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THE MIDDLE EAST AND MARITIME GEOPOLITICS

The Military Significance of the Sea Routes to the Middle East

by

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submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
of the degree of Master of Arts
in the Arab Studies Department of the
American University of Beirut
Beirut, Lebanon
1962

M. E. MARITIME GEOPOLITICS

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

It is with sincere gratitude that I acknowledge the scholarly effort which my thesis advisor, Dr. Joseph Malone, made on my behalf. His help and encouragement will long be remembered. Thanks is due also to Captain R. K. N. Emden, DSC, RN, Naval Attaché to the British Embassy, Beirut, for the use of his charts and books; and to Dr. Joseph Van Riper, A.U.B. Geography Department, for his constructive criticism and aid.

I would like to express my appreciation for the advice given by those professors of the A.U.B. History Department who donated valuable time to discuss with me the subject of my thesis. Lastly, I wish to thank my wife for her help and everlasting patience during the past several months.

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May, 1962

ABSTRACT

Chapter I surveys the coasts of the area under discussion from a geographical point of view. It shows how the configurations of the coastline of the Middle East tend to constrict the sea lanes and to channel shipping through certain prescribed routes. Further, those areas which by certain characteristics such as availability of fresh water and harbors, population centers and climate, and the geographical location for strategical reasons (in connection with the adjacent sea routes) are pointed out.

Chapter II is divided into four parts, the first of which discusses the effect of Vasco de Gama's discovery of the Cape route on the maritime geopolitics of the Middle East. The rivalry of Portugal, the Netherlands, and England in the Eastern seas is explained. Part two treats the Napoleonic Wars in their Middle Eastern setting, and emphasizes England's growing geopolitical interest in the sea routes of the Middle East. Part three continues the story of England's search for a convenient overland route through Egypt or Mesopotamia, to link London with Bombay, and her opposition to French attempts to cut the Isthmus of Suez. Part four shows how England's opposition to a French-inspired Suez Canal crystallized, and how the Canal was constructed despite British opposition.

Chapter III deals with the effects of the opening of the Suez Canal on the Middle East, and is in three parts. Part one gives the general economic background of the period, including such things as the Industrial Revolution, the victory of steam over sail, the advent of the

railways, and new developments in the field of medicine. Part one goes on to describe the political situation at Constantinople, and the British opposition to the Russian goal of acquiring a warm water port. Part two follows the shift of Anglo-Russian hostility to the Persian Gulf area, where England consolidated her position and obtained a hegemony over the Gulf littorals. Part three relates the European "Scramble for Africa" and Great Britain's interest in the coasts of the Red Sea and East Africa. Full awareness of the significance of the changing maritime geopolitics of the Middle East was slow in coming to Great Britain. When the situation was understood, commitments to imperial defense compelled the British to concert measures to prevent the loss of strategic coastal areas to hostile powers. The Suez Canal is, of course, central to the entire theme, and Britain's occupation of Egypt created a tense and complicated situation in Europe which was resolved in Africa.

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INTRODUCTION

This is a study in geopolitics, covering a period between the close of the eighteenth century (long before the term was understood) and 1914, and relating to those seas lying at or near the juncture of the continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa. What, over the years, has been their geopolitical significance to Europe? It is my purpose to trace the changes in the geopolitical valuation placed upon those waters which wash the shores of the Middle East, with special emphasis given to their European implications. Under consideration, therefore, are the Persian Gulf, the Gulf of Oman, the Arabian Sea, the Gulf of Aden, the Red Sea, the Gulf of Aqaba, the Gulf of Suez, the eastern Mediterranean Sea, and to a lesser extent, the Aegean and Black Seas.[1] The littorals, as well as the seas themselves, are of unquestionable importance in the use and control of such bodies of water, and must be given proper attention. Portions of these coasts became extremely valuable because of their relation to the adjacent sea lanes--the extent of their value being contingent upon ever-changing geopolitical factors.

Webster defines "geopolitics" or "Geopolitik" as "a science concerned with the dependence of the domestic and foreign politics of a people upon the physical environment."[2] The Thorndike-Barnhart Dictionary, under "geopolitics," reads: "a study of government and its policies as affected

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1. The Caspian Sea is excluded since it remains, with the failure until recently to link the Don and Volga Rivers by a canal, a virtually-enclosed, shrinking inland sea.
2. Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, 1952.

by physical geography."[3] Further,

> if we compare 'political geography' and 'geopolitics', it becomes obvious that political geography is a child of geography, while geopolitics belongs to the realm of political science.
>
> For political geography and geopolitics are characterized by extremely different approaches. Political geography regards states as static organizations firmly fastened to their geographic foundations. Geopolitics appears beside this mature and cautiously proceeding explorer as the younger, and sometimes rather juvenile, brother. For the domain of geopolitics is concerned with conflict and change, evolution and revolution, attack and defense, the dynamics of the terrestrial spaces and of the political forces struggling on them for survival . . . . Geopolitics raises the dynamic question of development.[4]

Finally, to quote one definition from the Encyclopaedia Britannica: In geopolitics, "nearly always a single country is considered with reference to the rest of the world, and a single aspect of its position is likely to be stressed—generally either national security or foreign policy."[5]

Any consideration of nineteenth and early twentieth century geopolitics concerning the Middle East sea routes will involve England as an active and important political factor. Therefore, it is first of all necessary to state that such was and is the geographical location (combined with a lack, other than iron and coal, of abundant natural resources) of the British Isles that the particular characteristics of their inhabitants compelled the creation of a community whose livelihood depended on trade

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3. Thorndike-Barnhart Concise Dictionary, 1956.

4. Hans W. Weigert, Generals and Geographers, pp.12-13. "There is no such thing as a general science of geopolitics which can be subscribed to by all state organizations. There are as many geopolitics as there are conflicting state systems struggling under geographic conditions which, for instance, in the case of sea-powers and land-powers, are fundamentally different." Ibid., p.22.

5. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol.10, p. 182F.

with other countries. Obviously, this trade could not be carried on without a merchant fleet necessary for the transportation of goods; and as the need developed, for carrying colonists to new territories overseas. As trade expanded and colonial ventures increased, so did the merchant fleet. Closely related was the growth of the Royal Navy. Yet at the end of the Seven Years' War Lord Chatham's naval building program was abandoned; but the War of the American Revolution and the wars with France, 1793-1815, demonstrated the folly of such economies, making the English conscious of the need to maintain their power at sea.[6]

As a further corollary, it also became vital for Britain to secure ports along the seaways in order to service her ships. The Indian Ocean was notorious for the speed with which hulls became fouled with barnacles, seaworms, and other marine organisms. When ships were small, all that was necessary to clear a bottom was to haul the vessel up on some deserted beach, careen it, and scrape away the marine growths. As ships became larger, however, facilities found only in roomier ports were needed to do a proper job of cleaning. Then, with the advent of steam propulsion, certain specific ports took on an increased importance as coaling stations. The result was a definite increase in the usefulness to Europe of permanently-secured ports.

Briefly, then, with England's subsequent search for raw materials and markets, and the control of sea routes and accessory ports, "colonialism" or "imperialism" became but a logical manifestation of geopolitics, with all

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6. The merchant fleet was often entirely responsible for its own protection - frequently being pressed into service during time of crisis.

the implications and ramifications relevant to a state all of whose policies were so directed.[7] It is with the evolution and implementation of these policies that this paper will be concerned, and especially with those relating to the control of the sea routes in the Middle East and the geopolitical factors that were cogent thereto.

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7. The zenith was perhaps reached in the late 1890's, when Hirst pungently criticized Chamberlain's policy: "'Mr. Chamberlain has raised a separate variety of Rhodes' financial or speculative imperialism dependent upon a supposed connection between Trade and the Flag, a confusion between emporium and imperium. Perhaps it may be called provisionally "Emporialism".'" Cited in Felix Gross, Rhodes of Africa, p. 375.

CHAPTER I

SOME GEOGRAPHIC FACTS

> The six seas which partly envelope Swasia (Southwest Asia) make it an irregular peninsula and also give it some of the qualities of an island. The isolation is especially obvious when one looks at a map and notes that mountains and deserts reinforce the insularity. Nowhere are there overland connections to the outside world across fertile plains.[8]

Nevertheless, from ancient times this region has served primarily as a land bridge for those peoples wishing to cross between the continents of Asia and Africa, Africa and Europe, and to a lesser extent, Asia and Europe. "Nations, tribes, traders, armies, and pilgrims—peoples on the move--have traversed the Middle East, finding the land bridge convenient . . ."[9]

In order to understand why the sea routes of the Middle East have not fostered large maritime nations (with few exceptions, that is, since the sixteenth century)[10] relative to the existing large bodies of water and the extensive coastlines, it is necessary to examine some geographical features of the area.

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8. George B. Cressey, Crossroads, p. 223.

9. S. N. Fisher, The Middle East, p. 3.

10. As an example, Curzon pointed out concerning Persia: "It would be difficult, and perhaps impossible, in the history of the world to find a country possessing two considerable seaboards, and admirably situated for trade, which has so absolutely ignored its advantages in both respects, and which has never in modern times either produced a navigator, or manned a merchant fleet, or fought a naval battle." George N. Curzon, Persia and the Persian Question, Vol. 2, p. 388.

As Mahan wrote:

> The seaboard of a country is one of its frontiers; and the easier the access offered by the frontier to the region beyond, in this case the sea, the greater will be the tendency of a people toward intercourse with the rest of the world by it. If a country be imagined having a long seaboard, but entirely without a harbor, such a country can have no sea trade of its own, no shipping, no navy;[11]

and:

> as regards the development of sea power, it is not the total number of square miles which a country contains, but the length of its coast-line and the character of its harbors that are to be considered. As to these it is to be said that the geographical and physical conditions being the same, extent of sea-coast is a source of strength or weakness according as the population is large or small.[12]

The following chart is an extract from a recent tabulation of the coast-line mileage, area, and number of seaports of the Middle Eastern countries:[13]

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11. A.T. Mahan, The Influence of Sea Power Upon History, 1660-1783, p. 35.

12. Ibid., p. 43.

13. Cressey, op. cit., p. 224. The figures from "Egypt" on were compiled from: Hammond's World Atlas, 1960; and the Oxford Regional Economic Atlas: The Middle East and North Africa, 1960.

COUNTRY		Coastline Miles	Area Sq. Mi.	Ratio Coast-Area	Commercial Seaports
Iran		1,400	628,060	1:464	9
Persian Gulf	1,000				
Caspian Sea	400				
Iraq		30	171,600	1:3888	2
Israel		110	8,000	1:71	3
Mediterranean	100				
Red Sea	10				
Jordan		10	37,500	1:3750	1
Kuwait		150	5,800	1:60	1
Lebanon		120	3,400	1:33	3
Saudi Arabia		1,400	870,000	1:621	3
Red Sea	1,100				
Persian Gulf	300				
Southern Arabia		2,400			2
Syria		85	72,234	1:777	1
Turkey		2,000	296,185	1:148	8
Black Sea	750				
Aegean Sea	650				
Mediterranean	600				
Yemen		300	75,000	1:250	1
Egypt		1,150	386,000	1:335	3
Mediterranean	620				
Red Sea	530				
Ethiopia		530	368,340	1:695	1
Somaliland (Br.)		470	68,000	1:145	1
Somaliland (Fr.)		170	8,492	1:50	1
Sudan		440	967,500	1:2199	1
TOTAL		10,760	4,098,300	1:380	41

It must be realized that this chart represents current statistics; and, the ports considered are only the major ones. Still, the figures give the general picture of a sea-oriented region which has not materially changed in over a century and a half. It now becomes necessary to elaborate the geographical story behind the figures ennumerated in the chart.

Turkey: In spite of its many miles of coast line, Turkey has only been of minor importance in the shipping world.[14]

Practically the entire Black Sea coast of Turkey is steep and rocky, bordered as it is by the Pontic Mountains. The seaward flowing streams descend abruptly, accounting for the general absence of harbors or centers of population. The only easy access to the interior, before the advent of railroads, was found at Trabzon.[15] There was, however, during the days of the Roman Empire a complete roadway from the Asiatic shore of the Bosphorus along the Black Sea coast,[16] exemplifying the completeness of the great network of Roman highways.

The western coast of Anatolia borders one of the most important waterways in the world. This sea-passage is divided into three principal parts: at the eastern end is the Bosphorus; in the center is the Sea of Marmara; and at the western end is the Dardanelles which opens into the Aegean Sea. The Bosphorus is 16 miles long, narrows to about 1/2 mile,

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14. Norton Ginsburg, The Pattern of Asia, p. 761. Certainly many factors enter into this argument, not the least of which is the human element. The approach here, however, is mainly geographical.

15. W. B. Fisher, The Middle East, p. 300.

16. W. M. Ramsay, The Historical Geography of Asia Minor, p. 487.

and has a current of approximately 6 miles-per-hour.[17] Ships may, however, find shelter from the occasionally stormy water in the harbor of the Golden Horn, on the western side of the Bosphorus.[18] Finally, the 25-mile channel through the Dardenelles is some 2½ to 4½ miles wide, with a somewhat slower speed of current, varying from 1½ to 2 m.p.h.

The Aegean coastland is particularly noteworthy for its irregular shoreline, with oddly shaped islands and extensive, twisting estuaries. Although not suitable for large ports, the area was used extensively by shallow-draft pirate vessels[19] as a sanctuary following depredations offshore.

The Mediterranean coastland of Turkey, like its Black Sea counterpart, is isolated by high mountain ranges. The two coastal plains (Antalya and Adana) have been built up by silt-depositing mountain streams, so that the infrequent harbors are shallow and poor. Two routes through the principal Taurus range--that of the Cilician Gates, which is indirect but relatively easy compared with the Cacit River Valley, which is more direct and very steep--offer access to central Anatolia from the Mediterranean shore.[20] The Turkish port of Iskanderun (which might more properly lie within the present political boundaries of Syria) is at the north-eastern tip of the Mediterranean. The Gulf of Iskanderun offers a sheltered

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17. Cressey, op.cit., p. 248.

18. Ibid., pp. 248-250.

19. Navy Records Society, Piracy in the Levant 1827-28, p. xxiii.

20. W. B. Fisher, op. cit., p. 305.

anchorage, and the Sira Daglari range of mountains surrounding the town[21] provide a "terminus for three overland routes to Euphrates."[22]

Looking at Anatolia as a unit, it may be said that the northern and southern borders greatly impeded access to the interior plain.[23] Added to this the robber bands in mountain fastnesses and pirates in the Aegean, the region bordering the great waterway between the Black and Aegean Seas is alone found to have encouraged maritime commerce.[24] Such was and is the strategic location of this region, however, that its potential for sea trade has been interrupted by the frequent passage of peoples between continents, and by the shifting of political control from one group to another. "It is fair to say that no power which has held one side of any one of these straits has ever refrained from designs upon the opposite shore."[25]

The Levant: Although the Syrian coast is not welcoming to seamen, throughout Syrian history people have been coming to and from the Syrian coast and almost every town on the coast has had its heyday of sea activity.[26]

The 400-mile coastal region of the Levant is comprised of a narrow, discontinuous coastal plain backed by a north-south line of three separate

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21. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. I, p. 578.

22. G. B. Cressey, Asia's Lands and People, p. 390.

23. Its strategic importance is of recent origin - but it has been asset economically for some time.

24. The main exception was Smyrna, long a terminus of merchant vessels.

25. Ellen C. Semple, Geography in the Mediterranean Region, p.71.

26. Nicola A. Ziadeh, Syria and Lebanon, p. 20.

sets of mountain ranges from 3,000 to 10,000 feet high. The coastal plain is confined by the mountains to a narrow strip in the north, widening in Palestine to the south. In many places the foothills of the mountain spurs rise directly from the sea, and "nowhere is there an irregularity in the coastline which might make a good harbor. A succession of north-facing half-moon bays provide shelter against some of the southern storms, but all of the modern ports depend on a breakwater for safe anchorage."[27] The lowland gap starting at coastal Tripoli connects this port with Homs in the interior,[28] where the overland transport links up with the trans-desert trade.

A considerable strategic importance is attributed to this coast because it lies on the land route between three continents, and acts as a barrier to eastbound trade from the sea. Indeed,

> The British geostrategist (Sir Halford J. Mackinder) whose Geographic Pivot of History first pointed to the integration of the three continents by the 'World-Island' and by its Middle Eastern core stated: 'If the World-Island be inevitably the principal seat of humanity on this globe, and if Arabia, as the passage-land from Europe to the Indies and from the Northern to the Southern "Heartland" be central in the World-Island, the hill citadel of Jerusalem has a strategic position with reference to world-realities not differing essentially from its ideal position in the perspective of the Middle Ages, or its strategical position between ancient Babylon and Egypt.'[29]

In the south, the coast gradually opens onto the plains of the Sinai Peninsula—but the Levant coast, separated as it is from the interior deserts has a pronounced geographic unity, and saw its most flourishing days when it lay within a single political unit. Semple stated:

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27. Cressey, Crossroads, p. 411.

28. Ibid., p. 413.

29. Ernest Jackh, "Mid-land, Mid-sea, Mid-air," R.N. Anshen, Mid-East: World-Center, p. 94.

> The distribution of the ancient Phoenician cities in relation to the Mesopotamian piedmont (plateau) reveals a significant interplay of geographic factors; geographical isolation and security operated versus geographical proximity and accessibility to an established trade route, a location which gave protection versus a location which gave profits. According to every law of geographical probability, the Phoenician settlements spread originally all along this coast from Mount Carmel to the head of the Gulf of Issus (Iskanderun).[30]

The result was a prosperous series of communities, being both protected by the mountains and located within reach of a busy trade route to the interior.

Egypt: Egypt forms the hinge between the two clamouring halves of the world.[31]

The next area to be discussed includes the coasts of the Gulf of Aqaba, the Gulf of Suez, and the Mediterranean coast of Egypt. Again, in terms of the strategical consideration given to sea routes, the prominence of this region cannot be overemphasized.

The map of the world shows that it is dominated by two principal bodies of water: the Atlantic-Arctic Ocean and the Pacific-Indian Ocean systems. They connect at about latitude 60' south, at the southern tip of South America, and at latitude 40' south, at the Cape of Good Hope. Since they are separated to the north by the two main land masses, the trade routes emanating from the centers of civilization north of the Equator were blocked in both the eastward and westward directions. Thus, centuries were spent searching for a commercially practicable "North-west" or "North-east" passage through these land masses.

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30. Semple, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

31. Jean and Simonne Lacouture, Egypt in Transition, p. 11.

When it was discovered that the only open route by sea lay to the south, and that this journey was long and costly, men began examining as an alternative those places where the seas most nearly approached each other. The map pointed up two such possibilities, in Central America and the Middle East. In the latter situation, two fingers of the Red Sea, the Gulfs of Aqaba and Suez were found to lay near the Mediterranean Sea.[32] The mighty attempt made to surmount the narrow land barrier, and the problems it created will be dealt with in the next chapter.

The coastal areas are of no more value, strategically, than those of the rest of the Middle East. The Mediterranean coast of Egypt from Cyrenaica to Alexandria is a sandy beach, as is that of Gaza. Both open onto deserts, with the consequent lack of population centers. The Nile Delta coast is exactly what might be expected—a low, marshy area, without good natural harbor facilities.[33]

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32. Until the advent of steam navigation, neither gulf was much used for sea travel. The combination of winds and currents in these slender passageways "remained difficult enough to terrify dauntless seamen. The Roman expedition of Aelius Gallus, which set out from the Gulf of Suez to the Gulf of Akabah and the land of the Nabataeans in 23 B.C., was disastrous. It resulted in the loss of 150 vessels out of a fleet of 300, or half the total." Semple, op. cit., p. 169.

33. James Morris wrote about the Delta: "The peasants and their animals live there teeming and hugger-mugger, wedded to the soil, prey to fears and primitive prejudices innumerable; and the canals stand brown and foetid, with water-buffalo lazing in the mud; and the old water-wheels turn slowly round, pulled by plodding blindfold animals; and so rich is the foliage of the place, so violently green its fields, so thickly and anciently cultivated its every inch, that there is something almost obscene about its fecundity." James Morris, The Market of Seleukia, p. 47.

The Gulf of Suez, approximately 175 miles long and varying in width from 10 to 25 miles, "is bordered by high land, in many cases approaching close to the coast."[34] Although the two coasts are fringed by coral reefs, that of the eastern side is particularly noteworthy for the distance which it protrudes into the water. The Sinai Peninsula has a rising coastal plain off the Gulf of Suez; while the eastern highlands of Egypt, stationed between the Gulf of Suez and the Nile Valley, are characterized by numerous deep wadis running either westward toward the Nile River, or eastward to the Red Sea.[35]

The Gulf of Aqaba is about 100 miles long, 10 miles wide at the entrance, and increasing to a maximum of 17 miles. The western coast is rocky and generally precipitous in the south, becoming sandy with low hills in the north. The eastern coast has a wider coastal plain, backed by mountains. From the head of the Gulf northward lies a walled valley passing into the interior of Jordan. The four countries whose boundaries presently meet at Aqaba are faced with exceedingly serious problems--problems which concern riparian rights, and right of passage for vessels.

The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden:

> Throughout the sixteenth century Arab traders were still bringing the silks, spices, dyes and drugs of the East and the coffee of the Yemen up the Red Sea and across the desert to Cairo and Alexandria.[36]

The Red Sea from the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula to the entrance of the Straits of Bab al-Mandeb is approximately 1,120 miles long,

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34. Great Britain: Admiralty Hydrographic Department, Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot, p. 74.

35. W. B. Fisher, op. cit., p. 456.

36. George E. Kirk, A Short History of the Middle East, p.65.

and is mostly bordered by mountains on both its Arabian and African coasts. Between mountains and water is found a generally low, sandy plain, with an abundance of offshore islets and reefs;[37] and deep wadis join the coastal plains and the interior on the eastern and northwestern Red Sea boundaries.

The width of the Red Sea at the northern end is just over 90 miles, increasing gradually to 225 miles in the south just before closing to about 30 miles at Bab al-Mandeb. Both coasts have a lack of natural harbors, and the amount of sea traffic venturing to Mecca (until the nineteenth century) has depended on the degree of pirate activity in the area.

Broadly speaking, the northern and southern coasts of the Gulf of Aden duplicate the topographical features of the Red Sea coasts, including the lack of harbors--the off shore waters, however, are comparatively free of coral reefs.[38] It is worth mentioning, too, that the waters and climate of the Red Sea, the Bab al-Mandeb strait, and the Gulf of Aden all contribute toward making navigation extremely difficult.

> The currents in the Red Sea are influenced by the general monsoons of the northern part of the Indian ocean. The effect of the north-east monsoon is to produce a west-going current in the Gulf of Aden, the water then passing up the Red Sea. The monsoon currents of the Gulf of Aden are, however, by no means constant; and this fact, combined with the effects of the local winds of the Red Sea on the water of that sea, account for the very great degree of variability of Red Sea currents.[39]

All in all, the conditions of the water and the frequent high winds and

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37. Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot, pp. 9-10.

38. Ibid., p. 13.

39. Ibid.

squalls characteristic of the area must certainly have brought grief to many an ancient mariner.

The Arabian Sea and the Gulf of Oman: The coast between Maqatin and Wadi Maifa'a is inhabited by tribes of murderous and piratical habits; care is, therefore, necessary in any dealings with them.[40]

The southern portion of the Arabian Peninsula descends gradually from the mountains at Aden to a wide, dry tableland in the Hadhramaut.[41] The low, sandy coast becomes even more barren as it progresses eastward, and the extreme heat in the summer plus a lack of cultivable lands combine to discourage human habitation. The one attractive place on the coast of the East Aden Protectorate is Mukalla, "perhaps the most beautiful small city in the whole of the Arab world. It stands on the shore of the Indian Ocean, like a little Oriental Venice. Its buildings are pale and delicate, and a single minaret stands like a majestic sentry on the harbour-front."[42]

Although the Arabian Sea extends to the western coast of India, unlike southern Arabia the Indian sub-continent lies outside the geographical purview of this study.[43] On the other hand East Africa, part of

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40. Ibid., p. 384.

41. W. B. Fisher, op. cit., p. 441.

42. Morris, op. cit., p. 207.

43. Such are the geopolitical elements of southern Arabia (excluding Muscat and Aden) that regular communication between it and India has been practically nonexistent. Indicative of the lack of any particular connection between the two, the term "Arabian Sea" does not appear in the indices of some recent geographical and historical works--rather, "Indian Ocean" or "Eastern seas" is used when referring to the area.

which protrudes south of the bounds of the Arabian Sea is geopolitically bound a good deal closer to the Middle East. "The title Ausanitic coast, which was applied to the east coast of Africa south of the straits of Bab el Mandeb as early as the first century A.D. may indicate a link between East Africa and Southern Arabia already, stretching back for several centuries."[44]

This coast has a number of towns along its length, with adequate harbors;[45] and a few sizeable rivers permit easy entry to the forbidding interior. Until the last quarter of the nineteenth century, however, the off-lying islands (such as Pemba and Zanzibar) were of considerably more strategic importance than the mainland coasts. For a long period they served as bases for slave-hunting expeditions, their role reversing (under British influence) in the middle nineteenth century to one of suppression of the slave trade. Equally as important to Europeans, the climate of the islands was agreeable;[46] and at the same time, the islands provided a convenient entrepôt for the conventional trade with the mainland.

If the heavy monsoon winds were followed almost due northeast from Zanzibar, they would be found to touch the southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula. Here is located Oman, until 1856 a part of the estate

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44. Kenneth Ingham, A History of East Africa, p. 1.

45. The Portuguese believed that while they were not of central significance, these towns would provide military sites of which there could not be an overabundance for control of the Indian Ocean. Ingham, op. cit., p. 7.

46. Africa took a heavy toll of lives from among those Europeans who dared to travel in its interior before advances in medical science afforded some protection for the uninitiated.

of the Sultan of Zanzibar. Since then Oman has been brought within the political sphere of the Persian Gulf; and while the Gulf of Oman acts as the entrance to the Persian Gulf, for the sake of geographical continuity it may be considered as an integral part of the Arabian Sea.[47]

The coast of Oman provides a notable exception to adjacent shores of the Arabian Peninsula. Its fjord-like coastline arises steeply from the water, and contains a maze of deep inlets which are walled by high cliffs.[48] "These deep-water estuaries make excellent harbors, but are greatly handicapped by lack of access to the shore--as there are no rivers, most inlets come to an abrupt end in a sheer wall."[49] This peculiarity is interrupted only by the coastal plain which stretches northwestward from Muscat to about Khor al-Fakhan; the high coastline then continues on as far as the head of the Musandam Peninsula. "The largest of these drowned troughs is Elphinstone Inlet at the head of the Musandum Peninsula, which is 10 miles long, and surrounded on all sides by cliffs 3,000 to 4,000 feet in height."[50] This coast, like those of the rest of the Arabian Peninsula, has had very little contact with the interior due to the Rub' al-Khali.

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47. Admiralty Hydrographic Office, Persian Gulf Pilot, p. 1.

48. W. B. Fisher, op. cit., p. 443.

49. Ibid., pp. 443-444.

50. Ibid. Curzon wrote: "In the deep coves which ramify inland between the cliffs, projecting like the points of a stag's antlers, the waters boom against the rocks, and roar in hidden caves. On the peaks and crags of this mysterious promontory, fit denizens of so weird an abode, are found the fragments of an aboriginal race, driven forward till they have reached this final resting-place, where none can pursue them, above the sea." Curzon, op.cit., Vol. 2, p. 447.

The Makran coast of the Gulf of Oman (that of Persia), is barren and indented with a "repeated occurrence of promontories and peninsulas."[51] These indentations are normally interspersed with low coastal areas, though occasionally high sand hills appear. The length of the Gulf of Oman is about 280 miles, and narrows from 200 miles in the southeast to approximately 35 miles in the northwest.

The northern and southern coasts of the Gulf of Oman resemble each other in that they both are backed by mountain ranges,[52] and that there are few offshore reefs. Further, since neither has a multitude of good natural harbors nor access to the interior,[53] the Gulf of Oman may be said to have derived its greatest importance from its position relative to India, Africa, and the Persian Gulf.

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51. Persian Gulf Pilot, p. 1.

52. Curzon wrote of the Makran coast: "From Jask eastwards, the coast line is of a sullen mountainous character, and would seem to be wholly deserted by human habitation;" and of the Muscat coast: "From a distance immense granitic masses of rock, with jagged outline of cliff and crag, are seen ascending in gloomy abruptness from the sea. Far inland ridge rises upon ridge, splintered edge above and savage fissures between, the impression being that of a country upheaved from nature's primaeval cauldron, and still scarred and blackened by those terrific fires. Curzon, op. cit., Vol. 2, pp.430 and 439, respectively.

53. W. B. Fisher, op.cit., p. 444: also Persian Gulf Pilot, p. 2. The intense heat which is prevalent in the region throughout most of the year compels mariners to avoid the use of even those harbors that are adequate. British Admiralty, Naval Intelligence Division, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 129. James Morris wrote of Muscat: "In the summer it was one of the hottest places in earth; a Persian visitor in 1442 reported that the gems in the handle of his dagger were reduced to coal by the heat, and the desert was filled with roasted gazelle." James Morris, Sultan in Oman, p. 148.

> The Persian Gulf: The position of this inland sea, lapping the shores of the territories of Arabia, Iraq, and Persia, and on the flank of all ocean routes from Aden eastwards, invests it inevitably with strategical importance.[54]

The length of the Persian Gulf, from the Strait of Hormuz to the coast of Iraq via a central route, is very close to 500 miles; and the breadth varies from about 50 miles in the south to 130 miles in the north, reaching a maximum of 220 miles in the central portion. These figures of width are, however, quite deceptive from the navigational point of view. Reefs and shoals extend almost the entire length of the Arabian bank for as much as 30 to 50 miles in places,[55] and the active sedimentation from the Shatt al-Arab has caused the Persian Gulf to be relatively shallow. Moreover, there are a large number of islands sprinkled throughout the Gulf, with the heavier concentration close to shore.

