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International Boundary Digest: The Middle East



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An Intelligence Assessment

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March 1986

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International Boundary Digest: The Middle East [Redacted]

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An Intelligence Assessment

This paper was prepared by [Redacted]
[Redacted] Office of Global Issues, with contribu-
tions from CPAS. Comments and queries are wel-
come and may be directed to the Chief, Geography
Division, OGI, [Redacted]

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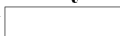
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**International Boundary Digest:
The Middle East**



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Preface

Information available as of September 1985 was used in this report, except where otherwise noted on individual revisions.

This Digest on the Middle East is the first in a series of regional digests that the Office of Global Issues plans to produce on international boundaries that either are in dispute or suggest by their characteristics potential for disagreement. The boundary information is categorized for ease of use, particularly by the current intelligence officer, when fast-breaking border incidents occur and charges and countercharges relating to border issues are made:

- **Border Basics.** Description of the border's length, status of demarcation, and its physical and cultural characteristics.
- **Significant Developments.** Summary of related issues as they affect political relationships.
- **Frontier History.** Review of the history of the frontier and the diplomatic evolution of the boundary.
- **Current Developments and Outlook.** Assessment of current border issues and prospects for their resolution.



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Other border factors—economic value or potential, ethnic mix, population pressures—are also noted as they pertain to border issues. A chronology of important dates affecting boundary status is included, and key boundary references are cited. A map, or maps, accompanies each boundary discussed to highlight the disputed sectors and territory and to illustrate other factors and relationships.



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Maritime boundary disputes involving nearby islands or coastal features related to boundary controversies also are included in the Digest. This publication, however, omits the more than 300 continental shelf and other maritime boundaries, many yet to be delimited, between the world's 139 coastal states and discussion of other types of maritime boundary and jurisdictional conflicts.¹



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The US Government rarely takes an official position on the validity of a particular claim in a boundary dispute. Boundary representation on maps produced by the US Government is complicated by map scale and the amount of detail shown. Four categories of boundaries are normally



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depicted on US Government maps: international boundary, indefinite boundary, boundary in dispute, and other lines of separation. Maps of disputed areas carry the disclaimer "Boundary representation is not necessarily authoritative." [redacted]

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Background

Disputes over international boundaries are a common cause of international tension and conflict. Almost half of the world's nations share land boundaries that are disputed. Additionally, disputes are sometimes revived over boundaries long settled, particularly where regional political alignments are fluid and internal political conditions change rapidly. Boundary issues are a major foreign policy concern of the United States. Disputes between nations friendly to the United States present sticky diplomatic dilemmas in that each party to the dispute will at some point exert pressure on Washington to support its view of the issue. [redacted]

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Fixed, geographically precise international boundaries are a recent development in international relations. Although ancient political entities—nomadic groups, tribes, and kingdoms—recognized geographical limits to their authority and control, these limits were usually vague and shifting, and located in distant and lightly populated frontier zones. Ancient borders often followed easily recognized physical features, such as mountain ranges, deserts, and swamps; sometimes rivers served to separate different ethnic groups. Some states, however, built walls, or constructed other physical barriers, to define limits of control, regulate trade, and control the movement of people and the establishment of settlements. [redacted]

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Modern international boundaries marked with pillars, cleared strips, and other physical means of identification accompanied the evolution of the nation-state system in Europe that commenced in the late 17th century. Advances in mathematics, geodesy, surveying techniques, and cartography permitted states to compile reliable maps of their territory and to more accurately draw their boundaries. New nations were born, colonies were established, and older nations that relied on distant buffer zones for their borders gradually were forced or chose to define their boundaries with greater precision. Increasing population pressures and the need for more land led to the settlement of frontier lands and the necessity to establish definite state limits. [redacted]

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Boundary disputes originate from a variety of causes and for different reasons. The degree of national passion and emotion aroused over a boundary-territorial dispute is often wildly disproportionate to the size and value of the area disputed. Occasionally, international boundaries, long settled by treaty and demarcated, are used as a pretext—citing alleged violations or “incidents”—to publicize deep-seated quarrels between states and to inflame public opinion.

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Types of Boundary Disputes

The list of causes for border disputes is lengthy, but in general there are three major situations that lead to disagreement:

- Disputes arising from the boundary marking itself, usually in the interpretation of details and the lack of precise geographic data.
- Disputes as the consequence of territorial and economic expansionism.
- Boundary problems created from state succession and the desire to renegotiate old boundary treaties.

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In all boundary disputes the political-military strength of the state and domestic politics have as much or more to do with the raising (or perhaps reviving) of boundary-territorial questions than the legality and justification for boundary adjustment. Once a dispute is aired and a nation presents its case publicly, all types of evidence—good, bad, and irrelevant—are used to convince other states of the justice of the particular nation's claim. Occasionally, disputes will be settled without rancor, but more often they sputter along for years, even decades. Still others may go to a third country or an international tribunal for arbitration and settlement, and at times armed conflict helps settle the issue.

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For example, the Argentina-Chile boundary originally was delimited on the assumption that the line of high peaks also coincided with the watershed. Later exploration revealed that the watershed was well east of the line of highest peaks. Controversy over this and a later dispute over which stream was the headwater stream that affected the boundary had to be resolved through British arbitration.

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Colonial boundaries defined by the European powers in the Americas, Africa, and much of Asia from the 16th through the 19th centuries were

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often hastily drawn and without benefit of detailed knowledge of the terrain. This lack of precision frequently led to later disputes over the boundary when the compilation of more accurate maps revealed the errors. In some cases, colonial boundaries were drawn so as to keep intact homogeneous ethnic and economic areas, but this was more an exception than a rule. [redacted]

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The creation of new states, particularly in ex-colonial territories, frequently is a cause of border problems. New states often attempt to redress old grievances and improve their internal political standing through threats or acts of belligerence against neighboring states. This may lead to the revival of ancient claims and the demand to renegotiate old boundary treaties. [redacted]

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Boundary Terms

Terms used in boundary disputes and boundary making possess special meanings that are often ignored or misapplied in press reports and in the speeches of national leaders when referring to border problems. Some of the more common terms and definitions are:

- *Boundary*. A line that marks the limits within which the state exercises its sovereign rights.
- *Border*. Border is often used as a synonym for boundary, but the term has a more generalized meaning of area or territory close to or in proximity to the actual line of separation on the ground between the states. The terms *border zone* and *borderlands* suggest the areal elasticity of the word. See *frontier*.
- *Delimitation*. The determination of where a boundary should be drawn through use of verbal description, usually in a treaty or similar diplomatic proceedings. The verbal description varies as to detail but contains sufficient references to physical features—midline of a river, a watershed, a mountain crest—and to specific points identified by geographical coordinates to permit a joint team of surveyors and technicians to demarcate the boundary on the ground. A map showing the agreed delimitation line usually is appended to the agreement.

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- **Demarcation.** The act of marking a boundary on the ground, as defined in the treaty or other document, by means of pillars, monuments, or other type of markers. Demarcation teams provided for in the treaty usually make or update ground surveys of the local topography. The end product is a more detailed point-to-point description of the boundary (markers are numbered or lettered consecutively) that is combined with one or more large-scale maps showing the exact alignment and individual markers. To be binding, the proceedings, resulting from the team's work and issued as a protocol or annex to the original treaty, must be signed by each nation.
- **Frontier.** A zone or area, usually of considerable length and breadth, that indicates the approximate limits of political authority. No exact limit is set to a frontier until a boundary agreement is reached and the boundary is demarcated on the ground. The term frontier to denote a nation's outward territories is not a synonym for the term boundary.
- **Thalweg.** The middle of a river channel, or its principal channel where more than one exists, of navigable streams that form an international boundary. Recent international law holds that the thalweg is the boundary in navigable rivers, failing any special agreement to the contrary. A thalweg boundary may divide the river into two very unequal parts; the thalweg also may change because of flooding and other natural causes. Nations usually have an agreement to resolve boundary questions when rivers shift their courses. In nonnavigable streams, international boundaries are usually defined by median lines. Detailed maps delineating the riverine boundaries are a standard part of the boundary documentation.
- **Territorial sea.** A belt of sea and underlying seabed and subsoil adjacent to the coast where the coastal state is sovereign. This sovereignty extends to the airspace over the territorial sea. Under international law, the maximum breadth of the territorial sea is 12 nautical miles (the US claims a 3-nautical-mile breadth) from the baseline. In the territorial sea, ships of all states enjoy the right of innocent passage, and in international straits, ships and aircraft have the right of nonsuspendable transit passage.
- **Continental shelf.** As defined by the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea, a nation's continental shelf comprises the seabed and subsoil seaward of the territorial sea extending to the outer edge of the continental margin or to a distance of 200 nautical miles from the baseline, whichever is greater.

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**International Boundary Digest:
The Middle East**

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Introduction

In no major world region are border and territorial disputes as disruptive to regional stability as in the Middle East. Border and territorial issues, although but part of the larger pattern of tension and hostility caused by deep-seated hostilities among ethnic, religious, and traditional groups, often provide the pretext for polemics and at times open warfare. Rivalries among outside powers, particularly the superpowers with their political, economic, and strategic interests in the region, pose additional complications and the possibility of still wider conflict.

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Current boundary-territorial disputes have ancient roots, some dating to Biblical times, others to the several centuries of Ottoman rule. More recent political decisions created additional problems and deepened embitterness. Following the dismemberment of the Turkish Empire after World War I, Britain and France assumed control over part of the area through League of Nations mandates. These actions delayed Arab hopes for the establishment of either a unified Arab state or at least a federation of states. The creation of Israel in 1948, coinciding with the withdrawal of British and French influence, led to a series of wars essentially over the question of the existence of Israel and its territorial limits.

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The increasing importance of oil as a source of energy has contributed to political dissension and tension in the Middle East. Added complications are the vagueness or lack of boundaries in areas inhabited by nomadic tribal groups, the growing importance of offshore oil deposits and their ownership, and the control over narrow straits guarding the entrances to the Middle East.

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Iran-Iraq

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Iran-Iraq Border



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Iran-Iraq**Border Basics**

The Iran-Iraq boundary extends for 1,458 kilometers between the tripoint with Turkey and the mouth of the Shatt al Arab waterway. No single geographical feature or principle was used to limit the boundary. In the north, the boundary follows mountain crests, often a drainage divide, and occasionally rivers. Farther south, the boundary follows the low foothills of the Zagros Mountains along ridges, ravines, and sometimes roads. In the south, the boundary is made up of straight-line segments across plains and swampy areas. In the Shatt al Arab, the boundary follows the midpoint of the deepest navigable channel (thalweg). []

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The boundary was most recently demarcated in 1975. There are 730 pillars numbered south to north from B. P. 1 to B. P. 125/12. The boundary in the Shatt (about 105 kilometers) is marked by 60 points identified by geographic coordinates and plotted on hydrographic charts. Iraq, however, has renounced the 1975 treaty that defines the boundary. []

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The border crosses lightly populated territory. Significant exceptions are the port cities along the Shatt al Arab. Although the large Kurdish population in both northern Iran and Iraq has long been a divisive issue in Iranian-Iraqi relations, the alignment of the boundary has not figured in the quarrel. []

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Significant Developments

Disputes over the Iran-Iraq border provided a pretext for Iraq's invasion of Iran in September 1980. Immediately before the outbreak of hostilities, Iraq abrogated the Algiers treaty of 1975 that, when signed, seemed to resolve contentious border issues that had plagued relations between the two nations for more than a century. Although military actions were initiated over land border areas (where Iranian forces reportedly held territory that was to have been transferred to Iraq by terms of the 1975 treaty), the more important border issue was the Shatt al Arab. This waterway, formed by the confluence of the Tigris and

Euphrates Rivers, serves as the border for 105 kilometers. The 1975 treaty—the Algiers Agreement—had fixed the boundary along the thalweg, or deepest navigable channel. This reversed, however, nearly 150 years of border history and tradition whereby Iraqi (and earlier Turkish) sovereignty over the entire waterway and control of its shipping had been recognized. Although border problems have now been subsumed in the larger context of the Iranian-Iraqi conflict, any delimitation of the boundary will almost certainly be a major issue when peace negotiations are undertaken. []

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Frontier History

The border between Iran and Iraq (formerly Persia and the Turkish Ottoman Empire) initially was defined generally by a 1639 treaty.² It was not until the second Treaty of Erzurum (1847), however, that a more precise boundary was delimited through the work of a mixed commission of Turkish, British, Iranian, and Russian officials. More important, this treaty for the first time used the lower course of the Shatt al Arab to define the southernmost section of the border. This treaty is the legal foundation for the current boundary. []

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During boundary proceedings, the Turkish representative introduced language setting the boundary along the eastern bank of the waterway, thus placing all of it under Turkish sovereignty. The reason given for placing the boundary along the left bank, instead of using the deepest channel or a median line, was that the Shatt al Arab is Iraq's only outlet to the sea whereas Iran has a long coastline on the Persian Gulf. This argument is the major justification usually cited for Iraqi sovereignty over the entire waterway. []

Iran's unhappiness with the Shatt al Arab boundary deepened after the discovery of oil early in the 20th century. The development of a petroleum center at Abadan increased Iranian shipping on the river. Iran

² The name Persia was used until 1935. For the purposes of clarity, Iran will be used throughout. Iraq emerged as a political entity following World War I and termination of the Turkish Ottoman Empire. Iraq, initially under British mandate, was admitted as an independent state to the League of Nations in 1932. []

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also chafed over anchorages in Turkish waters to its ports on the left bank and the payment of Turkish import duties. Negotiations ensued that led to the 1913 Constantinople Protocol. Although the treaty confirmed Turkish sovereignty over the Shatt al Arab, Iran gained jurisdiction over its anchorages serving the port of Muhammerah (now Khorramshahr). The 1913 agreement also provided for the demarcation of the land boundary by pillars, a task completed in 1914. []

Friction over the border continued during the 1920s and 1930s as Iranian use of the Shatt al Arab expanded. Iran exerted pressure to force change, sending naval craft up the Shatt in defiance of Iraqi navigational rules. Direct negotiations between the two countries led to a new treaty (1937) that again confirmed Iraqi sovereignty over the waterway, although it modified the Constantinople Protocol of 1913, by using the thalweg to define a short segment of the boundary opposite the Iranian city of Abadan. The treaty also stated that the Shatt "shall remain open for merchant ships of all countries" and stipulated that a later agreement be reached to govern maintenance, pilotage, collection of dues, and other administrative matters. []

The navigation convention of the treaty concluded in 1937 was never honored. This shortcoming, combined with Iran's subordinate role in the administration of the Shatt al Arab, contributed to a renewal of Iranian pressures to move the boundary to the thalweg. In 1969 Iran abrogated the 1937 treaty; Iranian-Iraqi relations worsened; and in 1975, at the initiative of President Boumedienne of Algeria, the two countries met and signed yet another treaty (the Algiers Agreement) that ended Iranian support for the Kurdish rebellion in northern Iraq. The 1975 treaty contained protocols on redefining the land and waterway boundaries, of which the most significant was agreement to use the deepest channel of the Shatt to define the boundary. For the first time Iraqi sovereignty over the Shatt's waters was restricted to the western half of the waterway. The boundary settlement included detailed regulations for joint navigation of the Shatt and provided for a redemarcation of the land boundary with an increased number of markers. []

The border issue was quiet until the Iranian revolution. Iraq then began to talk about regaining full sovereignty over the Shatt al Arab. In 1980 Iraq specified several small areas along the land boundary from which Iranian forces had not withdrawn, according to terms of the 1975 agreement, a disagreement possibly caused in part by the use of different maps. In September of 1980, just before the outbreak of war, Iraq abrogated the Algiers treaty. []

Current Developments and Outlook

Iraqi leaders stated when the 1980 war began that they had no territorial ambitions. According to press items, Iraqi aims were to "liberate" border areas that Iran occupied in defiance of the 1975 treaty and to enforce a reversion to the pre-1975 boundary in the Shatt. These objectives were publicized at a time when Iraqi leaders believed that Iran was weak and that military pressure would lead to the ouster of the Khomeini regime, which publicly was for the overthrow of the Iraqi Government and the support of Iraqi Shia dissidents. []

The protracted hostilities have muted boundary questions. A decisive victory by either nation, however, would dictate which of the two basic versions of the boundary would be followed. Despite some confusion over the precise delineation of the land boundary, perhaps caused by terrain conditions, the 1975 border demarcation based on work done in 1913-14 probably will be followed. The boundary in the Shatt, however, will depend on the victor-vanquished equation. A decisive Iranian victory would keep the post-1975 status quo, using the thalweg; an Iraqi triumph would return to pre-1975 conditions and Iraqi sovereignty over the waterway and control of navigation. []

If the war ends inconclusively, other solutions to the problem may emerge. These include various compromises of which joint control or internationalization of the waterway are the most feasible alternatives. There are precedents for a solution that separates the issue of rights and sovereignty over a border waterway from the issue of use and obligation. The importance of the Shatt waterway, because it is clogged with silt and the

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hulks of several dozen ships sunk early in the war, has been temporarily eclipsed. It would require extensive salvage work of perhaps a year plus dredging to return the waterway to its pre-1980 condition. The postwar importance of the waterway in border negotiations will depend in part on the long-term feasibility of alternate routes Iraq has been developing since 1980.

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Border Treaties and Key Dates

1639

Treaty of Peace and Demarcation of Frontiers, signed at Zohab, 17 May. Initial border division, confirmed by later treaties.

1847

Second Treaty of Erzurum, 31 May. Redefines border and establishes Shatt al Arab as border under Turkish (Iraqi) sovereignty although permitting use of the waterway to Persia (Iran). Basic boundary alignment established remains unchanged.

1913

Constantinople Protocol, signed at Constantinople on 4 November. Provides for detailed delimitation of boundary and demarcation of land boundary. Allows Iranian anchorages opposite port of Muhammerah (now Khorramshahr).

1937

Frontier Treaty between Iraq and Iran, signed at Tehran, 4 July. Slight modification of 1913 treaty revising boundary in vicinity of Abadan. Opens river to merchant ships of all countries equally.

1969

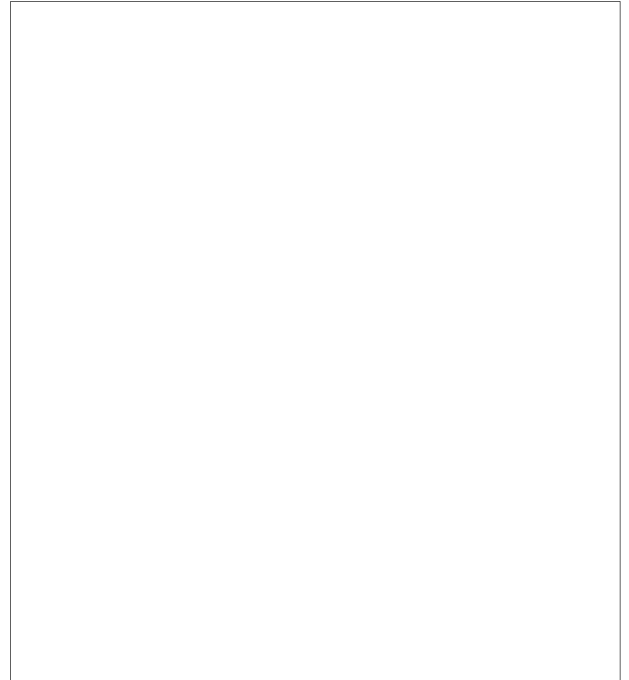
Iran abrogates 1937 treaty. Commerce on Shatt continues.

1975

Treaty Relating to the State Boundary and Good-Neighborliness Between Iran and Iraq, signed at Baghdad, 13 June. Known as Algiers Agreement and followed by series of protocols relating to boundary matters. Redefines boundary in Shatt according to thalweg; land boundary redemarcated, setting up additional markers.

