala. The terms of the agreement were violated by the Ottoman forces when they attacked the Persian town of Muhammara on Shatt al-Arab in 1837. The Persian forces entered Sulaymania a principale centre in Kurdistan in 1840, claiming the occupied locality to be under its jurisdiction. Therefore, the treaty of 1823, was breached. Jeopardizing mutual respect of each other. At this juncture UK and USSR had became deeply involved in the Persian affairs which had become urgent for maintenance of peace.
in the region. Those four states met at Arzurum to conclude a second treaty bearing the same name in 1847. The treaty addressed itself specifically to the frontier dispute. It laid down the following principles:

1. The two countries agreed on a waive the totality of their existing pecuniary claims on one another.

2. Persian abandoned all claims to the city and province of Sulaymaniya and promised not to interfere in the right of Ottoman empire over the said province. The Ottoman empire confirmed the sovereignty of Persia over the city port of Muhammara, and island of Khizr, and the anchorage and land on the eastern bank of Shatt al-Arab, which was in the possession of tribes considered to be persian subjects. Persian vessels had right to navigate freely without let or hindrances on Shatt-Al-Arab from the head of the Gulf to the point of contact of the frontier of the two countries.

3. Both parties agreed to appoint commissioners and engineers as representatives for the purpose of determining the frontiers between the two states.

4. Special commissioners were appointed to decide on all cases of damage resulting from frontier of the two countries.

5. Both parties had undertaken to co-operate that all refugees shall be handed over in conformity with the previous treaty of Erzerum.

6. This article would regulate the fixed the amount of taxes to be paid by Persian in accordance with the amount fixed in the previous treaty.

7. Persian pilgrimages were granted the right to visit the holy places in the Ottoman dominions. The consults were to be stationed in Persia to render services to nationals of the
one party in the territory of the other on the basis of reciprocity.

8. The two parties agreed to suppress brigandage and other acts of aggression committed by tribesmen settled on both sides of the frontier.²²ο

The two Erzurum treaties provided the framework for peace settlement. It may be said that they were the only constructive steps so far taken between the Ottoman empire and Persia. In which for the first time, the basic principles of peace and territorial sovereignty and non-interference in domestic affairs had finally been agreed on for normalization of their relations. However, the implementation of the treaties gave rise to almost innumerable incidents and differences over the interpretation of the article relating to frontier the demarcation of which was delayed for over a half century. The Ottoman empire became involved in the First World War, subsequently dismembered, the demarcation commission which had not finished its task.

The other problem relating to the interpretation of the treaty, in which some clauses that appeared too vague or too general to give one side to provide a different interpretation, from other. Following the war negotiations were resumed, Persia sought to review the whole frontier issue, both Iraq and Persia began to reconsider their relationship as a new states in accordance with standards entirely different from those followed in the perso- Ottoman era.
The League of Nations received complaints from Iraq. The government of Iraq blamed that Iran had violated the Arzuram and protocols of 1911 and 1913. The later agreement had provided for the formation of a four power commission to draw up the frontier in detail. The commission had proceeded to the region to delimit and mark the boundary, Iran argued that the treaty had been imposed on both Iraq and Iran by the British and hence Iran had no obligation to adhere to it because of changed circumstances. Iran government pleaded the international law doctrine of rebus sic stantibus (vital change of circumstances) had entitled Iran to declare the treaty null and void.

The strategic importance of the water way grew rapidly as a result of establishment of the Abadan refinery on the Iranian side of Shat Al-Arab. Further north lie the Iranian port of Khorramshahar, which had formed the southern terminal of the trans-Iranian railway. It may be recalled during the time it had gained international prominence. In the later years of the Second World War as the principal channel of Allies supplies to beleagured Soviet Union at the height of the Anglo-Iranian oil dispute in the early 1950s.

The British worship mauritius entered the water of Shatt Al-Arab, evidently to put pressure on the Musaddiq government in Tehran. The rapid change of circumstances in Iran and Iraq affected adversely the attitude of the two countries to each other which over- threw the governments by military coup d’etat after the outbreak of the Second World War. The post war years
had proved unfavourable for implementing the treaties because of the frequent violations of the treaties. Therefore, wide differences brought both countries to the brink of war.

INFLUENCE OF GOVERNMENTAL CHANGE IN EACH OTHER:

On the eve of the outbreak of World War Second, the Gulf region including Iraq and Iran, were drawn into the war. Both countries were forced to engage and endure military occupation. In the aftermath of the war, situation in both countries began to change considerably. Each country had begun to adopt a particular line of social and political action. The war had affected adversely their foreign policy orientation, which they pursued before the war. In Iran Shah Reza Khan, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty abdicated in 1941, in favour of his son, Shah Muhammad Reza, who sought to consolidate his regime to pursue the policy of modernization. He put down revolts and dissidence in the provinces. The name of Arabistan was changed in the following year to Khuzistan province. Although by force of habit, Persians continued to refer to it by its former name for many years.