"From the peninsula of Musandum as far as the Shatt el-Arab, the coastal region is everywhere below 600 feet, and consists for the greater part of an undulating plain, diversified very occasionally by low hills."[56] That portion of the coast from Ras Musandam roughly to the peninsula of Qatar was known as the "Pirate Coast"[57]--ample evidence as to the general sterility of the area.[58] It is somewhat surprising, therefore, that it came to be the central pillar in the British-Persian Gulf relationship structure.

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54. Arnold T. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 2.

55. Persian Gulf Pilot, p. 2.

56. W. B. Fisher, op. cit., p. 445.

57. Like the Aegean coast, it is riddled with shallow, concealed inlets.

58. There exists, however, a modern "treasure trove" in the form of oil deposits lying beneath the sheikhdom of Abu Dhabi.

The shoreline varies very little as it continues northwestward from Qatar to the head of the Gulf, with the exception of the comparatively large indentation of Kuwait. Here is found an enclosed bay, extending far inland, with a deep inlet and a good harbor--providing "the only sheltered anchorage on the southern side of the Persian Gulf."[59]

"After the parched and waterless sands of Kuwait, the Basra River seems like heaven to the Arab sailors, with its miles of green date gardens and its ever-flowing stream of fresh water."[60] The head of the Persian Gulf, in which is located the joint estuary of the Shatt al-Arab, has a coast comprised of soft, marsh-like delta soil. Consequently, the ports are all located up-stream on firmer ground.[61] Although the rivers themselves will not be included in this study, their presence very obviously enhances the value of the Persian Gulf as a strategic waterway. With the junction of the countries of Kuwait, Iraq, and Iran at this locale, it is not surprising that several rather thorny problems have arisen.[62]

The eastern, or Iranian side of the Persian Gulf is not as low or as muddy as the western side, but the coastal lowlands are small, discontinuous, and as uncomfortable. Although the outlying reefs are not as

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59. W.B. Fisher, op.cit., p. 447. Unfortunately, however, the lack of fresh water long delayed its rise to importance.

60. Richard H. Sanger, The Arabian Peninsula, p. 155.

61. Recently an oil pier was built on pilings at Khor al-Amaya in the Gulf, with a submarine pipeline extended to it from Fao. Its purpose is to serve those oil tankers whose size excludes them from Fao's port.

62. Not the least of which is the shifting of the Shatt al-Arab's river bed.

extensive as those of the opposite bank,[63] the natural harbor conditions are poor,[64] and the parallel ridges of the Zagros Mountains form effective barriers to inland communications.[65]

Some islands of the Middle East: Cyprus, Kamaran, Perim, Socotra, Qishm, and Bahrain.

The island of Cyprus, lying about 60 miles west of Syria and 40 miles south of Turkey, has an area of approximately 2,600 square miles.[66] The long 486-mile coastline,[67] though indented, does not possess harbor facilities suitable for the development of a modern port.[68] The island is mountainous in the central southwestern section, with another range flanking the northeastern coast. Cyprus has traditionally had more intercourse with the Levant than with Turkey, perhaps since it faces the busy entrepôts of Latakia and Iskanderun to the East, and the forbidding Taurus Mountains to the north.

The two islands worthy of mention in the Red Sea, Kamaran and Perim, are both located in the south, off the eastern shore. Kamaran Bay, just off the Arabian mainland, has one of the rare good anchorages in the Red Sea[69] which is sheltered from the weather. Oddly enough, the

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63. Persian Gulf Pilot, p. 2. This coast nonetheless had an ample amount of those qualities needed to foster piratical activities. British Admiralty, op.cit., p. 155.

64. British Admiralty, op.cit., p.153; see also information on port of Bushire, Ibid., pp. 156-157.

65. The one exception is Bandar Abbas. Ibid., p.163.

66. Oxford Regional Economic Atlas, op. cit., p.106.

67. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 6, p. 931.

68. Geoffrey Callender, The Naval Side of British History, p. 229.

69. Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot, p.371. Kamaran in recent times has afforded the British opportunity to keep watch on Soviet shipments to Yemen.

other principal inlet in the Red Sea is at Massawa,[70] directly opposite on the African coast at the same latitude. The island of Perim, lying in the Bab al-Mandeb strait, is 96 miles west of Aden and 2 miles from the nearest shore.[71] Its total area is only 5 square miles of flat land, with a reasonably good harbor on its southern coast.[72]

The island of Socotra is located about 140 miles eastward and slightly to the north of Cape Guardafui, on the same approximate longitudinal line as the boundary line between the Hadhramaut and Oman. The island is about 80 miles long and 30 miles in width.[73]

> Situated near the track of vessels bound to and from the East, Socotra is generally sighted by vessels entering or leaving the Gulf of Aden, but being exposed to both monsoons, and having no harbours in which vessels can at all times anchor with safety, coupled with the unfavourable character the natives have hitherto borne, it is but little visited.[74]

The islands of Qishm, Henjam, and Hormuz lie in the Strait of Hormuz off the coast of Persia. Qishm, the largest island in the Persian Gulf, approaches as close as 1-1/2 miles to the mainland across Clarence strait.[75] It is 67 miles long, varies between 7 miles wide on either end to about 20 miles in the center, and runs parallel to the mainland coast. Henjam and Hormuz islands have, respectively, 16-1/2 and 24-1/2 square

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70. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 19, p. 27.

71. Ibid., Vol. 17, p. 512.

72. Ibid.

73. Sanger, op.cit., p. 209.

74. Red Sea and Gulf of Aden Pilot, p. 471. This is not the case with native dhows, however, which "beating" up from the Coromandel Coast are compelled to stop for water before going on to Muscat.

75. British Admiralty, op.cit., pp. 162-165.

miles of area, and both are situated near the eastern tip of Qishm Island.[76] All three islands lack natural harbors, and the anchorage around them is limited and inadequate for year-round use. Since, however, they close the Strait of Hormuz to 32 miles on the one hand, and have access to the interior of Persia through Bandar Abbas on the other, their strategic importance is unquestionable.

"Bahrain . . . consists of an archipelago of small low-lying islands situated about half-way down the Arabian Gulf, some 15 miles from the Arab coast and slightly more distant from the Qatar Peninsula."[77] Of the six most important islands, Bahrain proper is by far the largest. It is 30 miles long from north to south and varies in width between 8 and 10 miles. Although the main island is fringed by coral reefs, good anchorage may be found at Khor Kaliya, to the northwest, or at Sitra, just off the eastern coast.[78] Like Qishm, much of Bahrain's importance lay in its proximity to traditional routes leading to the interior, and to the path of shipping in the Persian Gulf.

Having completed an examination of the salient features of the Middle East's maritime geography, it is now appropriate to indicate certain conclusions. The first, and most apparent, is the lack of natural harbors. The number of ports tabulated in the chart at the beginning of the chapter, small as it is, consists mainly of those harbors which have been recently

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76. Ibid.

77. James H. D. Belgrave, Welcome to Bahrain, p. 29.

78. British Admiralty, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 143.

deepened and improved to handle modern shipping. The fact that for a long time only shallow-draft vessels operated in these waters at least partially accounts for the limited success which sea trade enjoyed; for, without deep water adjacent to the coast, ships could be neither large nor heavily burdened. There are, of course, exceptions--Constantinople, Kuwait, and Aden being the most notable.[79]

Secondly, the water routes of the Middle East have many constrictions that provide strategic points for the military control of shipping through the region. The Dardanelles-Bosphorus passage is little more than a salt water river; the island of Cyprus acts as an obstruction to a portion of the sea route in the Eastern Mediterranean; the Bab al-Mandeb strait funnels vessels in and out of the Red Sea; the southeastern projection of Africa and the island of Socotra confine waterways for a distance along the southern shore of the Arabian Peninsula; the Strait of Hormuz narrows the egress and ingress of the Persian Gulf; and the Qatar peninsula forces sea routes to veer temporarily toward the Persian side of the Gulf. Such are the climatic conditions, generally insecure anchorages, underwater hazards, and lack of fresh water sources, that vessels are even further limited in their movement through these seas. Finally, until 1869 the immense land mass of Africa had to be circumnavigated in order for ships to reach Eastern seas--a fact which was of pivotal significance in the European regard of the Middle East's southern waters.

The few good harbors and the strategic constrictions in the sea lanes around the Middle East were the primary foci of European political

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79. As has been shown, however, other factors deterred the growth of a first-rate maritime community at either place (excluding Aden).

activity between 1800 and 1914. The European rivalry for control over such geostrategical areas as the Bosphorus, the Dardanelles, the Gulf of Aden, and the Gulf of Oman has, at various times and under various circumstances, been particularly intense. The following pages will be devoted to an account of this struggle in the framework of Middle Eastern geopolitics.

CHAPTER II

THE GROWTH OF EUROPEAN INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

Some remarks on the military and commercial advantages of sea routes are necessary at this juncture. First of all, the sea was the medium of transporting large quantities of trade goods, troops, and military supplies and equipment over great distances, from one shore to another. Although the high seas held many dangers for the traveller, they were still safer than land routes, often under the control of hostile inhabitants. The sea routes, moreover, offered special benefits to military strategy. The use of ships for expeditions immediately conceded the factors of speed and mobility, with the possible element of surprise to enhance an operation.

The choice of a route was influenced by various considerations. Once the destination was determined, seafarers based their course on existing knowledge of seasonal winds, tides, currents, ports of resupply, and the prevalence of piratical activity along the way. Those regions where the passages were closely confined by the land normally presented the greatest peril to a journey. When the hazards at sea became too great, much of the traffic, both military and commercial, shifted to travel by land. (This was particularly true during the nineteenth century due to the advances made in modes of overland transportation.) The routes were affected also by shifts of commercial emphasis from one region to another. Vasco de Gama's discovery resulted in a lessening of traffic to the Mediterranean coast of the Middle East, while the opening of the Suez Canal brought

it back. Lastly, military control of the seas by one nation in many cases necessitated a change in another's shipping routes. The extent of the control, however, was determined by the number and kind of warships, and the bases which were available to them. Thus the extent of the detour required by fear of aggression was predicated on the extent of the control imposed.

The matter of bases was vital for countries with overseas interests. Commercial considerations dictated the initial establishment of a station on a foreign shore; the prerequisites included a population center and markets for goods, an amicable relationship with the natives (or, at any rate, a modus vivendi), the staples necessary to sustain life (not necessarily those of the local people), and a climate which Europeans could endure. The placing of these "factories" became more complicated after a time, with the result that they had a tendency to gravitate from one location to another with the introduction of new elements of commerce and strategy. European rivalries, strategic geographic locations (such as access to the interior, control of a strait, availability of good harbors), development and discovery of new markets, changing relationships with the local inhabitants, and many many factors came into play in the new geopolitical concepts of Europe's overseas expansion.

Discovery and Expansion 1498-1783

The year 1783 marked the end of the First British Empire, and the beginning of the Second. The foundations, however, were laid for this Second Empire some time before--foundations which in the nineteenth century instilled in the British the determination to oppose the Suez Canal scheme.

The voyages of Columbus to the West Indies in 1492 and of Vasco de Gama around the Cape of Good Hope to India in 1498 opened a new era of exploration and conquest.[1] As much as the former, the latter journey was of special import to Europe, for the tide of Ottoman expansionism was closing the door to traditional routes to the East via either the Black Sea, or Palestine, Syria, and the Persian Gulf, or Egypt and the Red Sea.[2] "The final blow to the Eastern trade of Venice was struck by the discovery, by Portugal, of the Cape route to India, whereby Portuguese ships were enabled to bring home the products of the East far more cheaply than by the former route through Egypt."[3]

Europe continued to deal with the Ottomans, who still had some access to Eastern markets. Using as a basis those privileges given by

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1. A great deal of superstition and misconception concerning the southern waters had existed prior to de Gama's journey. Ptolemy's idea that the Indian Ocean was enclosed had been taken as factual; and the heat, plus the monsters that were supposed to exist in the "torrid" zone for a time effectively prevented Europeans from sailing to "certain death."

2. Marriott, The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth, p. 10.

3. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 111.

Mohammed al-Fatih to the Venetians in 1454,[4] the Turks tried to bolster the trade through their provinces which had been diminishing since the discovery of the Cape route. The trade between Europe and the East, through the Ottoman lands was after all a source of tolls and other revenues for the Turks, so their attempts to revive it are understandable enough.

In 1535 France received what became known as the "Capitulations" in the Treaty of Amity and Commerce concluded with the Ottoman Empire. This agreement, by which French merchants were granted special considerations in Ottoman domains, served as the pattern for similar concessions later obtained by other European countries.[5] In 1580 William Harborne, ambassador of Queen Elizabeth, negotiated a capitulatory treaty with the Ottoman Sultan, and in the following year the Turkey Company was founded.[6] The name was changed to "Levant Company in 1592 and [it] traded prosperously in the products of the Near East; but the lucrative commodities of the Far East were beyond its reach."[7]

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4. Reader Bullard, "Large and Loving Privileges," (a pamphlet) p. 11.
5. J. C. Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, Vol. I, p. 1.
6. James A. Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion, Vol. I, p.53. By breaking the French monopoly, Harborne inaugurated Anglo-French rivalry in the Levant which was not to end for 240 years, if then. The Sultan, of course, stood to profit by the rivalry. "The real advantage derived by the Sultan and his Pashas was the duty-usually 3 per cent of the value of the goods--which the British merchant had to pay." Zaki Saleh, Mesopotamia 1600-1914, p. 26.
7. James A. Williamson, The Ocean in English History, p.88. This company "inaugurated English commerce with the Ottoman Empire on a sustained basis. For more than two centuries, all English consular and diplomatic officials in the sultan's domain were employees of the company. Thus, by extension, the company was charged with supervising the execution of the English capitulations." Hurewitz, op.cit., pp. 9-10

The Turks could scarcely have been aware of the long-range implications of these grants to Europe, and their generosity was later to be repaid by European treachery. The Capitulations were to constitute an important factor in the situation which made the Eastern Question a subject of Great Power rivalries.

In the meantime, such Ottoman concessions fell short of achieving their objective. The Portuguese had the upper hand, for by using the sea they could market Eastern wares at a far lower price. "The diminution in the cost of freight along was so marked, being about 60 per cent, that the Arabs could not attempt to compete, and thus the old routes through the Persian Gulf and Red Sea fell by degrees into desuetude."[8] Henceforth, until the beginning of the nineteenth century, the eastern Mediterranean gradually became a backwater of European commerce.

The Portuguese, intent on following up the exploratory trips by more profitable voyages, exerted every effort to prevent the news of their discovery from spreading prematurely. Their ambition was clear to themselves alone.

> The Portuguese were not discoverers. They knew the conditions and were ready with their plan: to seize the Indian entrepôts, to challenge Arab sea-power to a decisive issue, to seal up the exits from the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf, and then to occupy the Straits of Malacca, the gateway to the lands of silks and spices. Thus the Portuguese empire of the East was founded, not a land empire, but the most purely maritime dominion that the world has seen.[9]

The trade of the Indian Ocean was soon dominated by an overwhelming monopoly. Native vessels were relegated to the function of carrying goods to and from

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8. S. B. Miles, The Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf, p. 140.

9. Williamson, The Ocean in English History, p. 98.

the Portuguese entrepôts, and restricted to plying the coasts of India.

An early attempt to dislodge Portugal from the Eastern seas had proved fruitless. Under the prodding of the Doge of Venice Egypt and Turkey outfitted a powerful fleet at Suez and sent it to attack the Portuguese in the Arabian Sea.[10] A Portuguese armada completely defeated it in 1508,[11] and the Arabs of Muscat and Yemen reluctantly gave up their age-old monopoly.

Nevertheless, the Ottomans did not immediately accept the supremacy of the "Lords of the Conquest, Navigation and Commerce of India, Ethiopia, Arabia, and Persia."[12] Several Egyptian-Ottoman fleets were sent from Suez and Basra during the first half of the sixteenth century. They achieved a partial control of the Red Sea coast of Arabia (since they had no choice but to safeguard Mecca), but were stymied in the Persian Gulf. Finally, after the decisive Battle of Muscat in 1553,[13] the Portuguese attained undisputed control of the Indian Ocean-- a control which was not challenged again for almost thirty years.

The decline of the Portuguese empire in the East may be attributed to several factors. First of all, the Portuguese authorities did not establish strong political relations with Indian rulers. Portuguese merchants were able to establish their own centers of power, and at times the Government in Goa was not able to check Portuguese piracy and lawlessness.[14]

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10. Miles, op. cit., p. 140.

11. Ibid., p. 141

12. A title conferred upon the King of Portugal, by Pope Alexander, VI, Following Vasco de Gama's voyage. W. W. Hunter, The Indian Empire, p. 267.

13. Miles, op.cit., p. 176

14. W. H. Moreland and A. C. Chatterjee, A Short History of India, p. 201.

Commerce was thus subjected to disruption, and the consequent attrition in Portuguese shipping diminished their prosperity and chances for a more secure hold on the area.

A second factor made itself felt in 1580, when the Spanish annexation of Portugal detracted from the Portuguese impetus toward imperialism. What was more important, Spain's preparation of the Armada against "heretical England" included an intensive ship building and ship gathering program, depriving Portugal of resources which she could ill afford to supply.[15] The weakly defended entrepot garrisons which the Portuguese maintained in the Indian Ocean were dependent on frequent visits of ships with supplies. Without them they were soon at the mercy of the resentful native population, alienated by physical and financial mistreatment, and eager to hasten the fall of their arrogant overlords.

A third cause was the catalyst of measures which eventually ended Portuguese supremacy in the Indian Ocean. The war between England and Spain brought about the exclusion of the Dutch vessels from Lisbon.[16] This city had become the principal trading center for Eastern goods, receiving them from the East Indies whence they were distributed in Europe. The Dutch all but monopolized the distributive function, content to let Portugal bring the merchandise from its source. No longer were the Venetians the principal shippers in the Mediterranean, for as trade between Europe through the Ottoman dominions dwindled the Dutch had replaced it

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15. Hunter stated: "The interests of Portugal in Asia were henceforth subordinate to the European interests of Spain". Hunter, op. cit., p. 269.

16. Miles, op. cit., p. 205

with Eastern products from Portugal. The Netherlands,

> by the necessitous condition of her people, . . . [who] were driven to the sea, . . . were, from their mastery of the shipping business and the size of their fleets, in a position to profit by the sudden expansion of commerce and the spirit of exploration which followed on the discovery of America and of the passage round the Cape. Other causes concurred, but their prosperity stood on the sea power to which their poverty gave birth.[17]

The blow dealt Holland by forbidding Dutch bottoms to enter Lisbon was therefore particularly harsh. It literally drove their ships past Portugal and around the Cape. With the experience of Dutch sailors who had shipped aboard Portuguese vessels to guide them,[18] they were quick to challenge the Portuguese monopoly in the Indian Ocean.

The inception of the Spanish Armada had its effects on the Indies; likewise, its destruction in 1588 resulted in the appearance of yet another rival to the Portuguese in the Indian Ocean. The English, though not at that time as dependent on the sea as the Low Countries, were nevertheless forced to take to ships in search of additional land and profits.[19]

> The Merchant Adventurer's Company . . . was formed expressly 'for the discovery of land . . . unknown',to become the first of a breed to which England owes a vast

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17. Mahan, op. cit., pp. 37-38

18. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 158.

19. "England . . . received from Nature but little, and until her manufactures were developed, had little to export. Their many wants, combined with their restless activi ty and other conditions that favored maritime enterprise, led her people abroad; and they there found lands more pleasant and richer than their own. Their needs and genius made them merchants and colonists, then manufacturers and producers; and between products and colonies shipping is the inevitable link. So their sea power grew". Mahan, op. cit., pp. 36-37.

> debt. In May 1553, Sir Hugh Willoughby, with Richard Chancellor as his Chief Pilot, set off down river, past the Palace of Placentia at Greenwich where the young Edward lay dying, the only person in the Court who did not turn out to cheer them as they sailed by in their brave new sky-blue coats. There had never been anything quite like this before--the youthful enterprise of England sallying hopefully forth, uninhibited by government control or even governmental encouragement, with the whole world for their oyster to be opened with sword and marlinspike. Neither of course reached the Far East. Chancellor won through to found the Muscovy Company: Willoughby and all his men froze to death on the Murman Coast. This too was prophetic: so true to form--'because on the bones of the English the English flag is stayed'.[20]

By any standard, the code of the merchant adventurers was brutal. Seafarers were for the most part independent, which meant freedom of restraint in their actions toward rivals, but implied also an utter lack of recourse for protection from the latter's retaliation. Consequently there was no clear-cut distinction between such terms as "commerce," "piracy," and "war;" the concepts of modern international law did not exist. Those individuals possessing a degree of "integrity" were most likely to disregard it under the frictions of the age cause by religious hatred, increasing national consciousness, and in the case of the English, irritation towards Spain for her monopolistic policy regarding Eastern markets.

Once Drake had revealed Spain's weakness at sea, England and her ships were precipitated into the Indian Ocean. On December 31, 1600, the

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20. Michael Lewis, The History of the British Navy, pp. 46-47. It must be mentioned that while Chancellor's discovery of the White Sea and his overland trek to Moscow made the Muscovy Company possible, he did not, in fact, found it; nor with Northumberland's role in the enterprise can it be said to have been truly "uninhibited by . . . government encouragement."

English East India Company was granted its charter.[21] A ferocious three-sided struggle began, no holds barred, from which the ultimate victor would not emerge for 200 years.

> 'There are three places in India', says Alboquerque, 'which serve as marts of all the commerce of merchantable wares in that part of the world, and the principal keys of it. The first is Malacca . . . at the exit of the Straits of Singapara. . . . The second is Adem in the entry and exit of the Straits of the Red Sea. The third is Ormuz at the entry and exit of the Straits of the Persian Sea. This city of Ormuz is, according to my idea, the most important of them all. And if the King of Portugal had made himself master of Adem, with a good fortress, such as those of Ormuz and Malacca, and so held the sway over these three Straits, which I have specified, he might well have been called the lord of all the world-- as did Alexander when he penetrated to the Ganges--for with these three keys in his hands, he might shut the doors against all comers'.[22]

In terms of maritime geopolitics this was a most remarkable statement; significant, too, was the fact that in time Great Britain was to control those "three keys." The Portuguese, however, left Aden in the hands of the Arabs and were not in a position to long withstand English and Dutch assaults on the other two sites.

Although the Dutch East India Company was not established until two years after the British Company, it was the first to break the Portuguese monopoly.[23] "Within fifty years the Dutch had established factories on the continent of India, in Ceylon, in Sumatra, in the Persian Gulf, and in the Red Sea, besides having obtained exclusive possession of the

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21. Lord Elton, Imperial Commonwealth, p. 76.

22. The Commentaries, iv. p. 185. Cited in Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 153.

23. Hunter, op. cit., p. 270

Moluccas."[24] The principal reason for this was the desperate dependance of the Netherlands on foreign trade.

The English were slower in developing their trade with India, perhaps because they were somewhat less reliant on the revenue from foreign commerce. Yet, while it might be correct to say that England could exist on what she could produce, she could not have lived very well. For hundreds of years the wool trade with Flanders was important, and a high volume of trade was carried by Hansa ships. Shakespeare was thinking of the distant past when he spoke of England being "bound in by the triumphant sea." Indeed, the closing down of the Steelyard in 1598[25] during Elizabeth's reign signalized that England was ready to control her own seaborne commerce--this at about the time when Harborne was dispatched to seek "large and loving privileges" at Constantinople.

Until 1612 English voyages to the Indies were financed on a one-trip basis, at which time the Company inaugurated its joint stock policy.[26] These voyages were financed largely by the merchants who had investments in the Levant Company--but owing to a slump in the business of that area, the weight of the capital began shifting towards India. The British effort was for a time characterized by impermanency and hesitation. In contrast, "the (Dutch East India) Company became a national force,"[27] its entire effort, with government support and without deviations of policy, being to establish a monopoly.

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24. Ibid. The Dutch had also planted a colony at the Cape of Good Hope.

25. The Hanseatic League entrepôt in England. Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion, p. 52.

26. In 1657 the "permanent capital" concept was instituted. Elton, op. cit., p. 81.

27. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 159.

In 1613 the English were able to counter Portuguese assaults long enough to establish their first trading settlement at Surat on the coast of India, and within the following two years consolidated their position after driving off Portuguese expeditions from Goa.[28] English forces were still pitifully small, however, and in order to provide some guarantee of security in the hinterland area the Company agreed to underwrite the expenses of establishing official English-Indian relations.

The dispatch of Sir Thomas Roe in 1615 as a representative of the King, James I, to the Great Moghul in India immediately improved the position of the English merchants in the area.[29] The decision taken to send a King's representative was admirably astute. It at once commanded high level support for the Company from both the English Government and an

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28. Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion, pp. 223-224.

29. "'Instructions for Sir Thomas Roe, knight, authorized by us, under our great seal of England, to repair as our ambassador to the Great Magoar (or Emperor of the Oriental Indies). To be careful of the preservation of the King's honour and dignity, both as we are a sovereign prince and a professed Christian. To advance the trade of the East India Company, the main scope of his employment, and referring him to their directions from which he is in no wise to digress. To answer to the Great Magoar, if he should ask why the Portugals at Goa or thereabouts do not agree with the King's subjects in those parts, but use hostility against them, that: "the Portugals desirous to engross the whole trade, yet the English being able to repel their force, by way of defence, His Majesty is willing to abstain from further actions of offence".'" Calendar of State Papers, 1515-1616, No. 852. Cited in Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 135. A few years after his mission to India, Sir Thomas was sent as ambassador to Constantinople, where he "became the Elchi of his time." Alfred C. Wood, A History of the Levant Company, p. 86.

Indian Ruler, and laid the cornerstone for the close cooperation between government and commerce which has since characterized the highly successful mercantile policy of England. In effect, this was the first step towards balancing the Dutch organization of mercantile enterprise.

The following year Sir Thomas sent two Company factors to contact the Shah of Persia, with the purpose of commencing trade in the Persian Gulf. One of the factors, Steele, could only obtain a nebulous firman to the effect that Englishmen should be given good treatment in Persia. Roe, accordingly, advised the postponement of the commercial venture[30] to evade the dangers of war and the expense of fortifications and defensive operations by restricting East India Company activities to areas in which the Moghul Emperor could afford protection. Nevertheless, in 1617 factories were organized at Shiraz and Isfahan;[31] and the English became involved in affairs in the Persian Gulf.

Hostilities between England and Holland were heightened by the massacre at Amboyna in 1623, in which the Dutch tortured and killed several Englishmen. Dutch fortunes were by this time on the incline, while those of the English descended. Yet as the Portuguese gave up their bases (Malacca in 1641, Muscat in 1650, Ceylon in 1658), Holland was able to concentrate more and more on driving England from the Indian Ocean. The rivalry reached crisis proportions in 1652 when war in Europe broke out between the two countries,[32] but the result was indecisive.

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30. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, pp. 137-138.

31. Ibid.; and Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 18

32. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 165. The incident at Amboyna in the Spice Islands, served as one of the pretexts for whipping up English enthusiasm. William Strang, Britain in World Affairs, p. 54; and C. E. Carrington, The British Overseas, p. 156.

Over the next thirty-five years England made new and greater efforts to protect her sea trade. Heeding the advice of Sir Thomas Roe, English merchants had relinquished the spices of the East Indies to the Dutch. They directed their labors to building markets on the sub-continent of India, where a permanent display of force was not so necessary. The wisdom of this policy became most apparent when the European market for spices went into a slow but inexorable decline. The vicissitudes of European politics meant that the market for India's saltpeter--a constituent of gunpowder--steadily improved. So, until the nineteenth century, did the demand for India's cotton products. But affairs of the Company in the Persian Gulf were languishing; and in India conditions were little better.

> In 1689, our factories at Vizagapatam and Masulipatam were seized by the Muhammadans, and the factors were massacred. But in this same year, the Company determined to consolidate its position in India on the basis of territorial sovereignty, to enable them to resist the oppression of the Mughals and Marhattas. With that view, they passed the resolution, which was destined to turn their clerks and factors throughout India into conquerors and proconsuls: 'The increase of our revenue is the subject of our care, as much as our trade; 'tis that must make us a nation in India. Without that we are but a great number of interlopers, united by His Majesty's royal charter, fit only to trade where nobody of power thinks it their interest to prevent us. And upon this account it is said that the wise Dutch, in all their general advices that we have seen, write ten paragraphs concerning their government, their civil and military policy, warfare, and the increase of their revenue for one paragraph they write concerning trade.'[33]

It is best to summarize a few of the eighteenth century events which affected the English East India Company's status in the Indian Ocean. In 1635 the Portuguese, by the Convention of Goa, relinquished their

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33. Hunter, op. cit., p. 279.

monopoly over the Indian ports in favor of the English. Between 1654 and 1689 the Company was considerably strengthened by affairs in England. Cromwell's decision to support the concept of joint-stock commerce was not unusual--but the corollary of requiring a new system for the election of directors gave stockholders a powerful weapon. Charles II was equally solicitous. He acquired Bombay as part of the dowry for marrying Catherine of Braganza, then ceded it to the East India Company in 1669.[34]

To a somewhat lesser extent, events in India were mirrored in the Persian Gulf. The Portuguese lost one of Albuquerque's "keys" when they were expelled from their stronghold at Hormuz. This was brought about by a Persian land force in conjunction with a British merchant fleet, in 1622;[35] and the Company received for its support permission from the Persians to set up factories at Gombrun (Bandar Abbas).[36] Anglo-Dutch hostility was manifested in a "cold war," broken occasionally by temporary alliances against the Portuguese.[37]

Although the Dutch retained their ascendancy in the Indian Ocean, they were particularly vulnerable to any assault on their sea-trade. The Navigation Act of 1651[38] excluded Dutch ships from trading with English colonies or England. The fact that Dutch shipping passed through the

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34. Miles, op.cit., p. 213.

35. Ibid., p. 188.

36. "For a century and a half Bandar Abbas remained the principal foothold of the East India Company on the shores of the Persian Gulf." Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 152.