1980

On 17 September Iraq abrogates 1975 treaty and announces aim to enforce a reversion to pre-1975 boundary on Shatt. Heavy fighting commences on 22 September. 25X1



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Afghanistan-Iran

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Afghanistan-Iran Border



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Afghanistan-Iran**Border Basics**

The Afghanistan-Iran boundary extends roughly north-south for about 936 kilometers between boundary tripoints with the USSR and Pakistan. The boundary was delimited and demarcated piecemeal between 1872 and 1935. Some 39 pillars were used to mark 70 kilometers (out of 226 kilometers) of the northern section of the boundary (1888-91); 90 markers were placed (1905) to demarcate 300 kilometers of the southern section of the boundary; and only 38 boundary monuments were set to demarcate the 410 kilometers of the lightly populated central section of the boundary in 1935. []

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There is no single dominant physical feature in the border area. Border terrain varies from relatively low hills and mountains to huge salt flats, brackish lakes and marshes, and sandy or rocky plains. Boundary makers used small streams and wadis, minor water divides, and ridges interspersed with straight-line segments to mark the boundary on the ground. The border area is lightly populated by Persians, Pash-tuns, Tadjiks, Baluchs, and other ethnic groups. []

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The economic significance of the borderlands revolves around the availability and control of water. Water has been the primary cause of past disputes and a key factor used by boundary commissions to determine the boundary alignment. []

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Significant Developments

The twin events of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and Iran's Islamic Revolution, both during 1979, added a new dimension to Afghan-Iranian relations and to the potential for future border disputes. The new factors are the large numbers of Afghan refugees who fled into Iran, the relative ease of cross-border movement, Afghan resistance groups operating in western Afghanistan, and Soviet countermeasures taken against them. []

The ancient quarrel over water usage in the lower Darya-ye Helmand threatened to erupt anew in 1979-80 as Afghanistan began to build a new, upstream

dam. A halt (1980) in construction, however, and internal economic changes brought on by political-military conditions have for the present defused the issue. []

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Frontier History

The history of the Afghanistan-Iran border is recent, with boundary delimitation and demarcation taking place in the period from 1872 to 1935. Four separate arbitration commissions defined the boundary. Three of the commissions were headed by the British, a result of a provision of the Treaty of Paris in 1857 that called for British mediation of Afghan-Iranian disputes. []

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The southern section of the boundary was the first to be legally fixed. Here, Persian and Afghan groups pressed claims to use of the Darya-ye Helmand waters that empty into a large basin of semipermanent lakes and marshes, where grazing and agriculture flourish. Disputes over the territory and its waters eventually led to a request for arbitration. A commission headed by Major General Goldsmid delimited the border in 1872 by dividing the basin, locally known in Iran as the Daryacheh-ye Sistan; in some areas the boundary separated irrigation control points and portions of canals in one country from the remainder of the system in the other. A key provision of the award was that neither side should construct "works" to interfere with future water supplies. The Goldsmid commission did not survey the area on the ground nor did the award provide for boundary demarcation. Neither side was pleased with the award, but both were forced to accept it. []

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A short stretch of the northern section of the boundary was next settled by terms of an award in 1891 drawn up by Major General MacLean, a British officer assigned to head the arbitration team. At issue was a small basin claimed by both Iran and Afghanistan that, although once cultivated, had been abandoned. A compromise solution was accepted by both sides and a detailed description as to the placement of the 39 boundary markers was made. The remainder of the northern section of the boundary follows the Harirud, a major river of Afghanistan that flows into

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the USSR. Specific language stating that the boundary followed the river was not prepared, however, until the final boundary award was made in 1935. []

The dispute over water use in the southern section of the boundary arose again in the early 1900s. A minor change in the channel used by the Helmand in its delta and a severe drought in 1902 caused competition and dispute over water supplies. A call for arbitration resulted in the sending of a large British commission to the area, headed by Colonel McMahon. Because the McMahon commission was instructed to follow the delimitation set by the earlier Goldsmid commission, McMahon's duty was to properly interpret the language of the agreement when compared to more recent, detailed topographic maps of the area. Boundary markers were then described in text and placed in the ground. The award also clarified and refined language used to define the amount of water to be made legally available to Iran. []

The remaining central section of the boundary was defined in 1935 after a minor dispute had arisen over an area adjoining a section of boundary demarcated earlier. A commission, headed by Turkish General Altai, not only produced an agreed compromise, but also proposed that the remainder of the boundary be defined and demarcated. This was accepted and some 38 pillars were erected to demarcate 410 kilometers of border. []

Current Developments and Outlook

Radical political changes in Iran and Afghanistan after 1979 have had little effect on Afghan-Iranian relations regarding their common border. Despite the provocative possibilities in the border area—Afghan refugees in Iran, the flareup from time to time of insurgent activity in western Afghanistan near the border, and countermeasures by the Soviets—both the Iranians and the Soviets have been cautious and not allowed the border itself to become a divisive issue. []

A longer term and perennially sensitive issue concerns water rights to use of the Darya-ye Helmand in the southern section of the Afghanistan-Iran border. A water-sharing treaty, signed in 1973 and finally ratified in 1977, was intended to end decades of

bickering. Afghan development plans unveiled during the 1970s, however, called for a new dam, upstream some 70 kilometers from the border. When completed, the dam would seriously disrupt downstream hydrology, particularly in Iran. Although water supplies guaranteed by treaty would not be affected, the possibility of Iran gaining additional water supplies would be foreclosed. Work on the dam was halted in 1980, and a resumption of construction probably would cause serious political reverberations in Iran. []

Border Treaties and Key Dates

1857

Treaty of Paris provides for British arbitration of Afghan-Iranian disputes.

1872

Goldsmid Award defines boundary, after dispute over water and grazing rights, although no demarcation is provided of lower Helmand (Sistan) area.

1891

MacLean Award settles local dispute and provides for demarcation of short section of northern boundary.

1905

McMahon reaffirms boundary defined in 1872 and provides for demarcation following disputes over water rights. Water apportionment clause included.

1935

Altai Award settles local dispute and closes 390-kilometer gap between MacLean and McMahon Awards. The thalweg of the Harirud is the declared boundary for most of the northern section.

1973

Helmand Waters Treaty signed, ending two decades of bickering over water allotments.

1977

Helmand Waters Treaty ratified, although not publicized in Afghanistan because of sensitivity of issue.

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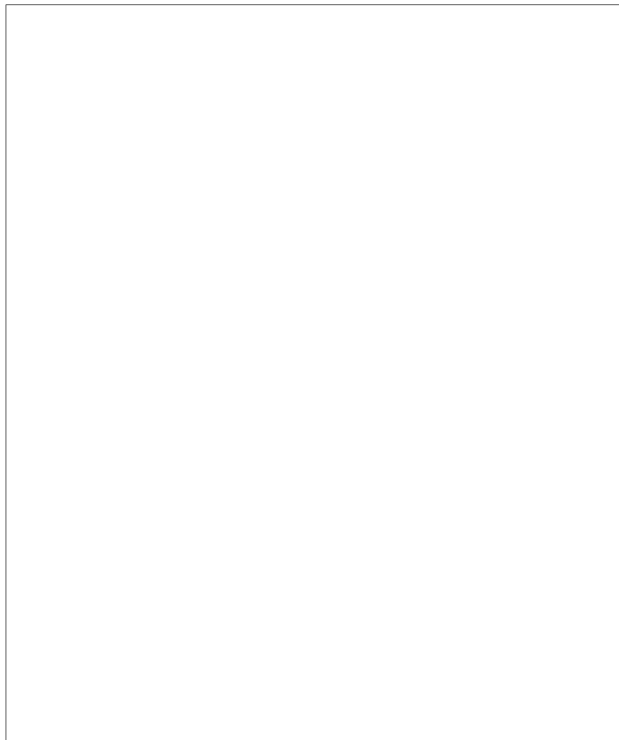
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1978-80

Construction of Kamal Khan Dam (Chakhansur project) under way on Helmand; Iran bitterly opposed, fearing hydrological changes in Iran and cap on water availability when project completed.

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Iraq-Kuwait

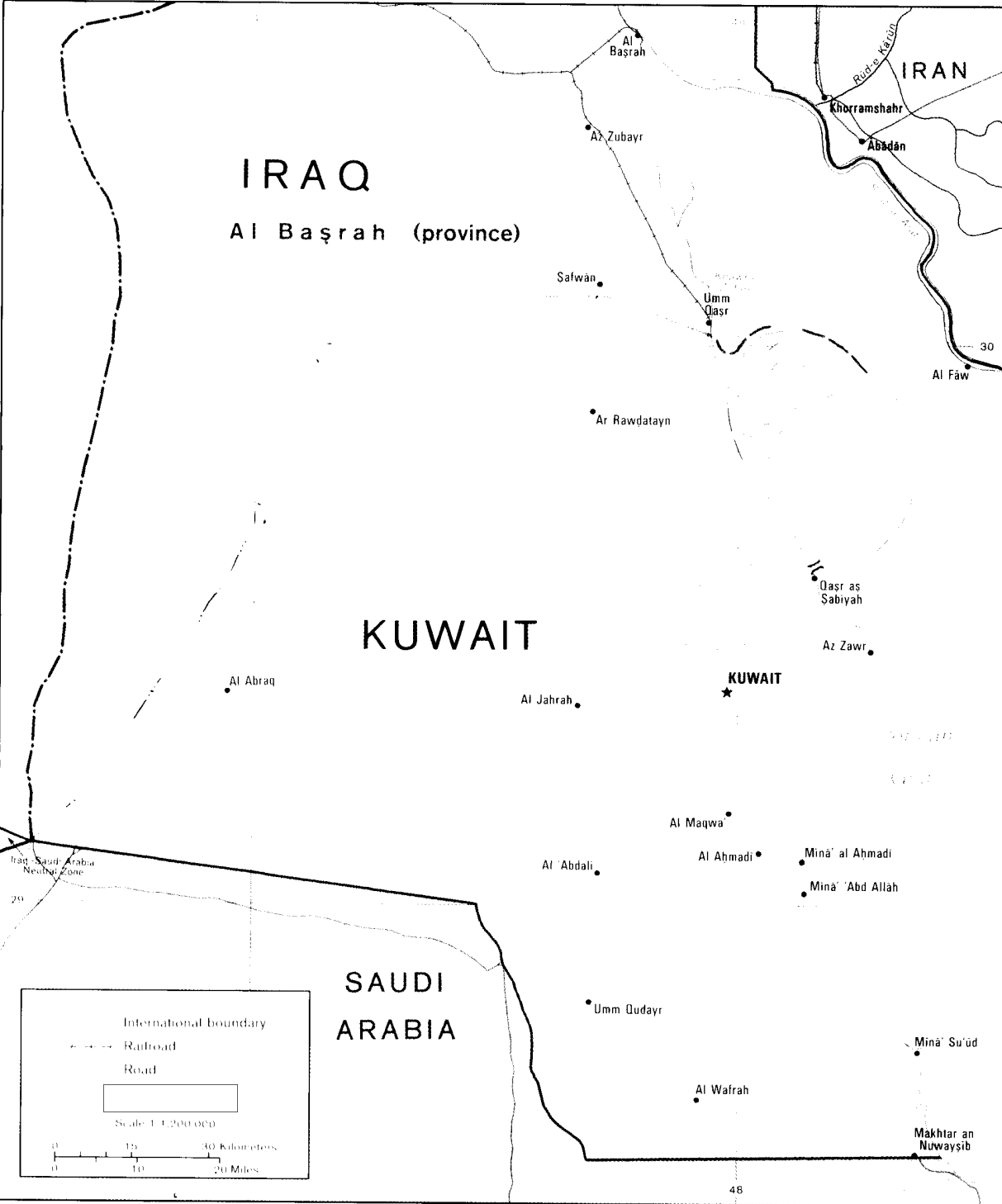
Iraq-Kuwait

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Iraq-Kuwait Border



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Iraq-Kuwait**Border Basics**

The Iraq-Kuwait boundary, about 240 kilometers in length, has been neither surveyed nor demarcated. Even the language of the 1913 Anglo-Turkish Convention that initially defined the border is vague, with references to features no longer identifiable. The border was drawn on the basis of separating nomadic tribes who held allegiance to the Shaykh of Kuwait from those under the jurisdiction of Turkish authorities of Al Basrah Province. Thus, much of the border alignment is in reference to the location of wells traditionally used by these nomadic groups. []

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The boundary cuts across mostly barren desert and steppe terrain that is inhabited only seasonally by herders with their flocks. An exception is the eastern end of the border where scattered farming areas are found and small villages located. This easternmost boundary sector, plus the ownership of some offshore islands, is disputed. The proximity of the boundary to important Iraqi facilities, present and planned, is the key factor in the dispute. []

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Significant Developments

Since the start of the Iranian-Iraqi war, Kuwait has made several unpublicized attempts to resolve border and territorial problems with Iraq. Baghdad, however, has been uncooperative and until mid-1984 proposed deferring boundary negotiations until the war with Iran is over. The strategic significance of the Iraq-Kuwait border issue is tied to the growing importance of the port of Umm Qasr and its adjacent waterways to Iraqi access to the sea. The vulnerability of Iraq's major port, Al Basrah, was demonstrated early in the war by closure of the Shatt al Arab, the waterway that serves it. []

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According to media reports, Iraq in mid-1984 offered to sign a border agreement if Kuwait would lease three offshore islands to permit monitoring of Iranian shipping. Kuwait has some leverage in any border talks because it provides considerable support and has permitted supplies to be routed through Kuwait to

support Iraq's war efforts. Kuwait is strengthening its claim on the key offshore island of Bubiyan by constructing a bridge (1983) to the island, building a perimeter road, and stationing military personnel there. []

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Frontier History

The Iraq-Kuwait border dispute has its origins in Kuwait's evolution as an independent state and its former political relationships to the Ottoman Empire and Great Britain. The present Kuwaiti ruling family has governed the area in and around the town of Kuwait, an important port and shipbuilding center on the Persian Gulf, since the mid-18th century. By 1829, however, the growing influence of the Ottoman Empire forced Kuwait to recognize the suzerainty of the Turks. Tribute was paid, and in 1871 Kuwait was placed under the administrative jurisdiction of Al Basrah Province, then part of the Ottoman domain in Mesopotamia that is now Iraq. []

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Kuwait's Shaykh Mubarak, fearing complete political domination by the Ottomans, requested and received (1899) a guarantee of British protection. In 1913 an Anglo-Turkish Convention was signed that defined Kuwait's external borders. To secure Shaykh Mubarak's support in British plans to free what is now Iraq from Turkish control, Britain recognized the Shaykhdom as "an independent government under British protection" shortly after the beginning of World War I. After the Ottoman Empire was dismembered following World War I, Britain for a time governed Iraq under a League of Nations Mandate arrangement as well as continued its relationship with Kuwait. A later British Memorandum (1923) reaffirmed the 1913 boundary delimitation, including Kuwaiti ownership of the offshore islands. []

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Kuwait gained its independence in 1961 and within a week was threatened by official Iraqi announcements that Kuwait was "an integral part of Iraq." Baghdad cited a number of legal points to support its view, although the weight of diplomatic and legal evidence provides support for Kuwait's independent status. After British troops were rushed to Kuwait, Iraq backed down and after a change in governments in

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1963 agreed to recognize "the independence and complete sovereignty of the State of Kuwait." Despite this profession of faith in Kuwait's independence, Iraq soon resumed its border and territorial claims. In 1973 Iraq seized a Kuwaiti police post, the adjoining territory near Umm Qasr, and some additional land, requiring the intervention of other Arab powers to force an Iraqi withdrawal. In 1976 another military confrontation arose over alleged poaching of Iraqi oil by Kuwait. [redacted]

Current Developments and Outlook

During the 1970s proposals by both sides at settling the dispute were discussed but ultimately rejected. The postponement of border talks probably strengthens Iraqi views of the need to provide additional territorial insulation for its link to the Persian Gulf via the port of Umm Qasr. Kuwait owns the islands located astride Iraqi's fragile maritime lifeline. In addition, the land border is located on the outskirts of Umm Qasr. These locational facts, in Baghdad's view, are imperatives to press hard for territorial accommodations from its much smaller and weaker neighbor. Iraqi territorial demands probably include the following:

- A strip of territory several kilometers deep from the beginning of the land boundary near Umm Qasr and extending inland for a distance of possibly 20 kilometers.
- Acquisition or lease of the small island of Warbah that controls access to Umm Qasr.
- Ownership or lease of the northern half of the larger, low-lying island of Bubiyan, which overlooks Iraq's access to the Persian Gulf and to a planned naval base on the Iraqi shore some 8 kilometers away. [redacted]

In past discussions, Kuwait has indicated interest in some territorial accommodations, including a possible leasing arrangement regarding Warbah and a redefinition of the border near Umm Qasr. Kuwait has strongly opposed, however, concessions affecting Bubiyan, an island they view as vital to the security of the port of Kuwait. To bolster its sovereignty over Bubiyan, Kuwait constructed a bridge to the island

and is now building a road there. Press reports in August 1984 indicated a renewed Iraqi attempt to lease Warbah and another island, Faylakah, for purposes of monitoring Iranian activities directed against Iraq and Iraqi shipping. Iran would probably threaten retaliation against Kuwait if this were done. If border talks resume, resolution of the issue will likely turn on the questions of leasing agreements or, possibly, some form of joint control over contested territories. [redacted]

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Border Treaties and Key Dates

1829

Sheikh of Kuwait recognizes suzerainty of Ottoman Empire.

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1871

Kuwait included as an administrative district of Al Basrah Province and the Kuwaiti ruler is appointed district governor.

1899

Shaykh Mubarak signs agreement with Britain placing Kuwait under British protection.

1913

Anglo-Turkish convention contains articles delimiting Kuwait's boundaries.

1923

Britain issues memorandum affirming, in nearly identical language, Kuwait's border with Iraq as implied in 1913 treaty.

1932

Iraq becomes independent and in exchange of letters with Britain agrees to honor Iraq-Kuwait boundary.

1961

Kuwait becomes independent and Iraq announces almost immediately that Kuwait will be placed under the jurisdiction of Iraq's Al Basrah Province. Britain intercedes on Kuwait's behalf.

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1963

Iraq's new regime announces recognition of Kuwait's independence and sovereignty but does not reject territorial claims.

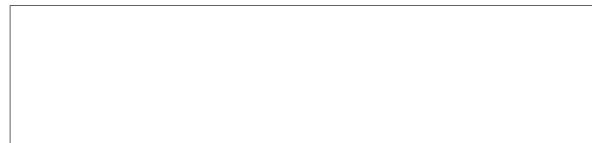
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1973

Iraq seizes Kuwaiti border post and additional territory; withdraws from post and some of the border territory after Arab countries intervene. Border closed.



1973-78

Attempts to negotiate boundary issues produce various proposals for territorial adjustments, but no agreement.

1976

Border with Iraq reopened.



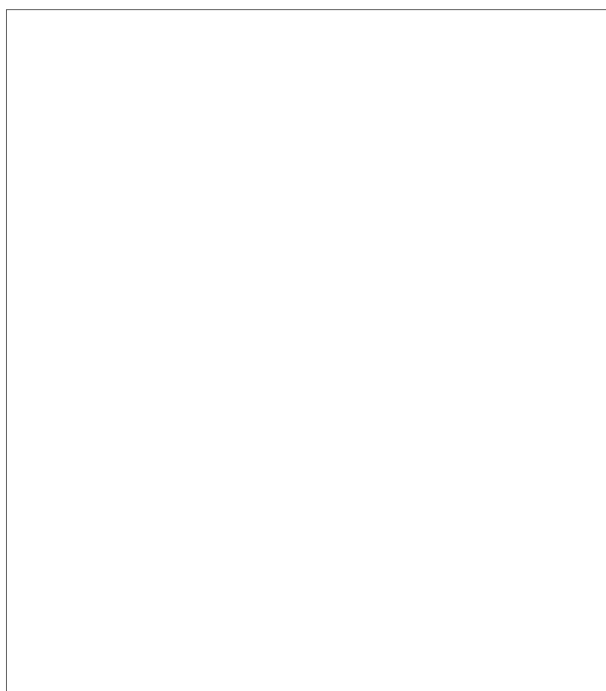
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1984

Iraq offers to sign border agreement in exchange for lease of offshore islands to monitor Iranian shipping.