Earlier his father had been able to play off, the two historic rival powers the Soviet Union and Britain against each other and had was successful in maintaining the country’s independence. When America supported Muhammad Reza for his imperial design this resulted in the gradual alienation of the people and weakening his regime. The aim of America was to strengthen Shah’s regime in domestic policy and not to replace Britain. But the Shah used the American support to enhance his
own power and authoritarian rule. The Shah policy demonstrated
to serve the best interest of the west. From the regional
perspective his policy was viewed with suspicion and disfavour in
Arab land. In addition the support for the Kurdish war in Iraq,
aiding the Kurds in their insurgency against the regime in
Baghdad, Iran and the Kurdish leadership had come to an
understanding under which the former had agreed to provide arms
and advisers. Moreover, Iran probably also acted as a conduit for
arms shipped to the Kurds by Israel\(^{(24)}\).

On the other hand Iraq’s domestic policy constituted in the
main of promoting internal reforms and development, maintaining
the country’s independence and maintaining cordial relationship
with neighbours. These policies were shaped by King Faysal I. and
were pursued by General Nuri al-Sa’id. These policies had proved
quite adequate for Iraq’s requirements after the Second World
War.

However, the conditions began to change. The income from oil
was made available for development. General Nuri’s foreign policy
faulted because he had committed the country to a western
alliance which was rejected by the masses. The people had
demanded neutrality in the conflict between east and west. The
new generation and their supporters were not satisfied with
Nuri’s domestic policy. They were denied participation in the
government. As in Iran, an uneasy alliance eventually developed
among dissatisfied groups. Irrespective of their differences they
swept away from the old regime. Making several attempts the army
officers who called themselves free officers, seized the power after over-throwing the regime in July 1958. The Shah's reaction towards the July revolution was natural. First, he was unwilling to recognize the new Iraqi regime. After recognition of new regime by several countries including the western powers, he recognized the regime reluctantly.

After two weeks, since it pledged to respect international agreements and co-operate with the all neighbours the Shah was horrified on overthrow of the civilian regime by a military revolution. It had alarmed the Shah, as well as, other civilian rulers in the region. "The Iranian government was afraid of Kurdish nationalism and its impact on regional politics. It was felt that it might dash between Arab nationalism and Kurdish nationalism. Apprehension was raised that Nasser's influence was strong in Syria, USSR and Iraq, so he might attempt to create a Kurdish satellite state to provide link between USSR and UAR (Syria)".

The revolution in Egypt spread in the region as paradigm of revolutionary military leader. Iran had already experienced the danger of ideological propaganda that might invite Soviet intervention and overthrown by Iranian Communist Party. The Tudeh party had been officially banned following an abortive attempt on the life of Shah in 1949.

Meanwhile, in Iraq Qasim had allowed the Communist party to infiltrate into several Government departments and influence his policy. Moreover, he had entered into several agreements with
Soviet Union that encouraged the Communist propaganda to take place. Probably, Shah was afraid of Soviet intervention. Since Kremin had established strong hold in Egypt, Syria and Iraq, the Iranian regime visualized the sources of threat to its security not only from within the country but also from abroad. There were several allegations of direct and indirect foreign support to the Iranian opposition movement from both right wing and left wing, not only from the Communist countries, but also from radical Arab states like Egypt, Syria and Iraq, Libya(27).

So Shah had reason to be apprehensive of the events in Iraq, and the possibility of joining other Arab lands in the anti-western wave, that appeared to encircle and isolate his country from the west. Shah felt that only United States could challenge the Soviet ambition to penetrate into the Gulf region. At home Shah of Iran found theart to his regime from anti-Shah forces in Iran supported by radical Arab movements. Therefore, indirect threat to the Iranian security posed by radicalism, republicanism, imperialism and Arab nationalism, as exemplified in the controversy over the name Persian or Arab Gulf and the questions of Khuzistan and the islands in the Gulf. Iran also considered China as a potential threat to its security. China was staunch supporter of the Dhofar movement and had offered all possible political and military support to the popular front for the liberation of occupied Arab Gulf.

The Shah of Iran feared of possible threat, posed by Cuban soldiers in south Yemen, who had extended support to the leftists
in the region. The Shah slowly engaged the United States to enhance his position against increasing Soviet influence in the Arabs lands. The United States helped to organize Savak, a new agency primarily to uncover communists, but the Shah used it to hold all political opponents in check. The interests of the United States and the Shah, thus did not coincide, they merely overlapped.