37. Ibid., p. 161.

38. Ibid., p. 165.

English Channel to and from the Indies put Holland practically at the mercy of England's warships. Moreover, Holland did not possess England's capacity to exist on domestic industry--consequently Holland was seriously weakened by wars which disrupted her sea commerce.[39]

The same held true for the relative capacities of England and Holland to withstand the depredations of pirates. Members of the defunct Courteen Association, which had been granted a royal charter to trade in the East in 1635[40] under questionable circumstances, set out to prey on the shipping of all countries "from the Red Sea to Canton."[41] The Indian Ocean at the turn of the century was particularly hazardous for commerce. The English East India Company found its trade imperiled by a greatly increased number of pirates, both Arab and European. The latter were by far the more dangerous (as some of their names will testify).[42]

> At Muscat, they commanded the entrance to the Persian Gulf. At Aden they could intercept the rich stream of vessels passing between India and the Red Sea, while on the coasts of Madagascar they made settlements in which they lived in freedom and luxury. In comparison with the various naval powers in the East, the rovers felt themselves strong enough to defy any attempts at capture.[43]

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39. Strang, op. cit., p. 54.

40. Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion, p. 228.

41. Ibid.

42. Kidd, Avery, Tew, Misson, Caraccioli, Shivers, Culliford, England, de la Bouche, Kirby, Plantain, and many others.

43. Miles, op. cit., p. 226. It was not until the English, the Dutch, and the French companies agreed to combine against these marauders that they were temporarily suppressed. "The protection of the Red Sea shipping was assigned to the Dutch; to the French, the Persian Gulf was given as a station;" and the English were given the responsibility of safeguarding the southern portions of the Indian Seas. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 195.

The instrusion of European pirates into the Indian Ocean was but a manifestation of the unsettled state of the area. Without a dominant European sea power, pirate activity went unchecked. Holland had just passed the zenith of her naval supremacy, and was weakened by wars in Europe and her dependence on England for support against France. Further, the Dutch monopoly of the spice trade had resulted in their being monopolized by it, and profits had been decreased by flooded markets and lower prices.[44] Unlike Holland, English trade was still vitalized by the competition of entrepreneurs from within. In 1698

> a new statutory East India Company was chartered by Parliament . . . in opposition to the old royal Company . . . The impact of India Upon English opinion took the form of a growing rumour about the great fortunes which were to be made in the East.[45]

This division of effort, added to a vacillating official policy in London in respect to the Company, effectively hamstrung any attempts to strengthen or consolidate the English gains in India. This is not to say, however, that English merchants were not expanding their commercial spheres. "Before the seventeenth century ended the Company had established trade and factories in every useful area from the Red Sea to the coast of China."[46] Nevertheless, for several years dissension in England over the question of monopolies resulted in the East India Company having a rather thin time of it.

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44. "The fall of the Dutch colonial empire resulted from its short-sighted commercial policy. It was deliberately based upon a monopoly of the trade in spices, and remained from first to last destitute of sound economic principles." Hunter, op. cit., p. 271

45. Carrington, op. cit., p. 159.

46. Williamson, The Ocean in English History, p. 109

The interest of France in the Indian Ocean mounted during the seventeenth century, particularly with the founding of the fifth French East India Company in 1664.[47] Earlier companies had failed, including Richelieu's effort to plant a French colony on Madagascar as a basis for eastward expansion.[48] Unlike the Dutch and the English companies, the French companies resulted not from mercantile initiative but from a deliberate government policy. The new French East India Company of 1664 was given a fifty-year monopoly, with "a government guarantee against financial loss for the first ten years."[49] The island of Mauritius was occupied in 1690[50] in order to have a strategically located base for their sea-power. Although French interests expanded, they were unable to greatly disturb those of England which were already well established--the nucleus of the British Indian empire, begun in 1757.[51]

A succession of events in the eighteenth century brought increased prosperity to England. In 1704 the English took Gibraltar and in 1708, Minorca--thereby giving British sea-power the capability of bottling up the Mediterranean. In 1707 Scotland and England were united under one crown,[52] to their mutual advantage. The amalgamation of the royal and statutory East India companies into "'the United Company of the merchants

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47. Hunter, op. cit., p. 279.

48. Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion, p.355.

49. Ibid.

50. Carrington, op. cit., p. 161.

51. Mahan, op. cit., p. 306.

52. Elton, op. cit., p. 88.

of England trading to the East Indies,'"[53] in 1708, helped to reduce dissension among the British merchants. Queen Anne's War (War of the Spanish Succession) in 1713 left the British navy supreme.[54]

With the twenty-six years of peace which followed, it was not surprising that the resultant prosperity in England brought in its train a laxity, and neglect of the Royal Navy--source of Britain's pre-eminence.

> For worse as well as for better, the imperial history of the eighteenth century bears the impress of the greatly increased political power, and the greatly increased wealth, of the commercial classes. In the eighteenth century the economic begins to overshadow the political motive, and the moral sentiment disappears, until, largely for that reason, the first Empire dissolves.[55]

It was not only England, however, who was concerned with expanding markets in the East. Signs of augmented French imperialistic goals became visible towards the middle of the century. The War of the Austrian Succession (1740 to 1748)[56] and the Seven Years' War (1756 to 1763)[57] left the British navy strong and the French navy overwhelmed. The policy of France, therefore, had to be based on something other than sea-power. In India "a brilliant series of governors, intermittently supported by French naval power, plunged into the chaos of Indian politics with the clear intention of sharing in the partition of the Mogul Empire"[58] exactly what the English had been assiduously working to avoid.

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53. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 170.
54. Strang, op. cit., p. 68.
55. Elton, op. cit., p. 89.
56. Strang, op. cit., p. 76.
57. Elton, op. cit., p. 132.
58. Carrington, op. cit., p. 161.

In 1740 France received a renewal and expansion of earlier Capitulations from the Ottomans,[59] thereby hastening the decline of the English Levant Company.[60] The first signs of the weakness of the Ottoman Empire were becoming apparent, and France found herself in a position to take advantage of her predominant status in the area.

> As the Anglo-French struggle for supremacy in India developed and it was seen that that vast peninsula was fated to pass under European control, keen brains in France, the forerunners of Napoleon, had quickly seized upon the strategic importance of Egypt as the great stepping stone to the East.[61]

England continued to use, however, the Levant Company station at Aleppo for freighting easily transportable merchandise overland from Basra or, to send "political and commercial agents of the great companies as the quickest means of journeying . . . between Europe, the Persian Gulf, and India."[62]

Russia, too, was making her presence known in the Eastern Mediterranean. During a war with Turkey, Catherine the Great combined an assault in the Black Sea region with the defeat of a Turkish fleet in the Mediterranean.[63] Ali Bey, upon declaring the independence of Egypt and joining hands with the Russians, went on to collaborate in the defeat of the Turks and the occupation of Beirut in 1772.[64] Following the Treaty of Kuchuk Kainardji in 1774 Russia evacuated the city. Intent only on the Straits,

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59. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 1.

60. Wood, A History of the Levant Company, pp. 142-143.

61. Ibid., p. 166.

62. Great Britain: Admiralty, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 264.

63. William Persen, "The Russian Occupation of Beirut 1772-1774," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. 41-42, pp. 275-276.

64. Ibid., p. 280.

she missed an excellent opportunity to extend her sway over the Middle East--although difficulties in Poland, and the Pogachen Rebellion might have made continued Mediterranean activity impossible.

France, in turn, busied herself in the Persian Gulf. "French agents with consular rank arrived in 1775;"[65] and in 1759, some 16 years earlier, a French fleet had bombarded the English factory at Bandar Abbas.[66] The destruction of this station led to the abandonment of Bandar Abbas in 1763, and the establishment of a British Residency at Basra in 1764. "This transference of the British Agency from Persian to Turkish soil was an incident of decided political importance."[67] Further, the English in 1763 were given exclusive permission by Persia to establish a factory at Bushire--"destined in the nineteenth century to become the headquarters of British political as well as commercial activity in the Persian Gulf area."[68]

Under the able direction of Lord Chatham between 1756 and 1763 England's policy began to "follow a clear and decisive line, and it was an aggressive line, for sea-power, for trade, for empire. 'When trade is at stake,' said Pitt, 'it is your last retrenchment; you must defend it or perish.'"[69] This policy enabled England to conclude an extremely successful

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65. Great Britain: Admiralty, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 264.

66. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 177.

67. Ibid., p. 178.

68. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 53.

69. Strang, op. cit., p. 80.

peace treaty in 1763. "The broad result was that France was, politically, driven out of India and North America."[70]

Between 1763 and 1783 England lost the American colonies, and the First British Empire ended. However, by retaining most of her acquisitions elsewhere Britain was able to form a second empire--for the foundations were there.[71] With the lessons learned from the American Revolutionary War, the English were able to build better. "The idea that British colonies were municipal corporations, inseparably connected with the motherland, was thrown overboard with the tea into Boston Harbour when the American Revolution began."[72] This new concept was not adopted quite so readily, for there followed a transition period which carried through the Napoleonic Wars. It did provide, however, a springboard from which the new theory of "free trade"--with the equally important considerations of imperial sea routes and defense--was to be launched.

The "old colonial system" was also undergoing a rapid transition from the commercial standpoint. The origins may be found in the relocation of English factories from the East Indies to India after 1623.[73] There were no ready markets in India; therefore, they had to be created. Indian

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70. Marriott, The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth, p. 78.

71. "The peace of 1783 is commonly said to have marked the end of the first British empire. We certainly lost the richest part of the Empire and the only part with a large English-speaking population; but we held Canada and most of the West Indian islands, and India was saved by Warren Hastings from the wreck." Strang, op. cit., p. 82.

72. A. J. Grant and Harold Temperley, Europe in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries, p. 312.

73. See above, p. 40.

cotton, being cheaper than linen or wool, provided one possibility for trade.[74] Indigo, far superior to the blue dye of Europe, was soon in demand. Saltpeter, used in the manufacture of gunpowder, offered ample opportunity for profit. In other spheres of Company interest worthwhile commodities were found, such as Mocha coffee from Yemen, and raw silk from Persia.

Gradually, demands for goods increased. Markets in the eighteenth century expanded, and "in its last forty years there was a remarkable and progressive intensification of industry."[75] But increased profit-taking had the unfortunate corollary of a demand for reduced expenses, to the extent that a lack of funds created difficulties for the Company in India.[76] One important result was the India Bill in 1784. It was the first step towards bringing India under the Crown (the last was to be taken in 1858),[77] and the second step towards providing India with a responsible government.[78]

In the India Bill may also be seen a response of England to an aggressive, empire-minded France. In 1720 the French had occupied the

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74. Nothing helped the India trade more than the growing demand by all classes forwashable underclothing in England and Europe.

75. Williamson, The Ocean in English History, p. 189.

76. See re Hastings policy in India, Hunter, op. cit., pp. 292-293.

77. Carrington, op. cit., p. 179.

78. "The Act of 1773 planted the responsibility for the government of British India directly on the Company." Reginald Coupland, India: A Restatement, p. 43.

island of Reunion,[79] near Mauritius. Despite setbacks during the century, as late as 1781 a French force secured the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope against the British, and the French fleet went on to take Trincomalee, Ceylon's naval base.

England's policy regarding the sea defense of her empire had to be evaluated in terms of imperial commitments, for it was rapidly becoming apparent that unless she could adequately protect her possessions they would be quickly taken from her. English policy regarding sea defense of the Empire had been briefly this: The Royal Navy would attempt to contain the enemy within European waters; the colonies, however, were responsible for security measures against those enemy vessels which eluded the Royal Navy. There were, of course reasons for this attitude.

> Because of the technique of navigation and the necessity of seeking winter quarters, great naval powers as a rule concentrated their naval forces in metropolitan waters. Colonial interests, apart from actual settlements, being private in character, admiralties felt no need of establishing naval bases with permanent units in remote zones, even where important interests were concerned.[80]

It had been formalized in an

> Admiralty . . . memorandum of 1756 regarding the loss of Minorca, wherein it was laid down that since it was impossible to keep at all, or perhaps any, of the distant dominions a strength at sea equal to what the enemy could send thither, 'the best, indeed the only security, arises from a detention of the enemy's strength in their ports.' Blockage of the enemy fleets in their bases was the first line of defence, rapid pursuit the second, local defences, capable of holding out until the relief could arrive, the third.[81]

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79. Carrington, op. cit., p. 161.

80. Walter L. Dorn, Competition for Empire 1740-1763, pp. 103-104.

81. Herbert Richmond, Statesmen and Sea Power, Appendix II, pp. 341-342.

The East India Company, accordingly, had had to decide on the steps which would be necessary for the protection of its interests, and to estimate the expenses involved. From the beginning, merchant ships were well constructed and armed--and the number of ships built was based on the prerequisite commercial activity. The "Honourable East India Company's Marine" was founded in 1612, and early in its history defeated a greatly superior Portuguese fleet at Surat.[82] In 1686 the name was changed to "Bombay Marine", and during the eighteenth century it dealt mainly with pirates and the so-called "Country Powers," leaving conventional naval forces to the Royal Navy.[83] Examples of its importance were profuse. Following the fall of Calcutta in 1756, and the "Black Hole" incident, an expedition was mounted under Clive using Madras-based sea-power.[84] After retaking Calcutta, Clive went on to wrest Chandernagore from the French, and at Plassey defeated the Indian army of Siraj ad-Dowlam. It would be safe to say that sea-power made these victories possible. Clive, however, had left an undermanned garrison at Madras, and it was soon under attack by French troops from Hyderabad. It was only England's command of the sea which enabled her to defeat France at Wandiwash in 1760, and with the fall of Pondicherry the next year the English were pre-eminent in the Carnatic.[85] In this manner the Company's forces became responsible both for the "local defense" of harbors and coastal trade, and wars of expansion; and when all

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82. A. E. F. Bedfor, "The Royal Indian Navy," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. 38, p. 237.

83. Ibid.

84. Moreland and Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 273.

85. Ibid,, p. 279.

Royal Navy ships were withdrawn from the East Indies in 1767,[86] the Bombay Marine was instituted in its place.

Far from its use being restricted to India, the Bombay Marine ranged far and wide. During the Seven Years' War the East India Company proposed to the government the conquest of the Spanish possessions in the Philippines. The capture of Manila would have crippled Spain's commerce, and if the diplomatic arrangements made the restoration of Manila necessary, the great island of Mindanao could be taken in its stead. In August, 1762, 1,000 European troops and 2,000 sepoys, with stores and artillery supplied by the East India Company, departed Madras enroute to the Philippines. Manila was taken the following month, but was lost to England right away through the peace negotiations already underway in Europe--still, it demonstrated the importance of Indian naval bases. Shortly afterwards the Company undertook to establish an entrepôt near Borneo (anticipating Raffles' work at Singapore between 1811 and 1814)[87] and in 1778 Warren Hastings considered establishing a base on the Bay of Tourane (coast of Annam, Cochin-China); but the war in America prevented him from going ahead. The combination of sea-power and well trained troops gave England a powerful, mobile weapon with which to achieve her aims in Eastern seas.

Thus the East India Company came to depend on the structural protective qualities of its merchant vessels, and on the occasional appearance of a squadron of the Royal Navy for security. At the same time pressure

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86. Bedford, op. cit., p. 237.

87. Williamson, A Short History of British Expansion, Vol. II, pp. 30-31.

was exerted from England in an attempt to save the Company the financial outlay necessary for a large, full time navy--an amount not to be lightly reckoned, for until the advent of copper sheathing much later, ships rotted much more rapidly in tropical waters. Imitating somewhat the Government's system of basing its own warship requirements on that number afloat among its rivals, the Company's policy had proven to be at times inadequate.

> What statesmen had to learn then and in our own times was that the number of 'cruisers' is not dependent on the number of enemy vessels, large and small, but upon the number of convoys to be defended, the positions to be kept under observation, and the strength of the individual escorts. As the attacks are ubiquitous, so defence must be similarly ubiquitous.[88]

Bearing in mind, therefore, the problems of defense with which the East India Company was faced, the India Bill was of special moment. Government participation in the administration of British India carried with it the important inference of increased Governmental participation in its preservation. The revenue which the Company was bringing to England in effect caused her Government to be actively concerned in safeguarding its source.[89]

The same general policies regarding India held true for the Persian Gulf area. The influence of England was predominant due to her superiority at sea. In fact, the infrequency of visits by ships of other nations probably induced the Jawasmi pirates, in exasperation, to attack British shipping.[90] This led, in turn, to the rise of piracy, and an augmentation

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88. Richmond, op. cit., p. 343.

89. Dorn, op. cit., p. 252.

90. "In 1797 the Jawasmi made their first capture, off Rams, of a British vessel, the Basseim." Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 201.

of attacks on the merchant vessels of England. The primary interests of the East India Company in the Persian Gulf were, for a long time, the factories at Bushire and Basra. The remainder of the Gulf coast the English left to the native inhabitants--a policy based on the mutual vexations arising from previous attempts by Englishmen to reside in or near native settlements. The strategy which dominated was that of commerce, not war. So long as England's trade was not threatened by the existence of a rival power in the Persian Gulf, she was more than content with just maintaining the status quo.

The question of bases for sea operations was resolved during the wars of the eighteenth century. The basic contradiction in the two lines of naval policy was recognized: "In the one there is a strict analogy to a war of posts; while in the other the objective is that force whose destruction leaves the posts unsupported and therefore sure to fall in due time."[91] In selecting bases in the Persian Gulf the East India Company had given primary consideration to the profits which it might expect to realize. The establishment of bases for factories, therefore, had to be in prospering population centers (or, at any rate, where English merchants could successfully carry out their business) located near a port of some kind where they could be in contact with sea communications. Normally these bases were not heavily armed. In the event of attack by land, they could be counted on to defend themselves until help arrived by sea. The relocation of a trading post would often follow an attack of this type, for it was generally indicative of local political turmoil (with an attendant interruption of trade).

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91. Mahan, op. cit., p. 339.

Attacks from the sea were best repelled by the presence of friendly sea forces. The laying of siege to a Company port by an enemy fleet meant the destruction of factories from naval artillery bombardment, and the cutting of sea communications. To be more than temporarily successful in an attack of this nature, however, a permanent command of the sea was necessary. In this particular respect the French may be said to have signally failed. The reverses experienced by French fleets at the hands of the British is generally attributed to two causes: the fallacy of a strategy which called for isolated raids on England's commercial shipping, or guerre de course, instead of the destruction of her fleets; and, the superiority of British naval officers. England acquired and retained in the Indian Ocean the supremacy at sea during the course of the eighteenth century. France had been decisively shown the futility of challenging the primacy of the British navy.

Napoleon and the Middle East

Great Britain could not suppress indefinitely the need of Europe for outlets in the East. While able to dictate her maritime policy to the world, she had neither the strength nor the inclination to maintain large armies for sustained operations on land. In this respect, she did not differ from her European rivals. The word "sepoy" came to mean an Indian soldier trained by Europeans, and both England and France came to rely on the extensive use of these native forces.[92] England, owing to her command of the sea, was able to utilize sepoys in many theaters of operation throughout the world. "Between 1858 and 1914 Indian troops served on a large scale in the Second Afghan War (1878-80) and the Third Burman War (1885), and on a smaller scale in Perak (1875), in Egypt (1882), in the Sudan (1885 and 1896), in South Africa (1899-1902) and in China (1900-1)."[93] Seapower thus bestowed the advantage of mobility on its user, a most powerful factor in maritime geopolitics.

The East India Company, however, was not called upon to provide the funds to maintain these large forces. There are many mistaken notions about "the riches of the East"--the trade with India hardly provided the British with vast wealth. "In the mid-century (eighteenth) Britain's Indian and far eastern trade amounted to scarcely one half that of the West Indies."[94] This is not to say, despite smaller volume, that the profits were not handsome--it is merely to point out that the English in India could not afford to maintain large conventional land forces, and

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92. Moreland and Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 270.

93. Coupland, op. cit., p. 59.

94. Dorn, op. cit., pp. 273-274.

during the first part of the nineteenth century their exposure and vulnerability was marked.

"After the outbreak of war between France and England in 1793, a period of unrest and intrigue in the countries adjoining the Gulf began."[95] Between 1793 and 1798 two representatives of the French Government traveled in Turkey, Egypt, and Persia, evaluating areas in which France's imperial designs might possibly be advanced.[96] Their recommendation of Egypt as advantageous for French occupation was certainly ominous. At this time there was continued French privateering activity based upon the harbor at Muscat.[97]

Napoleon's plans and ultimate objectives were, at this point, a matter of conjecture. France, with the overt or tacit support of European countries, either in coalition or an armed neutrality, belligerently faced Great Britain across the English Channel. And yet, although the combined fleets of Spain, France, and Holland had compelled the British navy to evacuate the Mediterranean in 1796,[98] England remained in control at Gibraltar. The development of the permanent blockade, through an organized system of reliefs on station, had served the Royal Navy well.[99] The continuing capability and ubiquity of the naval arm convinced Napoleon that a successful invasion of England would be impossible.[100]

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95. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 189.

96. Ibid., pp. 189-190.

97. Ibid., p. 232.

98. For a period of about two years. R. C. Anderson, Naval Wars in the Levant, p. 354.

99. Dorn, op. cit., p. 110.

100. Anderson, op. cit., pp. 353-354.

With these facts in mind, he cast his eyes toward the Middle East. The Ottoman Empire was, at the close of the eighteenth century, in a weakened condition, after a series of wars with Russia. Control over the Arab principalities had loosened. More important, England's interest in the area was limited to the activities of her Levant Company--an interest which, if evaluated in strictly commercial terms, could not be said to have been much. "In 1803 the imports of the Levant Company were valued at £175,000, as compared with the East India Company average of five million."[101] On the other hand, the following quote from the Times hints that in 1791, at any rate, the subject of the Levant was not altogether forgotten:

> By reference to the Custom house books, and other unquestionable authorities, it appears, that the trade of the Levant is of the first importance to England, whether the immense value of the cargoes imported be considered, or the trade itself. Merchants trading to Leghorn are best acquainted with the value of that branch of commerce, which must, if the gigantic strides of Russia were suffered to continue, be inevitably transferred to that power; and Petersburg, instead of the ports in the Mediterranean and London, become the grand repository and mart of silks, cottons, carpets, coffee, gums, and the various other valuable articles exported from the East.
>
> If this trade should ever get into other hands, the English must bid eternal farewel [sic] to the advantages they have hitherto derived from the Mediterranean. Their ships, which carry manufactures to the Italian ports, must return frequently unladen; and the immense sums of money and even the blood that was expended in the defence of Gibraltar, might all have been saved, since that fortress, without a trade to Turkey, would be of little service.[102]

This article was obviously written by a person who evaluated the Levant situation in terms which decidedly extended beyond the sphere of commerce.

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101. Piers Mackesy, The War in the Mediterranean 1803-1810, p. 9.

102. London: The Times, July 30, 1791, p. 2, Col. A.

The location of the Levant coast vis-à-vis two arms of the Indian Ocean was highly significant. Napoleon could see that Britain was able to preserve a relatively secure position in the Persian Gulf by virtue of two factors: (1) the ubiquity of British vessels;[103] and (2), the treaty relations which England had entered into with the local rulers. The occupation of Egypt would not only render the British vulnerable in the Persian Gulf, but also in India--and is therefore an excellent example of both the nature of geopolitics, and the genius of Napoleon.

> The conquest of Egypt was but his first intended step. Far beyond, in the Indian Ocean, the Governor of Mauritius had been at work inciting Tipu Sahib ('Citoyen Tipu') to drive the British from India with the help of a French fleet. These plans for a single co-ordinated offensive based on Malta and Corfu, developed through Egypt and Mauritius as far afield as Mysore, with the intention of breaking the power of England in the East, were bolder, grander in conception, more far-reaching than any earlier combination against the British Empire.[104]

Napoleon's brilliant strategy thoroughly alarmed Great Britain. Not unaware of France's imperialistic goals, the British had occupied Cape Colony in 1795 and Ceylon in 1796.[105] In 1798 French forces took Malta, and on the first of July landed in Egypt[106]--and the Middle Eastern phase of the struggle with Great Britain was initiated.

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103. In the period after 1793 "the presence at Muscat of persons of French nationality, or in the French service, was suspected: the movements of British vessels between India and the Persian Gulf appears to have been one of the principal subjects of their study." Wilson, op. cit., p. 190.

104. Carrington, op. cit., p. 242.

105. Marriott, Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth, pp. 96-98.

106. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 169.

Impressive as was Bonaparte's maneuver, even more so was the reaction of the British Empire. The far-flung resources which England was able to call upon in her hour of need were indeed awesome. On the first of August Nelson destroyed the French fleet anchored in the Bay of Aboukir, thus interdicting Napoleon's line of communication with France--and the fate of the French in Egypt was sealed. In October the English East India Company concluded an agreement with the Imam of Muscat. "As a defensive measure against Napoleon's Egyptian campaign . . . [it] constituted the first of a series of acts which gradually placed most of the principalities along the eastern and southern littorals of the Arabian Peninsula in varying degrees of dependence on Great Britain."[107] The Indian trade was important to Muscat, and should the Imam "throw in his lot with the French, the British Government would have no alternative but to place his territory under a commercial blockade from the side of India."[108] Just as important was the permission given for the British to locate a factory at Bandar Abbas (at that time under the Imam's rule) and to garrison it with Indian troops.[109] In 1798 the East India Company moved its Resident, who had consular rank, from Basra to Baghdad.[110] His "chief duty was to transmit intelligence overland between India and England, and to watch and report on the proceedings of the French emissaries in connection with Napoleon's projected invasion of

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107. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 64.

108. Wilson, op. cit., p. 233.

109. Saleh, op. cit., p. 63.

110. Admiralty, op. cit., p. 264.

of India by way of Egypt and the Red Sea."[111]

Within a year an Ottoman firman gave British vessels access to the Black Sea.[112] Britain joined the Russo-Ottoman defensive alliance of 23 December 1798 a month after receiving this grant; and her contribution to the alliance was said by one British historian to be "'the most extensive pledge' England ever gave to the Ottoman Empire."[113]

Simultaneously, England prepared to oppose the French in the Indian Ocean. Not too many years had passed since Warren Hastings had kept British India from the French, as directed by the able strategist, Admiral Suffren. Now the machinations of Napoleon with respect to Tippoo Sultan of Mysore gave the English a real fright.

Wellesley, the Governor-General of India, reacted vigorously. The Malcolm Mission was sent to establish treaty relations with Persia,[114] in order to block Napoleon in that direction. In India Wellesley "conceived the scheme of crushing for ever the French hopes in Asia, by placing himself at the head of a great Indian confederacy."[115] In 1799 he captured Seringapatam, thereby bringing about the death of Tippoo who died fighting in its defense.[116]

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111. Stephen H. Longrigg, Four Centuries of Modern Iraq, p. 254. The first British Consulate, however, was not established in Baghdad until 1802.

112. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 67.

113. Ibid., p. 65.

114. Wilson, op. cit., p. 254.

115. Hunter, op. cit., p. 297.

116. Ibid., p. 298.

In 1800 "Wellesley had sent an Indian army from Bombay to the Red Sea to cooperate against the French in Egypt; and even Popham, the Governor of the Cape, had been able to spare troops for a similar expedition."[117] This operation emphasized some very important factors from the viewpoint of Britain's maritime geopolitical interests. In the first place, the Royal Navy had regional "command posts," or stations, distributed throughout the world for areas such as the North Sea, Jamaica, Newfoundland, etc. In India was such a headquarters, responsible for all of the Indian Ocean "from the Cape to the Persian Gulf, from Calcutta to Australia, and the whole of the East Indies and China Sea as far as Canton and the Philippines."[118] However, the Red Sea had never been considered to be important because of the difficulty of navigating in its waters, and the lack of good commercial opportunities on its coasts. With the French occupation of Egypt, an attack of some sort towards Suez was called for--and the subsequent operations reflected England's earnest intentions of surrounding Napoleon in Egypt.

In addition to the expeditions proceeding from India and the Cape, the Admiralty sent a squadron of three ships from England to the Red Sea.[119]

> The measures taken to block Bonaparte's route to India--measures naval, military and diplomatic--were held to be incomplete unless some bases were occupied at the mouth of the Red Sea. The orders from Dundas [later Lord Melville] provided for such a base being seized--the island of Perim

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117. Carrington, op. cit., p. 243; and Coupland, op. cit., p. 24.

118. C. Northcote Parkinson, "British Operations in the Red Sea 1799-1801," Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, Vol. XXV, 1938, p. 249.

119. Ibid., p. 252.

> being specified. The Government of Bombay prepared to carry out instructions but without excluding the island of Melun as an alternative. The idea was to secure, if possible, a position from which the straits—or at least the navigable channel—might be covered by shore batteries.[120]

After a ten-month trip, including replenishment of their depleted provisions at Zanzibar, the squadron at last reached Mocha. Once there it was learned that the French had already taken Suez, and that the port was easily defensible from a naval attack due to the presence of sandbars in the fairway. There was nothing to do but blockade, until the monsoon season made operations in the Red Sea impossible. The effect of the squadron was not totally lost, however.

> Its presence had had a steadying effect upon the Arab rulers—'the Sherriff of Mecca, the Imaum of Muscat, the Bashaw of Baghdad and the other smaller princes', as the commodore described them—whose inclinations to seize the opportunity to attack their Turkish overlords were kept in check by the pressure which the squadron could bring to bear through its power of interrupting the food supplies from Upper Egypt, on which the Arab Powers depended. The Arabs also constituted a threat to the French army in Egypt, who feared an irruption of wild desert warriors into Kosseir from across the Red Sea, supported by the British squadron.[121]

Perim, meanwhile, was occupied and fortified--though it was discovered that the island suffered from a lack of fresh water. The port of Kosseir, which the French occupied, was considered a suitable target for a naval bombardment. Finally, after transferring the main garrison from Perim to Aden, both positions were evacuated in 1800 due to reports that the French were quitting Egypt.[122]

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120. C. Northcote Parkinson, War in the Eastern Seas 1793-1815, p. 149.

121. H. Richmond, op. cit., pp. 211-212.

122. C. N. Parkinson, "British Operations in the Red Sea 1799-1801," p. 257.

In 1801 the British aimed a two-pronged attack at the French in Egypt, from Aboukir and Suez. The expeditions from India and the Cape were to be utilized at last. By the time that the landing was effected and the troops were on their way to Cairo it was learned that the French had already surrendered.