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Arabian Peninsula

Arabian Peninsula

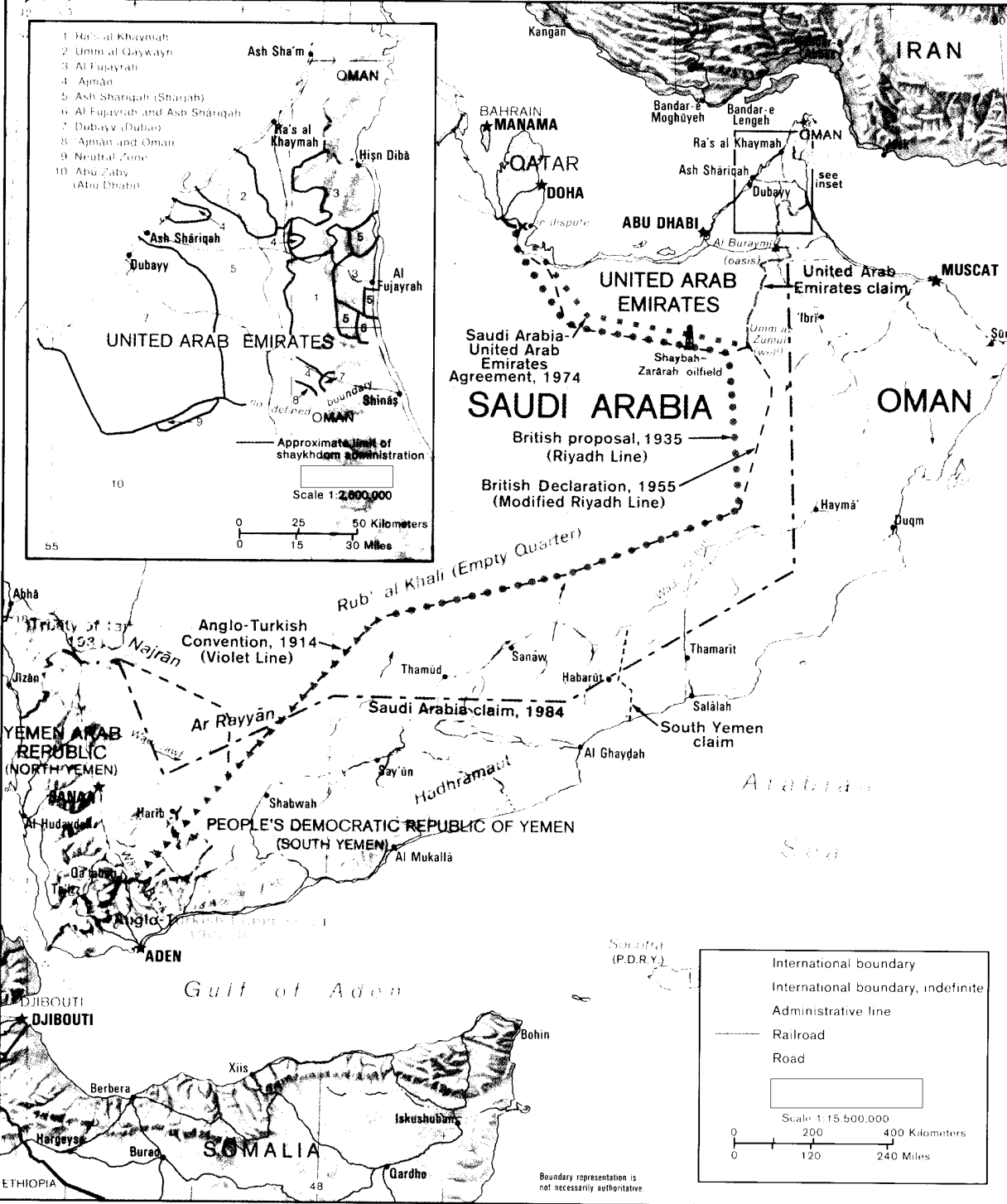
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Arabian Peninsula



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Arabian Peninsula

Border Basics

Most Arabian Peninsula boundaries are indefinite and disputed. Saudi Arabia's claimed boundaries with its peninsula neighbors—North and South Yemen, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE)—extend for about 2,650 kilometers through or on the margins of the vast Rub' al Khali (Empty Quarter). In general, Arabian Peninsula boundaries and border claims are located in barren, dune-strewn plains, although in places the terrain is rough and broken, cut by wadis and gullies. Some boundary sections—notably between North Yemen and Saudi Arabia and between North and South Yemen—extend through rough hilly and mountainous terrain.

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Most border areas are uninhabited or populated only seasonally by nomadic groups. Exceptions are the occasional oases, some of which have figured in disputes, and scattered villages in the hilly border terrain of the two Yemens. Hampering the resolution of peninsula border disputes are the political allegiances of various tribal groups living in or near the border and the presence, or suspected existence, of oil deposits in disputed territory.

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Significant Developments

Since the 1974 agreement between Saudi Arabia and the UAE defining their common boundary, there has been little progress toward settling other Arabian Peninsula disputes. In some disputes, tribal relationships with the central government and competition for their loyalties are important factors to resolving differences; in other disputes the oil factor has raised the stakes and acted to slow negotiating efforts until geophysical prospecting has been completed. The recent emergence of the peninsula states as independent political entities and the development of nationalistic feelings and attitudes have made it more difficult to make the kinds of territorial concessions needed to resolve many of the disputes.

Frontier History

The European concept of territorial sovereignty and fixed boundaries is a recent concept in the Arabian Peninsula. Traditionally, states consisted of a confederation of tribal groups that included some oases and agricultural villages, and perhaps coastal towns. The land borders normally were in desert country—the habitat of nomads. The territorial limits of nomadic tribes were often extensive but vague, marked by wells and grazing lands and the routes between them. Some of the grazing areas were used by more than one tribal group—a complicating factor in efforts to define a static boundary. Environmental conditions—a shortage of forage, a drying up of wells—often led to territorial changes. The political loyalties of the nomadic tribes to shaykhs or other leaders, not states, also shifted at times and contributed to the vague and imprecise limits of state authority.

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Britain's growing role in Arabian Peninsula affairs during the latter half of the 19th century did not initially disturb these traditional political relationships. Britain's primary interest was to secure its sea lanes to India; British policy, in fact, was to avoid territorial commitments that London reasoned would in time lead to disagreements, conflict, and the need to introduce ground forces.

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Later, increased interest in Arabian Peninsula affairs by other powers, especially Turkey, led to disagreements and the imposition of fixed boundaries. An Anglo-Turkish agreement provided for the partial delimitation (1903-05) of what is now the boundary between North and South Yemen. A broader, more inclusive agreement, the 1914 Anglo-Turkish Convention, attempted to define British and Turkish spheres of influence in the region by delineating a line—the so-called Violet Line—that ran northeast from Aden to Bahrain. In 1955 Great Britain defined on a map its version of the heretofore shadowy southern boundary of Saudi Arabia. This was termed the Modified Riyadh Line to distinguish it from an earlier (1934) British-defined Riyadh Line. Neither line was accepted as authoritative by Saudi Arabia, whose own and

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somewhat conflicting claims extended much farther south. The current Saudi definition of its southern borders is shown on a recent (1984) map. The 1955 British declaration favored the coastal states, then under British protection, and was intended to restrict Saudi encroachment into the desolate Rub' al Khali.

[REDACTED]

The status of individual boundary disputes and issues is as follows:

North Yemen-Saudi Arabia. About 320 kilometers of the Yemen Arab Republic's (North Yemen's) boundary with Saudi Arabia, drawn from the Red Sea inland across mostly rough, hilly terrain, was demarcated in 1936 as far east as the Najran area. A 1934 treaty ended fighting between the two countries and provided for boundary delimitation and demarcation, although some sections of this boundary, perhaps because of the difficult terrain, were not demarcated. No agreement, however, was reached over the remainder of the boundary extending east and south of Najran to South Yemen. The Yemeni base their claim on the 1955 British-delineated Modified Riyadh Line. This line placed a large tract of sparsely populated, largely desert country in North Yemen, but in an area where Saudi Arabia also has claims and some influence with local tribes. [REDACTED]

The poor communications from the capital, Sanaa, into North Yemen's disputed northeastern quadrant has made the area difficult to control and administer. Border clashes occasionally occur, and an incident in late December 1983 near Najran, apparently the result of Yemeni antismuggling operations, resulted in casualties and the buildup of Saudi forces in the border area. A further complication has been the discovery of oil (1984) within North Yemen in a concession area, part of which lies within Saudi-claimed territory. Saudi pressures to resolve the dispute and to delimit the border have been unsuccessful.

[REDACTED]

Saudi Arabia-South Yemen. Boundary claims between Saudi Arabia and the People's Democratic Republic of Yemen (South Yemen) differ markedly. South Yemen's claims are based on the 1955 British proclamation drawing the boundary in a series of

straight-line segments along the southern margins of the Rub' al Khali. The de facto boundary corresponds, as far as is known, with this British view of the border. Saudi Arabia's boundary claims have varied, but, according to a 1984 map, the border claimed lies much farther south, cutting across much of the rough, dissected hills of the Hadhramaut. [REDACTED]

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Border tensions between the two countries were high in the years following the British withdrawal from Aden in 1967. During the next two years, both countries sponsored border incursions in the other's territory. The border remained a sensitive issue for a number of years as South Yemen supported insurgent activities against both Oman and North Yemen. Even after Riyadh established diplomatic ties with Aden in 1976, relations remained cool until a series of internal changes led South Yemen, after 1982, to pursue more moderate external policies. By late 1982 a high-level meeting between Saudi and South Yemeni officials had an agenda on which border issues, including talks about fixing the boundary, were included. Despite improved relations, no boundary agreement has been reached. [REDACTED]

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North Yemen-South Yemen. A joint British-Turkish commission delimited (1903-05) about 400 kilometers of the border, the alignment of which was later confirmed by the 1914 Anglo-Turkish Convention. The boundary begins at the Red Sea and ends in hilly terrain at Wadi Bana. Boundary markers, if in fact placed, apparently no longer remain. North and northeast of Wadi Bana the boundary was defined in general terms, terminating in the sands of the desert.

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[REDACTED]

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Although dissident activity flourished in North Yemen during the 1970s and early 1980s, and a significant amount of aid for the dissidents was supplied from and through South Yemen, territorial issues were not a factor. Nevertheless, the imprecise alignment of the boundary—particularly that portion northeast of Wadi Bana—is a potential source of disagreement. [REDACTED]

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Oman-South Yemen. In 1965 British officials defined an administrative boundary to separate the Aden Protectorate from the territory of the Sultanate of Muscat and Oman. This administrative line consists of four straight-line segments ending in the desert to the north. Periodic border incursions and South Yemen's support for Omani rebels in southwestern Oman raised tensions. Through diplomatic initiatives taken by Kuwait and UAE, the two governments agreed in late 1982 to hold discussions and to include the issue of border delimitation as an item on the agenda. A cease-fire line, at places between the two claims, complicates the issue. The Omanis also claim Habarut fort, which is apparently located on the border. [redacted]

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Border talks have been held off and on since September 1983, although no agreement has been reported. Oman is satisfied with the 1965 administrative boundary, but South Yemeni officials have proposed a new alignment—apparently based on older claims and agreements—that would move the present boundary to the east and provide South Yemen additional territory in which oil prospects may be present. Any agreement would be open ended, however, until both nations have resolved their border differences with Saudi Arabia. [redacted]

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Oman-Saudi Arabia. The difference between Saudi and Omani border claims range from 80 to as much as 200 kilometers. The usual factors are present: oil deposits in the disputed area and the political ties of tribal groups inhabiting the area. In general, Saudi claims at their most extreme incorporate nearly all of the desert country of the Empty Quarter—amounting to about one-third of Oman's territory—and extend Saudi-claimed borders to or near the highlands that fringe, in greater or lesser degree, the Omani coast. The Saudi-claimed border is based on presumed ties with tribal groups of the area. The Omani claim rests on the tribal affiliations and the British definition of the boundary made in 1955. [redacted]

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In mid-1983 Saudi Arabia reaffirmed its claims, increasing tension between the two countries. Seismic survey teams working for Saudi Arabia have at times strayed into Omani-claimed territory. In late 1983 Omani and Saudi troops had a standoff at some wells

located near, but apparently a number of kilometers beyond, the Omani-claimed border into Saudi Arabia. Omani militia were ordered to the wells, where Omani personnel had earlier installed pumps. The wells reportedly are the only source of water for about 100 kilometers and had traditionally been used by Omani tribes en route to seasonal pastures. In February 1985 another incident took place when Omani troops disarmed a Saudi patrol discovered within Omani-claimed territory. [redacted]

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Al Buraymi Oasis. The dispute over the Al Buraymi Oasis has been the most widely publicized of those among Arabian Peninsula countries. Oman, the UAE, and Saudi Arabia each have laid claim to the small, remote oasis. During the early 1950s Saudi Arabia reasserted earlier claims by dispatching troops to occupy the area. The Saudis' rationale for this action was to counter the inclusion of the oasis within an oil concession zone drawn up by a company based in Abu Dhabi. When arbitration failed to resolve the dispute, a force of British-led Omani troops drove the Saudis from the area in 1955. Subsequently, Britain proclaimed its Modified Riyadh Line that placed Al Buraymi some 200 kilometers outside of Saudi territory—a boundary solution not accepted by Riyadh. As part of the 1974 Oman-Saudi Arabia border settlement, Saudi Arabia relinquished its claim to the oasis. Presently, the majority of the villages of the oases are controlled and administered by Abu Dhabi. [redacted]

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The precise alignment of the boundary within the oasis is unclear. Oman has belatedly recognized the importance of the rapid modernization of the Abu Dhabi sector of the oasis. The Omanis, now pushing development of their sector, recognize the interdependence of the two sectors and are promoting cooperation rather than confrontation. [redacted]

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Saudi Arabia-UAE. The boundary between Saudi Arabia and Abu Dhabi, the largest and westernmost of the UAE, was defined by terms of an August 1974 agreement between the two states. Although the general provisions of the agreement are known, the exact details of boundary delimitation have not been

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made public. The terms grant Saudi Arabia a section of the coast on the Persian Gulf, just east of Qatar, of about 60 kilometers in width. Additional, relatively narrow strips of territory were gained by Riyadh to the south, leaving about three-fourths of the Shaybah-Zararah oilfield in Saudi hands. In return for these territorial concessions, Saudi Arabia reportedly relinquished its long-held claims to the Al Buraymi Oasis, now divided between Oman and the UAE, and extended diplomatic recognition to the UAE. [redacted]

The Saudi Arabia-UAE boundary consists of a series of straight-line segments extending south and east through desert terrain before turning north near the well of Umm az Zumul. The remaining 200-kilometer section of the boundary extends north to the Al Buraymi Oasis. Saudi officials state that the southern and eastern sections of the boundary up to Umm az Zumul were demarcated in the late 1970s. The northern section of the boundary cannot be demarcated until Saudi Arabia and Oman settle their boundary disagreement. If Saudi claims are the basis for an eventual agreement, the tripoint of the UAE-Saudi Arabia-Oman borders would be near the Al Buraymi Oasis; if the Omani view prevails, the trijunction would be at or near Umm az Zumul. [redacted]

The significance of the agreement for Saudi Arabia is that its "window on the Gulf" alleviates Riyadh's concern about strategic access to the southern Gulf. Some future economic gain may also be realized. Gulf waters in this area are too shallow for the construction of a port, but a pipeline and offshore terminal could be constructed to transport oil. [redacted]

Oman-UAE. Boundary disputes between Oman and the UAE have arisen in the Musandam Peninsula where a wedge of UAE territory separates the northernmost part of Oman from the rest of the country. The confusing hodgepodge of tribal areas, most of them small enclaves of the seven UAE shaykhdoms that border on Oman, has led to disputes, one of which relates to offshore resources. According to the US Embassy in Muscat, senior Omani officials still question the legality of the British surveys made in the 1950s that established the boundaries of the seven shaykhdoms. [redacted]

In the northwest, Oman has quarreled with Ra's al Khaymah, one of the emirates, over some 16 kilometers of the coast; on the eastern side of the peninsula, Oman has contested the boundary with Ash Shariqah, another of the emirates. Both disputes arose during the 1970s. Despite announcements made in 1979 and 1981 that agreements had been reached, official documentation concerning the details of the presumed settlement—delimitation of the borders and procedures for demarcation—have not been released. [redacted]

The boundary between Abu Dhabi, the largest of the emirates, and Oman is complicated by the 1974 Saudi Arabia-Abu Dhabi (UAE) boundary agreement that realigns this particular stretch of border south of the Al Buraymi Oasis. This revised boundary, which would allocate some 600 square kilometers to Abu Dhabi, is apparently not an issue between the two countries. The relaxed "live and let live" approach to these boundary differences is appropriate in that the Oman-UAE boundary will not be final until Oman and Saudi Arabia agree on the terminal point of their boundary adjoining the Abu Dhabi border. [redacted]

Current Developments and Outlook

Progress in resolving the numerous border disputes and issues between and among Arabian Peninsula nations has been slow and halting. In nearly all of the disputes, preliminary talks have been held in an attempt to narrow differences and to find a basis for compromise and agreement. A key player is Saudi Arabia whose southern frontier adjoins all of the other peninsula states. The de facto boundaries between Saudi Arabia and its southern neighbors are more or less along the line proposed cartographically by the British three decades ago. This border is favored by the peninsula states because it maximizes their territorial limits. The Saudis, however, still maintain claims considerably beyond the British-drawn line—in essence the interior desert—leaving the mountains and coastal areas to the Yemenis and Omanis. These claims are based in part on tribal alliances and on the possibility that additional oil reserves may be found on disputed tracts. Despite differences and the slow and intermittent nature of the talks, the continuing

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threat to regional security has helped promote a general consensus among Arabian Peninsula rulers not to allow the border issues to lead to conflict.

1979-81

Border differences between Oman and UAE reportedly settled, but no details released. 25X1

Border Treaties and Key Dates**1903-05**

Joint British-Turkish commission defines Aden-Yemen, now North Yemen-South Yemen boundary.

1914

Anglo-Turkish Convention signed, confirming earlier Yemeni boundary and defining on map, through drawing Violet Line, respective spheres of influence in Peninsula Arabia.

1934

Treaty of Taif ends fighting between Saudi and Yemeni forces and provides for boundary delimitation.

1936

North Yemen-Saudi Arabia boundary delimited as far north as Najran area.

1955

Great Britain defines cartographically by a series of straight-line segments southern borders of Saudi Arabia, termed Modified Riyadh Line. Saudi Arabia rejects British definition.

1950s

British surveys of Trucial States (now the UAE) define boundaries of individual states and their boundaries with Muscat and Oman (now Oman).

1965

British officials define on map, using series of straight lines, the "administrative boundary" between British protectorates of Aden (South Yemen) and sultanate of Oman.

1974

Saudi Arabia and UAE reach boundary agreement providing Saudi access to southern Gulf and transferring other narrow strips of territory to Saudi Arabia from Abu Dhabi.