The Shah began to revive grievances and issues that have had existed in the past such as boundry conflict of the waters of Shaht al-Arab. The Shah tried to learn Qasim’s position on the Question of Navigation. After recognition of Qasim regime by Iran, Iranian delegation to the United Nations discussed the matter with Iraqi delegation. But, no worthwhile progress was reached on the subject. The situation became even worse, when Iraq withdraw from Baghdad pact in 1959. So, Iranian shipping in the Shatt Al-Arab was confronted with further obstructions. Iran’s show of force was commenced when the freighter Ebin-Sina sailed through the Shatt into the Persian Gulf. Escorted by the Iranian navy and with an umbrella support of jet fighters, was the first sizable vessel to pass through, the disputed waters under the Iranian flag, ever since Iraq claimed the border river as part of its territory.

The tension had increased between the two countries which badly affected their trade. Iranian’s visit to Shi’ia holy places in Iraq was interrupted in 1961. Qasim faced another problem which has suspected to have been incited by the Shah, e.g. the
Kurdish war. The Kurds in Iraq are fewer in number than the Kurds in Iran. But they expressed their national aspirations, and revolted several times against central authority. The situation became more difficult soon after the Second World War, partly due to the Soviet instigation, but mainly because Kurdish nationalism stood in sharp contrast to the rising tide of Pan-Arabism, under Qasim the Kurd who had put their demand for autonomy. Mulla Mustafa of Barzan, a tribal leader championed the cause of autonomy who had emerged as the most formidable leader in the post war years. He participated in the foundation of Kurdish republic at Mahabad in 1946, and was given rank of General. After the collapse of Mahabad, he went to Soviet Union, and reportedly he was given military training there. When he returned to Iraq after 1947, Qasim became aware of the Mulla Mustafa's ambition so restricted his movements, as a consequence the rift gradually depend when the war brokeout.

The Shah of Iran was not prepared to lend the Kurds support since Mulla Mustafa, had been received in Baghdad by all liberal and Communist groups. It gave him impression that the Kurdish movement in Iraq was ally of Communists. The Iranian Kurds who sympathized with their brethren in Iraq had given indirect support to him. The failure of Mulla Mustafa to receive direct support from the Shah prompted him to come to an understanding with 'Abd-al Salam Arif', who succeeded Qasim in 1963. The new Ba'athist government rejected Mulla Mustafa demands and the war was resumed and the Shah lost no time in offering support to him.
From the fall of Qasim in 1963, to the coming of the Ba`ath party to power in 1968, the strained relations between Iraq and Iran were considerably reduced, mainly because the new Iraqi regime under the leadership of `Abdal-Salam` Arif and then under the brother `Abd al-Rahman` Arif appeared anti-Communist to the Shah. Iraq decided to construct oil pipeline from Khanaqin (near Iran border) to Baghdad on the Iraqi side and the Naltishah and Khana, on the Iranian side, seems to have the same subteranean sources. The Iranian government protested against the project on the ground that this action would increase the exploitation of the common oil reserve at the expense of Iran. However, both sides agreed to resolve the issue on a joint exploitation basis, on the annual volume of oil that each country produce and method of supervision, left for foreign ministrical meeting to resolve.

Iraq under the two `Arif brothers appeared no longer an enemy to the Shah. But the rise of Ba`ath party, which openly advocated Pan-Arabism and socialism was unwelcome events to the Shah. The Ba`ath party had seized power by military coup and had adopted principle of Non-aligned foreign policy, whose beneficiary in Shah eyes, was non-other than Soviet Union. Therefore, the new regime was opposed not only by Iran, but also by the west as a whole. The escalation of the Shah al-Arab dispute, the area of conflict between Iran and Iraq widened rapidly. Each side charged the other with plotting against it.
In the beginning of 1970, Iraq had suspected Iran's complicity in abortive coup and accordingly expelled the Iranian Ambassador and four members of his staff. Iran too retaliated by expulsion of the Iraqi Ambassador in Tehran. The tension resurfaced again between the two countries. The Ba'ath party had made known its proposal for the settlement of the Kurdish issue. Baghdad had floated its vision of Arabs and Kurds live together in peace under Apan-Arab Union, in which the Kurds were to enjoy an autonomous status. However, neither the Kurds nor Arabs were ready to abandoned their national identity. The resurrection of the pan-Arabism aroused Kurdish suspicion that their dependence on the Iraqi identity might be merely a step toward ultimate assimilation by the Arabs of Iraq. Iran's involvement in the Kurdish war appeared to have been motivated by tactical rather than strategic considerations.