> Though the diversionary object aimed at was thus not achieved, the campaign has certain points of particular interest in the example of the initiative and foresight of the Governor-General, the flexibility which sea command confers, the importance of time, and of the need for a sufficiency of shipping if the benefits of command at sea are to be reaped.[123]

Furthermore, the British had occasion to become familiar with the Red Sea, a sea route which was to become of prime geopolitical importance later in the century.

The Mediterranean, meanwhile, had become a British lake again. Nelson had won back Minorca and Malta,[124] setting the stage for General Abercromby's invasion of Egypt. With the forces arrayed against them, the defeat of the French at the Battle of Alexandria in 1801 by a joint Anglo-Turkish force[125] was anti-climactic.

The French occupation of Egypt gave the first inkling of what was to become a most controversial subject for England during the nineteenth century--that of alternate routes to India. In a portion of the instructions given to Napoleon by the French Directory on April 12, 1798,

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123. Ibid., p. 258.

124. "In September 1800 the French garrison of Malta, which had been closely blockaded for two years, was starved into surrender." Richmond, op. cit., p. 210.

125. M. Rifaat, op. cit., pp. 14-15.

may be found, inter alia, the earliest official proposal for a modern canal:

> Considering, in addition, that the infamous treason which enabled Britain to become mistress of the Cape of Good Hope has rendered access to India by the customary route very difficult to the vessels of the Republic, it is important to open to the Republican forces another route, to combat the satellites of the English Government and dry up the source of its corruptive riches;
> Decrees as follows:
> Art. 1. The General in Chief of the Army of the Orient shall direct the land and sea forces under his command to Egypt and shall take over the country.
> Art. 2. He shall expel the English from all their possessions in the Orient which he can reach and shall in particular destroy all their factories on the Red Sea.
> Art. 3. He shall have the Isthmus of Suez cut and shall take all necessary measures to insure to the French Republic the free and exclusive possession of the Red Sea.[126]

The geopolitical implications to Great Britain were enormous. Such measures would cut her route to India by giving France a strong base from which to attack her shipping in the Indian Ocean. The strategic value of Gibraltar, heretofore, so vital a factor in England's naval strategy, would be nullified. A Suez canal could alter the maritime geography in such a way as to place England again (with respect to the East) in that unenviable spot which she occupied prior to the discovery of the Cape route--on the periphery of the main shipping lanes.

There is no reason to doubt that Napoleon would have tried to comply with Article 3 (above) had not his fleet been destroyed. At any rate, he at least caused to be completed the first important survey for the future route of the canal--a survey which erred by reporting "the waters of the Red Sea at high tide to be 32 feet 6 inches above those of the Mediterranean at low tide."[127] Napoleon had taken with him to Egypt some 150

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126. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 62.
127. A. T. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 7.

experts from various branches of the arts and sciences. Among them were a group of engineers under Lepere, who undertook the survey. The conditions for precision work were far from being optimum.[128] The discrepancy thus produced was used a s the basis for opposing a number of future projects, because the assumed requirement of the construction of locks made any such undertaking economically unfeasible. When Captain F. R. Chesney undertook his survey of the Isthmus of Suez in 1830, "he reported no essential difference in the levels of the two seas, but his report apparently[129] carried little weight, even in England, where it was duly considered by the House of Commons."[130]

Meanwhile, England continued striving to solidify her support in the Persian Gulf area. In 1800 the Imam of Muscat confirmed the agreement of 1798, and permitted the British to represent him when dealing with other countries.[131] Next, in 1801, England concluded one treaty of

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128. "It was impossible for the persons engaged in it to be too scattered without risking being carried off by looting parties of the unsubjugated Bedouins. If the carefully hoarded water supply ran out it could only be replaced by a return to Suez. The supplies had been reduced to a minimum to avoid overburdening the convoy." F. Charles-Roux, Bonaparte: Governor of Egypt, p. 62.

129. In his footnote at this point, Wilson stated: "There is, however, reason to think that Lord Palmerston was already cognizant of the error in the calculations of the French surveyors." Certainly evidence must have existed showing that the Red Sea and the Mediterranean had previously been joined by a simple canal.

130. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 7. With a reputedly pro-French ruler in Egypt at the time, the chances are that this information was received with scant enthusiasm by the British Government.

131. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 64.

alliance and another of commerce with Persia--the former treaty being an innovation brought on by fear of a possible French invasion of India with Persian collaboration.[132]

Frustrated in Egypt, Napoleon had one other plan for the conquest of India. This time he intended using a different system of waterways. Tsar Paul I of Russia readily agreed to a scheme whereby a French force would proceed down the Danube, cross the Black and Caspian Seas, take Persia, and attack India. The Russian expedition was scheduled to drive overland into the Upper Indus Valley, and finally to unite with the French at the Indus River.[133] Though a large Cossack force did actually cross the Volga in 1801, the untimely assassination of the Russian Tsar brought the campaign to a halt.[134]

Following the Peace of Amiens in 1802 there was a temporary lull in the hostilities. It became necessary for Great Britain to make a decision as to the disposition of Malta, an island of prime geopolitical meaning to her. "Russia, though she had played no part in the siege, having employed the fleet and army she had in the Mediterranean to purposes of her own interests in the Ionian islands, now set out her claim to Malta."[135] France wanted Malta returned to the Knights of St. John--something which the English hesitated to do.

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132. Ibid., p. 68.

133. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 171.

134. Ibid.; and, George Lenczowski, Russia and the West in Iran 1918-1948, p. 1.

135. Richmond, op. cit., p. 211.

> It was impossible to return Malta to the fictitious possession of the Knights. Napoleon's open and unconcealed declaration of his intention sooner or later to take Egypt, coupled with the publication by the French Government of a report by Colonel Sebastiani in which the intentions of France regarding both Egypt and Turkey were plainly set out, furnished, in the eyes of the Government, compelling reasons for not casting away this single safeguard to India.[136]

However, England had agreed in the definitive Treaty of Amiens to restore Malta to the Knights;[137] and her failure to do so contributed to the fresh outbreak of war in 1803. As Strang said: "Malta, and sea-power in the Mediterranean, and the sea-road to Egypt as the way to the east, were in 1803 the immediate cause of our re-entry, with great public enthusiasm, into the war, again alone."[138]

England, however, had defaulted in her defensive alliances as soon as cessation of war had made them of no further use to her. The Imam of Muscat was not only gaining little from his treaty with Britain,[139] but was losing the revenue created by the French practice of disposing of captured goods in the markets of Muscat.[140] The revival of French activity in the Gulf resulted in the Imam's virtual repudiation of his friendship with England. He proceeded to take shelter in neutrality.

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136. Ibid., p. 217. "To frustrate the Near Eastern ambitions of Napoleon was the great British purpose in holding the central Mediterranean." Mackesey, op. cit., p. 391.

137. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 172.

138. Strang, op. cit., p. 93.

139. The Wahhabis were disrupting his commerce and proving to be a serious menace to security.

140. Saleh, op. cit., p. 64.

Persia, in 1805, was the object of Russian aggression, and the Shah requested Great Britain to implement the terms of the 1801 agreement.[141] At this time there was no great British concern over the territorial aims of Russia, hence Persia turned for aid to France. Napoleon had very carefully placed his agents throughout the Middle East to gather military information, and to report just such eventualities as were now transpiring in Persia. He was similarly able to take advantage of Anglo-Ottoman discord. By 1807, French influence in the Near East prevailed over that of the British. The treaty between France and Persia "signed at Finkenstein on 4 May [1807] was intended to form part of a projected tripartite alliance of France, Persia, and the Ottoman Empire against Russia and England."[142] British India was again in danger.

When Napoleon relinquished his gains in the Middle East by concluding the Treaty of Tilsit with Russia (1807),[143] England at last acted decisively in establishing herself permanently in the area. The division of the Ottoman Empire between France and Russia was unthinkable to Great Britain.

> To abandon to Napoleon the naval resources of the Ottoman Empire--its seamen, harbours and timber--would ultimately mean the weakening of control in the eastern Mediterranean, at least, and the opening of the routes to India to the French. As long as Turkey survived, Britain should not merely avoid precipitating its collapse by the seizure of its outlying possessions, but must do the utmost in her power to avert the danger.[144]

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141. Ibid., pp. 80-81.

142. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 77.

143. Again there was talk of a Franco-Russian invasion of India, and again it came to nought. Saleh, op. cit., p. 142.

144. Mackesy, op. cit., p. 214.

A British expedition was sent to Egypt in 1807. While it was repulsed at Rosetta[145] the invasion was a sign of growing English involvement in the Middle East.

Another force was dispatched from India in 1809 to check the increase of piracy in the Persian Gulf.[146] Piracy was closely linked to Wahhabi aggression, and the British were able at once to strike a blow against the source of attacks on their own shipping and to regain the good graces of the Imam of Muscat by protecting him from further Wahhabi encroachments.[147] Minto, the Governor-General of India (1807-1813), saw to it that "permission was obtained from the Imam of Muscat for British-Indian troops to occupy one of his ports if it should be necessary thereby to forestall a French advance along the coast."[148]

The Franco-Russian alliance, moreover, precipitated England into re-establishing cordial relations with the Ottoman Empire and Persia. Preliminary treaty negotiations were begun with the Persians in 1809, and

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145. Carl Brockelmann, History of the Islamic Peoples, p. 348. The British belatedly tried to oust Mohammed Ali Pasha, whom they believed to be under French control, and to reinstate the Mamluk rulers.

146. Saleh, op. cit., p. 109.

147. "Efforts . . . to construe the anti-French treaty of a defensive alliance, by which the British were obliged to defend Oman against her enemies, were strongly resisted by the Government of India. However, as the cooperation of Muscat, especially in its capacity as the prime naval power among the Gulf states and as an entrepôt of the trade of India, Arabia, and Persia, was deemed essential to the maintenance of maritime peace in the Gulf, it became an object of equal importance in British policy to preserve the strength and integrity of the Sultanate." J. B. Kelly, "Sultanate and Imamate in Oman," p. 9.

148. Coupland, op. cit., pp. 25-26.

while not concluded until 1814, the British were able to send several military training missions to Persia in the meantime.[149] In 1809, too, Britain and the Ottomans were once more bound by an alliance. "The United Kingdom became the first European power to acknowledge (article 11) the right of the Sublime Ports to close the straits to foreign warships, on condition that 'this ancient regulation of the Ottoman Empire is in future to be observed towards every Power in time of peace.'"[150] The reaffirmation of British capitulatory privileges within the Ottoman domains, and the acquisition of the "most favored nation" status at the Sublime Porte were to prove to be spectacularly helpful to England throughout most of the century.

The Napoleonic Wars had been a serious threat to the British Empire, especially since India was a target of the French. What if Bonaparte had succeeded in driving England from India? The financial loss to Great Britain would have certainly been enormous[151]--but there is more significance in the fact that India's central geographic position commanded the sea routes of both the Far East and the Near East. With France predominant in the Indian sub-continent, the decline of British influence in

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149. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 86.

150. Ibid., p. 81. It was not decided among the European powers to close the Straits to all foreign warships so long as Turkey was at peace until 1841. Ibid., p. 123.

151. It should be noted, however, that the importance of England's trade with the East declined to the extent that the East India Company lost its monopoly in India in 1813, and its China concession in 1833. Anthony Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, p. 38.

the Persian Gulf area and Africa, not to mention other regions in the south and east, would surely have followed. Without India, England's sea empire in the East would have fallen like a house of cards. As the nineteenth century progressed the British embarked on a policy of making their acquisitions in the Eastern seas independent of India. This policy had two objectives: (1) to provide additional bases for operations at sea; and (2), to ring India and its approaches with a British-controlled buffer zone.

Euphrates or Suez?

In 1815, with the Congress of Vienna, the end of an era was marked. Another began, in which Great Britain was supreme at sea, her trade routes well secured by a network of bases vital tothe "imperial communications." Many colonial possessions of her former enemies had either been taken or neutralized, including Mauritius which had been seized from the French in 1810;[152] Capetown, which had been retaken from the Dutch in 1806;[153] and Ceylon, which the British had retained. All in all, it was an auspicious time for the introduction of a new concept of Commerce.

> Britain . . . had engaged all rivals in turn--Portugal, Spain, Holland, France--and she had beaten them all. By 1815 she was established as <u>the</u> trading country, owning more overseas raw material than her competitors; by far the largest share of the carrying trade, both of her own goods and of other peoples', to transport; because her Industrial Revolution was far in advance of theirs many more--and much cheaper--finished goods to sell; and, to crown all, a far larger fighting navy to protect it all, with unchallenged command of all seas and oceans.[154]

There was little doubt, too, that as long as her monopolistic outlook on trade continued it was in the nature of things that this monopoly would be challenged time and time again.

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152. "The surrender of Mauritius, in December 1810, to a naval and military force dispatched from India under General Abercromby, brought the vexatious activities of the French in the Eastern seas to an end." Wilson, <u>The Persian Gulf</u>, p. 191.

153. Carrington, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 246.

154. Lewis, <u>op. cit.</u>, p. 190.

Therefore, Adam Smith's theories[155] of "free trade" found increasing acceptance, especially when merchants began to realize that the expansion of their markets depended to a great extent on the expansion of markets in other countries. The idea that there was a "fixed" or "limited" amount of trade, and that one nation could not obtain more except at the expense of another, was soon shown to be fallacious. In London, the "Act of the British Parliament Dissolving the Levant Company, 1825,"[156] was passed as one of the first steps in ending the system of monopolies. England could afford to make the change—having virtually everything to gain and nothing to lose—and so began the Pax Britannica.

The mission of the British navy was altered. "The Navy . . . is always an instrument of national policy. Therefore a major change in the Navy's role must reflect a major alteration in the Nation's policy. It was so in the early 1800's."[157] The Royal Navy now had the task of safeguarding the sea routes not only for Britain's merchant ships, but for the shipping of all other countries as well.[158] Finally, it was

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155. Adam Smith (1723-1790) was a Scottish economist, author of An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations (1776), who proposed among other things the principle of laissez faire. Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. 20, pp. 826-828.

156. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 92.

157. Lewis, op. cit., p. 189.

158. England "made the great change in national policy from Mercantilism to Free Trade, changing thereby her whole conception of what the seas were for; from 'Seas which are ours' —the 'Mare Nostrum' idea—to the 'Freedom of the Sea', with its inevitable corollary, the 'Safety of the Seas'. 'All seas freely open for all', became her watchword." Ibid., p. 190.

thought that this generous dictum would reduce the hostility directed toward England and make possible a curtailment in the Royal Navy. The peacetime problem thus created for naval establishments was the chronic one: an expanded mission and a reduced force.

This is not to say, however, that British interests did not continue to be of primary concern. Mohammed Ali Pasha, the ambitious governor of Egypt who became ruler after the French withdrawal in 1802,[159] experienced on at least three occasions the limits which Britain placed on his plans for conquest eastward.[160] The first instance was in 1819, just a year after Mohammed Ali's son, Ibrahim, had captured and destroyed the Wahhabi capital, Dar'iyah.[161] The British had tried unsuccessfully for a number of years to put down the piracy of the Jawasmi who had been conquered by the Wahhabis.[162] In 1819 an expedition was sent from India to rendezvous at the island of Qishm with the forces of the Imam of Muscat.[163] Ras al-Khaima was besieged and captured within six days; the fleet then attacked as many remaining pirate harbors as could be found

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159. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 172.

160. Among others, "Mohamed Ali's military operations affected three regions in which the British were interested, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf, and Abyssinia, and that from these campaigns date the British suspicion and hostility which eventually brought the greater plans of the Pasha to ruin." H.L. Hoskins, "Some Recent Works on Mohamed Ali and Modern Egypt," Journal of Modern History, Vol. IV, #1, p. 97.

161. Brockelmann, op. cit., pp. 356-357.

162. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 208.

163. Ibid.,p. 207.

along the coast.[164] Although the Egyptians were also fighting the Wahhabis, the British, in supporting the Imam of Muscat indicated their candidate for authority in the area. The next step was the conclusion of a "General Treaty of Peace" in 1820, which the principal sheikhs of the "Pirate Coast" were prevailed upon to sign.[165] The agreement was also signed—at their own request—by the "non-piratical" rulers of Bahrain and Abu Dhabi. In this treaty all signatories agreed not to disturb the European vessels, although they (the signatories) were free to war among themselves—and it was enforced by the establishment of a British naval base on the island of Qishm.[166] "In theory it secured for Britain only a right to act against piracy. In practice, Great Britain applied it arbitrarily to all political relations of the area, establishing herself thereby in a far more strategic political position than she had previously enjoyed."[167] If Mohammed Ali had cherished any pretensions concerning the peninsular coast of the Persian Gulf, he was effectively relieved of them by England.

In his conquest of the Arabian Peninsula, the Egyptian ruler did not ignore the possibilities inherent in a control of the Red Sea coasts. Once the eastern shore was secured, between 1812 and 1818,

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164. Ibid.

165. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 208.

166. It was, however, "soon abandoned owing to its intolerable climate and the lack of local supplies." Ibid., p. 212.

167. Adamiyat, op. cit., p. 80.

arrangements were made for an expedition into the Sudan and Abyssinia. In 1818 Mohammed Ali "was named by the Sublime Porte as wali of Abyssinia," and two years later he embarked "on the campaign which resulted in the annexation of the kingdom of Sennaar."[168] Not until many years later did England eventually come around to replacing Egypt as the major power in the Red Sea. At this time, however, the Red Sea littoral had little attraction in the British scheme of imperial strategy--except to prevent its use by other Europeans--and the East India Company was engaged in but little trade with the region.[169]

England was best able to cope with the second phase of Mohammed Ali's aggressive policy by the judicious use of diplomatic mediation. The march of the Egyptian army through Syria, again led by Ibrahim, was climaxed by the defeat of an Ottoman army in 1832 in the foothills of the Taurus.[170] His further advance was prevented by Russia, who sent a fleet to the Bosphorus upon the request of the Ottoman Sultan in 1833.[171] Not long before, England had observed the French attempt to make Egypt an instrument of her policy in Algeria. If that effort had become somehow blocked in a cul-de-sac, French control of the southern littoral of the Mediterranean nonetheless threatened, and then Britain was faced with a

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168. David Mathew, Ethiopia: The Study of a Polity, p. 152.

169. Sir Thomas Roe had inaugurated the English coffee trade with Mocha in 1618--but due to the Muslim regard of the Christian infidel, in the Red Sea area particularly, "for over two centuries the old trade route to the orient via Egypt and the Red Sea had been of necessity disused by the merchants of Europe, and the Cape of Good Hope took the place of Cairo and Alexandria as the main channel of communication with India and the far east." Wood, History of the Levant Company, p. 167.

170. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 232.

171. Ibid., p. 234.

> virtual state of war which developed along the Euphrates between the British Euphrates Expedition and Egyptian forces under Ibrahim Pasha after 1834 for the control of that line of communication, a mutual hostility aggravated by Mohamed Ali's conquest of Arabia and temporary occupation of strategic positions on the Persian Gulf and by the Retaliatory seizure of Aden by an Anglo-Indian force.[172]

England and France were able to effect a compromise between the belligerents at Kutahya that same year, which while preserving the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire left Syria in the hands of Egypt, and Russia in temporary control of Constantinople.[173] The Treaty of Unkiar Skelessi in 1833 "marked the zenith of Russian influence at Constantinople. In effect, it placed the Ottoman Empire under the military protectorship of Russia."[174]

Finally, in 1839 England was able to terminate Egyptian expansion to the east. The occasion of a Wahhabi revolt in the Nejd brought an Egyptian army to Qatif and al-Hasa where preparations were made for an invasion of Bahrain. However, "the British Government objected strongly to Mehmet Ali's occupying any part of the Arabian coast of the Persian Gulf, and was especially against his supposed designs on Bahrein; the Egyptian Khedive withdrew his forces from the Gulf coast, and finally abandoned his plans regarding Bahrein."[175] Simultaneously, the British occupied Aden.[176] In London, Lord Palmerston was working to eject Moham-

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172. Hoskins, "Some Recent Works on Mohamed Ali and Modern Egypt," p. 98.

173. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 235.

174. Ibid., p. 235.

175. F.O. 60/118. Extract of a letter from the Secret Committee to the Governor of Bombay, February 29, 1840. Cited in Adamiyat, op. cit., p. 240.

176. Sanger, The Arabian Peninsula, p. 240.

med Ali from Syria, convinced as he was that any power controlling both Egypt and Syria was jeopardizing imperial communications with India. "On July 1, 1840, Britain concluded with Russia and the two German powers the so-called Quadruple Alliance, with the obligation to defend the integrity of Turkey and in case of need to constrain Muhammad 'Ali by force to relinquish Syria."[177] Accordingly a joint marine force, following up their victory at the Nahr al-Kelb, was successful in combined operations against Acre. Upon its capture the Egyptians were driven from Syria, and Mohammed Ali was compelled to submit to the Ottoman Sultan.[178]

The first half of the nineteenth century also witnessed the active opposition of Great Britain to Russian territorial schemes. The treaty which England negotiated with Persia between 1809 and 1814[179] and the training of Persian soldiers by British missions was a move against Russia as far as Persia was concerned. However,

> the Treaty of Turkumanchai (1828) really inaugurated Anglo-Russian rivalry in the Middle East, and, in conjunction with the Treaty of Adrianople (1829), throughout the East as a whole. Thereafter, Russian encroachment upon both Persia and Turkey increased steadily, down to about the end of the

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177. Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 361. France refused to be a party to the affair because it was not in consonance with her interests in the Levant; and 80 years later, in her mandate over Syria, she actively supported the system of confessionalism to which Ibrahim had made such a significant contribution.

178. Mohammed Ali was, however, later guaranteed the right to a hereditary governorship of Egypt. Ibid., p. 362.

179. See above, pp. 70-71.

> century, while British resistance to the spread of Russian influence to the south-east increased correspondingly. India was at stake, it was thought; and Mesopotamia, as one of the approaches to India, immediately assumed special importance for the British.[180]

The goal which Russia had was the acquisition of a water outlet into the Mediterranean or the Persian Gulf. Northern Russian ports were of limited use—being iced over for the long winter season. In 1833 the Sublime Porte granted Russia the freedom of the Dardanelles, and at the same time closed them to the warships of other powers at all times.[181] This concession represented the greatest Russian advance in their efforts to obtain control of the strategic water passage—and it was largely mullified by the Straits Convention of 1841.[182] It further crystallized Britain's policy on the necessity for maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.[183]

Moreover, Russia's advance towards the Persian Gulf threatened India, and in 1828 Britain indicated that Russia was to be permitted to advance no further. "Britain's vital interest barred the domination of Persia by any nation capable of jeopardizing British hegemony in the Persian Gulf and in India. Russian expansionism posed precisely that threat."[184] It is now recognized that Russia's moves in the direction of India were, insofar as operations beyond the Oxus were concerned, only levers for extracting British concessions for Russian endeavors in Europe and the Far

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180. Saleh, op. cit., p. 148.

181. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 106.

182. Ibid., p. 123.

183. Ibid., pp. 111-112.

184. Abraham Yeselson. United States-Persian Diplomatic Relations, 1883-1921, p. 15.

East. Yet England was at no time able to disregard a major power's "steam roller" advance upon the states ringing India's borders.

Russia was able to bring about a rupture between England and Persia in 1838[185] and again in 1856,[186] when she incited Persia to attack Herat in the neighboring country of Afghanistan. In each case England declared war on Persia, and an expedition was sent from India. Once troops were landed, peace (with Afghanistan intact) quickly followed. "Thus, indirectly, Russia was deprived of an opportunity to infiltrate this buffer territory of India."[187]

Russia was certainly not the only country seeking routes through the Middle East to the markets beyond. She provides but one example of the general European surge through the region, particularly after the inception of England's policy of free trade. It was an era in which merchants sought more rapid means of reaching the distant markets of the East. The American "Clipper Ships" were an innovation which decreased sailing time, and, although the early nineteenth century saw the first application of steam propulsion to water transport, the "Clippers" extended the "Age of Sail" by several decades. England's reaction to the steamship was hostile. "To accept the new principles was tantamount,

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185. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 257.

186. Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 3.

187. Ibid., p. 4. British attempts to control Afghanistan were likewise unsuccessful for a long period. "To secure the buffer-state of Afghanistan against Russian infiltration and domination, he (Governor-General Auckland of India) deposed its ruler, Dost Muhammad, installed a pro-British protege on the throne, and stationed a British force at Kabul to protect him. The Afghans rose in rebellion (1841-1842)." Coupland, op. cit., p. 32.

sooner or later, to putting the whole of the old fleet on the scrap-heap, losing our long lead over neighbours and rivals, and starting the long and costly competition all over again from scratch."[188] Bearing in mind the role of the British navy in policing the world's seas, the question of bases assumed a new importance--for England could not entertain the thought of switching from sail to steam "until those seas were dotted with coaling stations, and fleets of colliers to supply both stations and ships."[189] Thus the relative merits of a specific base came to be weighed against the needs of the new fleet. It was a gradual transition away from assigning importance to regions--as had been the case in the era of sailing vessels. New "bases," as permanent installations, rather than regions, came to possess vital importance.

Although Britain did not wish to see the Mediterranean connected to the Red Sea, and thus to the Indian Ocean, she had long been interested in the possibilities of a secure overland link. "When Napoleon held Egypt the desert route was the only speedy road for dispatches left open between England and India, and a regular courier service was started in 1801 from Basra or Baghdad by Aleppo to the Levantine ports."[190] The advent of

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188. Lewis, op. cit., p. 198.

189. Ibid., p. 202.

190. Great Britain: Admiralty, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 164. "From the time of the Seven Years War with France, the route between Europe and India by way of Aleppo and Basra was much used by the East India Company, and even by the British Government, as a safe and fairly speedy line of communication. . . . The transport of goods between Basra and Baghdad, or vice versa, could be effected at fairly reasonable rates by river boat in Turkish Iraq. Merchandise could be conveniently forwarded between Kuwait or Basra and Aleppo by caravan." Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 264 n 3.

of steam vessels re-emphasized the importance of routes across the Middle East. The early steam vessels, limited in their capabilities, were better suited to river navigation. It became apparent in the 1820's, moreover, that either the Nile or Tigris-Euphrates River system would provide sufficient penetration by water into the land mass to justify transporting goods the remaining distance overland, for eventual transshipment. The East India Company's commercial interest in this matter found support in the British Government, the latter wishing to encourage private capital investment in the area in order to interdict the spread of Russian influence.

> In the thirties of the last century, Parliament was much concerned about the question of steam communications with our most important colonial possession, India. So, in 1834, we find the inevitable Committee, reporting on the question of steam navigation with India, and another Committee, in 1837, dealing with the subject. The chief alternatives were the Cape and Suez routes; but the overland, by way of Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf, was not without its advocates.[191]

The East India Company sent one of its steamships on a trial run to the Red Sea, and "by 1837, arrangements were being made for a monthly service between Bombay and Suez."[192]

Projects for crossing the land separating the Mediterranean from the Red Sea began to appear thick and fast. England's disinterested responses to overtures regarding a Suez Canal had produced alternative plans.

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191. A. J. Sargent, Seaways of the Empire, pp. 46-47. Sargent goes on to say: "The problem was mainly technical: Could a steamer carry enough coal for the voyage across the Indian Ocean; could she, with a speed of some six knots, force her way westward from Bombay against the South-West Monsoon; and how could she be coaled on the voyage by the Cape route?"

192. Ibid.

Mohammed Ali became interested in a canal joining Suez and Cairo in 1831, this plan being in turn replaced by a railway scheme in 1834. Although Britain did not at first encourage this railroad connecting Alexandria and Suez via Cairo,[193] it later became a useful means by which to oppose a French-sponsored Suez Canal. In this connection, it must be emphasized that the policies of England's government and her commercial interests did not always coincide. Upon the settlement of the Egyptian problem in 1841, talk of a canal began once more. "The East India Company favoured a canal, as also the P. and O.S.N. Company [Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company], whose Managing Director, Arthur Anderson, made in 1841 a careful study of the whole question."[194] The increasing size of steamships, however, while enhancing the desirability of a shorter route to the East tended at the same time to dampen its prospects. (A larger ship would, of course, need a larger channel through which to pass--and this meant vastly increased costs, already one of the main drawbacks to the plan).

In the meantime, the route to Mesopotamia was also under study, based on the preliminary exploration report of Francis R. Chesney. As a result of a House of Commons Select Committee recommendation in 1834,[195]

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193. A refusal on the part of the British Government to give financial guarantees was tantamount to discouragement. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 9.

194. Ibid., p. 8. "Two years later Anderson's views were published in pamphlet form and had considerable influence on public opinion." Ibid.

195. Saleh, op. cit., p. 152.

Chesney was commissioned to carry out a survey of the Euphrates River Valley.[196] Although the final report showed steam navigation to be unfeasible, one of Chesney's lieutenants, Henry Blossom Lynch (in partnership with his brothers, Thomas Kerr Lynch and Stephen Finnis Lynch), founded a navigation company based on later explorations of the Tigris River.

> The House made such a promising start, that shortly afterwards, when the India Government intimated its intention of withdrawing the Euphrates and another of its vessels from Mesopotamia, the Messrs. Lynch proposed to buy them and take over their commercial operation. Quite alive to the strategic importance of the proposal, the India Government accepted it; arrangements for the transfer were made; and by the middle of the 1840's Messrs. Lynch were operating the two steamers for commerce.[197]

This company established the foothold against Russian advances which the British Government wanted. Further proposals for a route connecting the Persian Gulf with the Mediterranean were, therefore, looked upon with disinterest from the official point of view.[198]

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196. The Sublime Porte sanctioned the project, and the British Parliament and East India Company granted £20,000 and £5,000, respectively. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 264.

197. Saleh, op. cit., pp. 159-160.

198. Although a Euphrates Valley Railway was enthusiastically supported in 1857 (See Speech of C. Darby Griffith Esq., M.P., on the Subject of the Euphrates Railway and the Suez Canal, on 15th August, 1857), the plan failed due to its vain attempts to secure guarantees from the British Government. Palmerston supported it as a counter-proposal to the Suez Canal. "The project was essentially political, not commercial, and that whilst, for passengers, it was a possible alternative to the canal, it could never have existed along with it." Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 20.