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Persian Gulf

Persian Gulf

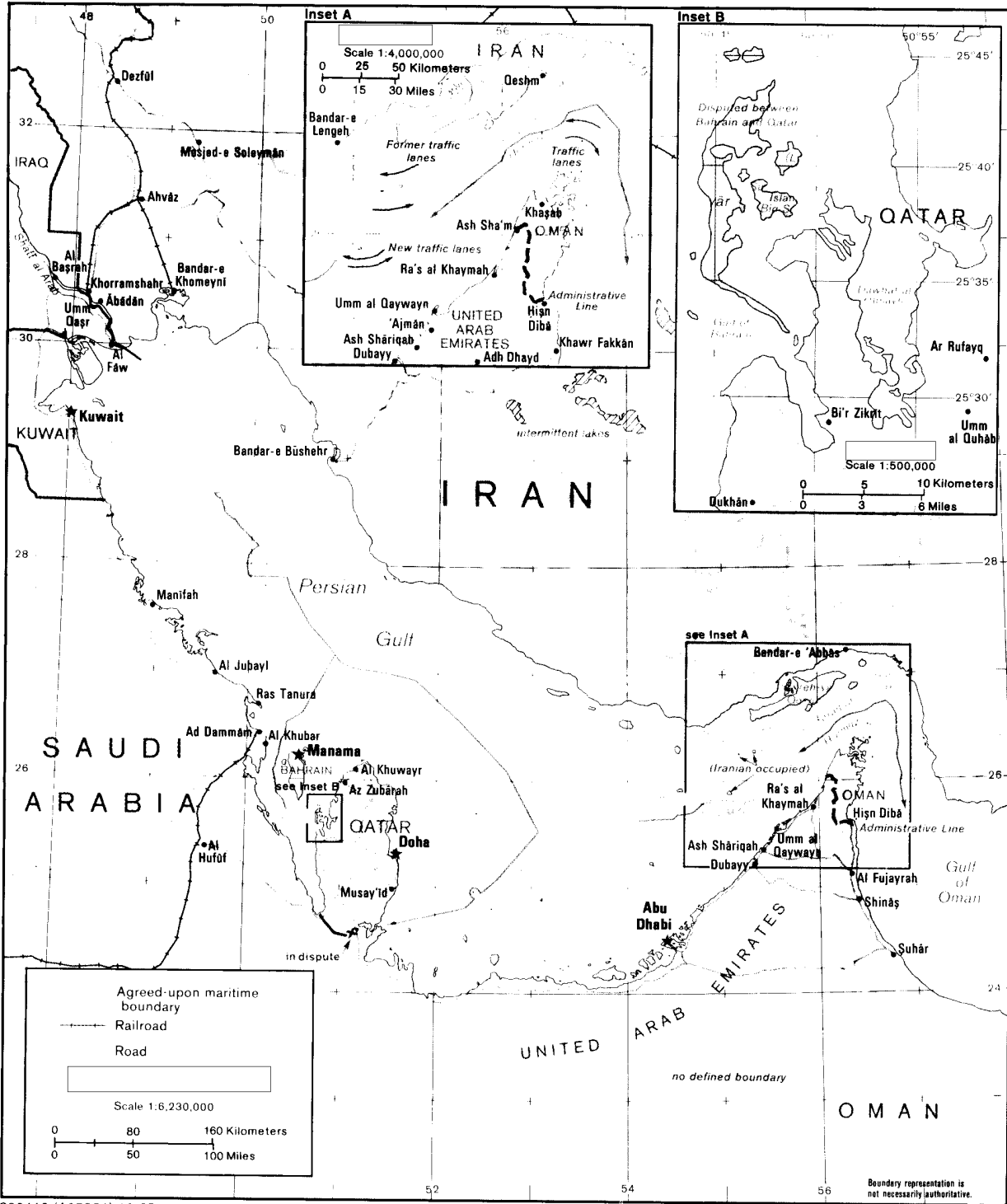
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Persian Gulf



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Persian Gulf

Border Basics

The Persian Gulf is a narrow, virtually enclosed arm of the sea bordered by three major states (Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia) and five small Arab countries (Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, Oman, and the UAE). The small size of the Gulf, about 900 kilometers in length and between 200 and 300 kilometers in width, and its many islands have directly contributed to a number of sovereignty disputes and related problems on the division of marine areas. A dispute between Iran and the UAE over several islands located at the western approach to the narrow Strait of Hormuz—the entrance to the Gulf—concerns other Gulf states because of the leverage it gives Iran, which occupies the islands, to disrupt Gulf shipping. Many disputes over the division of the Gulf's waters, however, have been resolved. []

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Significant Developments

Despite progress over the past 15 years to resolve outstanding differences, particularly the division of the seabed, several disputes remain to be settled. The more important ones, primarily because they are intertwined with the Iranian-Iraqi conflict, involve the northern third of the Gulf and Iran, Iraq, and Kuwait. These disputes are treated in individual boundary assessments. Seven continental shelf boundary agreements have been concluded, namely: Iran-Oman, part of the Iran-UAE boundary, Qatar-UAE, Iran-Qatar, Bahrain-Saudi Arabia, Bahrain-Iran, and Iran-Saudi Arabia. Disputes still unresolved, including both island and marine areas, are discussed or summarized in the succeeding paragraphs. Although the 1974 land boundary agreement between Saudi Arabia and the UAE gives Saudi Arabia Gulf frontage, there is no information on what maritime boundaries adjustments will be made. []

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Bahrain-Qatar. A dispute persists between Bahrain and Qatar over the small, barren island of Hawar and its ring of islets; failure to resolve the sovereignty issue also prevents the two states from dividing the Gulf waters between them. []

The dispute is unusual in that Hawar is located some 23 kilometers from Bahrain, but lies a mere 2.5 kilometers off the Qatar coast. The barren island is not suited for agriculture or much else, but the potential for oil on Hawar, or in the waters near it, is sufficiently high to attract the interest of oil companies. Bahrain maintains a small military garrison on the island. []

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In the late 18th century, the Khalifa family, then located in northern Qatar, moved to Bahrain and established themselves as its rulers. They continued to retain some political influence in northern Qatar for several more decades. These historical facts presumably figured in Great Britain's ruling in 1939 that Hawar belonged to Bahrain. At the time, London controlled the foreign policy of both Bahrain and Qatar. Bahrain's ownership of Hawar was reaffirmed by Britain in 1947. []

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Qatar dismisses these claims on the grounds that the stay of the Bahraini ruling family in Qatar does not give Bahrain permanent sovereignty over areas once within its political domain. Qatari officials also suggest that London's ruling was influenced by a British oil company based on Bahrain and its belief that oil deposits existed on or near Hawar. Qatar's claims, in contrast, are based not on legal grounds but primarily on Hawar's geographical proximity. At low tide, it is possible to wade from Qatar to Hawar. Other "geographical, historical, legal, and logical indications," according to Qatar officials, point to Qatar's ownership. []

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Several efforts since 1975 to mediate have ended in failure. Bahrain reportedly refused to submit the case to the International Court of Justice. Despite reaffirmation of their conflicting claims, usually related to announcements concerning plans for oil surveys and drilling test wells, the common ties and mutual interests between the two countries are growing and suggest eventual compromise and a resolution of differences. []

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Strait of Hormuz (Iran-UAE). The western approaches to the Strait of Hormuz are dotted with a number of islands, most of which are located near the Iranian

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shore and under Iranian sovereignty. In 1971, immediately before British withdrawal from the area, Iran seized three islands—Jazireh-ye Tonb-e Bozorg (Tunb al Kubra or Greater Tunb), Jazireh-ye Tonb-e Kuchek (Tunb as Sughra or Lesser Tunb), and Jazireh-ye Abu Musa (Abu Musa)—lying more or less in mid-channel that had been controlled by the Trucial States (now the UAE) and thus under British protection. [redacted]

The dispute over the three islands dates to the 19th century when the islands were under the jurisdiction of the Shaykh of Lengeh, who controlled an area centered on the port of what is now known as Bandar-e Lengeh located on the northern (Iranian) side of the Persian Gulf. The Shaykh of Lengeh was an Arab whose ancestral ties were in the two small shaykhdoms of Ash Shariqah (Sharjah) and Ra's al Khaymah, now part of the UAE, on the southern side of the Gulf. British forces apparently used the islands to help curb piracy and protect their growing interest in the Gulf region. By terms of a treaty in 1853 with the shaykhdoms of the Trucial coast, Great Britain legally acquired the authority to enforce maritime peace and adjudicate disputes, an obligation strengthened by later treaties in the 1890s. Subsequently, Britain defended the Trucial claims to the islands. [redacted]

Tehran bases its claim on seizure of Lengeh in 1887. Despite efforts to occupy the Gulf islands, none of the attempts resulted in a permanent presence. Britain's announcement in 1968 of its intention to withdraw politically from the region caused the shaykhdoms of Ras al Khaymah to claim the Tunbs and Ash Shariqah, the island of Abu Musa. The Shah of Iran, however, also announced in early 1971 plans to secure the islands. An agreement was subsequently reached between Iran and the Shaykh of Ash Shariqah for joint control of Abu Musa. A provision in the agreement provided for sharing of revenues from drilling ventures near the island (oil was discovered with production commencing in 1974). Iran has since fortified Greater Tunb and Abu Musa. [redacted]

The Iranian occupation of the islands on the day prior to British withdrawal precipitated sharp anti-Iranian and anti-British reactions throughout much of the Arab world. Iraq threatened to militarily intervene to

regain the islands for Arab claimants. When Iran declared a war zone around the islands in September 1980, shipping had to be rerouted to a new channel south of and outside the 12-mile limit around Abu Musa. [redacted]

In December 1982 Iran signed the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and asserted its right to restrict innocent passage through Iranian territorial seas. Tehran also maintained that the United States, as a nonsignatory of the convention, would not have transit passage rights through the Strait of Hormuz (the transit channels, however, now lie wholly within Oman's territorial waters). The United States interprets transit passage as a customary right, to which it is entitled and which may not be impeded. Iran's letter to the UN Secretary General in December 1983 asserted that "freedom of navigation is possible only under conditions of security . . ." and that it is impossible to isolate the security of one littoral state from the security of the others. Iranian restriction of passage through the Strait of Hormuz, if attempted, would involve interdiction of ships in Omani waters.

[redacted]

The transit issue and threat to shipping remain highly contentious and somewhat dependent on the progress, tactics, and eventual resolution of the protracted war between Iran and Iraq. [redacted]

Other Gulf Boundaries. Several marine boundaries in the Gulf remain to be defined because of the continuance of the Iran-Iraq war and other disputes. Boundaries not yet decided include:

- The Iran-Iraq marine boundary.
- Kuwait's boundaries in the Gulf with Iran, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia.
- The boundary between Bahrain and Qatar, undefined because of the dispute over Hawar.
- The land boundary disagreement between Oman and some of the emirates of the UAE delays the definition of a marine boundary between the two nations.

Although a short segment of the Iran-UAE shelf boundary has been negotiated, but not ratified by the UAE, the dispute over ownership of the islands at the

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western approaches to the Strait of Hormuz requires resolution before the entire shelf boundary between them is defined.

Border Treaties and Key Dates**1958**

Saudi Arabia and Bahrain decide (22 February) Gulf boundary, using equidistance method between base-points on both coastlines.

1968

Saudi Arabia and Iran agree (24 October) to sea boundary; reflects equal exchange of areas in relation to equidistant line and settles ownership of two islands.

1969

Qatar and Abu Dhabi (later UAE) agree (30 March) to marine division, mostly based on nonequidistant methods.

Iran and Qatar agree (20 September) to Gulf boundary, disregarding Iranian, Qatari, and UAE islands in drawing lines. Note: 1974 Oman-Saudi Arabia land boundary agreement presumably changes this line.

1971

Iran and Bahrain agree (17 June) to marine boundary connecting to earlier negotiated Iran-Saudi Arabia and Iran-Qatar maritime boundaries.

On 30 November, one day before British transfer of power to UAE, Iran seizes Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa, claimed by UAE shaykhdoms.

1974

Iran and Oman agree (25 July) to maritime boundary, using modified equidistant method. Iran and UAE sign (31 August) shelf agreement; boundary heeds extension east and west. Agreement ratified by Iran, but not by UAE.

1980

In September Iran declares war zone and shifts shipping channel 12 nautical miles south of Abu Musa.

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Egypt-Israel

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Egypt-Israel

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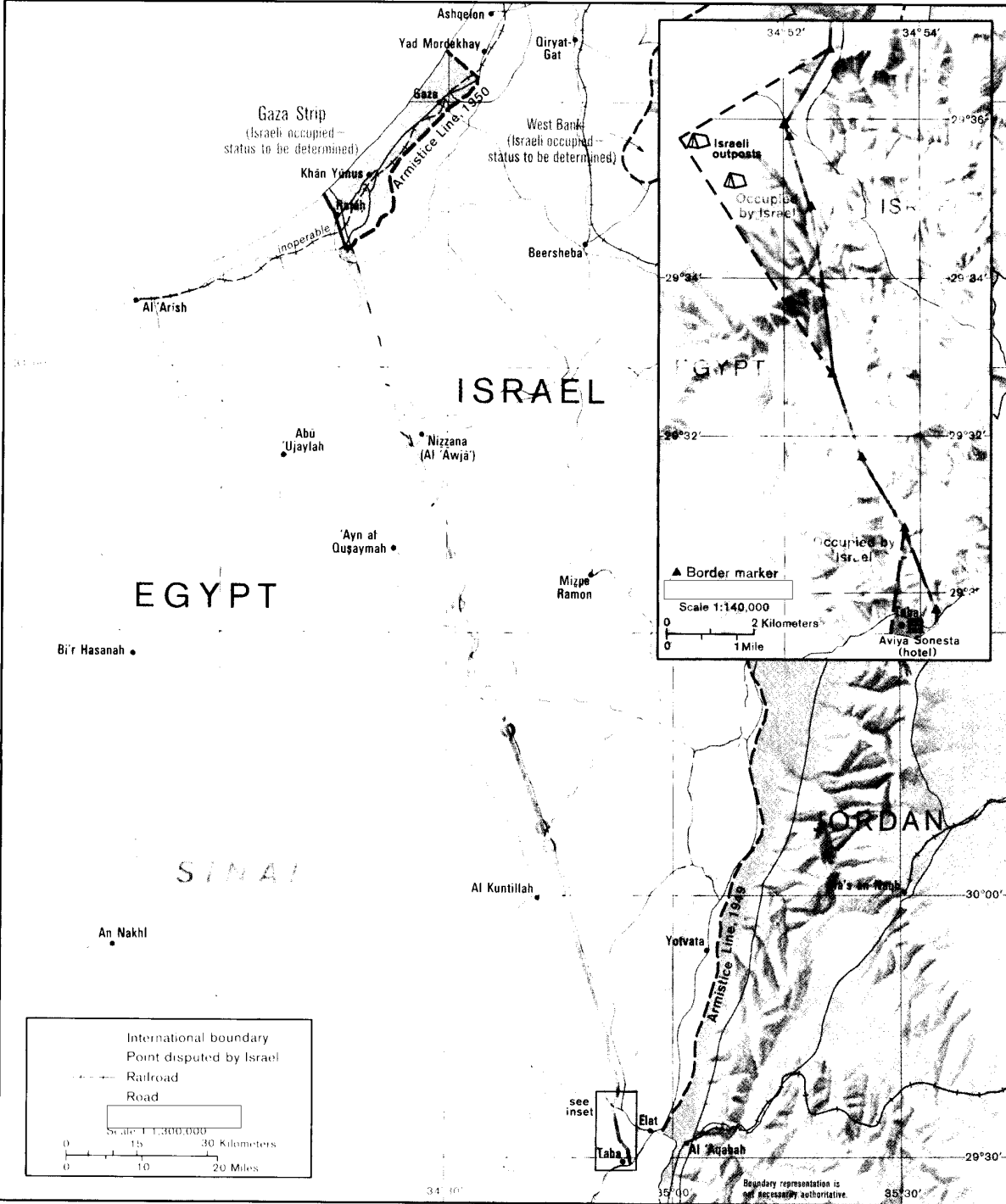


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Egypt-Israel Border



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Egypt-Israel**Border Basics**

The Egypt-Israel boundary in the Sinai is 266 kilometers in length, extending from a point on the Mediterranean Sea near Rafah to Taba, a point near the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. The boundary was originally delimited and demarcated in 1906; 14 markers were initially placed to mark the alignment, and a number of supplementary markers were erected later. The crests of hills and other physical features, many of them intervisible, were used as sites for many of the markers. By terms of the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel, the boundary was to be redemarcated using the earlier 1906 demarcation for guidance. During redemarcation a number of disputes arose over the precise location of individual markers and the boundary alignment. [redacted]

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The border crosses the Sinai Peninsula, a region of generally barren, desolate desert terrain. An exception is a narrow strip of densely populated coastal plain at the extreme northern end of the boundary. The remainder of the border passes through rough plateau and mountainous terrain. Some sections, particularly in the north, are blanketed with sand dunes. [redacted]

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The only significant population along the border is in the north where the boundary adjoins the Gaza Strip. A predominantly Palestinian population is found here, many housed in refugee camps and resettlement areas. There are also 12 Israeli settlements in Gaza. The rest of the borderlands is essentially unpopulated except for a scattered and transitory Bedouin population. In a few areas near the border, a little agriculture is found when sufficient rain or other water sources are available to permit the growing of crops. [redacted]

Significant Developments

Territorial problems relating to the Sinai did not vanish with the signing of the 1979 peace treaty between Egypt and Israel. Before the withdrawal of Israeli forces on 26 April 1982, a joint boundary

commission was formed to redemarcate the boundary, using the earlier 1906 demarcation work as guidance, and to settle such issues as vehicle-crossing points and crossing procedures. During the work of the boundary commission, a number of disagreements arose—all of them raised by Israel—over the precise location of some of the boundary markers. Most were minor, involving only a few meters in their placement, although at one point in the southern half of the border the difference amounts to about 2.5 kilometers. The most important dispute, however, is the location of the terminal point of the boundary at Taba where a luxury beach hotel (the Aviya Sonesta) and other tourist facilities opened in 1982 at locations up to several hundred meters west of the traditional boundary. Other beach facilities had opened during the 1970s. Discussions in 1982-83 over Taba were inconclusive. A meeting in late January 1985 between Israeli and Egyptian officials produced limited agreement over some functions of the multinational observer forces (MFO) to be deployed in the disputed Taba area. [redacted]

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Frontier History

The definition of the Egypt-Israel boundary in the Sinai evolved from a unilateral British announcement in 1892, issued under the auspices of the Egyptian Khedivate, stating that an administrative line separating Egypt from Turkish-ruled Palestine should be defined. The proposed administrative line ran from near Al 'Arish in a southeasterly direction to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. Turkey did not officially respond with a counterproposal until 1906, when it suggested that a line be drawn from Al 'Arish to the southern tip of the Sinai Peninsula. Negotiations ensued and an agreement reached to align the boundary from Rafah on the Mediterranean coast to Taba, located near the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. An initial traverse was completed in May-June 1906 that determined the coordinates of a series of provisional points along an approximate boundary line. After the agreement was accepted and signed, a joint commission of British and Turkish officials demarcated the border by placing intervisible markers along most of the

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boundary. In the vicinity of Taba, the boundary points were marked on site by agreement between Turkish and Egyptian representatives. []

The boundary was not affected by the demise of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of a British mandate in Palestine after World War I. The emergence of Israel and the first Arab-Israeli war (1948-49) caused minor changes. In the extreme northern part of the boundary, Egyptian forces occupied a narrow strip of territory, now known as the Gaza Strip, east of the old boundary. About 40 kilometers south of Gaza, a demilitarized zone was established around the Al 'Awja' oasis (called Nizzana by Israel) adjacent to the boundary. []

Israel captured the Sinai in 1956, but under pressure returned the territory to Egypt in 1957, although the former demilitarized zone at Al 'Awja' was retained by Tel Aviv. Israel militarily captured the Sinai once more and also the Gaza Strip in the brief 1967 war. Israeli control of the Sinai was relinquished in April 1982, when by terms of the 1979 peace treaty the old boundary was reaffirmed. []

Current Developments and Outlook

Taba and other disagreements over the boundary have dragged on since 1982 with little progress. Both governments face internal political problems in a settlement: for Egypt, to acquiesce to the current territorial status quo; for Israel, to relinquish territory now held. Egyptian officials want the issue resolved through arbitration, believing that Cairo's case is a strong one. [] Tel Aviv will try for a joint ownership arrangement of Taba and its lucrative tourist business, a resolution Cairo almost certainly will reject. The border problem, however, is also tied to broader Egyptian-Israeli issues and progress in improving relations between Cairo and Tel Aviv. The Egyptian-Israeli meeting at Beer-sheba of 27-29 January 1985 resulted in an agreement to allow the MFO to enter the disputed area but in disagreement as to its function. Israel insists that the MFO force has limited functions and that the Israeli police presence continue; Egypt contends that the Israeli police activities in Taba violate the "letter and spirit" of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Further talks on Taba are scheduled. If an agreement on

Taba is reached, the remaining boundary differences should be easier to resolve. []

Border Treaties and Key Dates

1892

British unilaterally proclaim boundary between Egypt and Ottoman Empire extends from near Al 'Arish direct to head of Gulf of Aqaba.

1905-06

Tension over Sinai rises as British want land depth to protect Suez and as Ottoman Sultan wants area at head of Gulf of Aqaba for railroad.

1906

British and Turkish Governments exchange notes (14-15 May) on Sinai border delimitation with agreement over demarcation signed on 10 November.

1917

Palestine comes under British military rule and in 1922 becomes British Mandate.

1948

British forces leave Palestine (15 May); Israel becomes state; Arab states invade Israel.

1949

Armistice reached, ending Arab-Israeli hostilities. Armistice line follows Sinai boundary except for Egyptian control of Gaza and demilitarized zone at Al 'Awja' (Nizzana).

1956-57

Israel attacks Egypt, captures Sinai; Israel withdraws (March 1957) from Sinai and retains control over Al 'Awja'.

1967

Israel recaptures Sinai (June).

1975

Egypt and Israel agree to staged Israeli withdrawal from western Sinai.

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1978

Israel begins construction of hotel on Egyptian side of boundary at Faba.

1979

Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty calls for Israeli withdrawal by 26 April 1982 and restoration of 1906 boundary. Treaty provides for UN (later multinational) forces and observers in Egypt adjacent to boundary.

1981-82

Joint commission demarcates boundary except at nine separate areas where disputes arise over marker placement.