Iran could not afford to help the Iraqi Kurds to achieve their demand as an autonomous status in the view of its inevitable backlash effect on the three-million strong Kurds of the Iranian Kurdistan... The Kurdish revolt in Iraq was beneficial to Iran in more ways than one. Firstly, if the Abadan oil refinery could be covered by the Iraqi artillery from the adjacent mountain-tops, the Kirkuk oil-fields could be held to ransom by the Kurdish pesh mergha, equipped with heavy guns supplied by Iran. Secondly, Iran's preoccupation with the Kurdish insurgents greatly circumscribe its role actual or potential, in the Gulf region. Finally, by giving aid and confort to the Kurdish fighters Iran hoped to strength its bargaining position...
vis-a-vis Iraq on the Shatt al-Arab issue. Towards the end, Tehran kept its channels of communication open with Baghdad. As evidence by the secret negotiations between the foreign ministers of the two countries in Geneva (1973), and Ankara (1974)\(^3\).

On the initiative of President Boumidian of Algeria, resolutions for agreements on border issues and other disputes matters were accepted by both Iran and Iraq on 6th March, 1975. The whole package usually referred as the ‘Algeria treaty’, was signed in Algeria’s by Mohammad Reza Shah of Iran and Saddam Hussein the Foreign Minister of Iraq\(^4\).

**ALGIERS TREATY OF 1975:**

Iraq and Iran reached to an understanding to resolve their differences issues by direct negotiations between the two countries. In the later part of 1974’s, there were attempts by Turkey and Jordan who offered their good offices, which might have indirectly paved the way for bringing the two sides together. However, at the meeting of the organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) in Algiers in March 1975, Saddam Hussein, Vice President of the revolutionary command council of Iraq, agreed with Shah of Iran at the invitation of President Houari Boumudiah of Algiers, to sort out differences between the two countries.

The meeting was attended by Shah, Saddam and Boumudian, which was held on June 5th and 5th 1975. The agreement centered on the following matters, the thewleg would be the boundary line in the shatt al-Arab, and Shah agreed to stop his assistance to the
Kurds. Both sides agreed to cooperate on the maintenance of peace and security. Following the agreement between the two leaders, the foreign ministers of the two countries met in separate conferences. The agreement signed on the principles of territorial integrity and non-interference in each other internal affairs. Both sides mutually agreed to undertake.

1. To make demarcation and redemarcation on the basis of the Constantinople protocol of 1913, and the delimitation frontiers commission of 1914.

2. To define their maritime frontier in accordance with thalweg.

3. To put an end to any infiltration of a subversive nature from any source.

4. The protocol attached to the agreement is integral part and permanent any violation of the components parts would be contrary to the spirit of the treaty.

5. Both parties respect inviolability of the frontiers and territorial integrity, finally and permanent.

6. Any dispute between the two parties, should respect the frontiers refered to in article 1 and 2.

6.1. Such dispute should be solved by direct bilateral negotiations within two month from any side complain.

6.2. If no agreement reached both parties shall have recourse within a three-month period to the good offices of a friendly third state.

6.3. If both parties disagree on arbitration within not more than one month will be set up from the date of refusal or failure.
6.4. If any party disagree to the arbitration procedure, one of the parties may have recourse, within 15 days after such disagreement was recorded\(^{33}\).

On signing the agreement both the leaders claimed that the respective side had fulfilled long standing national demand. In June, 1974, the draft of reconciliation treaty designed to embody the principles laid down at Algiers to settle all outstanding differences between the two countries was prepared. Four protocols were attached to the treaty. The first provided establishment of border security arrangements to prevent the infiltration of subversive and undesirable elements from one side of the border to the other. The second protocol provided for establishment of an Iraqi-Iranian and Algerian Committee to carry out the redemarcation of the land border between them. In accordance with Constantinople protocol of 1913, and Tehran protocol of March 17, 1975 the third protocol stipulated that the shatt al-Arab waterway border between the two countries be the thalweg rather than the eastern bank as laid down in Algiers agreement of March 1975\(^{34}\).

With Iraq-Iran detente the Kurdish revolt suffered a serious setback. Despite the proclamation of amnesty, thousand of Kurds migrated to Iran, which maintained an open border for them, Mullah Mustafa Barazani criticized the Shah and the USA but had no option, than to stop all military activities. However, they did cross over into Iran by the last moment\(^{35}\).


4. Ibid.,


6. Ibid., p.9.


10. O’Ballance, op. cit., p.2


13. Ibid., p. 2

14. Ibid., Chapter IV.


24. Sreedhar, op. cit., p. 34.
26. Ibid., p. 20.
27. Ibid., p. 21.
28. Ibid., p. 40.
29. Sreedhar, op. cit., p. 34.
31. Ibid., p. 46.
34. Ibid.,
35. Ibid.,