Attention was returned to Egypt in the mid-1840's by an intensifying European demand for speedier passage to the East. In particular, France and Austria were eager for a channel to be cut through the Isthmus of Suez--and Great Britain had to decide on a course of action. Support of the canal, while benefiting England's shipping, would certainly present difficult problems. The canal would geographically separate Egypt from Turkey, and could conceivably lead to the complete dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. Peace in Europe was based on Britain's adherence to a policy of preserving the balance of power, and the strongest pillar of this policy was protection of the Ottomans from territorial losses. The exercise of the predominant British influence at Constantinople served to maintain a semblance of Turkish sovereignty; and the possible loss of Egypt could only bring about a scramble for the remainder of the Ottoman domains.

On the other hand, opposition to a canal project would sustain British supremacy over the water routes to the East, although generating hostility in Europe for a "dog-in-the-manger" attitude. There was never any real question about the stand which the British Government would take on the issue, but merely on the form and degree of opposition. Further, in the event that France should force through a canal, England would have no choice but to repeat the action taken in 1801. Egypt would have to be occupied--a consideration which caused British statesmen to shudder.

In 1845 an Englishman, Thomas Waghorn, inaugurated a mail system overland through Egypt, and succeeded in delivering letters to Bombay

from England in thirty days.[199] This provided a temporary answer to the need of the East India Company for the expeditious transit of messengers and dispatches between England and India. The following year Prosper Enfantin, a Frenchman, created the Société d'Etudes pour le Canal de Suez. This company (composed of Stephenson, an Englishman, and Negrelli, an Austrian, among others)[200] undertook to present to Mohammed Ali a study of the Suez Canal project, with a goal ofobtaining his consent for its inception. Even "Metternich did his utmost to convert Muhammad Ali to the project. The Viceroy, nevertheless, feared that the blending of the waters of the Red Sea with those of either the Nile or of the Mediterranean would swamp the identity of Egypt and eventually make of his country an appendage of European power."[201] The Viceroy rejected, therefore, many such requests for a canal concession.

The British found this subject particularly distasteful during the 1840's, just as the trade with China was beginning to open.[202] The

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199. "Thomas Waghorn, son of a Rochester tradesman and a Hugli pilot, was the pioneer of mail communications via the Red Sea. He associated with the Arabs between Cairo and Suez, lived in their tents, and having gained their confidence established a regular caravan service." Ibid., p. 10 n 2.

200. Wilson, The Suez Canal, pp. 9-10. "How," stated Wilson, "Robert Stephenson came to be associated with an enterprise, the object of which ran counter to all the views that he had expressed both before and after 1846, remains a mystery." Ibid.

201. Pierre Crabites, The Spoliation of Suez, pp. 8-9.

202. Grant and Temperley, op. cit., p. 313.

Pax Britannica meant that the British navy would ensure free passage on the seas, and free access to available markets. A water route through Egypt would place Britain's European competitors decidedly closer to the East, to the disadvantage of her own commercial interests. Great Britain, having the means to oppose the canal began to do so--by withdrawing economic guarantees, discouraging private capital investment, and exerting an impressive diplomatic pressure in Cairo and Constantinople to prevent the granting of a concession for the proposed canal.

The British Government doubtless collectively sighed with relief upon the accession of Abbas Pasha to the Viceroyalty in 1849, after the death of Mohammed Ali and the prospective heir, Ibrahim.[203] It was an unexpected stroke of luck, for Abbas had two characteristics which greatly endeared him to the British--conservatism, and a preference for conservative England over France. In order to end the canal question once and for all, official encouragement was given for "the rival project of a railway across the Isthmus of Suez, construction of which was actually begun in 1851."[204]

European rivalry in the form of sponsoring or protecting religious communities in Syria and Palestine was causing considerable turmoil during this period. The rivalry centered upon a dispute between France and Russia over the custodianship of the Holy Places in Palestine. In reality, of course, this was a mere subterfuge for the goal of a Russian protectorate over Turkey, and a French protectorate over Egypt. The suggestions of

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203. Rifaat, op. cit., p. 91.

204. Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 364. This supplanted the P. and O.S.N. Company's desert route, Carrington, op. cit., p. 465.

Tsar Nicholas in early 1853 (to Sir Hamilton Seymour, British Ambassador to St. Petersburg) regarding the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire were made in vain.[205] That same year Russian troops crossed the Pruth, and the Sublime Porte formally declared war.[206] The policy of Great Britain, as directed by her capable ambassador to Constantinople, entailed firm support for the Ottomans against the Tsar. Russia, by placing herself outside the pale of European harmony, could be eliminated as a threat to the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. Accordingly, an allied force sailed into the Black Sea in 1854 to attack the Russian fortress at Sebastopol, and the Crimean war moved into its most important phase.[207]

Practically unnoticed in an England beset with anxieties over the war, the accession of Said Pasha took place in Egypt following the murder of Abbas in 1854.[208] This change proved to be of immense importance. Its significance lay in Said's earlier acquaintance with a Frenchman by the name of Ferdinand de Lesseps, and in the ramifications of the renewal of their association.

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205. Edward A. Creasy, History of the Ottoman Turks, pp. 534-535.

206. Brockelmann, op. cit., p. 366.

207. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 268. It is interesting to note the advantage which command of the sea gave to the allies: "The principal functions that fell to the allied sea power were those of assuring the safe passage and supply of the army in the Crimea, of preventing the Russian fleet in the Baltic from coming into the North Sea to attack the British coast and coasting trade, and of creating a diversion by a threat of landing in the Baltic which would prevent the despatch of troops from thence to the Crimea." Richmond, op. cit., p. 266.

208. Crabites, op. cit., p. 12.

The Suez Canal Project

In a letter to Monsieur S. W. Ruysseñaers, Consul General of the Netherlands in Egypt, de Lesseps wrote on September 15, 1854:

> '. . . I was busy among masons and carpenters, putting an extra storey on Agnes Sorel's old manor-house, when the postman appeared in the courtyard with Paris mail. The workmen passed my letters and papers from hand to hand. Imagine my astonishment when I read of the death of Abbas-Pasha and the accession to power of that friend of our youth, the intelligent and warmhearted Mohammed Säid! I hurried down, and at once wrote to the new Viceroy to congratulate him. I reminded him that I now have leisure from politics, and that, if he will let me know when he returns from Constantinople, where he will have to go for his investiture, I would use it to pay my respects to him. He answered without delay, and appointed the beginning of November for our meeting in Alexandria. I want you to be one of the first to know that I shall punctually be there. What good fortune to find ourselves together again on our old ground in Egypt! Before I arrive, not a word to anyone about the project of cutting the Isthmus.'209

Shortly thereafter de Lesseps appeared in Egypt, and was soon firmly established in Sa'id's good graces; and, by virtue of a series of fortunate incidents, the Viceroy of Egypt accepted this remarkable Frenchman's plan for a Suez Canal project.[210] Of the entire phenomenal story of the canal enterprise, de Lesseps' part in it is almost beyond belief. The difficulties with which he single-handedly contended, both of a practical and a political nature, name him as probably the ablest man of his century. (For the purposes of the present study, emphasis will be given to the opposition to the project posed by Great Britain. However,

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209. Charles Beatty, Ferdinand de Lesseps, p. 88.

210. For an account of the particulars, see Wilson, The Suez Canal, pp. 11-12; Beatty, op. cit., pp. 88-100; and Crabites, op. cit., pp. 14-21. It should be mentioned that the work on the Alexandria-Suez railway continued, however, and was completed in 1858. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 11.

his eventual triumph over all obstacles placed before him by the British Government illustrates his unimagineable persistence, and is ample elucidation of his abilities.)

Just as impressive was England's stoic persistence in opposing the canal enterprise. With dogged determination she tried to block the realization of de Lesseps' inspiration to connect two seas by a narrow ditch. The basis of British opposition to the canal rested upon a great number of geopolitical factors--and as the rather complicated story unfolded, many of them became apparent.

On November 30, 1854, Sa'id Pasha signed the "Act of Concession of the Viceroy of Egypt for the Construction and the Exploitation of the Maritime Canal of Suez and Appendages between the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea."[211] That part of the Act which served as the basis around which initial British opposition could be marshalled, was in the following codicil:

> To my devoted friend of high birth and exalted rank, Monsieur Ferdinand de Lesseps. The Concession granted to the Company requires ratification by His Sublime Majesty the Sultan. I send you this copy for your personal use. As to the actual work of construction, it should not be begun until the authorization of the Sublime Porte has been received.[212]

Thus it was that the first step taken by de Lesseps, after an expedition to determine the route of the canal, was a trip to Constantinople in order to secure the Sultan's approval. It was there that he encountered strong British opposition to his scheme. The British Ambassador to the Porte, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe, was able to exert his

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211. For the full text of the Act, see ibid., Appendix No. 1, pp. 173-175.

212. Beatty, op. cit., p. 102.

influence and prevent Ottoman ratification. This was done in such a way that neither a negative nor a positive reply was given to de Lesseps' importunities, and discouraged, he returned to Egypt in February, 1855.[213]

The reasoning behind the Anglo-Ottoman rapprochement on the matter was not difficult to understand. Both countries were apprehensive concerning the prospects of an aggressive Egypt.

> There might also be a new Mohammed-Ali whose aspirations would be the more easily achieved through the construction of the Suez Canal. It would physically divide him from the Sultan. It would earn the money needed for his war machine. It would provide a direct incentive to that militant Egyptian independence most likely to call down the Russians. So Lesseps had been wasting his time when he sought to convince Stratford of the canal's advantages. Had they been even greater than Lesseps himself believed, and had Stratford been completely persuaded that the scheme was eminently practical, he must still have opposed it because of strategic realities. To deal with those, Lesseps would have had to discuss not the isthmus but India, not peace but war. For the inevitable focus of British appreciation was that the canal could easily become an unwelcome casus belli.[214]

In this manner the first reason for Britain's position in the affair appeared--her long-stated principle regarding the maintenance of the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

A query was sent through diplomatic channels from England to

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213. Ibid., p. 121. Most likely the British did not press for a negative reply in order to avoid offending France, their ally in the Crimean War.

214. Ibid., pp. 120-121. Moreover, "British statesmen could scarcely forget that the Indian Empire was laid by merchants who gradually acquired trading privileges, lands, the management of revenue, and finally sovereign powers. They had no mind to see the same process repeated in Egypt" by France. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 17.

France asking if de Lesseps had the support of the French Government.[215] Although the reply was negative, Ferdinand secured the private backing of Napoleon III; and so armed, he traveled to London in order to check the pulse of English financial circles.

British men of business, among them Rothschild, were found to be interested, but sceptical. Since it became apparent that firm commitments from them hinged on governmental guarantees, de Lesseps arranged for a private talk with Lord Palmerston, the Prime Minister.[216] In this instance the Frenchman was completely unsuccessful. Palmerston personified the hard core of nineteenth century British statesmen who felt that the interests of Great Britain came first, last, and always, with or without free trade and the Pax Britannica.

> After further sparring, Lord Clarendon, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, summarized in a note to Count Walewski, the French Ambassador, the considered views of the British Government:
>
> (1) The canal project was physically impossible except at a prohibitive cost. If undertaken, it can only be for political objects.
>
> (2) The project would delay if not prevent the Cairo-Suez railway, which was all the British Government required.
>
> (3) The scheme was founded upon an antagonistic policy on the part of France with regard to Egypt; it had survived the policy out of which it arose and should be dropped.[217]

The financial drawbacks of the scheme were thus revealed as a second reason for British opposition.

The progress of the Crimean War made further efforts to alter the political climate useless, so de Lesseps turned his considerable charm

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215. Beatty, op. cit., pp. 122-123; and Crabites, op. cit., p. 41.

216. Ibid., p. 127.

217. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 18.

toward enlisting to his cause a select group of influential Londoners.

> His circle soon included almost everyone of importance in eastern trade, together with a number of Members of Parliament and City personages. He was everywhere accepted socially, and his extraordinary capacity for inspiring confidence was soon turning indifference into friendly interest.[218]

Those who resisted his arguments based their refutations on the financial impracticality of the undertaking. Again, de Lesseps came forward with an answer--he offered to place before them the facts and figures of the canal survey which he had had made under the scrutiny of an international commission. The members of this commission would be those engineers nominated by each designated Government.[219] Only England among the countries concerned refused to cooperate, so de Lesseps himself invited three Englishmen of high professional standing to participate (Rendel, Maclean, and Manley). By commissioning this survey, the wily Frenchman effectively smothered all further criticism of his project, pending the publication of its final report in early 1857. Although there was risk involved--should the final evacuation be heavily qualified--as it turned out, this maneuver was remarkably astute.

> The report, which was unreservedly favourable to the designs of de Lesseps, concluded with the following pregnant paragraph: 'It is not our province to judge what motives may have retarded the execution of a work of this character. But we believe that all delay is to be deplored when once a well-matured opinion on the subject has been formed. Our subject has been to enlighten, as far as in us lay, the Governments and Nations of the world; with all confidence, we submit to them the final results of our inquiry. May our labour hasten the moment when all impediments other than those in the actual nature of things, shall be removed,

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218. Beatty, op. cit., p. 131.

219. Crabites, op. cit., pp. 46-47.

> and when the artificial Bosphorus as Suez may be thrown open to the navies of all nations.'[220]

With the end of the Crimean War in 1856, and the subsequent neutralization of the Black Sea,[221] the European Public was ready to enthusiastically receive this report on the Suez Canal. As an alternative, Lord Palmerston was supporting the Euphrates Valley railway venture--though unsuccessfully.[222] He thereby indicated a third reason for Britain's opposition in his preference for a route through Mesopotamia. Nevertheless, the will of the trading world at this point added considerable impetus to the Suez Canal plan. From the financial viewpoint there could be no more denigration of the project, and Great Britain lost an effective weapon in her arsenal of obstacles.

The outbreak of the Sepoy Mutiny in India in mid-1857 gave de Lesseps fresh hope of obtaining the consent of the British Government for his enterprise. Instead, permission was secured from Said Pasha for British troops to cross Egypt by way of the partially completed railway.

> With this Lord Palmerston remained obstinately satisfied and continued his personal and official opposition to the canal as though he had no notion of the enormous effort and expense of transferring large numbers of men and vast quantities of supplies from ship to rail and from rail to ship.[223]

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220. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 19.

221. Marriott, The Eastern Question, p. 277.

222. See also: An Old Indian's Letter to the Rt. Hon. Lord Viscount Palmerston, K. G., showing the importance of opening the Suez Canal, the futility of the Euphrates Railway Projects (dated 1857).

223. Beatty, op. cit., pp. 165-166.

Again, Palmerston gave expression to a geopolitical choice between two possible routes--for a part of the expedition was sent to India via the Cape.

By this time, however, "British opposition" was restricted to the group led by Palmerston. Cecil had the following to say about him:

> Physical energy, a breezy way of treating things, an instinctive understanding of the mentality of common men, a cleverness sufficient but not too great for the House of Commons, one of the most skillful hostesses in Europe for his wife and one of the finest houses in Piccadilly for his abode--all these things helped prodigiously to give him a place amongst his contemporaries such as no man, perhaps, after him except Gladston has occupied.[224]

He was also a product of his age, an age in which one of the most important functions of the British Government was the protection of the Empire from European encroachments. His policy must therefore be evaluated in the light of its eighteenth century and early nineteenth century makeup, as in 1857 he stated in reply to a question in the House of Commons concerning the British Government's objection to the canal:

> 'Her Majesty's Government certainly cannot undertake to use their influence with the Sultan to induce him to give permission for the construction of this canal, because for the last fifteen years Her Majesty's Government have used all the influence they possess at Constantinople and in Egypt to prevent that scheme from being carried into execution. It is an undertaking which, I believe, as regards its commercial character, may be deemed to rank among the many bubble schemes that from time to time have been palmed off upon gullible capitalists . . . The obvious political tendency of the undertaking is to render more easy the separation of Egypt from Turkey. It is founded also on remote speculations with regard to easier access to our Indian possessions, which I need not more distinctly show forth because they will be obvious to anybody who pays attention to the subject . . . a scheme

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224. Algernon Cecil, British Foreign Secretaries 1807-1916, p. 138.

which is in every way so adverse to British interests.[225]

It is difficult to believe that at this late stage Palmerston expected to convince anyone by his arguments. This very fact suggests that he was a great deal more concerned with the British interest in India than with the financial difficulties in the canal plan--a fifth reason for British opposition. Palmerston did realize the consequence to England if a channel were dug between the Mediterranean and the Red Seas. The geopolitical factors involved would make it imperative for Great Britain to annex Egypt if she were to hold India. This action, in turn, would most likely lead to a general European conflagration over other parts of the Ottoman Empire. These considerations, unfortunately, could not be prudently used in attacking the project publicly--and the Prime Minister was forced to find ways to counter the growing pressure of British public opinion.

The English and French ambassadors at Constantinople agreed to remain neutral with respect to the request for the Sultan's approval of the concession.[226] This development gave de Lesseps the opportunity to float the shares in his Suez Canal Company late in 1858. Despite his efforts to make it an international undertaking, with the idea of international control upon its completion, England, Austria, Russia, and the United States refused to participate.[227] The people of France gave their vote of confidence in the enterprise by purchasing an overwhelming percentage of the equity reserved for them. In April, 1859, the digging commenced.[228]

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225. Beatty, op. cit., pp. 157-158.
226. Crabites, op. cit., p. 52.
227. Beatty, op. cit., p. 183.
228. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 23.

Thwarted by de Lesseps' refusal to rely on the all-powerful British bankers of Lombard Street, England seized the moment of outbreak of war in Europe to erect a new obstacle to the canal. "On the 29th April Austria invaded Piedmont, and British diplomacy, profiting by France's concentration on the war, intensified diplomatic pressure against Said and against the canal."[229] This pressure took the form of halting the work by obtaining control of the supplies and the transportation. Neither Said nor de Lesseps could offer much resistance because the work in progress was referred to as "preparation"; without Ottoman sanction, in other words, "construction" of the canal could not begin. Moreover, the capitalization was actually about one-quarter short of its goal, and funds were lacking.[230] De Lesseps again appealed to Napoleon III, and received the same conditional support as before; war with England was to be avoided at all costs. Finally, even the faith of the Viceroy of Egypt in de Lesseps began to fade. Indeed, it took the form of open hostility when the British undertook to secure his deposition in Constantinople.[231]

The last British maneuver of 1859 was to stalemate a Turkish proposal aimed at settling the matter of the canal. "Then it was suggested--brilliant procrastination--that the issues should be referred to the Powers for a prior agreement between them."[232] England's counter-

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229. Beatty, op. cit., p. 195.

230. Crabites, op. cit., p. 66.

231. Beatty, op. cit., pp. 197-198.

232. Ibid., p. 202.

suggestion "amounted to a proposal to buy out the French interests and form a new Company based on a new concession, not from the Viceroy but from the Sultan";[233] and the deadlock at Constantinople was resumed. (A diplomatic deadlock, that is to say, for the canal continued to inch forward.)

By 1860 Palmerston was still as stubbornly opposed to the canal as ever. He did not hesitate to attack de Lesseps' character, the legality of the Company, the intelligence of Said, or in fact anything or anybody which might hinder the progress of the work. As a rebuttal to Palmerston's charges of mishandling Company shares, de Lesseps addressed himself to its shareholders in August, 1860:

> '1. Lord Palmerston declared that a certain number of shares booked to the Viceroy's account were transferred without his knowledge or consent. This accusation is completely false . . .
> 2. Lord Palmerston claimed that the work already done shows that it will be impossible to complete the canal without such an expenditure of both time and money that no Company would be able to bear it. The contrary is true . . .
> 3. Lord Palmerston tried to suggest that the loan recently arranged between His Highness and a well-known financier was rendered necessary by his investment in the canal. That is not the case . . .'[234]

The support of France toward the project was becoming more overt, and Great Britain was forced to reevaluate her policy in the light of the current situation. Perhaps the best summary of the views of the British Government may be found in the following letter from Lord Palmerston to Lord John Russell, his Foreign Secretary, on December 8, 1861:

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233. Ibid., p. 205.

234. Ibid., p. 206.

'The proposal of a French, English and Austrian commission to inquire into the practicability of the Suez canal sounds fair and plausible, but it would be a dangerous measure. There are three aspects under which this scheme may be looked at. First, as to the commercial advantage of it; secondly, as to the engineering and the financial practicability of executing it; thirdly, as to the political effect of the canal, if completed. Now we cannot deny that if no objection could be urged against the scheme on the second and third hands, no valid objection could be made to it on the first. Looking at the matter purely with reference to the commerce of Europe, any great work which would shorten considerably the voyage to India would be advantageous to all nations trading by sea to Asia. Even on this ground, however, there is something to be said against the scheme, because it was demonstrated by a Dutch engineer that owing to the difficulties of navigating the Red Sea, in consequence of coral reefs, prevailing winds, and the intense heat, the navigation round the Cape would, except with regard to very powerful steamers, be cheaper and shorter than through the canal.

But the second point hardly admits of a doubt. The Lesseps Company have now been ostensibly at work for nearly ten years at a canal that is to be a hundred feet wide and thirty feet deep from sea to sea, with ports for sea-going vessels on the Mediterranean and Red Sea ends, and yet up to this moment, though a very large part of their nominal capital has been spent, not a single spadeful has been turned up for the construction of the canal. Lesseps has begun what he calls his rigole, a boat canal twelve feet wide and four feet deep, of which one-third, beginning from the north end, has been finished; a second third may be completed next spring or early summer, and the remaining third would be more easily finished by letting the water of the Red Sea into a salt marsh some way to the north of Suez. Lesseps is eager about this, because he thinks that his shares would rise in the market at Paris if he could show that he had actually floated a boat from sea to sea. But he will not tell his shareholders what is nevertheless the fact, that this boat canal or rigole is not to form any part whatever of the ship canal; the ship canal is to be dug in a line parallel with this canal, and the boat canal is only to be used like a railway, for the easier conveyance of workmen, provisions and material as the great work goes on. I understand there is scarcely one among the French engineers employed who would not, if he told the truth, acknowledge that the ship canal could not be made

> without an amount of money and a period of time far exceeding all the calculations hitherto made, and that if completed, it never could be made to pay the interest on the cost incurred. It may be safely said, therefore, that, as a commercial undertaking, it is a bubble scheme which has been taken up on political grounds and in antagonism to English interests and English policy.
>
> Well then, we come to the last point, namely the political objects of the enterprise, and these are hostility to England in every possible modification of the scheme. It requires only a glance at the map of the world to see how great would be the naval and military advantage to France in a war with England to have such a short cut to the Indian seas while we should be obliged to send ships and troops around the Cape. Thouvenal proposes, indeed, that the passage of men of war should be forbidden as at the Dardanelles, but I presume he does not expect us to receive such a proposal without a decently repressed smile. Of course the first week of a war between France and England would see 15 or 20,000 Frenchmen in possession of the canal, to keep it open for them and shut for us. But then, moreover, so strong a military barrier between Syria and Egypt would greatly add to the means of the Pasha for the time being to declare himself independent of Turkey, which would mean his being dependent on France; and lastly, if the canal should ever be made, the French Company is to have a large grant of land in the middle of Egypt and would establish a colony whose complaints against the Egyptian Government, well or ill-founded, would give the French Government pretences for interfering in all the internal affairs of the country.
>
> I would say therefore, on the whole, that it would be best for the French and English Governments to have this scheme as a commercial and engineering question to be settled by the result of experience and the money markets of Europe; and that, as regards the political question, all we ask of the French Government is not to interfere in the matter, but to let all questions between the Sublime Porte and the Pasha be settled according to the mutual rights and reciprocal obligations of those two parties.'[235]

Though Palmerston appears to have been misled in his assessment of de Lesseps, who was politically naive, he was certainly under no delusions as to the political potentialities involved in the undertaking.[236]

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235. **Lettres**, Journal et Documents (iv, 123), cited in Beatty, op. cit., pp. 208-210.

236. See Crabites, op. cit., pp. 110-112, on the French colonization plan in Egypt.

Here, at last, the Prime Minister let fall that fatal phrase: "only a glance at the map of the world." With the French exercising control over Egypt, not only the Suez Canal but Africa itself would have been in jeopardy--and once the eastern coast of Africa was in unfriendly hands, England's position in the East would have been greatly weakened. Talleyrand's statement:--

> 'Opening up the Suez route will react on England in the same fatal way that the discovery of the Cape of Good Hope ruined Genoa and Venice in the sixteenth century. If France is in possession of the Suez route, it matters little into whose hands the Cape of Good Hope may fall.'237--

was carried one step further by Lamartine once the Canal was opened:

> 'England', said Lamartine, 'would fight to her last ship before she would allow a French Power to close the Suez Canal directly or indirectly against her . . . The whole of mankind is interested in this Eastern Question . . . It is essential that the Mediterranean, this great lake which is neither French nor European but international, should once more become the theatre and the vehicle of an incalculable volume of commerce and ideas. Finally in the background stand the immense empires of India and China, which will be brought five months nearer Europe as a result of the Suez route and the discovery of steam. They will renew their contacts with us through Asia Minor and Africa, and so we will help to weld the whole universe into one great unit, politically, industrially, and religiously.'238

England's command over Eastern seas by dint of her Indian naval bases would have been offset by the presence of a rival naval power strongly entrenched in the African continent. The British redoubled their efforts to halt the canal's progress.

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237. Andre Siegfried, Suez and Panama, p. 54.

238. Ibid., p. 60.

The last major threat to the Suez Canal arose upon the death of Said in 1863, and the succession of Ismail Pasha. Ferdinand de Lesseps found that unless the new ruler of Egypt reinstated the canal concession, the project had come to an end. Ismail, however, had no great objection to the canal, and accordingly signed two documents--one reaffirming the basic concession, and the other accepting those shares to which Said had subscribed.[239]

Great Britain reacted by attacking the legality of the Suez Canal Company in French courts,[240] and by attempting to liquidate it through financial strategem.[241] British pressure at the Sublime Porte, however, accounted for the only success which Great Britain was able to score. The Sultan was compelled to take issue with Ismail on three points: the corvée (Egyptian forced labor), the land grants, and the exclusive rights to the fresh water of the Sweetwater Canal. The result, as laid down by an arbitration commission appointed by Emperor Napoleon, was Ismail's repudiation of all three items in the concession--with, of course, appropriate indemnification. The retrocession of the land grants

> was unquestionably on political grounds a wise step. It prevented the Company from acquiring too great political power or local influence in the immediate vicinity of the waterway: it met the principal, if not the only, legitimate objection of the British Government which might well have seized the occasion to reverse its attitude of hostility and to accept, gracefully, the fait accompli, but continued on the contrary a policy of obstruction at Constantinople.[242]

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239. Beatty, op. cit., p. 227.

240. Ibid., p. 231.

241. Ibid., p. 228.

242. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 27.

It was also of considerable geopolitical significance, for with the establishment of a French colony in Egypt from which to radiate influence England would have been hard pressed to retain her predominance in the East. Yet, despite more favorable terms, the Sultan's ratification was prevented by a vehement British protest[243] which in turn offended Napoleon. France and England teetered on the brink of war.

An impasse at Constantinople shifted the scene to Cairo, and the pressure to Ismail. The Egyptian ruler ignored the struggle as best as he could for several months, giving aroused feelings a chance to subside. Then, "quietly, . . . Egypt made the first payment due under the arbitration award; and so sealed the bargain with France."[244] De Lesseps had won at last.

The much-coveted firman for the Suez Canal project was given by the Sultan in 1866.[245] Although British opposition to the Suez Canal ended, most assuredly British interest did not. While hostile to the project, England had not hesitated to anticipate the event of its completion. Steps were taken in 1863 to "increase the harbour and docking

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243. Crabites, op. cit., pp. 124-125.

244. Beatty, op. cit., p. 241.

245. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 27. On April 30, as the story goes, "when Napoleon III passed through Marseilles, on his way to Algeria, the Grand Vizier, Fuad Pasha, who was in the South of France undergoing a cure, hurried to the steamship pier to present his respects to the Emperor. Great was Fuad's surprise to observe that His Majesty not only paid no attention to him, but did not even return his bow. The Grand Vizier, greatly humiliated, asked whether the Emperor had any reproach to make of him or his government. The answer was an expressive gesture and the one word 'firman'. The documents arrived by the first available courier." Crabites, op. cit., p. 129.

facilities at Malta, and to extend the fortifications. . . . The Peninsular and Oriental Company, too, had anticipated completion and intended to transfer their shipping to this route at the earliest possible moment. Similar preparations were already in progress at Aden and Bombay."[246]

The effects of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 were even more widespread than Palmerston had visualized. The geopolitical implications in the Middle East alone were to whirl international policies and politics into a frenzy of reexaminations. The intensive efforts which the countries of Europe were to make over the next 45 years to establish "spheres of influence" in the Middle East and Africa, with Egypt as the central object, the first prize, the pivot of the melee, culminated in World War I and the dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire. The broad effects of the opening of the Suez Canal on the Middle East and East Africa may therefore be the nucleus of the final chapter.

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246. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 27.

CHAPTER III

IMPERIALISM AND GEOPOLITICS

Great Britain in the Eastern Mediterranean and Asia Minor

The opening of the Suez Canal introduced a basic change in the maritime geopolitics of the Middle East. Although other factors came to enhance its importance or to decrease it, this canal was at once the principal foundation and common denominator of world geopolitics upon which the nations of Europe could base their various strategies. The restlessness in Europe to a great extent emanated from the precariousness of formulating strategies on so vulnerable a consideration as the Suez Canal. The international ripples from the blow by which Ferdinand de Lesseps sundered the Isthmus of Suez have continued to eddy down to the present time.

The increasingly complicated state of affairs in Europe in the second half of the nineteenth century must be briefly sketched. "Nationalism" and "Imperialism" were the keynotes. In 1871 Italy and Germany entered the field of European rivalries, and the national consciousness of each demanded overseas acquisitions like those of the older members of the European family. The goal was not primarily commerce and markets, but a desire for prestige whipped up by pride in race and culture. The Suez Canal, moreover, placed them in a favorable geographic position from which they could pursue this ambition.

England was not impervious to the spirit of the times.