1982

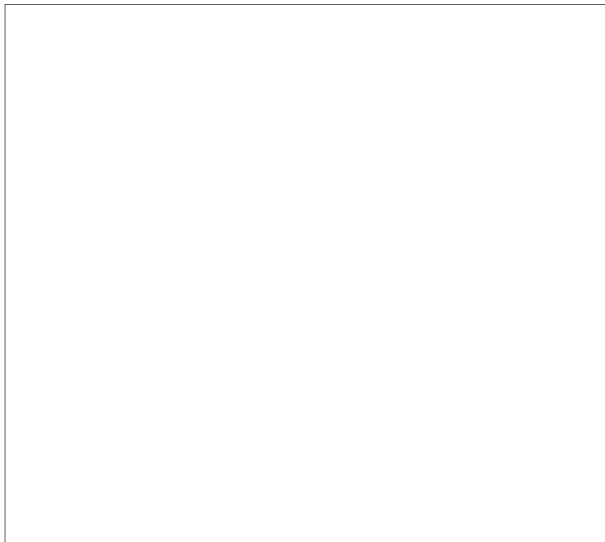
Israeli forces withdraw except at Taba and three other locations. Israeli hotel (Aviya Sonesta) opens for business.

1984

Growing internal political pressures in Egypt to force resolution of dispute.

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Israel-Jordan

Israel-Jordan

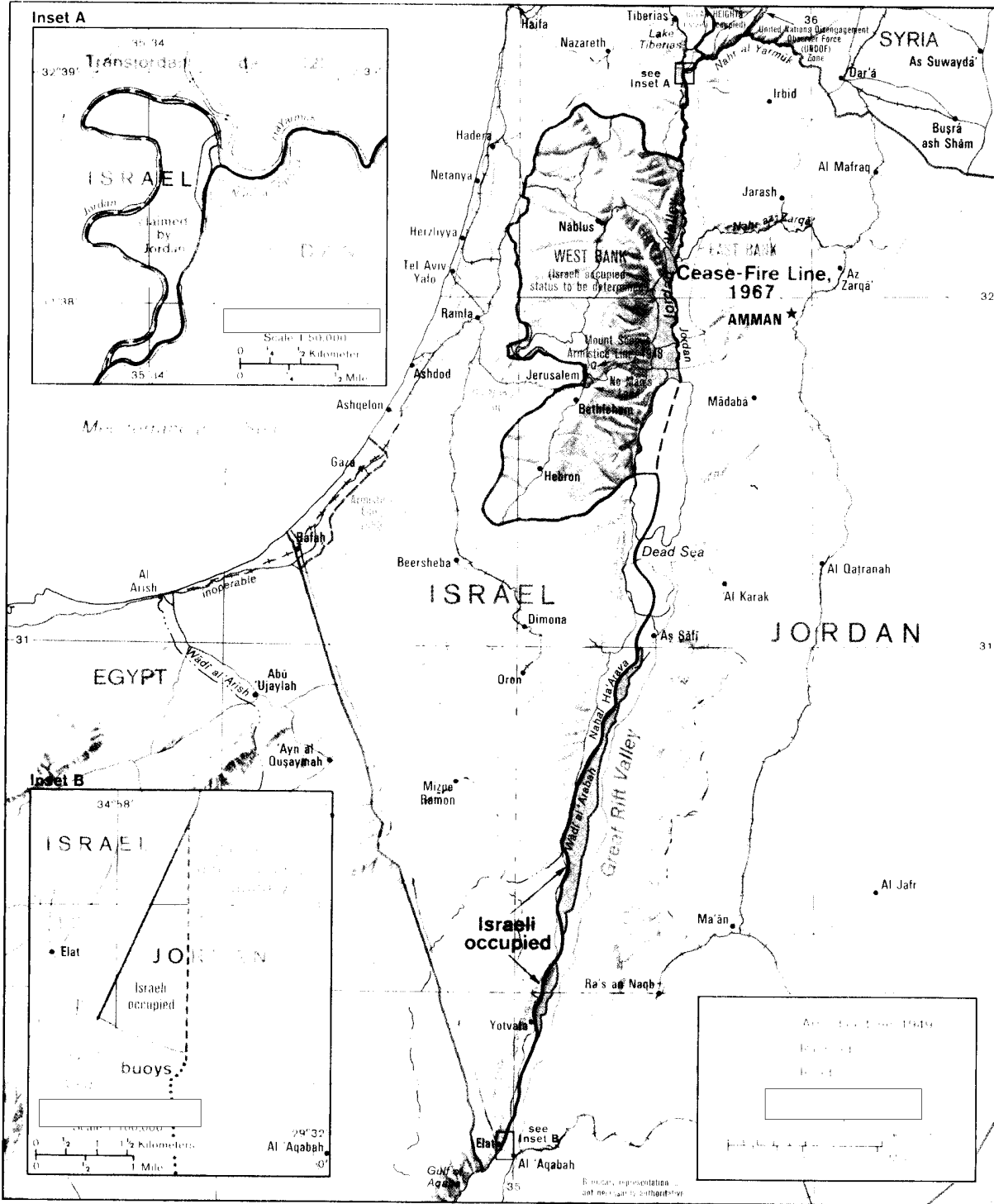
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Israel-Jordan-West Bank Border



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Israel-Jordan**Border Basics**

25X1 *The de facto boundary between Israel and Jordan extends north to south for roughly 455 kilometers from a point on the Yarmuk River to the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. The boundary south of the Dead Sea is technically part of the 1949 Armistice Line; a section of the boundary north of the Dead Sea is part of the 1967 Cease-Fire Line. Both these northern and southern "lines" correspond to Jordan's boundaries that were defined—though never demarcated—when Transjordan was created in 1921.* []

25X1 *According to the 1978 Camp David accords and subsequent statements made by US officials, the final status of the West Bank territory controlled by Jordan (1948-67), its relationship with its neighbors, and the Israel-Jordan boundary are to be negotiated among the concerned parties. Pending completion of this process, US policy regards the status of the West Bank as yet to be determined.* []

The northern section of the boundary follows the Yarmuk River west for a short distance before joining the meandering course of the Jordan River. The Jordan Valley is fairly broad—in places 10 to 13 kilometers wide—and good agricultural land exists in strips of river floodplain and wadi bottoms that

can be irrigated. A sizable Arab population, including many Palestinian refugees, inhabited the West Bank side of the valley when Jordan administered the area. Some of this population fled to the East Bank of Jordan during the 1967 war; only a small number have been repatriated. Israeli settlements have been constructed on West Bank lands, including the Jordan Valley. [] 25X1

The 175-kilometer southern section of the boundary extends south from the Dead Sea and follows the Wadi al'Arabah (called Nahal Ha'Arava by the Israelis)—part of the geological depression known as the Great Rift Valley, much of it below sea level, that extends from Mozambique to Syria. The southern borderlands consist of flat to rolling desert terrain, cut here and there by smaller wadis and backed by rugged hills and mountains. Traditionally, the borderlands held only a scattering of Bedouins. Israeli settlements have been established and a little agriculture is practiced on the Israeli side. On the Jordan side, the population still is scanty, mostly Bedouins. Israel has erected security fences and established strict controls along nearly all sections of its boundary with Jordan. [] 25X1

Significant Developments

The major boundary dispute between Israel and Jordan is essentially a territorial and legal problem over the West Bank—whose ultimate resolution is tied to deeply complicated political issues. Less contentious disputes involve much of the southern section of the boundary and a short section of the northern boundary. In the south, the boundary—actually the 1949 Armistice Line—is aligned along the center or deepest part of the Wadi al 'Arabah. Israel has constructed a security fence along the boundary and for part of the distance the fence is from 1 to several kilometers east of where Jordan claims the Armistice Line is located. Another dispute is the division of territory

immediately south of the Dead Sea. A third area in dispute is at the juncture of the Nahr al Yarmuk (Yarmuk) and Jordan Rivers. No progress has been made in several low-key approaches by Jordan over the years to resolve these border differences. []

Frontier History

25X1 Transjordan was founded in 1921, a result of the interplay of rising Arab nationalism, Zionism, and the downfall of the Ottoman Empire and the subsequent mandate system set up to administer territories previously controlled by Turkey. In 1921 the British-administered Palestine Mandate was subdivided to

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create the Arab Emirate of Transjordan. Transjordan's boundary with Palestine was defined in 1922 in very general language to begin at a point 3.2 kilometers west of the town of Al 'Aqabah, thence up (north) following the Wadi al 'Arabah, through the Dead Sea, along the River Jordan to its juncture with the Yarmuk River, and following that river to the Syrian border. The boundary was later drawn on 1:100,000-scale topographic maps, labeled "not demarcated." [redacted]

The failure to demarcate their common boundary apparently created no serious problems between Transjordan and Palestine before 1948 and the establishment of the state of Israel. When the first Arab-Israeli war was ended by the 1949 Armistice, the Armistice Line shown on an accompanying map appeared to follow the older boundary between the two states except in the West Bank area where Arab forces were in military occupation of Palestine. The West Bank territory of more than 5,800 square kilometers was defined by an Armistice Line that ran west from the Dead Sea, then north to include part of Jerusalem (with an Israeli exclave on Mt. Scopus), and eventually back to the east to join the Jordan River at a point about 70 kilometers north of the Dead Sea. During the 1967 war Israel quickly seized the West Bank and in effect returned the boundary to its pre-1948 position. Israel (1967) unilaterally enlarged the boundaries of Jerusalem, adding about 65 square kilometers of West Bank territory. [redacted]

The most significant boundary question, aside from the West Bank territory, is the alignment of the border in the Wadi al 'Arabah. Israel has constructed a security fence along some 120 kilometers of the border. The fence encroaches from 1 to 7 kilometers east of the boundary as depicted on older topographic maps. Within the fenced territory is a dirt security road and bits of cultivated land, and a few water wells. Unfortunately, the alignment shown on the 1949 Armistice Agreement map is at too small a scale for locational precision. Although the Armistice Line is defined on the map as representing "military positions as surveyed in March 1949 by UN observers," it is assumed that the Armistice Line was intended to follow the defined, although undemarcated, boundary previously existing between the two

countries. Most of the Armistice Line was subsequently marked on the ground with pylons by the Mixed Armistice Commission. [redacted]

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The location of the Armistice Line immediately south of the Dead Sea is also in dispute. A potash refinery, built in 1936 and located on what is now the Israeli side of the border, is supplied from salt pans, some of which extended into then Transjordan. During the 1950s and early 1960s Jordan complained that Israel was expanding salt pan operations into Jordanian territory. The disagreement is over the location on the ground of the ill-defined 1949 Armistice Line and interpretations of the vague wording of the 1922 border delimitation in an area where the Wadi al 'Arabah is not present. An additional complication for future negotiations is the gradual lowering of the water level in the Dead Sea and the consequent expansion of land at the shallow south end of the sea. [redacted]

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There is disagreement over the southern terminus of the boundary at the head of the Gulf of Aqaba. The 1922 agreement specified that the boundary began at a point 3.2 kilometers west of the town of Al 'Aqabah. On later topographic maps, the boundary was depicted at a point about 4.8 kilometers to the west, instead of 3.2 kilometers. In 1946, however, the boundary was repositioned to start at a point 3.2 kilometers west of Al 'Aqabah, and about 4 kilometers of the boundary was demarcated to where it intersected the earlier drawn line. Because UN officials used an older map, the 1949 Armistice Line showed the terminal point and alignment in accordance with pre-1946 conditions. Israel has used the 1946 repositioning of the boundary terminus to expand resort development at Elat and to extend a line of buoys more or less due south into the Gulf that narrows access to Jordan's port at Al 'Aqabah. [redacted]

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Also disputed is a small parcel of land at the juncture of the Jordan and Yarmuk Rivers. The territory, roughly triangular in shape, probably amounts to about 3 square kilometers and is occupied by Israel.

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Although the old boundary between Jordan and Palestine used the rivers to define the boundary, the 1949 Armistice Line map depicts the line cutting diagonally southwest-northeast from the Jordan to Yarmuk just before their juncture. Although they have not yet arisen, disputes are also possible where the sinuous Jordan River forms the boundary because changes in the channel caused by flooding presumably "move" the boundary as well.

Current Developments and Outlook

The Israeli-Jordanian boundary disputes have not been widely publicized. Although Jordan shows the disputed areas on its maps and atlases, its protests have been low level, directed at third parties—the United States and UN officials—to point out Israeli incursions. Generally, however, Jordan has been concerned only when there are potential conflicts with Jordanian development programs or rights of access. In the mid-1970s Jordan's construction of a road parallel to the southern border caused concern because its proposed alignment would intersect the Israeli security fence at several points. The Israelis, however, reacted by moving their fence west, permitting Jordanian road construction to proceed.

The small scale of the armistice map and faulty cartographic representation of the Armistice Line—the width of the line is easily 500 to 700 meters—provide grounds for differing interpretations. In addition, the topographic character of the Wadi al 'Arabah as to its "center" or "deepest point" also leaves room for differences that would need resolving during boundary negotiations. Israel has made the point that in places changes in the channel of the Wadi al 'Arabah negate the location of the boundary as interpreted from the 1922 agreement. The boundary issue is likely to remain quiet unless some new development, such as an oil strike in the borderlands, requires a precisely defined and agreed upon boundary.

Border Treaties and Key Dates

1921

Establishment of British Mandate over what is named Transjordan, separating territory from British-ruled Palestine territory (west of the Jordan River). Abdullah (grandfather of King Hussein) confirmed as ruler of a semiautonomous Emirate of Transjordan.

1922

Palestine Order-in-Council defines Transjordan's boundaries with Palestine, such as the Jordan River–Dead Sea–Wadi al 'Arabah–Gulf of Aqaba Line. No provision for demarcation.

1946

Short section (4 kilometers) of southern boundary demarcated north from Gulf of Aqaba.

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1948

March treaty with Britain grants full sovereignty to Transjordan.

Israel established (May 14) and Arab nations invade on following day.

1949

UN-administered armistice ends first Arab-Israeli war; Armistice Agreement contains maps delineating line separating opposing armies; Jordan occupies West Bank, about 5,858 square kilometers. Except for West Bank boundaries, Armistice Line conforms generally to Jordan-Palestine border.

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1950

West Bank formally annexed (only Britain and Pakistan recognized action) and name changed to Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

1967

Israel seized West Bank territory; Cease-Fire Line of 7 June along Jordan River south to Dead Sea reconfirms older Jordan-Palestine border.

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1975-76

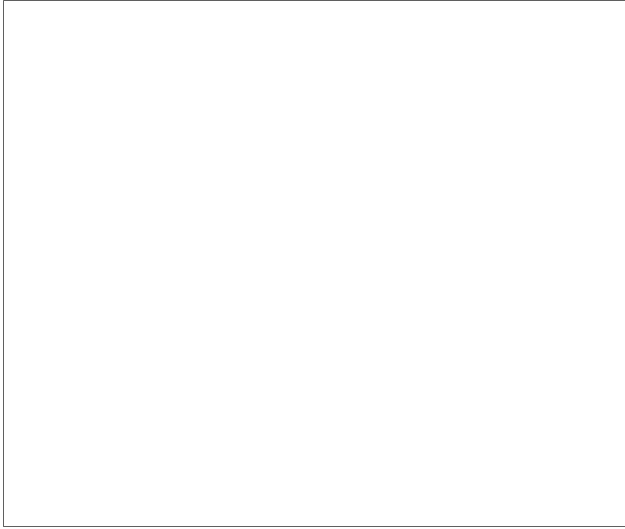
Minor crisis over Jordanian roadbuilding in southern boundary section averted when Israel relocates security fence erected east of Armistice Line.



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Israel-Lebanon

Israel-Lebanon

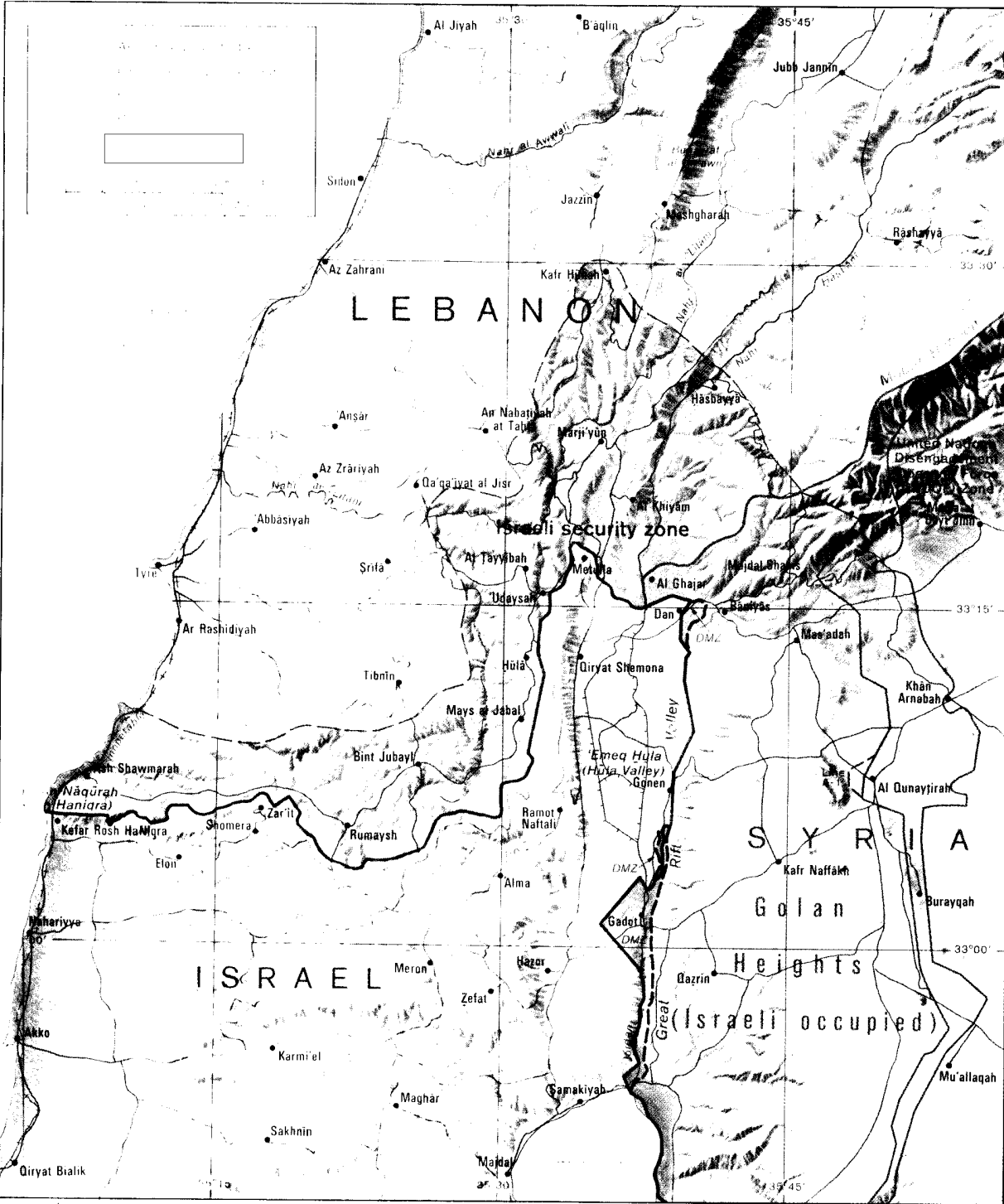
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Israel-Lebanon Border



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Israel-Lebanon**Border Basics**

25X1 *The Israel-Lebanon boundary, technically the Israel-Lebanon Armistice Line of 1949, is 79 kilometers in length measured west to east from Ra's An Naqurah, on the Mediterranean, to the trijunction of the Israel-Lebanon-Syria boundary. Since Israel's occupation of the Golan Heights (1967), the de facto tripoint presently is located another 20 kilometers to the north-east on the lower slopes of Mount Hermon. The 1949 Armistice Agreement stipulated that the Armistice Line was to follow the former Lebanon-Palestine boundary officially defined by the Anglo-French Boundary Convention (1920), demarcated by 38 boundary posts (1922), and ratified in 1923.* []

25X1 *The boundary alignment follows the crest of low hills and ridges in the west, cuts across somewhat higher (600 to 900 meters) and more rugged terrain in the central sector, and in the eastern sector runs north-south along the western rim of the Great Rift Valley overlooking the 'Emeq Hula (Hula Valley) before winding its way to a point near Al Ghajar. Parts of the boundary consist of short straight-line segments connecting individual markers.* []

25X1 *When the boundary was established, the population of the border area was mostly Arab (Shia Muslims) with a few Jewish settlements in Palestine. A few Christian villages were interspersed in southern Lebanon. Since 1948 Jewish settlement has increased, and since 1969 there have been additional population displacements and a net population loss in southern Lebanon caused by people fleeing from Palestinian guerrilla attacks into Israel and Israeli military operations.* []

Significant Developments

Since the military invasion of Lebanon in 1982, Israel has exercised complete control over the boundary and border area. There have been no changes made in the alignment other than some slight adjustments made prior to 1982 to allow for road changes and to

accommodate security fencing. The boundary alignment has not figured in discussions initiated to settle the political and security relationships between Lebanon and Israel. []

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Frontier History

The Lebanon-Palestine (later Israel) boundary was an outgrowth of early 20th-century political events: the decline and overthrow of the Ottoman Empire, which controlled much of the Middle East; the scramble and rivalry between Great Britain and France over the division of the Ottoman possessions; the rise of Zionism; and Arab nationalism and aspirations. []

Proposals to divide Turkish territories began during World War I, and many plans were considered to satisfy the several groups with interests in the region. In the end, however, the military occupation of the area by British and French troops forced decisions. Zionist aims, supported by the British, were to secure additional water, notably to incorporate the headwaters of the Jordan River within a Jewish-dominated state and to gain access to the Nahr al Litani, to support future development and provide arable land for Jewish settlers. France's desire to maximize its area of control led to the concept of a Greater Lebanon state. In 1920 a compromise was reached on dividing the Ottoman territory and a Lebanon-Palestine boundary defined; initially both states were to be mandates of Great Britain and France, respectively. Although the boundaries of Palestine included all Jewish colonies, the territorial limits of Palestine failed to incorporate territory that would augment its meager water supplies. []

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The 1920 convention defining the boundary paid scant attention to actual ground and terrain conditions. Consequently, the 1922 boundary demarcation caused division of some village and individual land holdings and disruption of local trade and transportation. These local problems were resolved in a 1926 agreement (Lebanon-Palestine-Syria) that established procedures allowing border inhabitants freedom to cross the boundary without the usual formalities. []

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Although Israeli forces advanced into southeastern Lebanon during the first Arab-Israeli war (1948-49), the terms of the Armistice Agreement called for the Armistice Line to follow the former Lebanon-Palestine boundary. The border area remained quiet over the following 20 years, in part because an Israeli-Lebanese Mixed Armistice Commission carefully marked the Armistice Line in 1950 to prevent accidental crossings and incidents. Stricter regulations, however, also stopped the easy cross-border travel and economic activities of the past.

The peaceful character of the border area changed after 1969, when Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) forces moved into southern Lebanon. The next 15 years saw cross-border raids, invasions, civil war, and since 1982 Israeli occupation of southern Lebanon. There was considerable damage to border villages and a general depopulation, much of it temporary, of the border area. During this time Israel constructed (1974) a security fence along the border together with other security measures designed to prevent illegal entry. In 1976 a "good fence" policy was instituted to permit and regulate a limited amount of cross-border travel and trade and to nurture linkage between villagers in southern Lebanon with Israel.

Current Developments and Outlook

Despite the prolonged period of military activities in and near the border, there are no indications that either an Israeli-Lebanese settlement or the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon would change the location of the boundary. Israel has, however, in the construction of its border security fence and structures encroached in some areas onto the Lebanese side of the border. The border terrain favors infiltration from the north and is militarily unfavorable to Israel. It is possible that in a settlement some minor alterations in the boundary may be agreed upon, probably in a context of boundary redemarcation based on updating the 1923 boundary treaty. Israel's major interest in the border area is to maintain a buffer area of some depth on the Lebanese side that would be under Israeli or a surrogate's control.

Border Treaties and Key Dates

1920

Franco-British Boundary Convention signed in Paris (23 December) delimits boundary but fails to incorporate within Palestine the river basin areas (Jordan and Litani) desired by Zionists. French Mandate for Lebanon and Syria and British Mandate for Palestine established.

1922

Mixed Anglo-French commission marks boundary on ground.

1923

Agreement signed in Paris (7 March) on demarcation of border between "Greater Lebanon" and Palestine. Three maps at 1:100,000 scale appended, showing marker placement and terrain.

1926

Agreement between Lebanon-Palestine-Syria, signed at Jerusalem (2 February), over administration of frontier and division of land holdings; alignment unchanged.

1949

Lebanon and Palestine sign Armistice Agreement (23 March); Article V, Section 1, states that "Armistice Demarcation Line shall follow the international boundary between Lebanon and Palestine."

1950

Boundary marked in greater detail by mixed Israeli-Lebanese team to prevent inadvertent border crossing by local inhabitants.

1969

Palestinian guerrilla presence in southern Lebanon ushers in cross-border shellings and raids, prompting Israeli reprisals and preemptive strikes in southern Lebanon.

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1974

Israel constructs elaborate security fence and related installations to prevent border crossings.

1976

Israel establishes "good fence" program specifying border crossing points to permit limited and supervised contact and trade in border area.

1978

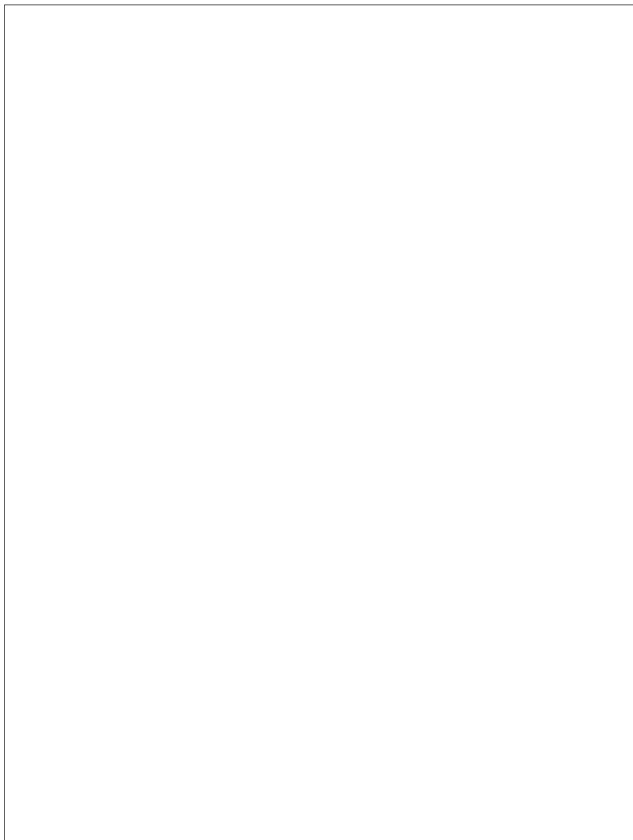
Israeli military invasion north to Nahr al Litani attacking guerrilla base area; withdrawal after three months.

1982

Israeli invasion and occupation of southern Lebanon.



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Lebanon-Syria

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Lebanon-Syria

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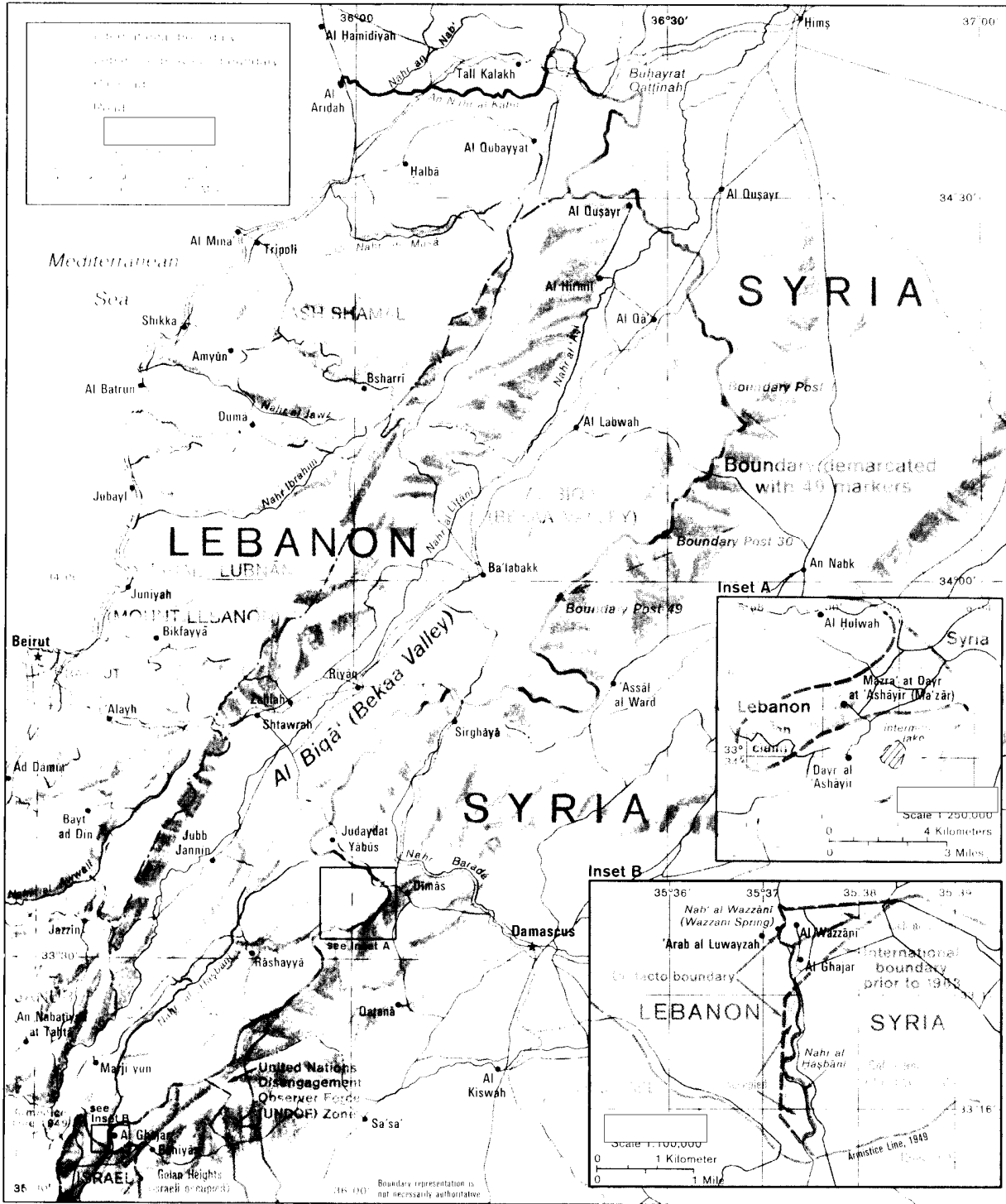


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Lebanon-Syria Border



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Lebanon-Syria**Border Basics**

The Lebanon-Syria boundary—estimated at about 375 kilometers in length—was initially established in 1920 when France divided the mandate into separate Syrian and Lebanese territories. Only two short sections of the boundary have been settled. No comprehensive border treaty, however, has been signed.

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Most of the central and southern sections of the boundary are aligned southwest-northeast along the crests of hills and mountains; occasionally, the boundary is aligned in wadis or stream valleys. The northern third of the boundary, however, leaves the mountains and is aligned northwest and then west across plains and low hills. The northwesternmost section of the boundary follows the An Nahr al Kabir, a stream that empties into the Mediterranean at Al 'Aridah.

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The border area is fairly well populated even in the mountainous areas, traditionally places of refuge from invaders. The border population and the diverse ethnic and religious identifications of the inhabitants have not openly figured in the low-key disagreements over the boundary alignment.

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Significant Developments

Neither Syria nor Lebanon has voiced much concern or widely publicized a failure to delimit and demarcate their common border or their differing interpretations of the boundary alignment. A joint commission worked periodically after 1958 to delimit the boundary, but agreement apparently was reached for only two short boundary sections. Maps issued by the two countries continue to show border differences, of which the most significant are those in the area where the main route from Damascus to Lebanon's Al Biqa' (Bekaa Valley) crosses the frontier and at the village of Al Ghajar at the southern end of the border.

Frontier History

The Lebanon-Syria boundary has been neither delimited nor demarcated in its entirety, and verbal descriptions of the boundary alignment are generalized. The ambiguous status of the boundary results from agreements reached following protracted negotiations over the disposition of the former Turkish domains in the Middle East. The territory now comprising Syria and Lebanon was placed under French mandate. In September 1920 France separated the area, adding coastal districts and the Bekaa Valley to Mount Lebanon and thus creating the modern state of Lebanon. No legal description of the boundary accompanied this administrative measure nor was provision made, since both Syria and Lebanon were under French control, for border delimitation and demarcation.

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The vague definition of the boundary was not remedied in Lebanon's first constitution (1926), which merely stated that: "Its frontiers are the present ones which are officially recognized by the mandatory French Government, and by the League of Nations." The revised constitution of 1943 struck this clause and in its place inserted a more specific boundary description that referred to rivers and "summit lines" separating river valleys and other physical features. Part of the description, however, stated that the boundary followed the borders of certain administrative districts. The boundaries of older Turkish administrative districts apparently were meant to coincide with mountain crests in some areas, but in other areas administrative lines were drawn without apparent reference to physical features.

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Lebanon and Syria gained full independence by 1946, but neither country hurried to delimit and demarcate their common boundary. Official Lebanese topographic maps in the late 1950s, for example, carried no boundary with Syria; government ministries and officials marked individual maps by hand using older French maps for boundary alignment guidance. At that time Lebanon had no official position as to the border alignment. In the late 1950s the two countries

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finally agreed to appoint a mixed boundary commission to review the border situation and to delimit those sections of the boundary not clearly defined. The commission apparently worked fitfully and slowly and after a decade (1969) reported agreement and delimitation of only "50 to 60 kilometers" of the boundary. Agreement was reached on the river boundary (the An Nahr al Kabir) in the north and a section of the boundary of about 55 kilometers marked by 49 boundary posts extending from approximately 34°00'N to 34°14'N in the northeast. Officials stated that terrain features and village borders were the major criteria used to fix the boundary. Lebanese topographic maps printed in 1964 show the boundary presumably recognized by the government. [redacted]

The major border differences that emerged in the late 1950s and early 1960s, apparently through Syrian actions, include:

- A Syrian salient of about 6 by 2 kilometers, extending southwest from the main Damascus-Bekaa Valley route. The salient incorporates the village of Mazra' at Dayr at 'Ashayir (Ma'zar), reportedly a Syrian-inhabited village, blocking easy Lebanese access to the border. Syria probably occupied the area in the late 1950s or early 1960s.
- A small area centered at the village of Al Ghajar and including the Nab' al Wazzani (Wazzani Spring), a major water source for the Nahr al Hasbani (lower Hasbani River) in Lebanon. The traditional, although undemarcated, boundary had split the village of Al Ghajar. The northern part of the village, inside Lebanon, was reunited when Syria moved the boundary north in 1963 (possibly earlier) about 0.5 kilometer to facilitate digging a canal from the Wazzani Spring to the Golan Heights. Israel seized the area in 1967 and continues to use the de facto alignment as its border with Lebanon.
- South of Al Ghajar, the Hasbani River formed the Lebanon-Syria boundary for about 4 kilometers until the Israel border was reached. Israeli maps now show the boundary along the western bank, in places up to 500 meters from the river, from just south of Al Ghajar to the boundary tripoint. [redacted]

Although other border differences appear minor and probably related to cartographic problems of map scale and the amount of topographic detail, reporting from a boundary commission member in 1969 stated that a "large number of errors" in the boundary remain. [redacted]

Current Developments and Outlook

It is unlikely that Lebanon-Syria boundary differences will be resolved soon and the entire boundary delimited and demarcated. Little pressure exists to reach agreement, and the fluid political-military situation in Lebanon points toward a continuation of the status quo. Although the border area has been described in the past as where "frontier residents seem to be somewhat tolerantly casual about the boundary," Syria has closed the border during political crises. Furthermore, since the mid-1970s Syria has disregarded the boundary and Lebanese sovereignty to place military units in Lebanon in response to internal Lebanese political problems and Israeli actions in southern Lebanon. Syrian interests are probably best served by leaving the boundary issue unresolved and the boundary alignment imprecise. Lebanon, whose political future is tied to regional political problems and their solution, has little bargaining power and more pressing political issues than the status and alignment of its boundary with Syria. [redacted]

Border Treaties and Key Dates

1920

Mandate for Lebanon and Syria awarded to France (April).

France separates Lebanon from Syria (September) through addition of former Turkish administrative districts and enlarging area of core Lebanese settlement.

1926

Lebanese constitution adopted, but boundary with Syria defined only in terms of existing administrative units.

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1943

Lebanon revises and amends 1926 constitution; includes a more specific but still generalized description of Lebanon-Syria boundary. Lebanon declares its independence.

1946

Syria achieves independence.

1958-59

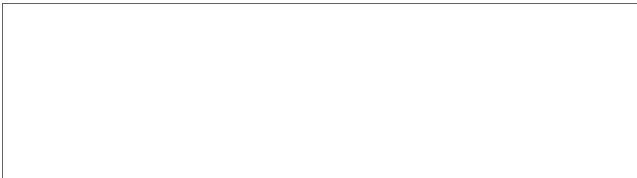
Lebanon and Syrian appoint joint boundary commission to delimit boundary.

1967

Syria loses Golan Heights to Israel.

1969

Reporting from joint boundary committee states that only "50 to 60 kilometers" settled and that a large number of errors in the boundary remain.



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Israel-Syria

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Israel-Syria

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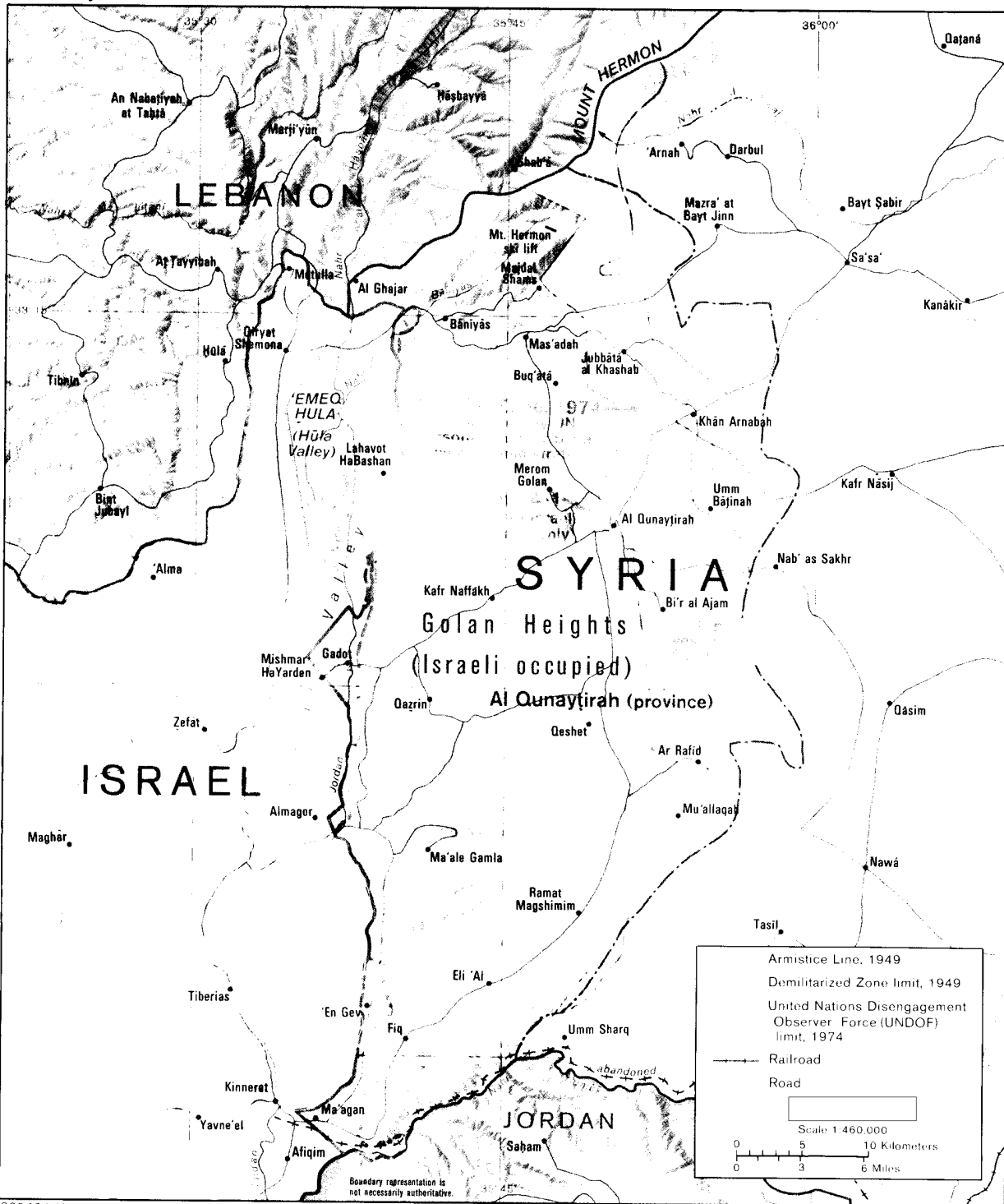