John Ruskin in his inaugural address to the students of Oxford proclaimed the gospel of British Imperialism:

> 'There is a destiny now possible for us, the highest ever set before a nation to be accepted or refused. We are still undegenerate in race; a race mingled of the best northern blood. We are not yet dissolute in temper, but have still the firmness to govern and the grace to obey . . . Will you youths of England make your country again a royal throne of kings; a sceptred isle, for all the world a source of light, a centre of peace; mistress of learning and of the Arts, faithful guardian of time-tried principles, under temptation from fond experiments and licentious desires; and amidst the cruel and clamorous jealousies of the nations; worshipped in her strange valour, of good-will towards men? . . . This is what England must either do, or perish; she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea: and that, though they live on a distant plot of ground, they are no more to consider themselves therefore disfranchised from their native land than the sailors of her fleet do, because they float on distant seas. . . . If we can get men, for little pay, to cast themselves against cannon-mouth for love of England, we may find men also who will plough and sow for her, who will behave kindly and righteously for her, who will bring up their children to love her, and who will gladden themselves in the brightness of her glory, more than in all the light of tropical skies. . . . You think that an impossible ideal? Be it so; refuse to accept it, if you will; but see that you form your own in its stead. All that I ask of you is to have a fixed purpose of some kind for your country and for yourselves, no matter how restricted, so that it be fixed and unselfish.'[1]

The granting of voting privileges to industrial craftsmen in 1867, and to the farmers in 1885,[2] compelled the British Government to listen more carefully to the desires of the masses. Thus Disraeli's Crystal Palace

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1. Felix Gross, Rhodes of Africa, p. 38.

2. Elton, op. cit., p. 367.

speech of 1872[3] for an aggressive consolidation of the colonial empire received an enthusiastic popular support which succeeding statesmen were obliged to heed. The Prime Minister referred in his speech to a new structure of "Imperial Federation"--and if the plan had ever come to maturity, it would have been categorized under the broad meaning of "Imperialism." "Its protective tariff, its militarist sentiments, its ideology of a unified 'Greater Britain' all foreshadowed vague aggressive trends that would have emerged soon enough if the plan had ever passed from the sphere of the slogan into the realm of actual policy."[4] Disraeli's decision to use "Imperialism" as an election slogan was a forerunner of the later transplantation of European rivalries to Africa and the Far East--areas where aroused national sentiment found room for maneuver without unduly ruffling the surface harmony of continental Europe. Disraeli, in keeping with the new spirit of imperialism, concerned himself after 1874 with the protection and expansion of the British Empire and its imperial communications. His was known as the "Forward" policy.

Once this concept was born various other elements tended to give it impetus. England's industrial prosperity was greatly envied by the rest of Europe, and it set the pattern which Italy and Germany were determined to follow--and territorial expansion for its own sake appeared to be the secret of Britain's success. On the other hand, the growth of philanthropic groups during the period acted as a salve to the conscience of European society. The official abolition of the slave trade in 1807,[5]

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3. William L. Langer, The Diplomacy of Imperialism, p. 70.
4. Joseph A. Schumpeter, Imperialism and Social Classes, p. 13.
5. Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 27.

and slavery in 1833,[6] gave missionaries ample justification for attempting to help stamp out the sources of the traffic in Africa. In this the missionaries and the traders found common cause, for the solution hit upon was to supplant the slave trade with legitimate trade--hence the expression "philanthropy and 5%." The influx of missionaries into Africa after 1876 and the anti-slavery campaign weakened tribal structures. Native rulers were forced to look to Europeans for assistance; and in many cases the breakdown of African society led to expeditions from Europe to restore order and protect European lives and property. In this manner governments became officially committed to safeguarding the interests of their nationals in Africa. Annexation of the troubled areas was not far off.

Technological developments in the nineteenth century greatly simplified the problems connected with territorial possessions overseas. Steam power made an enormous contribution to the mobility of England's merchant and naval shipping. Until after the opening of the Suez Canal, however, steamships were used primarily for river travel and relatively short trips on the open seas. In 1856 Bessemer developed the process for changing iron into steel,[7] which effectively reduced the cost of steamships by giving metal a greater resistance to the corrosive action of salt water--a vital factor with respect to the high salinity of the Indian Ocean. Moreover, steel was also about 15% lighter,[8] and the

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6. Elton, op. cit., p. 276.

7. Marriott, Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth, p. 183.

8. H. Moyse-Bartlett, "From Sail to Steam," p. 10.

availability of iron ore in the British Isles offset somewhat for a time the advantages held by the timber-rich shipwrights in America. The tremendous advances made in the compound engine before 1860[9] gave ships a far greater operating range on a given amount of coal. Improvements made in the surface condenser by 1870[10] relieved vessels of the necessity of either carrying great quantities of fresh water with them, or exposing boilers to the quickly fatal effects of brine. Finally, the innovation of the screw propeller made obsolete the awkward paddle wheels. Steam had won out over sail.[11]

Steam was also adapted to land travel in the railway locomotive. Railways proved to be of vast strategic importance in several ways: (1) by giving easy access to the interior from coastal areas; (2) by encouraging the economic development of backward regions through which the rails passed; and (3), by giving that nation which controlled a railway in a foreign country an advantage over its international rivals in "staking out a claim". Railway concessions usually included timber and mineral rights on either side of the right-of-way. In addition, the railroad gave a greater mobility and flexibility to military operations, particularly in those instances of expeditions originating overseas and

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9. Marriott, Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth, p. 183.

10. Ibid.

11. "Perhaps the chief impetus towards the early establishment of the regular steamer routes lay in the competition to secure the mail contracts, on account of the financial rewards and the constant effort and efficiency needed to ensure fulfilment of the contract terms." Moyse-Bartlett, op. cit., p. 12.

having to pass through inhospitable territory on the way to final objectives. Once there, the railroad had the capability of providing timely resupply and reinforcement.

The invention of the telegraph was of prime geopolitical importance, for it eventually alleviated what was probably one of the principal irritations and inconveniences to Europeans overseas--that of poor communications. After the fact of the Suez Canal, and Britain's new position vis-à-vis her European adversaries and the East, better communications for the Empire became essential. It is, therefore, significant that London was linked by submarine cable with Bombay in 1870;[12] and towards the end of the century the British Empire was joined by a maze of communication networks, called her "all-red route."[13]

New attacks on diseases which had plagued overseas colonies encouraged European emigration to remote quarters of the globe. Around the turn of the century both malaria and sleeping sickness were brought under control.[14] Assaults on the breeding-grounds of the mosquito and

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12. Carrington, op. cit., p. 470. In 1872 South Australia and London were connected by the telegraph. F. H. Hinsley, "International Rivalry in the Colonial Sphere, 1869-1885," Cambridge History of the British Empire, p. 99.

13. Carrington, op. cit., p. 848.

14. Ibid., pp. 839-840. It is maintained that in Africa, various medical reforms of the 1840's reduced European mortality by at least one half. Had the previous rate of mortality continued, there might not have been a "scramble" for Africa. By the mid-nineteenth century, much empirical knowledge about yellow fever had been incorporated in naval regulations. P. D. Curtin, "The White Man's Grave," Journal of British Studies, #1, November, 1961, pp. 94-110.

the tsetse fly reduced the source of these dreaded diseases.[15]

Finally, a spark was needed to set off the explosion of imperialism. It was provided "when, in 1867, a child was found at play with a toy which proved to be a diamond worth £500"[16] in South Africa. This incentive was enough to galvanize the most timid soul with a desire to join the search, and by 1870 the scramble for Africa had begun.[17]

The Eastern Mediterranean and Black Sea

The unrest in Syria fomented against Ibrahim by the European powers did not cease when the Egyptians evacuated the area in 1840. The religious strife previously set in motion by British and French agents against Egypt broke out again in 1841, 1845, and 1860,[18] in these cases between the Christians and the Druzes. The massacre of the Christians in 1860 forced France to step in with troops under the auspices of Britain, Austria, Prussia, Russia, and Turkey, to create order.[19] The Powers

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15. "Chamberlain's railways also helped to repair the ravages of the tsetse, for in the locomotive engine he had at last provided tropical Africa with a beast of burden that was fly proof." Carrington, op. cit.,p. 841.

16. Ibid., p. 622.

17. One of those who left his holdings in Natal to go off to the diamond fields around Kimberley was Cecil Rhodes. The "scramble" was sustained by the discovery of gold on the Witwatersrand in the late '80s, at a time when the expanding world economy was suffering from an acute source of precious metals. Rayne Kruger, Good-bye Dolly Gray, The Story of the Boer War, pp. 19ff.

18. Philip K. Hitti, Lebanon in History, p. 433.

19. The joint decision was to send a composite force of 12,000 men, but France alone sent her share of 7,000. Ibid., p. 439.

were far from loath to intervene--especially England and France. "Both approached the situation from their respective interests in the economic and maritime aspects of the strategic area located astride the principal intercontinental lines of land and sea communication. These were considered life-lines connecting them with their markets and dependencies in East Africa, India, and the Far East."[20] Significantly, France began the construction of various railway lines in Syria, the benefits of which she reaped at the end of the First World War.

These considerations were not, however, limited to England and France. While Russian agitation over Palestine had died down after the Crimean War, the interest of Russia in the Levant remained as keen as ever. In Beirut, which had become the principal seaport during the Egyptian occupation, could be found Europeans of all nationalities engaged primarily in trade or proselytization. The Levant and its coast was largely neutralized by the creation in 1861 of the mutasarrifiyah, an autonomous state under Ottoman and European supervision;[21] and the region was able to enjoy a period of increasing prosperity, with the influx of Western commerce, until the beginning of World War I.

Although the Crimean War diminished the Franco-Russian rivalry over the Holy Places in Palestine, Russian expansionist aims continued to be an obstacle to European cooperation at Constantinople. It is convenient to stop and examine why this was so.

England was able to build her overseas empire, and protect it from those who would take it from her, essentially through sea-power.

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20. Ibid., p. 431.

21. Ibid., p. 441.

Britain was not basically a military power, and was at a tremendous disadvantage when challenged by a country with a strong land force independent of naval might. Russia, though desirous of a warm-water outlet, never developed the strength at sea which would enable her to secure it. (This was demonstrated on several occasions, when her Black Sea fleet was not able to successfuly execute an attack in conjunction with a land invasion--an event which most assuredly would have overwhelmed the Ottomans.)

The reasons were not difficult to find. In the first place, Russia was not able to develop a navy until Ottoman control over the Black Sea began to decline. By that time, however, Russian land forces were gaining such profitable victories that there was no need to control the water. All emphasis was placed on taking Constantinople from the Turks on terra firma. The rise of a general European interest in the fate of the Turks slowed Russia's overland advance, and by the time she got around to building a navy it was found to be locked in the Black Sea--and the British fleet stood guard over Constantinople. Russia had learned not to rely on her navy. The main efforts continued primarily, therefore, on land.

Again, Russia enjoyed but a comparatively limited success, taking into consideration the potential of a country of such vast size, with a large population and extensive natural resources. In Eastern Europe the mutual interest of Austria and Russia in the Balkans had made of it a buffer zone.[22] In Asia, Russia's struggle to reach warm water was blocked

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22. The two countries agreed (Austria's claim being supported by Great Britain) to voluntarily limit their freedom of action in the Balkans in 1838. Spector, op. cit., p. 4. The rivalry was later limited through the diplomatic skill of Bismarck. Grant and Temperley, op. cit., pp. 323-324.

by England in Persia, Afghanistan, and India. Simultaneously, Great Britain was intent on preventing the appearance of a potential naval power which would threaten her supremacy at sea--and ultimately, her overseas possessions. The fact that the threat came from a land power, the element in which England was most vulnerable, compelled the British to limit Russian expansion by creating, as was done in the Balkans, a series of buffer zones. British policy, as it finally emerged, envisioned a strong Turkey to keep Russia from the Mediterranean, and the establishment of solid influence in the Persian Gulf to fence in the Russians from the Indian Ocean. The stand of the British Government, as it crystalized during the era of Palmerston in London and Canning in Constantinople, was: (1) to keep the Russian fleet bottled up in the Black Sea; (2) to protect the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire from Russian encroachment; and (3), to screen Russia from the Persian Gulf and the Indian Ocean by controlling the littorals, with controlled buffer areas inland. In the latter case England's effectiveness rested on the strength of her land forces in the East, and on her ability to marshall them for expeditions involving combined land and sea operations.

Russia resumed her probing tactics, merely changing the direction of her expansion, after having been halted by defeat in the Crimean War.

> After the successful completion of the conquest of the Caucasus in 1859, the Russian army continued its efforts to revive the military prestige of the Tsarist Empire by new victories in Asia and to establish a defensible frontier there. In a rapid succession of victories during the next twenty years the Russians captured the Uzbek city of Tashkent (1865) and made it the capital of the new province of Turkestan, occupied Samarkand (1868), the famous capital of the Empire of Tamerlane, and converted the Khanate of Bokhara into a Russian

> protectorate. England, greatly alarmed at the strides the tsarist forces were taking in the direction of India, proposed the recognition of a series of 'buffer states,' including Afghanistan. Although Russia somewhat tentatively accepted this proposition, the instability of conditions in Central Asia and the absence of a natural frontier led to the occupation of Khiva (1873) and of the Khanate of Kokand (1876), thereby extending Russian frontiers to the mountainous northwest borders of China. Russian forces then proceeded to subjugate the warlike Turkoman tribes in the Trans-Caspian region.[23]

Just how alarmed statesmen in London were is open to some doubt. However, "to those again who looked through Anglo-Indian eyes the advance seemed a serious menace to India, not so much directly--for the idea that the Russians could invade India with adequate, or even inadequate, forces, by such a route at Kashgar and the high Pamirs was really too grotesque for all but monomaniacs--but indirectly by reducing Persia and Afghanistan to the position of vassal or dependent states."[24] The crisis in the 1860's resulted more, perhaps, from the "masterly inactivity" of British statesmen than the desire of Afghanistan for Russian assistance. Requests from the Afghanis had been steadily turned down since 1866,[25] so the latter were forced to come to terms with the Russians. It was plain that the Indian Government was a great deal more worried than Whitehall. Finally, in line with Disraeli's new policy of imperial defense, arrangements were made for a British "resident agent" to be established in Afghanistan in 1876--and "Quetta was occupied as

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23. Spector, op. cit., p. 6.

24. R. W. Seton-Watson, Disraeli, Gladstone, and the Eastern Question, pp. 4-5

25. Hinsley, op. cit., p. 100.

a result in 1877."[26] Doubtless, too, the Queen's adoption of the title of "Empress of India" that same year was, in part, done more to quiet the fears of those who were worried for India than to impress Russia with the British determination to spread their influence over the disputed region.[27] It was not until after the Congress of Berlin that Russia, frustrated in her plan for a puppet Great Bulgaria, began once more to probe further into Afghanistan.

At any rate the time was propitious for Russia to consolidate the gains she had made, and to prepare for another drive toward Constantinople. Again England reacted to this new Middle Eastern crisis. This time Disraeli's new policy (after 1874) came into play. His support of Turkey led the latter to believe that the reforms which had been initiated through European pressure were no longer necessary[28]—but in this matter Russia's prestige was at stake. Russian troops invaded Turkey in 1877[29] after a suitable pretext was found; and a British naval squadron, which had been ordered to Bessika Bay in 1876, sailed a year later into the Sea of Marmara to face the Russians outside of Constantinople.[30] Malta,

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26. Ibid., p. 103.

27. Schumpeter considers that Disraeli's imperialism was largely designed to capture the support of an expanded electorate at a time when Liberals and Tories had exhausted other electoral issues. His position is that ". . . the title of 'Empress of India' was a gesture that serves to demonstrate to the hilt the verbal character of imperialism." Schumpeter, op. cit., p. 170.

28. Hinsley, op. cit., p. 97.

29. Spector, op. cit., p. 7.

30. Grant and Temperley, op. cit., pp. 300-301.

whose harbor and fortifications the British had taken steps to improve in 1863,[31] was the recipient of 7,000 sepoys sent through the Suez Canal from India to reinforce its garrison.[32] The resultant Treaty of San Stefano between Russia and Turkey, however, was not satisfactory to the rest of Europe. England, especially, loudly decried it for it advanced the border of a Greater Bulgaria to the seaboard of the Aegean Sea.[33] In the likely event that Russia was able to spread her hegemony over Bulgaria, she would have the warm water outlet so long desired. Bismarck, therefore, in his role as the "honest broker" convened the Congress of Berlin in 1878.

There are several aspects of this European assemblage which bore importantly on the maritime geopolitics of the Eastern Mediterranean. Salisbury, who became the Foreign Minister that same year, felt that the peace of Europe could best be maintained by partitioning the Ottoman Empire instead of preserving as the focus of European animosities and jealousies.[34] Bismarck, moreover, had proposed in 1876 that England annex Egypt; and the following year the Sublime Porte hinted that it might be

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31. Wilson, The Suez Canal, p. 27.

32. Carrington, op. cit., p. 729.

33. William L. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 139.

34. Elie Kedourie, England and the Middle East, pp. 20-21. This was a revival of the concept contained in the Nesselrode Memorandum of 1844 in which it was suggested that Russia as a land power and England as a sea power should make some provisions for the coming dissolution of the Ottoman Empire. Vernon J. Puryear, "New Light on the Origins of the Crimean War," Journal of Modern History, Vol. III, #2, p. 224.

willing to sell the control of Egypt, Cyprus, and Crete to Great Britain.[35] The British Government, however, feared that Russia in turn would assume control over the Straits--and to some statesmen "'Constantinople is the key of India, and not Egypt and the Suez Canal.'"[36] The Congress of Berlin placed the matter in a new perspective. In the face of strong French opposition a British occupation of Egypt was out of the question; but it now became possible for England to secure a strategically located base in the Eastern Mediterranean on the grounds of protecting the territorial integrity of the Ottoman Empire. The possibilities narrowed down to two: Cyprus or Alexandretta. There was reason to believe that France would be concerned for her interests in the Levant if England should secure Alexandretta, so it was Cyprus that came under the weightier consideration. "'If Cyprus be conceded to Your Majesty by the Porte,' Disraeli wrote to Queen Victoria on May 5, 1878, 'and England, at the same time, enters into a defensive alliance with Turkey, guaranteeing Asiatic Turkey from Russian invasion, the power of England in the Mediterranean will be absolutely increased in that region, and Your Majesty's Indian Empire immensely strengthened. Cyprus is the key of Western Asia.'"[37]

Accordingly, a Colonel Home was ordered to recommend a site for

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35. Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 225.

36. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 100.

37. G. B. Buckle, Life of Benjamin Disraeli (London, 1920), Vol. VI, p. 291. Cited in Andre Raymond, "Salisbury and the Tunisian Question, 1878-1880," St. Anthony's Papers Number 11, p. 113.

a British base in the Eastern Mediterranean. As a result of his study, Colonel Home chose Cyprus because:

1. The population was not sufficiently homogeneous to present local political problems, and included a large number of Christians. (What was an advantage in the nineteenth century became a disadvantage in the twentieth.)

2. Being an island, Cyprus was largely free of the possibility of future territorial claims by other countries.

3. It would enable Britain to extend her influence and protection to the Levant, and would provide a command over the approaches to Alexandretta.

4. Its size permitted the quartering of a large armed force.

5. It either had, or had access to, most of the required supplies.

6. There were few coastal areas suitable for an amphibious attack--hence a small garrison would be required for the island's defense.

7. It was an entrepôt for trade among "the Levantines, the Greeks, and the Turks"--and therefore possessed some commercial potentialities for Great Britain.

8. The island's harbor capacity, though slight, could be made "far superior" to any other in the area.[38]

Lord Derby, on the other hand, was very sceptical of the value of Cyprus--indeed, of the need for another base in the Mediterranean at all. "It was doubtful whether a new naval station was really required,

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38. Summarized from Dwight E. Lee's "A Memorandum Concerning Cyprus," Journal of Modern History, Vol. III, #2, pp. 235-241. Cyprus was especially important in view of the French interest in the port of Alexandretta. H. F. Frischwasser-Ra'anan, Frontiers of a Nation, p. 47.

in addition to Malta; Cyprus was inconveniently situated, it was very unhealthy, it had no harbour, it could never command the Euphrates Valley railway and was a 'hopelessly unremunerative undertaking'; it was too far off to be a means of defence either for Suez or Constantinople and 'after a generation it will be a Greek community, not an English one'."[39] It appears now that both statesmen, Disraeli and Derby, were in part correct. More important to England than the acquisition of Cyprus, as it came to pass, was the territorial guarantee which she gave to the Ottomans in exchange for the island--for it served as the most legitimate excuse for the British invasion of Egypt in 1882.[40]

Another aspect of the Congress of Berlin was highly important

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39. Seton-Watson, op. cit., p. 496.

40. One authority holds that the Cyprus Convention policy of Great Britain did not achieve its purpose because, although it put Britain in a position from which she could apply pressure for reform in Turkey (thereby protecting Turkey from dismemberment), little could be accomplished in that the Convention made it necessary to work through existing Turkish institutions. Italy's anger over the British acquisition of Cyprus was soon replaced by bitterness over the special position Austria obtained in Bosnia and Herzegovina. France was outraged, the Paris press charging that "it was already sufficient for England to control Gibraltar and Malta and perhaps too much that she should direct the destinies of Asia Minor from Cyprus." An attempt was made to placate the French by assurances that Britain would not seek to change the status quo in Egypt and Syria. While Great Britain made no official statements in reply to the French suggestion they be compensated with Tunisia, it is beyond doubt that the French were informally assured that no opposition would be forthcoming in London to a more forward French policy in Tunisia. D. E. Lee, Great Britain and the Cyprus Convention Policy of 1878, pp. 106-110, 164-165.

to England--the question of Greater Bulgaria. The fact that Great Britain was able to push the Bulgarian border back to the Balkan Mountains from the sea[41] attested to her skill at the conference table. The tsarist attempt to win proprietorship over a country with a warm water coast was nullified, and Russia was not to be offered another such opportunity for obtaining the coveted port until the outbreak of the First World War.

A third factor involved the international status of the Straits and the prohibition on the passage of foreign warships through it. Disraeli, pressing for a British occupation of the Dardanelles "in the days of the initial Russian advance, had privately dispatched an officer to blow up the defence guns of the Dardanelles if necessary."[42] When the Cyprus Convention did not reserve to Great Britain the opportunity of using her fleet in the Black Sea, Salisbury "even went so far as to propose to the Porte an agreement under the terms of which the Sultan should not offer forcible opposition to the passage of the English fleet through the Straits if, Russia having acquired Batum, the English government should consider the presence of a naval force in the Black Sea expedient to protect the Turkish territories."[43]

The British did not push this line of reasoning too far lest the Straits should be opened to all--an equally dire alternative. In fact, Turkey was ambiguously given permission as late as 1871 to allow passage

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41. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, p. 149.

42. Ibid., p. 129.

43. Ibid., p. 157.

of foreign warships through the Straits if she requested them for her own protection--the same year, appropriately enough, which saw the Russians unilaterally repudiate that portion of the Treaty of Paris (1856) which forbade them to erect fortifications or construct a fleet in the Black Sea.[44] It was argued, too, that the Russian fleet in the Black Sea was much closer to home port than a British fleet, and thus it was considerably more prudent to keep the Russian ships blockaded within than to obtain the dubious privilege of being able to go in after them. The matter was finally dropped, having never been settled, with everyone feeling that the Straits had remained closed to foreign warships in time of peace.

The Congress of Berlin decisively altered the geopolitical status of the Eastern Mediterranean. No longer was Turkey to act as the buffer between Great Britain and Russia, for it had become apparent that further unilateral dismemberment of the Ottoman Empire on the part of either would result in open war between them.

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44. Hinsley, op. cit., p. 96.

The Growth in Geopolitical Significance of the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea to 1914

The interests of Great Britain in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea were primarily concentrated in the littoral regions. Throughout the nineteenth century and down to the advent of World War I the English were concerned with protecting these interests from Russian, French, and German challenges, while at the same time stabilizing relationships with local Arab, Persian, and Turkish rulers. A shift came about, therefore, from an essentially commercial interest to an emphasis on Britain's political status in the area.

Dealings with the Arabs in the southern portion of the Gulf were regularized. The treaty prohibiting piracy concluded in 1820 between Great Britain and the sheikhs of the Pirate Coast, and joined in by the Sheikh of Bahrain, was followed by several other similar agreements. Finally, in 1853 the sheikhs were prevailed upon to sign the Treaty of Peace in Perpetuity with England.[45] The gradual transition away from a maritime commercial interest was by this date apparent. The main purpose for the agreements of 1820 through 1853 was the protection of British shipping from Arab pirates. The India Office, however reluctantly, found itself obliged to support the sheikhdoms against Wahhabi and Persian designs. Moreover, the secondary purpose of these treaties was the suppression of the slave trade, for which the British were bound to afford the signatories some sort of protection in return. (As has been pointed out, the disruption of the slave trade seriously affected the structure of society, with the result that those rulers collaborating

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45. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 209.

with the foreigners became unpopular and consequently politically weak.)

While the British Government in India was willing to lend naval support to the "Trucial Sheikhs" (as they might properly be called after 1835),[46] protracted operations ashore were firmly opposed. For this reason the British began to concern themselves more intimately with the affairs of the Trucial States' maritime neighbors, Muscat and Bahrain. In the case of Muscat, Great Britain and France agreed in 1862 to respect "the independence of the sultanates of Muscat and Zanzibar."[47] This led, however, to British intervention inland at Qatif and Buraimi in 1864 to protect Oman from Wahhabi intrusions.[48] As British influence became stronger in Muscat, France was only able to keep Britain from declaring a protectorate over the sultanate by their joint declaration of 1862, and as the result of diplomatic leverage gained after the British occupation of Egypt in 1882. England did, however, negotiate an agreement in 1891 with Muscat "whereby the Sultan bound 'himself, his heirs and successors, never to cede, to sell, to mortgage, or otherwise give for occupation, save to the British Government, the dominions of Muscat and Oman or any of their dependencies.'"[49]

The French reaction and subsequent British maneuvers offered an illustration of the geopolitical value assigned to Muscat by the two

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46. J. B. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," St. Anthony's Papers Number 4, p. 122.

47. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 235.

48. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," p. 128.

49. Aitchison, lxvi. Cited in Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 237.

countries. In 1893 a French subject tried to get a coal depot concession from the Sultan; and the following year France appointed a Vice-Consular Agent to Muscat.[50] The English retaliated by offers to the Sultan of financial help, naval assistance in recovering Dhofar, and weapons for his defense.[51] The appearance of a French warship seeking a concession for a coaling station exacted a British ultimatum, backed by an impressive British naval demonstration, that the Sultan adhere to the agreement of 1891.[52] At last "the question was settled in 1900 by French acceptance of the British offer of half of the site already occupied by British coal-sheds in the Makalla Cove near by."[53] The Anglo-French contretemps in the Gulf might be considered as one more ramification of the "era of ill-feeling" which began with the British occupation of Egypt and ended only with the Entente of 1904.

Bahrain posed a different problem to British interests. England, through her hostility to Egyptian expansion in the Persian Gulf in 1839,[54] and her consequent strategic interest in Bahrain, was responsible for strong restatements of Persian claims to the islands. Great Britain was compelled in 1842 to provide for measures regarding suspected Persian aspirations to re-establish authority over Bahrain. "'In the event, however, of the Persian Government sending out any force of armed vessels,

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50. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, pp. 238-239.

51. Ibid.

52. Ibid., p. 240.

53. Ibid.

54. See above, p. 78.

carrying armed men, such vessels should be watched, and any actual attempt to possess themselves of territory belonging to Arab Chiefs in friendly alliance with the British Government, should first be remonstrated against, and then if persisted in resisted.'"[55] The conflict was then taken up on the diplomatic level, while Persia tried unsuccessfully to buy warships first in 1850--oddly enough--from the British,[56] and four years later from the United States.[57]

In 1859 Sheikh Mohammed of Bahrain asked both Persia and the Sublime Porte for their protection[58]--and the following year he declared his allegiance to Persia.[59] Fourteen months later, in 1871, Great Britain was able to announce the conclusion of a treaty with Sheikh Mohammed in which he was recognized as an independent ruler.[60] In effect, the British secured control of this strategic island without arousing the active hostility of Europe or the Ottomans, nor providing Persia with a satisfactory excuse for an invasion.

Moreover, in the case of Bahrain the India Government was not

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55. F.O. 248/116. Secretary to the Government of India, to the Chief Secretary of the Government of Bombay, August 13, 1842. Cited in Fereydoun Adamiyat, Bahrain Islands, p. 127.

56. Adamiyat, op. cit., p. 146.

57. Ibid., p. 152.

58. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," p. 126.

59. Adamiyat, op. cit., pp. 156-157.

60. Ibid., p. 163.

troubled with the need for land military operations, as the islands were quite defensible by naval forces alone. For example, in 1868 Sheikh Mohammed requested military support from Persia in order to suppress internal rivalries.

> Before his request could be considered by the Persians, Colonel Pelly, now the Resident in the area, appeared before Bahrain with the British navy and blockaded the island. The Sheikh's correspondence with Persia was intercepted, cannons were fired over the fort from which the Persian flag was flying, several of the Bahreini vessels were burnt and Sheikh Mohammed was dismissed by force from the rulership of Bahrein, after a penalty of ten thousand tomans was exacted from him.[61]

Over the following twenty years Great Britain was able to tighten her hold over Bahrain by a series of such acts, and by bringing the islands into a similar status such as that of the Trucial States. In 1880 the Sheikh agreed to permit England to handle his diplomatic relations with foreign powers, to refuse foreign diplomatic representation on the island other than British, and to allow only Britain the privilege of establishing a coal depot.[62] Finally, in 1892 Anglo-Bahraini relations were amplified to agree with those between England and Muscat and the Trucial States as outlined in the agreements of 1891 and 1892, respectively, to wit: "'Not to cede, sell, mortgage or otherwise give for occupation any part of his territory save to the British Government'."[63]

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61. Ibid., pp. 165-166.

62. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," p. 134.

63. Aitchison, xxxiv. Cited in Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 247. It should be noted, however, that the Sheikh of Muscat retained control of his foreign affairs. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," pp. 134-135.