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Israel-Syria Border



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Israel-Syria**Border Basics**

The Israel-Syria boundary is approximately 76 kilometers in length extending roughly north-south from the tripoint with the Lebanon boundary to the juncture with the Jordan boundary. The boundary was demarcated in 1922 by a joint Anglo-French commission also charged with marking the Lebanon-Palestine boundary. Consequently, the 32 markers placed along the Palestine-Syria boundary were numbered north to south from 39 to 71 and were part of a numbering sequence begun at the western end of the Lebanon-Palestine border. The major portion of the boundary was primarily aligned along the base of the uplands marking the eastern rim of the 'Emeq Hula (Hula Valley). In the south, the boundary was drawn 10 meters from the shoreline of Lake Tiberias (Sea of Galilee)—regardless of the water level—along the northern half of the lake and then paralleled the lake at distances of from 2 to 3 kilometers before turning east to the Jordanian border on the Nahr al Yarmuk (Yarmuk River). []

Since 1949 the de facto boundary has differed from the de jure border, a result of Arab-Israeli wars. The 1949 Armistice Line followed the older Palestine-Syria boundary except in three areas designated as demilitarized zones where Syrian forces had pushed west of the border. In the brief 1967 war, Israeli forces advanced from several to more than 20 kilometers into Syria before cease-fire lines were drawn. Israel seized additional Syrian territory east of Al Qunaytirah in the 1973 war but withdrew in 1974 when minor modifications in these lines were made. A narrow buffer strip known as the UNDOF (United Nations Disengagement Observer Force) area or zone and roughly a kilometer or so in width, is patrolled by UN troops. The present disengagement lines in the Golan Heights, previously one of Syria's more prosperous agricultural areas, pass through semiarid rocky hills and rolling plains. Nearly all of the Syrian population fled or were forced out in 1967; almost no one has been allowed to return. More than 30 Israeli settlements have been established in the Golan. []

Significant Developments

Israel's de facto annexation of the Golan Heights (14 December 1981) provided a legal cap to a long period of steadily tightened Israeli control over the area. Since 1967 Israel's policies have been to establish a presence in the Golan Heights by prohibiting the return of the Syrian inhabitants of the areas, through razing many former Syrian villages, and by establishing a number of Israeli agricultural settlements. The population, once in excess of 100,000, has been reduced to about 13,000 Druze—a religious, Islamic-derived sect concentrated in a few villages in the northeastern corner of the Golan—and about 8,000 Israeli settlers located in roughly three dozen settlements. Despite these steps and the annexation bill passed by Israel's Knesset, no other nation has recognized the legality of the action. [] 25X1

Frontier History

Syria, although briefly attaining independence following World War I, became a French Mandate in 1922 following lengthy negotiations between France and Great Britain. These negotiations, dividing up the territorial remains of the Ottoman Empire, were complex, involving not only Anglo-French interests and rivalries but also those of the Zionists and Arab leaders. The eventual definition of Palestine's borders was colored by British notions, based on a 19th-century atlas of the Holy Land that depicted the Biblical limits of Palestine. [] 25X1

The delimitation of the Palestine-Syria border was spelled out in an agreement signed in Paris (23 December 1920), and the boundary demarcated by an Anglo-French team in 1922. The demarcation was approved in 1923 by Britain and France. In the north, the boundary began at the point where the Nahr al Habasni joins the Lebanon-Syria boundary, extended east for 5 kilometers, then was drawn almost due south along the base of the escarpment overlooking Hula Valley and Lake Tiberias before turning south-east to meet the Yarmuk River and the Transjordan boundary. Although not apparent nor appreciated initially, the alignment of the boundary at the foot of considerably higher terrain overlooking Palestine was

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later to prove an important factor in the military and political relationships between the two countries [redacted]

Syrian civilian administration, although it was located in the UNDOF. [redacted]

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Fighting between Arab states and Israel in 1948 ended with armistice agreements, the last being between Israel and Syria. Delay was caused by Syrian military occupation of territory west of the established boundary, a presence that threatened Israeli control and development of the fertile upper Jordan Valley. The Armistice Line followed the old boundary except in three areas, totaling about 66 square kilometers, militarily occupied by Syria. These three areas were established as demilitarized zones in which UN officials had certain powers. Each nation interpreted differently the legal status, rights, and obligations in the zones: Israel held that its sovereignty in the zones was complete, except for the military prohibitions stated in the Armistice; Syria felt that the zones were internationalized territory with only the United Nations having authority to settle disputes arising in and over the zones. [redacted]

Current Developments and Outlook

There is almost no chance in the immediate future for an Israeli-Syrian agreement on border issues, primarily because any boundary rectifications are unlikely in the absence of a general Arab-Israeli peace settlement. Until then, Israel has no intention of relinquishing the rolling plains and hills of the Golan Heights and its commanding terrain overlooking the Hula Valley. The Golan is not a prime area of historic Jewish settlement—although some Jewish settlements and synagogues once existed there—and the area, together with southwestern Syria and northwestern Jordan, was included in the territorial proposals submitted by Zionist leaders before the establishment of the mandate over Palestine. These extensive claims were put forth in an attempt to obtain control of the Jordan River and adjoining river basins to meet possible future water needs of a Jewish state. The water issue is important in the northwestern corner of the Golan, which contains the headwaters of the Nahr Baniyas, a Jordan tributary. The southern Golan adjoining the Yarmuk River, which forms the boundary with Jordan, also figures in a dispute between Israel and Jordan over alleged Israeli use of Yarmuk water in the occupied Golan Heights. Security concerns, however, remain the single most important factor in Israeli policy toward Syria. For Syria, regaining the Golan Heights is a key foreign policy objective [redacted]

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Disputes arose over jurisdiction within the zones, particularly over land ownership and Israeli development plans for drainage and related water control projects. A lengthy number of problems and incidents were referred to UN officials; some reached the Security Council for settlement. Syria and Israel seldom agreed on either the facts or the proposed solutions of these issues. The number of incidents and the severity of the responses taken by the two governments increased over the years with shootings, use of artillery, and airstrikes [redacted]

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In June 1967 Israel seized the demilitarized zones and quickly advanced up the Golan escarpment 20 to 25 kilometers into Syria, occupying about two-thirds of the Syrian Province of Al Qunaytirah. Cease-fire lines were established and marked on the ground, and UN forces patrolled a narrow buffer zone between the two forces to keep the peace. The 1973 Arab-Israeli war in the Golan Heights ended with Israel extending the area under its control in a bulge toward Damascus. In 1974 the Golan Accord resulted in the disengagement lines, termed A and B, which roughly coincided with the 1967 cease-fire lines except in the Ar Rafid and Al Qunaytirah areas. The accord resulted in the destroyed city of Al Qunaytirah being returned to

Border Treaties and Key Dates

1920

Franco-British Boundary Convention signed in Paris (23 December); defines Lebanon-Syria boundary.

1922

Anglo-French commission demarcates Palestine border with Lebanon and Syria; markers numbered 39 to 71 placed along 76 kilometers of the boundary.

1923

Britain and France accept work of demarcation team (7 March).

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1944

Syria recognized as independent state by United States.

1946

France evacuates all troops from Syria.

1949

Armistice between Syria and Israel establishes Armistice Line that follows international boundary except in three areas where Syrian troops have occupied land west of the boundary. Syrian-held areas termed Demilitarized Zone. Map at 1:50,000 scale delineates Demilitarized Zone and Demarcation Line.

1951-67

Disputes over land ownership, water control measures, and related issues in Demilitarized Zones. Other issues raised and incidents lead to exchanges of fire and airstrikes. Tensions and severity of military responses increase during mid-1960s.

1967

Six-Day War results in Israeli occupation of Golan Heights of 20 or more kilometers east of boundary. Many residents flee; most of the remainder expelled.

Israeli census enumerates only 6,400 Syrian residents in Golan, out of 100,000 or more before the war.

1968

Initial paramilitary outposts and Israeli settlements established on Golan.

1973-74

October 1973 war and negotiations end with disengagements agreement (31 May 1974) establishing lines roughly identical to 1967 cease-fire lines except in Ar Rafid and Al Qunaytirah areas; includes territory between Israeli (Line A) and Syrian (Line B) forces monitored by UN personnel but under Syrian civilian administration.

1978

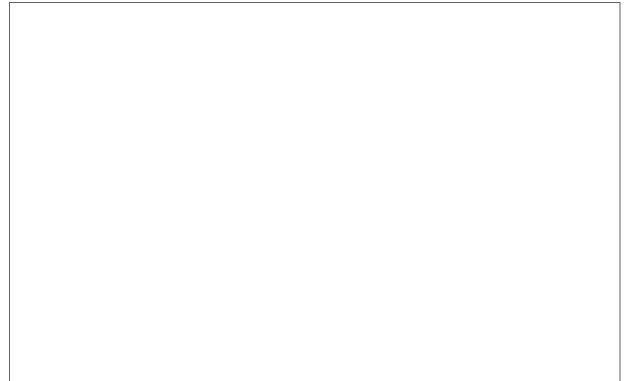
Camp David accords call for Syria and Israel to negotiate future of Golan Heights and to conclude a peace treaty.

1981

Israeli Knesset (December) passes bill extending Israeli law, legislation, and administration to the Golan.



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Syria-Turkey

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Syria-Turkey

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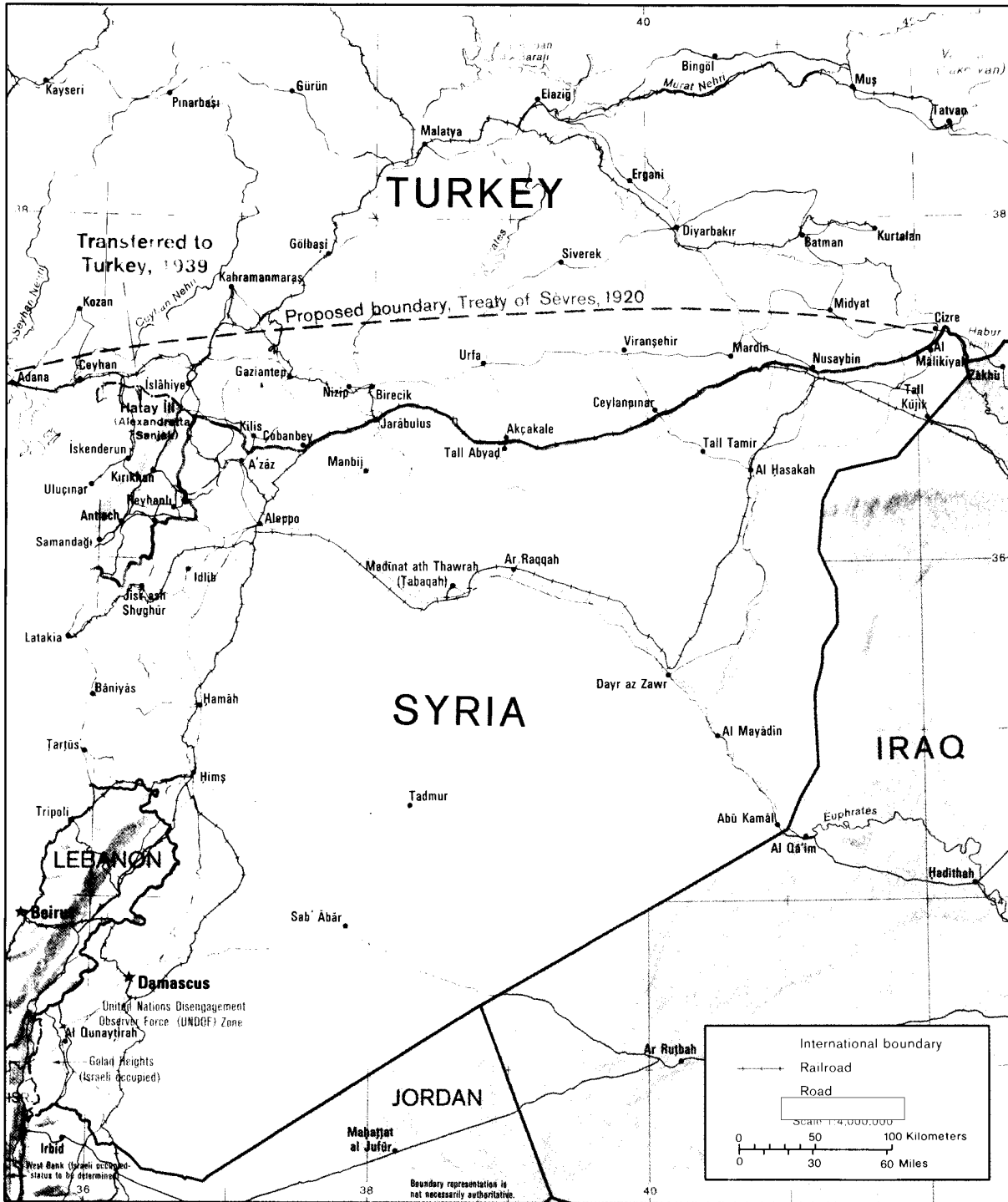


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Syria-Turkey Border



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Syria-Turkey**Border Basics**

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The Syria-Turkey boundary, about 822 kilometers in length, extends from the boundary tripoint with Iraq on the Tigris River west across a mainly semiarid steppe region to the Mediterranean Sea. []

The border was defined by terms of a Franco-Turkish agreement (October 1921). The first two sections of the boundary were delimited according to a treaty signed between France, the mandatory power for Syria at the time, and Turkey in May 1926. The third and easternmost section of the boundary was not settled and delimited until 1929, confirmed by another Franco-Turkish agreement signed in June of that year. One of the provisions of the 1921 agreement established Alexandretta Sanjak (district) as an autonomous district, located within Syria at the western end of the boundary. This district, which had a large Turkish population, was the subject of later negotiations in the 1930s that resulted in its incorporation by Turkey in June 1939. This section of the Syria-Turkey boundary was demarcated by 448 pillars and additional supplementary markers. []

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Most of the border area is barren, sparsely populated semiarid plains cut here and there by wadis. At the western end, however, the border crosses a mix of hills and plains, which is mostly cultivated and has a comparatively high rural population density. The boundary alignment follows no distinctive terrain feature or features; the numerous straight-line segments connect small hills or similar features and elevation points. One unusual feature is that about 300 kilometers of the boundary is aligned along a railroad. []

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Significant Developments

The transfer of the Alexandretta District to Turkey in 1939, termed Hatay Province in Turkey, has been a contentious issue between the two states ever since. Although Syria has never officially accepted the transfer, done while France was the mandatory power for Syria, the issue has not been actively pursued in

recent years. Syrian maps, however, continue to show the Syria-Turkey boundary as it existed before 1939. Border tensions have at times continued, although they have been low-key in recent years. []

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Frontier History

The Syria-Turkey boundary was initially defined by terms of the Treaty of Sevres (August 1920), signed by the existing Turkish Government but rejected by nationalist leaders who later established the Turkish Republic. France, wearying of its military role in Turkey quietly negotiated a later agreement in October 1921 that included a boundary definition more favorable to Turkey. The same agreement (also known as the Franklin-Bouillon Agreement) specified that a special autonomous area in northwestern Syria, the district of Alexandretta with a large Turkish minority population, should be established. The Treaty of Lausanne (1923) ended foreign intervention and fighting in Turkey and recognized the 1921 agreement fixing the Syria-Turkey boundary. []

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The lengthy border was delimited and demarcated during the period 1925-29. The first section fixed on the ground extended from the Mediterranean Sea east to the railway station of Cobanbey, located on the old Baghdad Railway. Boundary delimitation was confirmed by a Franco-Turkish convention of 30 May 1926. The second boundary section, also confirmed by the 1926 treaty, extended west to east between the rail stations of Cobanbey and Nusaybin. This section of the international boundary is unusual in that it follows the railroad with the track, stations, and sidings, and, as the treaty states, "all the existing installations employed in the working of the line will belong to Turkey as forming part of the railway track." The third and easternmost section of the boundary, extending from Nusaybin to the Iraqi tripoint located at the confluence of the Tigris and the Habur Nehri, was delimited by an agreement signed between Turkey and France on 22 June 1929. This section had been in dispute and Turkish troops had for a time occupied posts south of the 1921 line. In a followup annex to the agreement, dated 3 May 1930, it was stated that the boundary would follow the thalweg of the Tigris wherever it moved. []

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Negotiations between Syrian and French officials in 1936 included a Turkish request for a reconsideration of the status of the Alexandretta District. The question was referred to the League of Nations, which decided (1937) that Alexandretta should be a self-governing state with economic and political ties to Syria. The Turkish community, however, gained control in the elections that followed. Subsequently, in direct negotiations between Turkey and France in 1939, France accepted the absorption of what was termed the Republic of Hatay by Turkey. Disturbances broke out in Syria over the territorial transfer and what Syrian leaders believed was insufficient effort by France to defend their interests. Boundary demarcation, meanwhile, had been completed in 1938, with minor modifications made in the spring of 1939, and confirmed by a boundary protocol signed at Antioch. []

No adjustments in the boundary have taken place since 1939. Border tensions have at times been high, particularly in 1957-58, although factors other than, or in combination with, border issues have usually caused ill will between the two states. Much of the border on the Turkish side has been mined, although since the early 1960s there have been periodic reports of plans to remove the minefields. Military posts near the border and border patrols attempt to deal with smuggling and illegal border crossers. Border issues that have caused friction include minor disputes over water rights, land holdings in the border area by citizens of the other country, local cross-border travel, and smuggling. Smuggling is the most serious problem and involves illicit drug trafficking, the bringing of Turkish sheep into Syria, and the movement of miscellaneous contraband. Since at least 1960, Syrian and Turkish officials have periodically met to resolve local disputes. []

Current Developments and Outlook

There are presently no major border problems, or other issues, likely to cause any significant territorial adjustments. The alignment of the border generally is well marked, although occasional references to destroyed or missing markers suggest a need for redemarcation in some areas. The Alexandretta issue periodically flares in Syria, representing an easily grasped emotional issue that can be used to arouse

anti-Turkish sentiments. Although official Syrian maps continue to show the Syria-Turkey border as if the 1939 transfer had not taken place, this is less an ominous sign of Syrian intentions than a practical legal device to keep alive—if barely—a now somewhat ancient territorial dispute. []

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Border Treaties and Key Dates

1916

Sykes-Picot agreement between Great Britain and France divides eastern Turkish territories, assigning Syria and southeastern Turkey to France.

1920

Treaty of Sevres (10 August) declares Syria independent (under mandate to France) and defines Syria-Turkey boundary.

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1921

Franco-Turkish agreement (20 October), also termed Franklin-Bouillon Agreement, redefines Syria-Turkey boundary 20 to 60 kilometers or so to the south and states that the special administrative district of Alexandretta (within Syria) would be established.

1923

Treaty of Lausanne (24 July) confirms 1921 Syria-Turkey boundary.

1926

Franco-Turkish convention of Angora (30 May) delimits boundary, consisting of the two westernmost sections extending from Mediterranean to railroad station of Nusaybin.

1929

Franco-Turkish protocol (22 June) provides detailed delimitation of third, remaining boundary section from Nusaybin to Iraqi tripoint.

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1937

Treaty between France and Turkey makes Alexandretta District of Syria autonomous under joint French-Turkish guarantee.

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1939

Franco-Turkish protocol (19 May) provides details of demarcation (1938-39) of Alexandretta with Turkey.

Agreement between France and Turkey confirms annexation of Alexandretta District to Turkey; minor modifications in boundary alignment agreed to earlier.