Similarly Qatar (nominally under Bahrain's authority), a target of Saudi expansionism, was enveloped by the Trucial system in 1863.[64] A long-awaited major Arab assault into the peninsula occurred in 1895, and when it overflowed onto the coast, with preparations for an invasion of Bahrain, the British navy was able to turn it back.[65]

Turkish efforts, as actively directed from Baghdad by Midhat Pasha (1869-1872),[66] had not gone unnoticed by England. The Ottomans, aware of growing English power in the Gulf, occupied Hasa in 1871[67] with the view of extending their sway throughout the western Gulf littoral. They were forestalled by the presence of British naval units in the adjacent waters, and consequently turned their efforts toward consolidating control of the interior and maintaining their position at Kuwait. Towards the end of the century, therefore, a modus vivendi had been arranged between Great Britain and Turkey on the one hand, and Great Britain and the Saudi Arabs on the other. (This was not, however, the case between the Arabs and the Turks).

Ottoman rule in Kuwait was disputed upon the accession of Sheikh Mubarak in 1896, when he applied to the British for protection. Although it was at first refused, dawning English consciousness of geopolitics soon caused a reconsideration of the request. "The strategical and

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64. Ibid., p. 131.

65. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 247.

66. Great Britain: Admiralty, Iraq and the Persian Gulf, p. 265.

67. Ibid., p. 269.

commercial advantages of its situation, its proximity to the Tigris-Euphrates corridor, and its intimate connexion with the Central Arabian Kingdom of Ibn Saud, to which region it afforded easy access, have all combined to render the Kuwait shaikhdom of special importance."[68] Otherwise, its main advantage was a good, sheltered harbor--and its principal drawback was the absence of fresh water.

Two events precipitated England into supporting the Sheikh's independence from the Ottoman Empire. The first, and most important in the light of Gulf politics, was a request in 1897 from Count Kapnist, a Russian, to the Sublime Porte. The application involved the need for a concession in Kuwait to erect a terminal for a proposed railway from the Mediterranean to the Persian Gulf.[69] If the request had been carried to a successful conclusion, the site undoubtedly would have developed into an important Russian port and coaling station--thus establishing a foothold in warm water from which Russia could surmount the obstacles to her expansion which Great Britain had over the years placed in her way.

The second event was Germany's receipt of an Ottoman concession for a railway from Constantinople across Anatolia and Mesopotamia to the Gulf. Ottoman-German friendship may be said to have begun with the arrival of Von der Goltz and his military mission in the Turkish capital in 1883.[70] Further, since German engineers had built the first section of the Anatolian Railway in 1875 it was only natural that Turkey should

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68. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 249.

69. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," p. 135.

70. Edward M. Earle, Turkey, the Great Powers, and the Baghdad Railway, pp. 176-178.

grant permission for a German firm to extend the line in 1888.[71] Finally, after Kaiser Wilhelm II's second visit to Turkey in 1898, the Germans were able to obtain a concession from the Sultan to continue the railway to the head of the Persian Gulf. Like Count Kapnist, however, Germany needed Kuwait as a terminus.

In addition to the German competition thus implicit in Mesopotamia, there was--in the British view--the possibility that the Germans might want to add one last "B" to their Berlin-Baghdad-Basra line--that is, Bombay. Accordingly, in early 1899 Great Britain entered into an agreement with Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait "by which the Sheikh engaged not only not to alienate any portion of his territory to any individual or government without the previous consent of the British Government but also not to receive the agents of any other governments without prior British sanction."[72] It was fitting that this agreement should be patterned after that concluded between Britain and the Ruler of Muscat (in 1891), for the former now had the entire eastern coast of Arabia inextricably bound to her.

Several facts combined to imbue the Shatt al-Arab with prime geopolitical meaning. Basra, Mesopotamia's only port, acted as a terminus both for the Lynch Steamship Company's runs on the Tigris River, and for the operations of other British steamship companies plying between the Indian Ocean and the Persian Gulf in the early 1860's.[73] On the Persian

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71. Edwin A. Pratt, The Rise of Rail-Power in War and Conquest, p. 134.

72. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," p. 136.

73. H. L. Hoskins, British Routes to India, pp. 412-413.

side, Mohammerah fulfilled a similar function. Seventeen years of negotiations between Britain and Persia for the opening of the Karun River to the navigation of all nations were climaxed in 1888, and the Lynch firm soon had a ship in operation on the Karun as a result. With an easier access to the interior of Persia thus provided, the British were able to more effectively counter the spread of Russian influence from the north.

The British position on the Shatt al-Arab was anomalous in that Great Britain, in treaty relations with both Turkey and Persia, was called upon to support the claims of each regarding their disputes over the boundary. The Treaty of Erzerum in 1847, concluded following an Anglo-Russian Commission's recommendations on a Turko-Persian border, angered the Turks by ceding Mohammerah to Persia.[74] An attempt at the Congress of Berlin in 1878 to straighten out the boundary problem likewise proved futile.[75]

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74. G. L. Curzon, Persia and the Persian Question, Vol. 2, p. 335.

75. Ibid., p. 569. It is interesting to note, too, that Russia persuaded Persia to concentrate Persian troops at Mohammerah, among other places, during Russia's war with Turkey in 1877. Ibid., p. 620. Traditionally the center of the main stream had served as a delimiting line between the two countries; and since the stream had had a tendency to shift due to the damming of channels by silt deposits, it became impossible for the Ottomans and their neighbors to reach an amicable understanding on relevant areas of jurisdiction. The English, therefore, with a certain amount of "gun-boat diplomacy" stabilized local matters greatly, entering into private agreements with the local rulers. (A British Vice-Consulate, for example, was established in Mohammerah in 1890 and was able to remain on friendly terms with the sheikh, Mizal Khan). Ibid., pp. 575 and 325.

The discovery of oil in Persia in 1908 near the head of the Persian Gulf considerably affected the strategic value of the Shatt al-Arab. D'Arcy's successful venture and the creation of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company in 1909 carried with it two corollaries: security of the company's local operations, and a refinery and outlet for the oil. With the first consideration in mind, "agreements were negotiated between the British Residency in Bushire on one side and the Sheikh of Mohammerah (Khorramshahr today) and the Baktiyari tribe on the other";[76] and as to the second, pipe lines were shortly laid to the refinery under construction at the island of Abadan.[77] By diplomacy, by commercial interests, by the occasional use of force, and by any combination of the three Great Britain was able to retain and strengthen her hold on the vital Shatt al-Arab.

The picture on the east coast of the Persian Gulf and its extension into the Arabian Sea did not vary a great deal from the remaining Gulf coasts. The island of Karak was found to be of considerable use to Great Britain. When Persian troops moved on Herat in 1837, and again in 1856, British units utilized the island as a base for operations inland and along the coast.[78] After Britain evacuated the base for the second time in 1857 Russia became sensitive about subsequent rumors of Persia ceding the island to England.[79] At the same time some British statesmen

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76. Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 78.

77. Ibid.

78. Curzon, op, cit., p. 405. An important consideration was the presence on Karak of an ample source of fresh water.

79. Ibid.

criticized their government's policy in not keeping Bushire after capturing it in 1857.[80]

Bandar Abbas, Qishm, and Hormuz, having been leased by Persia to the Sheikh of Muscat in the eighteenth century, were made available to the British. A British naval base, established on Qishm island in 1822, "served until 1879 as the headquarters of the Indian naval squadron maintained in the Persian Gulf to suppress piracy and the slave trade and, after 1835, to supervise the maritime truce."[81] Despite a good fresh water supply (it traditionally had provided water for Hormuz),[82] the unhealthy climate made permanent domicile impossible for the sepoy contingent garrisoned there.[83] Finally, in 1888, the Shah of Persia placed a garrison of his own at Bandar Abbas when that of the Sultan of Muscat was suddenly expelled.[84]

The history of Jask points up how, in the realm of geopolitics, interest in one area can intensify, diminish, and then return for an altogether different reason. At Jask the English East India Company located its first factory on Persian territory in 1619. It was removed to Bandar Abbas a few years later when that city rose to commercial predominance in the region.[85] Then, after a lapse of more than 200 years

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80. Ibid., pp. 402-403.

81. Hurewitz, op. cit., p. 157.

82. Curzon, op. cit., p. 410.

83. Ibid., p. 412. A coal depot, however, continued to be maintained.

84. Ibid., p. 424.

85. Ibid., pp. 427-428.

(1869) Jask came into great importance once more "as the point of convergence of the land and marine wires of the Indo-European Telegraph Department between India and the Gulf."[86] Between Jask and Fao (at the head of the Gulf) the submarine cable emerged from the water only at Bushire. Fao, like Jask, derived its importance from the telegraph station connecting this underwater line with the overland wires from Baghdad (although it was also being used as a quarantine station).[87] The garrison of sepoys was moved from Qishm to Jask on the Makran coast in 1879. Then, no longer needed in the Gulf, they were returned to India when their withdrawal was requested by the Persians in 1886[88]--but the telegraph station remained.

The geopolitical importance of the Gulf, insofar as telegraphic communications were concerned, was enormous. A link between London and Bombay via a submarine line through the Red Sea had proved unworkable. A cable was finally completed in 1864 from India to Fao, whence it continued overland via Basra to Baghdad.[89] To improve the security of the communications while negotiations were underway with the Porte, the idea of running a wire from Khannikin via Teheran to Bushire was broached.

> It seems, however, to have been felt, while these negotiations were proceeding, and even when they were satisfactorily concluded, that the line thus opened would prove inadequate for its purpose, and might suddenly break down. Between London and Baghdad the gauntlet of

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86. Ibid., pp. 428-429.

87. Ibid., p. 463.

88. Ibid., p. 429.

89. Ibid., p. 608.

> quite a host of nationalities with different languages required to be run; and between Baghdad and Fao the climate of Mesopotamia was reported to be very unhealthy, while from the Arab tribes camping on the banks of the two rivers was expected a troublesome and permanent hostility.[90]

Thus, while persuading the Shah proved no simple task, the first Telegraphic Convention of 1863 paved the way for the desired concession. The following is a list of the telegraph lines laid in the Persian Gulf area before 1914:

(a) A cable from Karachi to Jask, opened in 1868; length 528 miles; stations at Karachi and Jask.
(b) A two-wire land line from Karachi to Jask; opened from Karachi to Gwadar in 1864 and from Gwadar to Jask in 1869; length 700 miles. There are stations at Karachi, Ormara, Pasni, Gwadar, Chahbar, and Jask.
(c) A cable from Jask to Hanjam, opened in 1904; length 136 miles, with stations at Jask and Hanjam. This cable was originally laid in 1869, as part of a direct cable between Jask and Bushire.
(d) A cable from Hanjam to Rishahr (Bushire), opened in 1904; length 380 miles; stations at Hanjam and Rishahr. This originally formed part of the direct cable between Jask and Bushire which was laid in 1869. From the Rishahr office, short local land lines run to the British Residency and the Persian Telegraph Office in Bushire Town, and to the Resident's country house at Sabzabad.
(e) A cable from Jask to Rishahr direct, opened in 1885; length 520 miles; stations at Jask and Rishahr.
(f) A cable from Rishahr to Fao, opened in 1864; length 150 miles; stations at Rishahr and Fao.
(g) A cable and land line from Hanjam to Bandar Abbas, crossing Qishm Island, completed in 1905; length of cable 17 miles, and land line 31 miles.
(h) A cable from Jask to Muscat, opened in 1901; length 220 miles, with stations at Jask and Muscat.[91]

From time to time Russia attempted to gain a footing on the Persian shore.

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90. Ibid., p. 609.

91. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 268.

> In 1887 Russian officers in the service of the Shah visited Isfahan, Shirz, and Bushire, ostensibly on a tour of inspection. A further indication of the strategical importance attached by Russia to the strait giving entrance to the Persian Gulf, was shown by the journey of a Russian engineer officer, by way of Bandar Abbas to Hormuz. He made a survey of the island, and on his departure, after two days, gave it out that the island would be made a Russian coaling station.[92]

Curzon speculated, too, on the probability that General Kuropatkin's scheme for the invasion of India in 1885 was to include "the cession to Russia of the Gulf port of Bunder Abbas";[93] and further, as to "whether the most recent railroad concession pressed for by Russian agents at Teheran did not postulate a maritime outlet at Chahbar, on the coast of Persian Baluchistan."[94]

Russia's southward drive toward warm water was firmly resisted by England. The conflict for concessions and commercial privileges was joined north of the Zagros Mountains. Afghanistan, too, was brought within the ambit of the struggle. Although it is now generally accepted that Russia threatened Afghanistan (and hence India) in order to use it as a bargaining point in larger areas of Anglo-Russian relations, Great Britain prevailed upon Yakub Khan of Afghanistan to accept the Treaty of Gandamak in 1879.[95] Besides binding Afghanistan to England, this treaty also brought eastern Baluchistan and adjacent portions of Afghanistan under the India Government--western Baluchistan going to Persia. "The

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92. Ibid., p. 258.

93. Curzon, op. cit., p. 598.

94. Ibid.

95. Moreland and Chatterjee, op. cit., p. 405.

strategical importance of Baluchistan lies in the fact that one of the two main gates of India, the road through Kandahar and Quetta, passes across its north-eastern portion."[96] At one stroke Britain thus acquired not only a neighbor for India, but the northern Makran coasts of the Arabian Sea as well.

War between Russia and England over the Afghans was narrowly avoided in 1885, and it afterwards appeared as though the momentum of the Russian movement southward had spent itself.

> The Russians . . . found the line of least resistance to lie not towards India but towards China. For an advance depended on railway possibilities, and the deserts of Persia and the mountains of North-west India presented the most formidable barriers known to man behind which lurked the troops of a well-armed Great Power. In comparison the physical difficulties offered to the railway penetration of China were small, while the power of the Celestial Empire was crumbling. So in 1892 the Czar turned his face away from India and towards China, and began to build a Trans-Siberian railway with French money.[97]

This indicated the new direction of Russian expansionism, and paved the way for the Anglo-Russian rapprochement in 1907 regarding spheres of influence in Persia, Afghanistan, and Tibet.[98]

Great Britain and Russia were able to implement their new friendship by presenting a united front in the face of Germany's Baghdad Railway project. Both countries had felt the growing commercial pressure of this new nation struggling to shoulder its way into Asia Minor. In 1906 the Hamburg-American Steamship Line began servicing the Persian Gulf,[99]

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96. Ibid., p. 404.

97. Grant and Temperley, op. cit., p. 316.

98. Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 265-266.

99. Earle, op. cit., pp. 108-109.

and a German Consulate opened in Baghdad two years later in order to look after German interests on the local scene. Russia, possessing no real interest after 1907 in the Persian Gulf, decided to take advantage of the opportunities which the Baghdad Railway would offer to her own similar plans in Persia and withdrew in 1911 from further opposition to the project.[100] In the Potsdam Agreement of that year northern Iraq became a Russian sphere in exchange for her support of the Baghdad Railway.[101]

Bread Britain's stand on the issue was consequently weakened, and in 1912 the Haldane Mission was sent to Berlin in an attempt to salvage some kind of favorable bargain in exchange for the retirement of British obstacles to the project's advancement. "Germany might buy the Belgian Congo, in return for giving a right of way to a Cape-to-Cairo Railway. England would cede Zanzibar and Pemba, in return for a satisfactory control of the section from Baghdad to Basra near the Persian Gulf."[103] Due, however, to Germany's refusal to substantially modify her shipbuilding program (the Navy Laws of 1898 and 1900, which gave substance to the Kaiser's oft-stated intentions to build a strong German navy,[104] had seriously alarmed Britain) this attempt to achieve agreement did not reach a successful conclusion.

It is highly significant that the British agreed in 1914 to

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100. Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 267-268.

101. F. H. Hinsley, "Great Britain and The Powers, 1904-1914," Cambridge History of the British Empire, p. 552.

102. Sidney B. Fay, The Origins of the War, Vol. I, p. 370.

103. Ibid., p. 307.

104. Ibid., p. 234.

allow the Baghdad Railway to progress to Basra.[105] In the first place, care was taken in order that any further progress towards the Persian Gulf would be at the discretion of Great Britain. Additionally, the planned construction and control of the ports of Baghdad and Basra were eliminated from the German railway concession. More important, however, was an agreement concluded three months earlier among the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, the Deutsche Bank, and the Anglo-Saxon (or Anglo-Dutch) Oil Company--and negotiated under the auspices of the German and British Governments.[106] These three companies had been competing for oil concessions in Mesopotamia, and "the British Government, about to become principal owner of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, insisted that this firm should acquire the largest individual share."[107]

One essential factor explains the overall English strategy. In 1913 the British Government, as a result of the establishment during the previous year of the Royal Commission on Oil Supplies, decided to substitute oil for coal as fuel for the Royal Navy. This immediately presented new problems for the Admiralty.

> Apart from the need for a tanker fleet to bring the oil from the Persian Gulf, for huge oil storage facilities in all naval bases at home and abroad, and for the provision of fleet oilers for refuelling at sea, the oil-burning policy meant a radical departure from processes of engineering and economics fundamentally associated with Britain's nineteenth century supremacy in trade and shipping.[108]

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105. For the text of the Anglo-German Draft Convention on the Baghdad Railroad, see Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 281-286.

106. Ibid., pp. 276-278.

107. Ibid.

108. W. C. B. Tunstall, "Imperial Defence, 1897-1914," Cambridge History of the British Empire, p. 600.

Thus when the Germans conceded 50% of the Mesopotamian oil interests to the Anglo-Persian Oil Company,[109] Great Britain felt sufficiently protected to permit reaching an understanding with Germany on the Baghdad Railway.

Despite this transition in the geopolitics of the Persian Gulf, the British position remained virtually unassailable due primarily to two safeguards: the British navy, and the legality of English rights and responsibilities with respect to the littoral areas. It will be useful to sum up the status of Britain in the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Sea just before the outbreak of war in 1914. The concluding statement of Article 12 of the "Bahrein Order in Council" of 1913 best illustrates the British view of their influence in the area, stating: "'Bahrein, Muscat, the Persian Coast and Islands, and all other places on the shores of the Persian Gulf of Oman, Aden, and British India, shall be deemed to be of one group of British possessions.'"[110] Kelly interprets the interrelationship of the two safeguards mentioned above in the following manner:

> Britain's position in the Persian Gulf stands or falls by the trucial system. Without it there can be no real justification for the maintenance of the special relationship in which the British Government stand towards the maritime principalities. None of the restrictive agreements relating to foreign affairs, the slave trade, the arms traffic, oil concessions and so forth could be defended if it had not been for the assumption by the British Government of responsibility for keeping the peace at sea.[111]

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109. Lenczowski, op. cit., p. 78.

110. British and Foreign State Papers, Vol. 106. Cited in Adamiyat, op. cit., p. 190.

111. Kelly, "The British Position in the Persian Gulf," pp. 139-140.

Finally, with Britain's status in the Persian Gulf placed in the broader view and perspective of global interests, Curzon stated:

> 'Our position in the Gulf . . . rests upon the unassailable ground of our trade in the Gulf; upon our services there for the last 100 years; upon the capital sunk; upon the naval position we kept up; upon the political predominance which we maintain; and, most of all, upon the fact that the Gulf is part of the maritime frontier of India, and that in the politics of the Gulf are involved the security, integrity, and peace of India itself. This is no new discovery, but an admitted truism accepted by all parties on both sides in both Houses of Parliament.'[112]

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112. Parliamentary Debates, House of Lords, 5th S., Vol. VII, 1911, p. 587. Cited in Saleh, op. cit., p. 274.

Europe, the Suez Canal, and East Africa

> The nineteenth century saw the establishment of British-Indian control over almost all the strategic points in the Arabian Sea. Since the earliest days of the East Indian Company the Bombay Presidency had been concerned with sea-power along the Persian and Arabian coasts. This expansion reached out, in the 1830's, to meet the expansion of British influence through the disintegrating Turkish dominions; a new factor in what was called the Eastern Question.[113]

In this respect, the British occupation of Aden in 1839 came as no surprise. To the contrary, it was unusual that the annexation of such a strategic position (as defined by Albuquerque some 235 years earlier)[114] was delayed for so long. Circumstances however, at last decreed that the Indian Government should establish control of this harbor. Possession of Aden warned Egypt on the subject of policy for southern Arabia, provided a potential site for a coaling station,[115] and gave the East India Company a base from which to extend commercial feelers into the coast of Africa, opposite.

In 1840 "the Company entered into treaties with two sultans across the Gulf in the Horn of Africa, paying them subsidies and controlling their external relations."[116] The government in London became

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113. Carrington, op. cit., p. 634.

114. See above, p. 36.

115. "In 1829 Aden was leased as a coal depot, but in the following year the steamship Hugh Lindsay could not take in more than thirty tons of coal on account of the lack of local harbour. Socotra was then surveyed and was in fact occupied as a coaling station from Bombay in 1834-5." David Mathew, Ethiopia: The Study of a Polity 1540-1935, p. 162.

116. Carrington, op. cit., p. 817. One of these rulers, the Somali governor of Zeila, agreed to cede an island off the coast to the East India Company for use as a harbor, Norman Bentwich, Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somaliland, p. 7.

interested as well, and in 1848 Palmerston dispatched a consul to Abyssinia.[117] He was stationed at the coastal town of Massawa.[118]

At the same time France was evincing some small regard for the Bab al-Mandeb strait. French commercial ventures on the Arabian coast, however, were fruitless; and they were likewise forestalled on Perim when Great Britain annexed the island to Aden in 1857.[119] On the African coast, opposite Perim, the French did succeed in acquiring Obok in 1862, ostensibly as a refueling point for French shipping bound for the newly obtained possessions in Indo-China.[120] Italy prevented the French from moving northward from Obok when an Italian shipping company purchased (in 1871) a portion of the Assab coast and an offshore island.[121] In turn, Great Britain stymied Italy by occupying Socotra in 1875[122] and so it went, a rather half-hearted struggle among Europeans to discover and assume jurisdiction over those parts of Africa which showed some promise of future value in the way of strategic and commercial importance.

To say that the British Government was anxious to add to its

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117. Mathew, op. cit., p. 181.

118. Bentwich, op. cit., p. 6.

119. Bernard Reilly, Aden and the Yemen, p. 70.

120. Mathew, op. cit., p. 207. This was one of a number of French moves made in ancicipation of the completion of the Suez Canal.

121. Reilly, op. cit., p. 7.

122. Carrington, op. cit., p. 818.

responsibilities overseas before the 1880's would be grossly inaccurate. Pressure for fiscal retrenchment made the Treasury work to divest itself of expenditures for maintaining the colonies. The spread of British influence rested primarily on trade; and only when an area represented an appreciable investment, or possessed obvious strategic value, would Great Britain take steps to protect in the case of the former, or acquire it in the latter instance. Thus it was that East Africa--with an abundance of good harbors, a ready-made base on the island of Zanzibar for the preparation of mainland expeditions, routes to the interior, and a system of lakes and rivers within reach of the coast affording passage from Central Africa to the Mediterranean--ultimately came into prominence in the scheme of Britain's world policy.

The growth of British interests on the eastern coast of Africa was relatively slow, however, emanating initially from Cape Colony in the south. The Great Boer Trek had resulted in a number of Dutch colonists settling in the vicinity of Natal. In 1840 they applied[123] to the English for recognition of the "Republic of Natal." "The application excited alarm not only in Cape Colony, but also, though belatedly, in Downing Street. Independent Boer States west of Drakensburg might be tolerated, but Natal touched the ocean; a Dutch republic established on the coast might establish embarrassing relations with European Powers unfriendly to England."[124] The presence of British colonists in Natal provided the excuse for British troops to occupy Durban in 1842, and a

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123. Eric A. Walker, A History of Southern Africa, p. 211.

124. Marriott, The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth, p. 165.

year later English protection was extended to Natal.[125]

The island of Zanzibar presented a somewhat similar problem though a different solution emerged. Sayyid Sa'id, ruler of Zanzibar and Oman, died in 1856.[126] German merchants, among other Europeans, had arrived in 1847 and peacefully began their trade. In 1859 the Hanseatic League concluded a trading agreement with Majid, the new ruler of Zanzibar.[127] The principal rivalry in the area, however, did not as yet include the Germans. Anglo-French rivalry intensified after the division of these two territories between Sa'id's sons, Thwain (or Thuwaini)--ruler of Oman and supported by the French--and Majid, who inherited both Zanzibar and British interest. Although an attack which Thwain launched from Oman in 1859 against Zanzibar was intercepted by a British naval squadron, French warships arrived at the island to assist Barghash, another rival to Majid's authority in East Africa. However, England was able to concentrate a superior naval force at Zanzibar, and the French withdrew.[128] The end result was a joint declaration made by England and France in 1862 in which it was agreed to recognize the separate identities and independence of Oman and Zanzibar--after which the British were increasingly able to dominate the politics of the latter without formally annexing it.[129] What was to have more far-reaching

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125. Ibid.

126. Kenneth Ingham, A History of East Africa, p. 80. Sa'id showed his appreciation for British help against the Wahhabis by awarding Queen Victoria sovereignty over the Kuria Muria islands in 1854. Wilson, The Persian Gulf, p. 234.

127. Ingham, op. cit., p. 73.

128. Ibid., p. 81.

129. Ibid., pp. 83-84.

effects, however, was the inference drawn from this declaration that Zanzibar's hinterland was to be a "no-man's land" with respect to the powers of Europe.[130]

In 1868 an expedition was sent from India against Emperor Theodore of Abyssinia to secure the release of some British subjects whom Theodore had imprisoned.[131] "The expedition was prepared by the Government of India; the troops were provided by the Bombay Army; and the bill was paid by the British Treasury."[132] It must be stated that the reasoning behind this action remains obscure. A likely explanation, of course, is to be found in Palmerston's belief that a British subject was entitled to the full protection of His Majesty's Government wherever he might be--as in the Don Pacifico case of 1850.[133] But, as in the case of Zanzibar it also exemplified the efforts of British statesmen and merchants to find a strong African ruler whom they could use to further their own interests. At this time Britain was irrevocably committed to the suppression of the slave trade; and the search for a politically favorable situation was doomed to failure. In a sense, Britain's policy was self-defeating. If

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130. F. H. Hinsley, "International Rivalry, 1885-1895," Cambridge History of the British Empire, p. 264.

131. Mathew, op. cit., pp. 195-196. Mathew apparently considers that thoughts about the detrimental effect which this treatment of British subjects might have in Britain's overseas territories might have provided the basic motivation for the occupation.

132. Carrington, op. cit., p. 661.

133. Wood, Nineteenth Century Britain, pp. 169-170.

a powerful ruler did her bidding on the slave traffic, with the collapse of that awful commerce came the diminution of the authority of the ruler who had collaborated with the British. One example of this type of ruler was Sultan Sa'id of Zanzibar. "The Sultan was the patriarch of a chain of self-governing Arab trading communities, not a despot at the head of a centralised administration and a powerful army."[134] When a crisis arose the British were faced with the alternatives of having to defend their protégé, finding a replacement for him, or withdrawing from this political subterfuge altogether.

Egypt in these years was displaying a resurgence of concern for Ethiopia "which developed under a form of quasi-private English tutelage."[135] In 1866 the Khedive Ismail bought Massawa from the Sublime Porte, and in 1870 in the same manner obtained the coastal area between Bulhar and Berbera (later within British Somaliland).[136] Harar was occupied in 1874, and Egyptian garrisons were soon established at all major points. It was just a few months prior to the opening of the Suez Canal that Ismail commissioned Sir Samuel Baker to annex the Upper Nile to Egypt[137] and reassert Egyptian authority in the Sudan. Baker was able to explore 1,600 miles of the White Nile from Khartoum to Central Africa, and he went a long way toward stamping out the slave trade in his territory.[138]

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134. Robinson and Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, p. 44.

135. Mathew, op. cit., p. 208.

136. Ibid.

137. Alan Moorehead, The White Nile, p. 141.

138. Ibid., p. 154.

Upon the expiration of his contract in 1873 he returned to England.

That same year Gordon accepted an appointment to fill the job vacated by Baker as Governor of Equatoria. "The details of the appointment were quickly settled: Gordon was to establish a chain of military stations down the White Nile from Gondokoro to the source of the river in Buganda, to annex Buganda itself and then to launch Baker's steamers upon Lake Albert and Lake Victoria."[139] Finding the route alongside the river impractical, particularly for maintaining a supply line, Gordon decided to attempt to reach Central Africa from Mombasa on the coast. The significance of this decision was momentous, for if successful, Egypt would acquire the entire Nile Valley, not to mention large chunks of Central and East Africa as well. In 1875 four warships with a complement of Egyptian soldiers sailed from Suez, and landings were made at three points on the mainland coast opposite Zanzibar.[140] British interests in Zanzibar, however, prevailed upon their government to intercede on behalf of Majid's successor, Barghash, and oppose the Egyptian invasion. Although Gordon withdrew, the British Government rejected an application by William Mackinnon[141] (agreed to by Barghash) to annex the

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139. Ibid., p. 165.

140. Ibid., p. 174.

141. William Mackinnon arrived in India in 1847 from Glasgow to team up with Robert Mackenzie in a commercial venture. Their subsequent success as merchants suggested a further investment in the shipping end of their business. The partners, significantly, "came from the shores of the Clyde estuary, on which some of the first successful essays in the propulsion of ships by steam-power had been made during the most impressionable years of their lives." In this manner was Mackinnon's career launched. George Blake, B. I. Centenary 1856-1956, pp. 18ff.

mainland opposite Zanzibar.

> Precisely why it failed remains something of a puzzle, but the more general reasons are plain enough. A handful of enthusiasts for imperial expansion in tropical Africa by themselves could no more make an imperialist summer in the late Eighteen seventies than they could in the Eighteen forties and Eighteen fifties. Their fabricated appeals to high national and commercial interests in the east African interior met with little response, for there existed in Britain no deep urges to expand . . . What it amounted to was this: if private enterprise could go it alone, well and good; but government would have no hand in the affair, at least in the pioneering stage.[142]

It is ironical that had England either permitted Egypt to annex Zanzibar's hinterland, or annexed it herself, she would have saved herself unimaginable trouble trying to accomplish just that during subsequent years.

Abruptly in the 1880's the nature of international rivalries changed. Lanquid interest was replaced by an atmosphere charged with nationalistic and imperialistic feeling. Nowhere did the "new imperialism" have more of an impact than in Africa. For the purposes of this study the eastern section, stretching from Zanzibar in the south on northward through Egypt to the Mediterranean Sea, must come under close scrutiny.

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142. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., pp. 48-49. As it turned out, once Mackinnon obtained a charter for the Imperial British East Africa Company (1888), the Company only survived for a few years--thanks to an access of missionary funds and to the gifted efforts of Sir Frederick Lugard. The missionaries supported the I.B.E.A. to gain a "beachhead" in Uganda against the White Fathers of Cardinal Lavigerie. But the tasks confronting the I.B.E.A. were too great, and following the Portal Mission (1893) the Rosebery government took direct responsibility for the area. Vide post.

The financial and political machinations of men like William Mackinnon, who founded the British India Steam Navigation Company in 1862 and started a monthly mail service between Zanzibar and Aden in 1872,[143] were of great geopolitical significance. By 1881 "the tracery of B.I. lines within the Indian Ocean alone was as complex as a cobweb."[144] Still, Great Britain was slow to realize the complete geopolitical implications of the littoral of eastern Africa. Even Disraeli's coup in purchasing Ismail's canal shares in 1875 did not meet with unanimous approval in England. The principal foe was still Russia, and Asia Minor the main line of defense. The friendship of France, which was needed at Constantinople, became somewhat strained because of the possibility that Great Britain would assume a greater role in Egyptian affairs. The British policy was, therefore, to participate with France in guiding events in Egypt--a policy which lasted until England's unilateral occupation of Egypt in 1882.

While Arabi Pasha's revolt in 1881 was not correctly assessed by France or England, great European involvement in Egyptian affairs was inevitable. It was only a matter of time before the inexorable process passed from the stage of verbal threats and subtle applications of pressure to naval demonstrations, and from thence to the landing of European troops, once more, on Egyptian soil. Since France at the last minute withdrew her participation, the concept of the Dual Control was thrown to the winds. Great Britain, by "goint it alone", was reduced to

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143. Ingham, op. cit., p. 86.

144. Blake, op. cit., p. 149.

implementing the terms of the Cyprus Convention by viewing the revolt as an attack on the integrity of the Ottoman Empire.

> Convinced that British supremacy in India and in the Mediterranean was now at stake in Egypt, Hartington reacted as Palmerston might have done. It seemed intolerable to him that the disorderly and unprogressive Egyptians should be permitted any longer to endanger a vital Imperial interest. He was determined that no longer should Britain's weakness in dealing with the French, the Turk and the Egyptian flaw her strength in the world.[145]

Accordingly, an expedition commanded by Sir Garnet Wolseley seized the Suez Canal and routed Arabi Pasha's army.

It is important to emphasize that Great Britain did not intend at that juncture to remain in Egypt. The extent of international investments in Egypt precluded its being controlled by any one country, and Britain's action of 1882 did not give her a free hand in the country. It did, however, reestablish order, and permit Europe to once more acquire a tight rein over the expenditure of Egyptian funds, in order to facilitate the payment of Egypt's international debt.

Once Egypt was under British occupation, geopolitical considerations prevented Britain from withdrawing as had been originally planned. Fundamentally, the problem was this: the safety of the Suez Canal rested upon a stable state of affairs in Egypt, and a healthy Egypt in turn was to a great extent dependent upon those areas to the south which were joined to her by the Nile. With the division of Africa in sight, Great Britain was soon engrossed in securing for Egypt strategic buffer areas like those established in the Persian Gulf area and around India. In the case of Egypt these regions were particularly vital, for they at

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145. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., pp. 106-107.

once represented a potential water route into Africa, the control of the life-giving waters, which indeed supported the statement of Herodotus that Egypt was "the gift of the Nile."

The increasing tension between Great Britain and France over Egypt brought a shift in the balance of power in Europe. In short, the British had to look for new friends. Negotiations between England and Italy in early 1887 centered on Italian support for the British position in Egypt, and Britain's support of Italy against invasion by France, in the light of French and Italian aspirations in North Africa.[146] Almost simultaneously, England tried to legitimatize her position in Egypt by promising Turkey (through the Drummond-Wolff Mission) to withdraw from Egypt within five years if the Sultan would approve the British occupation until then.[147] France and Russia combined to prevent Ottoman ratification, thus compelling England to reach a second Mediterranean Agreement with Italy that same year.

There had arisen in the Sudan, meanwhile, a formidable opponent to Egyptian rule. The self-styled Mahdi, Mohammed Ahmed, had blunted Egypt's southward drive. The massacre of the Hicks expedition, dispatched to the Sudan in 1883,[148] led the British to order the evacuation of the territory. Gordon was selected to accomplish the withdrawal, and in his zeal to perpetuate some sort of order in those centers containing Egyptian garrisons he permitted himself to be cut off from the north. The

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146. Langer, European Alliances and Alignments, pp. 397ff.

147. Hinsley, "International Rivalry, 1885-1895," pp. 258-259.

148. Elton, op. cit., p. 403.

relief expedition was not sent in time, and Gordon died as Khartoum fell in 1885.

Significantly, however, the British retained possession of Suakin on the Red Sea coast. In late 1883 a detachment under General Valentine Baker (Sir Samuel's brother) had been sent to liberate the Egyptian garrison stationed at Suakin from the hostile forces of Osman Digna, one of the Mahdi's lieutenants.[149] Baker, in giving battle to the enemy exceeded his orders, and was barely able to escape with his own life. The incident aroused the British public. "It was bad enough for the Sudan to be in revolt, but it was altogether worse for the Red Sea route to India to be endangered."[150] A brigade was outfitted in India and ordered to reopen the road from Suakin to Berber in the interior.[151] Gordon, at the time, was contemplating withdrawal from Khartoum to Berber.[152] Although Osman Digna's forces were dispersed, and an Egyptian garrison permanently established at Suakin, Gordon, of course, elected to meet his fate in Khartoum. Finally, with the recall of the colonial troops from the Sudanese campaign--made necessary by the Russian occupation of Pendjeh, Afghanistan, in 1885[153]--Wadi Halfa was designated as the southern Egyptian frontier. Here, Britain regrouped the Egyptian troops to repel the Mahdist probes.

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149. Moorehead, op. cit., p. 231.

150. Ibid., p. 232.

151. Carrington, op. cit., p. 739.

152. Moorehead, op. cit., p. 232.

153. This unexpected event, occurring so closely on the heels of Britain's humiliating experience in the Sudan, aroused intense feelings in England.

Great Britain had for decades set the pace for Western Europe's relations with the Sublime Porte. By occupying Egypt she opened the flood-gates for European imperialistic ambitions, to a great extent generated by French bitterness over Egypt, which in turn stimulated--through Bismarck's opportunism--a certain amount of Franco-German collaboration in the colonial field. This brought the wheel full circle, for such circumstances brought Britain--however reluctantly--into the ensuing scramble. Moreover, having made of France such an implacable enemy the British were obliged to seek approval and support in Italy and Germany, both of which were filled with colonial aspirations. The realization of their desires, it must be emphasized, was based upon the Anglo-French enmity over Egypt--and the extent of this enmity determined the extent of the success which Italy and Germany were to achieve in the "African grab." France's goal of attaining naval supremacy in the Mediterranean through the conquests of Mohammed Ali in the Levant had been forestalled by Palmerston--and now her revived dream of controlling the Mediterranean through the establishment of a series of naval bases in North Africa and Syria, flanking the Suez Canal, was again destroyed by Great Britain. Germany and Italy were thus favored with a situation which permitted them to make large territorial gains in Africa.

With the collapse of Egyptian authority, the time to parcel out the Red Sea coasts of Africa had arrived; and to England the eastern coastal areas possessed special significance. Between 1882 and 1888 Italy was permitted to take Eritrea, thus controlling approximately 700 miles of Red Sea coastline (for that area which became known as

Italian Somaliland was included).[154] Apparently England was unaware of Italian designs on Ethiopia, the successful conclusion of which would have encircled both British and French Somaliland on the landward side. In 1884, following negotiations with the Sultan of Tajoura, France annexed a portion of the Somali coast containing Obok and the Bay of Tajoura.[155] This area had gained importance after the British had refused entry to French ships at Aden in 1883 during the Tonkin War.[156] Moreover, in the original treaty of 1862 the French were given the right to establish a port at any other site within the sultanate, it being understood that Obok's ship-tonnage capabilities were severely limited.[157] France decided that the harbor at Obok was inadequate for a naval base, so "in 1888 the French took Jibuti, a nearby town with better prospects, and from Jibuti planned to build a railway across Abyssinia to the Nile."[158]

Britain, herself, got around to announcing the creation of British Somaliland in 1887, along what was strategically the least desirable

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154. Marriott, The Evolution of the British Empire and Commonwealth, pp. 194-195.

155. Charles Lucas, The Partition and Colonization of Africa, p. 89.

156. Parker Thomas Moon, Imperialism and World Politics, p. 141.

157. E. Herstlet, The Map of Africa by Treaty, Vol. II, p. 629.

158. Moon, op. cit., p. 141. Apparently the British chose to overlook the fact that they had been ceded exclusive rights to the area as early as 1840. Herstlet, op. cit., p. 631.

of the Somali coasts.[159] In the process of all this "parcelling-out," however, one point stands out clearly--England was anxious to prevent her rival, France, from acquiring a disproportionately large share of the spoils. Also, if Italy could be satisfied in East Africa, her demands with reference to Tripoli, and her desire for support against the French in Tunisia and Morocco would not be so embarrassing to Great Britain. With these factors uppermost in the minds of British statesmen, Italian aspirations in East Africa were looked upon with favor.

In Zanzibar the situation was somewhat different. Although grateful for Bismarck's support for her position in Egypt, Britain viewed with alarm German schemes for obtaining territory to westward in the hinterland of the coast opposite Zanzibar. As early as 1864 a German explorer, von der Decken, had written after traversing the Juba River:

> 'I am persuaded that in a short time a colony established here would be most successful, and after two or three years would be self-supporting. It would become of special importance after the opening of the Suez Canal. It is unfortunate that we Germans allow such opportunities of acquiring colonies to slip, especially at a time when it would be of importance to the navy.'[160]

The advice was not heeded until 1884, when Karl Peters founded the Society for German Colonization.[161] Peters planned to use the German trading interests already established on Zanzibar to provide a pretext for declaring a protectorate over the island. It would serve as an admirable

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159. British Somaliland, like Aden, came under the jurisdiction of the India Office. Lucas, op. cit., p. 89.

160. J. Scott Keltie, The Partition of Africa, p. 108. Cited in Ingham, op. cit., p. 132.

161. Ingham, op. cit., p. 133.

jumping-off point for further schemes of annexation westward towards the source of the Nile.

At the beginning of the post-1882 period, for strategic reasons Great Britain was willing to buy German support in Egypt by concessions elsewhere in Africa. After about 1885 strategic arguments with respect to empire were linked with commercial arguments, the latter deriving from over-production and the concomitant race for markets.

Britain's interests in East Africa were protected only through the efforts of William Mackinnon and John Kirk, the latter being the Consul-General at Zanzibar. Although the English were able to maintain their predominant position on the island, the nebulous status of the mainland made it the scene of a feverish race for annexations. German traders, as representatives of the government-protected German East Africa Company (founded by Peters in 1882) were in decidedly more advantageous circumstances than the British, who had only the Sultan of Zanzibar to look to for authority. Moreover, "a German squadron sailed into Zanzibar harbour on August 7, 1885, and threatened the Sultan's palace. The Sultan, abandoned by Britain, was forced to recognize all the German claims."[162] The British Government was in a quandary. Madagascar had been sacrificed to France without appreciably appeasing the French Government with respect to the Egyptian question; and Bismarck's support became more vital (and more expensive) as the British withdrawal from Egypt became less and less likely. Yet, England could not relinquish her hold on Zanzibar's coasts to another European power. "'Its annexation by France or Germany, and the seizure of a port would be

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162. Ibid., p. 137.

ruinous to British . . . influence on the East Coast. The proceedings of the French in Madagascar make it all the more necessary to guard our sea route to India.'"[163]

A compromise of sorts was reached. Germany was to be given a free hand in the interior, and a joint commission was appointed to draw up delimiting zones. "Egypt made the east African hinterland expendable and it was expended. On the coast, however, the government still hoped to keep its old supremacy for the safety of the India route."[164] As established by the Anglo German Agreement of 1886, the area south of a line drawn from the mouth of the Umba River on the coast to the eastern shore of Lake Victoria became a German sphere of influence, while the territory north of it was reserved to the British.[165] Though Germany was given the port of Dar as-Salam, certainly England did not come out of the bargain poorly. The latter retained Mombasa, and most important, was not cut off from Lake Victoria. Implied in the Agreement of 1886, however, was England's acceptance of a German protectorate over the sultanate of Witu[166]-- a sign pointing to a German drive into Uganda and Equatoria.

While Whitehall remained largely indifferent to East Africa, Mackinnon managed to put the British on an equal footing with the Germans

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163. Granville, Minute on Kirk to Granville, 23 Nov. 1884, F.O. 84/1679. Cited in Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 190.

164. Ibid., p. 193.

165. Ingham, op. cit., p. 138.

166. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 197.

by securing at last, in 1888,[167] a royal charter for the Imperial British East Africa Company.[168] Great Britain was not interested in taking over Uganda and Equatoria, but she did not want Germany to have them either. It was hoped that the new British company would be able to prevent the Germans from linking their spheres on the east and west coasts of Africa.

In order to understand the official British outlook on the area, it is necessary to return once more to Egypt. The reluctance of Britain to withdraw her control had brought about a serious shift of the balance of power in the Mediterranean. England's position at Constantinople had weakened in the face of active French hostility, with the effect of impairing British opposition to Russia at the Straits. Would India be in greater jeopardy by Britain's resignation to a Russian hegemony in Turkish Asia Minor, or by permitting the Suez Canal to be endangered through a British withdrawal? The convention held among the powers of Europe and the Ottoman Empire in 1888 to establish international control over the Canal did not alleviate the situation, for England interposed the stipulation that this control could take effect only after her retirement from Egypt.[169] Reasonably enough, Great Britain tried to shore up both sites between the years 1885-1890 while deciding upon which was the more practical choice. The fate of the Drummond-Wolff mission of 1887 introduced a disturbing element. It failed to achieve a formula for Egypt

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167. From which date the indifference of the British Government may be said to have ended.

168. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 201.

169. Hurewitz, op. cit., pp. 202-203.

which would be less expensive, diplomatically, for Great Britain; and in failing, it revealed the resurgent authority of France and Russia at Constantinople. This situation could hardly be squared with the demands of Britain's world strategy, and for a time British policy at the Porte, while giving the appearance of being forceful, in fact provided less effective opposition to Russia.

As soon as it became evident that England could not give up Egypt, both for external and internal reasons, an assessment of the country's strengths and weaknesses was in order. The first and most apparent vulnerability, in the light of Great Britain's growing awareness of geopolitics, was Egypt's complete dependence on the Nile River. The obvious step was to initiate procedures whereby it would be reserved along its length to Egypt or to her protector. A reconquest of the Sudan as early as 1889 was financially and militarily out of the question,[170] so the first objective focused on excluding other European powers from control of the river.

> Hitherto Britain had given way to her rivals in both east and west Africa, in order to protect Egypt. Henceforward, she could yield only on the west, for the Nile Valley and its approaches from the east coast were now considered vital to Egypt. The Mediterranean and Indian interest, like a driving wheel in some vast machine, was now engaging the lesser wheels of eastern-central Africa and connecting them one by one to its own workings. At the turn of Salisbury's strategy, these once remote and petty interests in the Sudan, Uganda and the northern hinterlands of Zanzibar were changing into safeguards of Britain's world power.[171]

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170. In addition to the need to give Cromer time to rehabilitate Egypt financially, so she could pay a share of the reconquest of the Sudan, a number of preliminary military operations were needed to pinpoint the enemy's strengths and weaknesses.

171. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 284.

The effect of England's new policy was immediately apparent. Crispi, the Italian Prime Minister, concluded the Treaty of Ucciali in 1889 with Ethiopia through which Italy threatened to control the country of the Blue Nile.[172] "He also laid claim to Kassala which commanded the Atbara tributary of the Nile. With this town as a base the the Italians might edge their way towards Khartoum at the confluence of the White and the Blue Nile. Crispi's vaulting African ambition and the challenge at Kassala goaded Salisbury to make up his mind about the Nile Valley as a whole."[173] Cromer wrote to Salisbury in 1890 that the Italian movement threatened the Suakin-Berber route, the most promising access to the Sudan's interior from the Red Sea.[174] Although the British admitted that the Upper Nile could be finally secured through occupation alone, the way had to be smoothed by appropriate diplomatic tactics.[175]

Accordingly, in 1890 Italy, France, and Germany were warned of England's new policy regarding the Nile Basin.[176] The reaction to this first measure did not give grounds for satisfaction. The task of arresting the momentum of European imperialism was not an easy one. By 1890 Germany was willing to "horse-trade." Salisbury had to choose

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172. Ibid., p. 284.

173. Ibid.

174. Mekki Shibeika, The Independent Sudan, p. 360.

175. It is interesting to note that Great Britain was willing to let Italy expand north (along the Red Sea) from Massawa, but not west from Asmara to Kassala, and therefore concluded an agreement which kept Italy 100 miles away from the Nile.

176. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 287.

between Cecil Rhodes' plan for a Cape-to-Cairo railway and control of the Nile Basin; in order for the Germans to agree to relinquish their northern coastal gains between Witu and Kismayu Rhodesia had to be severed from British territory to the north. According to Salisbury, as he told the House of Lords in 1890,

> there was '. . . a very curious idea . . . that there is some special advantage in having a stretch of territory extending all the way from Cape Town to the sources of the Nile. Now, this stretch of territory north of Lake Tanganyika could only have been a very narrow one. . . . I cannot imagine any trade going in that direction. . . . But if you look beyond the merely commercial considerations to those which are of a strategic character, I can imagine no more uncomfortable position than the possession of a narrow strip of territory in the very heart of Africa three months' distance from the coast, which should be separating the forces of a powerful empire like Germany and . . . another European Power. Without any advantages of position we should have had all the dangers inseparable from its defence.'177

So it was. The anomalous Anglo-German relationship in East Africa which both fostered the rivalry of their respective companies in the interior, and united their naval forces offshore[178] was at last regularized by the definitive Anglo-German Agreement of 1890. The boundaries set in 1886 were extended, a British protectorate was declared over Zanzibar, Pemba,

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177. Hansard, 3rd series, CCCXLVI, Col. 1268. Cited in Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 296. The British were by this time aware of German interest in purchasing the Congo Free State (along with some Portuguese possessions in Africa), which would make the Germans hostile to an "all-red route" behind Tanganyika, severing German communication with the heart of Africa.

178. In a native uprising, which began in Germany's territory of Pangani and lasted from 1888 until 1890, the British navy helped the Germans to blockade the coast. Ingham, op. cit., p. 140.

and Witu, and Germany acquired Heligoland in the North Sea.[179]

This was but Great Britain's debut on the field of imperialism. Once the way was pointed out, the elements she was able to call upon to expedite her progress were impressive. No longer were additions to the British Empire acquired in "a fit of absence of mind." A new kind of science--geopolitics--came to dominate the thinking of British policy-makers. The annexation of Uganda was accomplished in 1894 based upon the efforts and recommendations of Lugard and Portal, and in the following year England took that expanse of land between Uganda and the coast under her protection. In 1896 work was begun on the Tanga Railway,[180] thus providing that adjunct to sea power so vital to the concept of maritime geopolitics--easy access between coast and interior. Germany followed suit in 1907 when construction began on the railroad from Dar as-Salaam to Morogoro, to be joined to Lake Tanganyika in 1914.[181]

Menacing French gestures from West into East Africa caused the British Government to act decisively. The Heligoland Treaty, while keeping the Germans outside the Nile Valley did not prevent the Germans from agreeing to let in the French.[182] Therefore, in 1894 England by

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179. Ibid., p. 148. It might however, be noted that many Germans felt that too high a price had been paid in Africa for Heligoland. While Anglo-German colonial relations were regularized in Africa by 1890, no cordiality ensued. The German colonies had by 1890 acquired a remarkable sentimental value, if nothing else.

180. Ibid., p. 194.

181. Ibid.

182. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 329.

an agreement permitted Leopold of Belgium to extend the boundaries of the Congo State in such a way as to make of it a buffer between the English and the French spheres of influence. Moreover,

> Leopold leased from Britain for his own lifetime a considerable strip of land on the west bank of the Nile and stretching from Lake Albert to beyond Fashoda. With the object of fulfilling at least a part of Rhodes' Cape to Cairo railway dream, Rosebury then obtained from Leopold the lease of a strip of land sixteen miles wide, running from the most northerly port on Lake Tanganyika to the most southerly point on Lake Edward, thus linking Rhodesia with the British sphere in East Africa.[183]

This did not, however, relieve French designs on the Upper Nile. Instead, the pressure which France brought to bear on Leopold forced England to give up the Cape-to-Cairo corridor; and the rest of the treaty virtually fell to pieces. Finally, the Italian defeat at Adowa (1896) which halted Italy's advance into Ethiopia[184] afforded the French an opportunity to execute a pincer movement at Fashoda on the Nile.

Despite Britain's territorial offers to France in West Africa, the Nile problem remained. Moreover, Franco-Russian convolutions had almost entirely shifted the weight of England's concern in the Middle East to Egypt. "Russian support helped the French to threaten Britain on the Nile; French support helped the Russians to threaten Britain at the Straits."[185] To round out the picture, two additional factors gave the British ample justification for reconquering the Sudan and setting

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183. Ingham, op. cit., p. 170. This was the Bahr al-Ghazal.

184. This effectively ended Italy's scheme for joining Eritrea on the Red Sea with Italian Somaliland on the Indian Ocean. Lucas, op. cit., p. 102.

185. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 340.

their seal upon the Nile: Egypt's ability to bear the financial burden, and the breakdown of the power of the Khalifa in the Sudan.

With France and Russia supporting an Ethiopian drive toward Kassala,[186] Italy was obliged to beg England for help—and the latter's response was to order an expedition led by Kitchener into the "Land of the Blacks." Simultaneously, a thrust was planned northward from Uganda, hinging upon the speed with which the railroad from Mombasa into Uganda could be completed; and arrangements were discussed which visualized the landing of Indian troops at Suakin for a move westward. If East Africa was to provide a strategic flank for the imperial route to India and the Far East, then Indian troops could be called in to secure that region!

In the French scheme Captain Marchand was to lead a small expedition across Central Africa (no mean feat!) to Bahr al-Ghazal, and then on to Fashoda on the Nile. This party would rendezvous at Fashoda with another group coming from the Red Sea--a supply line which the French made secure by entering into a treaty in 1895 with Menelek of Abyssinia to exclude the Italians from the Somali port of Zeila.[187] Finally, the French intent was to examine the possibility of further expansion with the assistance of their Abyssinian allies.

Neither the original French nor the British plans were executed, nor were all of the early plans fulfilled. France, counting on her allies in Abyssinia (in conjunction with the Khalifa's forces) to bolster her challenge to England at Fashoda, was thwarted when this support did not

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186. D. W. Brogan, France Under the Republic, p. 320.

187. Robinson and Gallagher, op. cit., p. 344.

materialize. Even the expedition sent from the Red Sea to meet Marchand at the Nile did not make contact.[188] Finally, the political objectives of Marchand's party were, in the face of Kitchener's expedition, defeated. France had hoped to lever the British out of Egypt by dispatching an official representative to plant the French flag in the Nile Valley. Britain not only possessed the power to expel the Frenchmen but appeared willing to go to war in Europe over the issue, and Britain was able to embarrass France by charging her with occupying Egyptian territory--the "crime" of which the English had been continuously reminded for sixteen years. Since Kitchener was nominally acting under the orders of the Egyptian authorities, Captain Marchand, greatly humiliated,[189] was instructed by his government to withdraw.

Likewise, the British course of action was modified. England, acting as the agent of Egypt in the reconquest of the Sudan, canceled the attack from the south.[190] The landing of the Indian troops at Suakin was to be effected only to relieve the local Egyptian garrison

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188. Moorehead, op. cit., p. 341.

189. "Marchand's 3,000-mile march across Africa had been a tour de force. Setting out two years before from Brazzaville with a dozen French officers and something over 100 Senegalese he had made his way past fantastic obstacles in the interior, and had arrived at Fashoda in July 1898, six weeks before the Battle of Omdurman." Moorehead, op. cit., p. 340. The news that his trip had been made in vain crushed the gallant French officer--who was, however, treated with great consideration by Kitchener.

190. The railroad from the coast was completed as far as Nairobi by 1899. Ingham, op. cit., p. 209.

and permit it to join Kitchener's army.[191] England's role, only apparently secondary, became dominant again when the British were forced to underwrite the expenses of the expedition.[192] Before the campaign was finished two brigades of British troops and one regiment of British cavalry had to be thrown into the struggle.[193] All this, however, only served to tighten England's grasp on the Sudan--for once the Nile Valley was won, British participation in its conquest made possible an equal participation in its rule.[194]

The Anglo-Egyptian condominium of 1899, despite its irregularity,[195] in fact placed Britain in a stronger de jure situation in the Sudan than she had ever enjoyed in Egypt. There was one important exception. The port of Suakin, where Egyptian rule had not been allowed to lapse, remained solely under Egypt. It is interesting to note that while Suakin was brought under the jurisdiction of the condominium within six months,[196] Britain still preferred to initiate a shift to Port Sudan, greatly altering Suakin's role. The railroad which Kitchener had had built during

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191. Shibeika, op. cit., p. 406. This was done after Kitchener opened the Berber-Suakin route in 1897. Philip Magnus, Kitchener: Portrait of an Imperialist, p. 106.

192. France and Russia exercised their prerogative and refused to approve the use of Egyptian funds. Brogan, op. cit., p. 321.

193. Winston Spencer Churchill, The River War, Vol. II, pp. 3-4.

194. This put a good face on the matter. Actually, England ruled the Sudan far more completely than she did Egypt.

195. Irregular in the sense that two supposedly-sovereign countries could formally rule the same territory.

196. Herstlet, op. cit., p. 622.

his campaign from Wadi Halfa to Atbara (and which was continued on to Khartoum after its fall)[197] was linked to a line running from the new harbor at Port Sudan in 1905.[198]

Britain and France set forth their spheres of influence in Central Africa and the Sudan by a joint declaration in 1899.[199] "The latter was to be totally excluded from the Nile Valley, but to be left with all her recent acquisitions west of the watershed. The dream of a French barrier across Africa from Atlantic to Red Sea was over. Jibuti and French Somaliland remained as pathetic relics of those dreams."[200] In effect, this agreement laid the foundation for stabilized relations in East Africa between the Great Powers. With England and France no longer at loggerheads, Italy and Germany found it expedient to enter into the new atmosphere of European harmony.

The outline of Italian Somaliland began to take on definite form in 1900, when Italy purchased from Zanzibar the Benadir coast, including the port of Mogadiscio.[201] Italy's temporary relinquishment of her Ethiopian dream forced Britain to treat with Menelek in 1902, in order to secure the river exits of Lake Tana and the Blue Nile Valley.[202] This led, in turn, to a tripartite agreement among England, France, and Italy,

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197. Magnus, op. cit., p. 123.

198. Carrington, op. cit., p. 757.

199. Herstlet, op. cit., p. 796.

200. Brogan, op. cit., p. 325.

201. Carrington, op. cit., p. 818.

202. Mathew, op. cit., p. 240.

generally defining spheres of influence in Ethiopia.[203]

On the other hand, Anglo-German hostility found other outlets. Frustrated in her territorial ambitions in Africa by the impending Anglo-French rapprochement, Germany turned the brunt of her efforts to other dominions of the Ottoman Empire. As has been mentioned above, the Baghdad Railway absorbed a large portion of the German energy directed toward the Middle East. Equally important, Sultan Abdul Hamid's Hejaz Railway was German-inspired. Opened between Damascus and Medina in 1908 and linked to the Baghdad Railway by the French railway system in Syria, this railroad had the strategic connotation of being able to deposit a Prussian soldier entrained at Berlin, at Aqaba on the Red Sea coast[204] without passing through the Seuz Canal.

The implications compelled England to reexamine the value of the Canal with respect to its vulnerability. The response was the revival of Cecil Rhodes' old plan for a railroad from Capetown to Alexandria, in order to provide an alternative to dependence on the Mediterranean-Red Sea water route. The undertaking required, however, a right-of-way through German territory--and the failure of the Haldane Mission in 1912 to obtain it[205] forced England to eventually utilize a system of lake transportation in connection with the railways to complete the "All-Red route." Moreover, the decline of Zanzibar's importance in the scheme of maritime geopolitics was reflected in Haldane's offer to cede the island to Germany during the discussions.

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203. Ibid., p. 241.

204. Once the branch line was built.

205. See above, p.139.

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The broad aspects of Middle Eastern geopolitics, as presented in this study, have dwelt primarily on the effects of Vasco de Gama's discovery in 1498 of the Cape route to India, and of the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869. Within this framework the European rivalry for empire emerged, first in the Indian Ocean, then in Asia Minor, with the full impact of the struggle at last falling upon the Middle East as an entity, as a result of the recognition of the implications of its location and strategic sea routes.

Geopolitics, however, encompasses much more than geography and politics. The transition from sail to steam and then from coal to oil, as a means of propulsion, had far-reaching effects on world shipping lanes--and the application of these improvements in transportation to the littorals of the Middle East was a factor vital to European sea powers. The long period under discussion was one in which the European powers ran rough-shod over the sensibilities of the peoples of the Middle East; but the time was coming when this would no longer be possible--and the "political" aspect of the region's maritime geopolitics would become increasingly complicated.

Finally, it must be pointed out that a study of this type could hardly treat all aspects of geopolitics. Those factors which were most relevant were discussed. Nor should it be concluded that the onset of the First World War marked the end of geopolitical change. It did, however, end the phase of major geographical discovery and exploration in our history. As Professor Carrington has pointed out, "Marchand's

crossing of the continent from the Congo to the Nile and his historic meeting with Kitchener at Fashoda in 1898 marked the end of the heroic age of African travel."[206] After World War I there opened a new era of technological development which was to be particularly significant to maritime geopolitics.

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206. C. B. Carrington, The Liquidation of the British Empire, p. 33.

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