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Greece-Turkey:
Aegean Dispute

**Greece-Turkey:
Aegean Dispute**

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Greece-Turkey Border



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Greece-Turkey: Aegean Dispute**Basics**

25X1 *More than 2,000 islands lie between Greece and Turkey in the Aegean Sea. The islands extend north-south for nearly 700 kilometers from Thrace to Crete. With the exception of several islands near the entrance of the Dardanelles, all of the islands are under Greek sovereignty.* []

25X1 *Only 100 or so of these islands are inhabited, and they have a solidly Greek population of a little less than 1 million people. Those islands most affected by the various disputes between Greece and Turkey—the northern and eastern Aegean groups and the Dodecanese—have a population of less than 400,000 people.* []

25X1 *The Aegean disputes are complex, and at issue are continental shelf rights, definition of territorial sea limits, delimitation of airspace boundaries, and air traffic regulations. Greece's sovereignty over the numerous Aegean islands—a few lying as close as 5 kilometers from Turkey—is not contested at this time.* []

Significant Developments

Disputes between Turkey and Greece in the Aegean Sea have simmered for many decades, but tensions between Athens and Ankara have noticeably increased in recent years. Reasons include the discovery of oil in the early 1970s, Turkey's military seizure of part of Cyprus in 1974, the organization of Turkey's IV Army (Army of the Aegean) in 1975, and the development of additional Law of the Sea concepts that have complicated attempts to resolve differences. Since the election of Prime Minister Papandreu in 1981 and after the Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence (November 1983), the intermittent bilateral political dialogue between the two countries virtually ceased. The side effects of the Aegean disputes have also complicated NATO command and control arrangements, disrupted NATO joint exercises in the region, and slowed progress in important NATO planning meetings. []

Background

The Aegean dispute has its roots in mutual animosities that have persisted between Greeks and Turks since the collapse of the Byzantine Empire, the rise and fall of the Ottoman Empire, and the Greek war of independence. By the early 20th century Greece had expanded its frontiers to include much of modern-day Greek territory. By the terms of the Treaty of Sevres (1920) that divided former Ottoman possessions, Greece was in line to acquire most of Thrace, the Dodecanese (except Rhodes), several islands near the Dardanelles, and a mandate over the port of Izmir (Smyrna) and its then largely Greek-populated hinterland. But Greek military forces operating on the Turkish mainland (1919-22), lacking support from the European powers, were driven out of Turkey in 1922, a humiliation that produced an exodus of more than 2 million Greek refugees from Anatolia to Greece and supplied additional fuel for Greek-Turk animosities. More important, under the terms of the peace treaty between Turkey and the allied powers (Treaty of Lausanne) in 1923, Greece was forced to recognize Turkish sovereignty over areas earlier allocated to Athens in the Treaty of Sevres. One exception was the disposition of the Dodecanese Islands, which were ceded to Italy. []

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After World War II Greece regained the Dodecanese Islands. The organization of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) brought Greece and Turkey together militarily, and both are members of the Council of Europe. These potentially useful relationships, promoting joint efforts and policy coordination, were offset by growing disputes arising from development of Law of the Sea concepts of territorial seas limits, rights to underseas resources and their determination, and international airspace definitions. Another related problem is that different groups of Aegean islands fall under different national legal provisions. The territorial seas limits and problems of defining the continental shelf are particularly vexing because of the proximity of the numerous islands to one another and to the Turkish mainland. Attempts to resolve the continental shelf disputes led to bilateral talks (1976-81) that produced proposals but no solutions. []

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Greek-Turkish Disputes in the Aegean

Issue	Greek View	Turkish View
Territorial seas		
Does Greece have the right to claim a 12-nautical-mile territorial sea in the Aegean?	Yes. International law recognizes this right. Extension of territorial waters would not interfere with normal navigation.	No. A 12-mile zone would close off Aegean international waters and would not be equitable.
Airspace		
Must military aircraft flying in Aegean FIR ^a file flight plans with Greek civilian air traffic controllers?	Yes. Military aircraft must file flight plans. Athens cites 1944 ICAO treaty clause on safety, other ICAO resolutions.	No. The 1944 ICAO treaty expressly exempts international military aircraft from this requirement.
Is Greece's claim of a 10-mile airspace around its islands valid?	Yes. Athens declared a 10-mile zone by presidential decree in 1931, and Turkey did not challenge it until 1974.	No. This is a unique claim; it has no basis in international law or practice.
Continental shelf		
How should a continental shelf shared by two states be delimited? Should islands be used as base points if the equidistance method is applied?	Greek islands are entitled to a continental shelf according to international law. Preferably, islands should be used as base points.	Many Greek islands sit on the natural prolongation of the Anatolian shelf. This and other special circumstances in the Aegean make an equidistance line based on island inequitable.
Militarization of Greek islands		
May Greece place regular military forces on islands despite specific treaty prohibitions?	Yes. If Greek security from "Turkish threat" requires it.	No. Greece is violating several treaties in so doing.
Can the Greeks militarize the island of Limnos?	Yes. The Montreux Convention supersedes previous convention restricting militarization.	No. Treaty provisions restricting militarization were not specifically replaced by Montreux.
NATO issues		
Should the Greek island of Limnos be included in NATO exercises?	Yes. Exercises defending the Turkish Straits should include Lemnos (Limnos).	No. NATO should continue to leave out areas in dispute such as Limnos.
What arrangements should be made for Aegean command and control?	Turkey should not have security responsibilities over Greek territory. Athens wants return to pre-1974 arrangements (Greek control of Aegean). Establishment of NATO's Larisa headquarters must follow agreement on command and control responsibilities.	Turkey needs a security zone west of FIR line. SACEUR agreement provides for modification in pre-1974 command and control arrangement.

^a Flight information regions (FIRs) are air traffic control zones allotted by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO). FIRs are intended to protect the safety of air passengers and do not represent geographical or legal boundaries.

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The variety and complexity of the territorial and related Aegean issues is summarized in the table.

Current Developments and Outlook

The Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence (November 1983) not only worsened mutual suspicion but eroded hopes that discussion of the Aegean issues might resume any time soon. The long history of the Aegean region and the changing political status of its territory provide context for current policies, attitudes, and actions. Greece views Turkey as a clear and present danger to Greek territory; Greece's foreign policy revolves around Turkey and perceptions of the Turkish threat. Turkey's disputes with Greece, however, represent only one group of foreign policy problems within a broad range of issues important to Turkey's national interests. A major obstacle to resolving the territorial and jurisdictional disputes is that each side can cite numerous precedents and examples to bolster their case. In both countries the force of public opinion often shapes policy decisions and constrains compromise, thus making the resolution of extremely tangled and complicated problems even more difficult.

Treaties and Key Dates

1829

Greek independence recognized in Treaty of Adrianople after several centuries as part of the Ottoman Empire, but territory truncated in relation to traditional area.

1913

Conclusion of Balkan wars; Greek annexation of Crete and most but not all of the Aegean Islands.

1920

Treaty of Sevres allocates Aegean Islands plus Izmir (Smyrna) and its hinterland to Greece.

1919-22

Greek invasion and occupation of western Turkey leads to defeat and expulsion of Greek forces.

1923

Treaty of Lausanne abrogates provisions of Sevres treaty. Greece retains Aegean Islands except those near the Dardanelles; Dodecanese Islands ceded to Italy.

1931

Athens proclaims 10-mile airspace around its territory and extends width of territorial seas for air navigation purposes to 10 miles.

1947

Dodecanese Islands ceded by Italy to Greece.

1972

Oil discovery in Aegean, off island of Thasos.

1973

Map published in Turkey's *Official Gazette* (1 November) drawing median line between Greek and Turkish mainlands and showing about 40 percent of Aegean as Turkish petroleum claim.

1974

Turkey invades Cyprus; controls 37 percent of territory in north, following Greek-engineered coup attempt. Greece withdraws from military arm of NATO.

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1975

Turkey creates "Aegean Army" along Aegean coast with headquarters in Izmir.

Both sides issue conflicting "notices to airmen" that effectively close Aegean airspace to commercial air traffic.

1975-76

Appeals to Security Council and International Court of Justice lead to Bern Declaration in which both countries agree to refrain from actions that would prejudice further negotiations.

1980

Both nations withdraw air restrictions; commercial air travel over Aegean resumes.

Greece rejoins NATO as full member.

1976-81

Periodic bilateral talks on ways to resolve continental shelf issue.

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1981

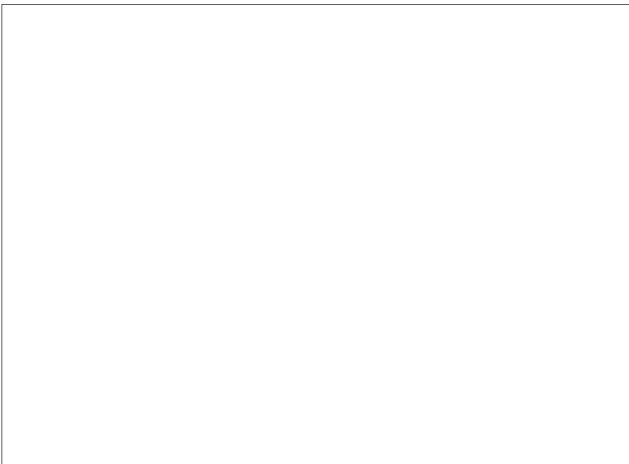
Greek Prime Minister Papandreou breaks off talks.

1983

Turkish Cypriots proclaim a "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus."

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Cyprus

Cyprus

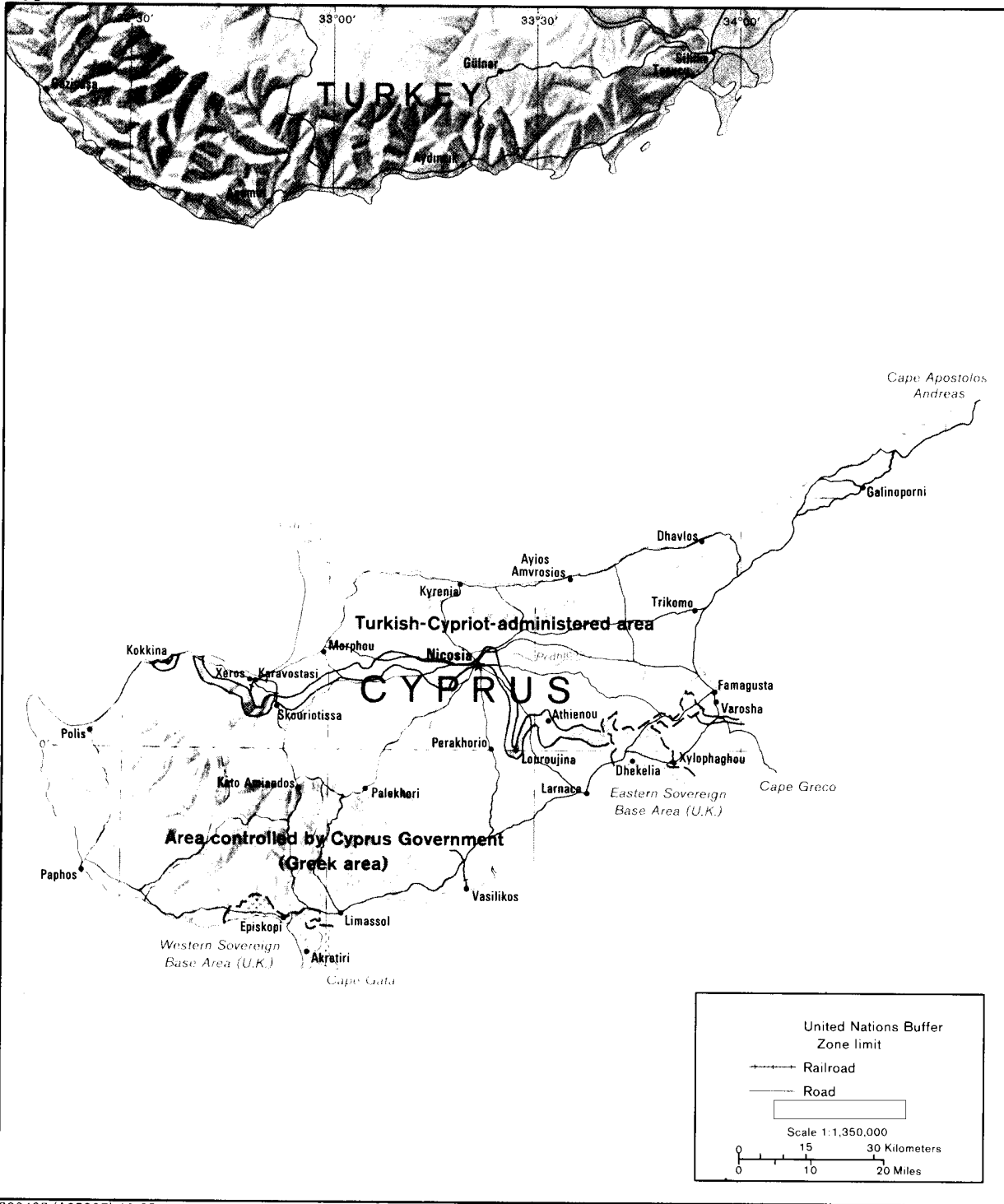
The design of this report permits updating of border information. Changes and additions will be disseminated to holders of this Digest as necessary.



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Cyprus



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Cyprus**Border Basics**

Cyprus is a strategically situated island (9,248 square kilometers), tucked into the northeastern corner of the Mediterranean. The island, about 80 kilometers south of Turkey and about 850 kilometers from Athens, has since 1974 been physically divided into two areas—one controlled by Turkish Cypriots (35 percent) and the other by Greek Cypriots (60 percent). The remaining territory comprises a UN-administered buffer zone separating the two, and two "sovereign base areas" retained by the United Kingdom under terms of the 1960 agreement that granted Cyprus independence.

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The UN buffer zone runs generally east-west but follows no distinctive physical or cultural feature. It is manned by a 2,350-man UN peacekeeping force, up for Security Council renewal every six months. The buffer zone in one or two places is about 5 kilometers wide, but generally is only 2 to 3 kilometers in width. In the capital city of Nicosia, the buffer is the so-called Green Line that contains the single official transit point between the two sectors.

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Before the conflict on Cyprus, Greek and Turkish Cypriots coexisted and commingled on the island. During the communal fighting in the 1960s the Turkish Cypriots, outnumbered 4 to 1 by the Greek Cypriot majority in a total population of 600,000, began to coalesce in enclaves throughout the island. After the Turkish military intervention in 1974, there was a mass dislocation of the population—Greek Cypriots and minority groups moved to the south and some 47,000 Turkish Cypriots moved to the north. The division of the island left the Turkish Cypriots in control of more than half of the best cropland, including about two-thirds of the cereal-producing areas and most of the citrus areas.

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Significant Developments

The stormy relationship between Greek and Turkish Cypriots worsened after the Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence in November 1983. Only Ankara recognized the new regime. Despite US requests for restraint, Turkish Cypriots have moved ahead on programs and actions designed to reinforce the symbols and mechanisms of statehood. Efforts by the UN Secretary General did result in a resumption of talks in the fall of 1984. A summit meeting in January 1985 collapsed, however, with no indication as to when the next round of talks might convene.

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Frontier History

Greek settlement and culture have been dominant in Cyprus for more than 3,000 years and account in part for the 20th-century Greek Cypriot political movement for *enosis* (union with Greece). The expansion of the Ottoman Empire resulted in Turkish conquest of the island in 1571. Three centuries of Turkish rule spurred the growth of a Muslim population comprised of Turkish soldiers and others who settled there, plus gains through intermarriage and converts to Islam. Great Britain assumed responsibility for administration of the island, by terms of an 1878 treaty with Turkey, and annexed Cyprus outright in 1914.

Cyprus prospered economically under British administration, but the improved living conditions and standards did not suppress demands by Greek Cypriots for union with Greece. The Turkish Cypriots, on the other hand, far outnumbered by the Greek Cypriots, desired some form of communal autonomy and guarantees of security to protect their minority status. After World War II Cypriot riots and other antigovernment actions increased in severity, particularly after 1955 and the outbreak of full-scale guerrilla warfare coupled with intensified intercommunal violence. In late 1958 lengthy and complicated negotiations began that ended with a compromise solution—neither union with Greece nor partition but the establishment of an independent Republic of Cyprus on 16 August 1960.

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Intercommunal violence, however, commenced anew as the delicate balance of political power between the two peoples began to fall apart. Twice tensions rose to dangerous levels (1963-64 and 1967), requiring the diplomatic intervention of the United States to avert warfare. In 1974 Greek Cypriot rightists and the Greek military government in Athens staged a coup that temporarily ousted President Makarios. Turkey responded by landing troops on the island and during fighting in July and August secured slightly more than a third of the island before a cease-fire became effective. A mass movement of Turkish and Greek Cypriots followed, each fleeing to the areas controlled by their compatriots. The establishment of a UN-administered buffer zone and the limited contact between the two areas mean that the two communities are living in a state of de facto economic, political, and social separation. []

The effects of partition reflect resources available in each sector. The Turkish sector gained more than half the arable land, and agriculture continues to generate most of the income. Manufacturing has remained stagnant, largely because of the lack of skilled managers and workers caused by the flight of Greek Cypriots to the south. The Greek Cypriot sector has economically diversified with development of a growing, export-oriented light-industry sector and tourism. Overall, the Greek Cypriot-controlled portion of the island has a developing and, by regional standards, prosperous economy. In the north, by contrast, the Turkish Cypriot sector has made minimal economic progress over the past decade, is visibly poorer, and still relies heavily on Ankara for support. []

Current Developments and Outlook

A political resolution of the Cyprus problem has dimmed since the Turkish Cypriot declaration of independence in November 1983 and the aborted talks of January 1985. Since 1976 the United Nations has managed to initiate on-again, off-again talks between the two sides, and some limited agreements have been reached that would provide for a federal governmental structure, an independent, nonaligned state, and joint participation in administration of the government. But the major issues are complex and the positions of the two sides far apart. Greek Cypriots

want the Turkish Cypriot territory considerably reduced from its present size, plus recovery of the once-booming tourist town of Varosha and the citrus-growing area of Morphou; Turkish Cypriot views are to concede little territory. Turkish Cypriots insist on a weak central government containing enough checks and balances, plus veto power, to ensure their security and autonomy; Greek Cypriots want a strong central government and demand a mechanism that will prevent governmental deadlock. There also continues to be differences on such issues as freedom of movement, settlement and land ownership rights, guarantees and guarantors of a settlement, the withdrawal of Turkish troops and ultimate troop numbers, and the very procedures used in negotiations to reach settlement. []

Prospects for settlement rest on a continuation of mediation efforts with backing from Western powers. Even here, the two sides hold different views as to the role of mediation and third parties. The continued partition of the island—especially if coupled with resumption of arms purchases by the Greek Cypriots and a reinforcement of Turkish troops—would increase the chances of military conflict through accident or miscalculation if not through design. []

Border Treaties and Key Dates

1878

Cyprus Convention (4 June) in which Turkey “consents to assign the island of Cyprus to be occupied and administered by England.” Britain institutes “Cyprus tribute,” continued until 1927, a major source of discontent underlying later Cypriot unrest. []

1914

Britain annexes Cyprus outright after outbreak of World War I.

1915

Britain offers Cyprus to Greece as inducement to enter World War I; Greece declines offer.

1923

By terms of Treaty of Lausanne, Turkey recognizes Britain’s annexation of Cyprus.

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1931

Riots by Greek Cypriots against British tax proposals; imposition of harsh measures deepens anti-British animosities.

1955-58

Anti-British demonstrations, strikes, and guerrilla warfare; in 1958 intercommunal strife increases.

1958-60

Negotiations among Britain, Turkey, and Greece lead to series of agreements granting Cyprus independence, granting Britain two "sovereign base areas," and allowing Greece and Turkey to garrison 950 and 650 troops, respectively, on the island.

1974

Athens-inspired coup against Makarios, followed by Turkish invasion of the island.

1977

Talks between Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders (Makarios and Denktash) under UN auspices, agree on guidelines: in terms of government (nonaligned and bicommunal), territory (economic viability and land ownership), movement and settlement (to be negotiated on basis of bicommunal nature of future federation), and power of central government (to safeguard unity of Cyprus).

Stage II talks on territory and constitutional proposals end in failure.

1978

Joint US-UK-Canadian Plan rejected by both sides.

1979

Summit between Greek and Turkish Cypriot leaders; agreement on 10-point framework for negotiations. Talks resume, but break down.

1981

UN presents guide for negotiations, seeking agreement on less contentious issues.

Negotiations get bogged down in details; broken off by Turkish Cypriots.

1983

Turkish Cypriots unilaterally declare independence after rejecting earlier UN plan for resumption of talks. UN condemns Turkish Cypriot move.

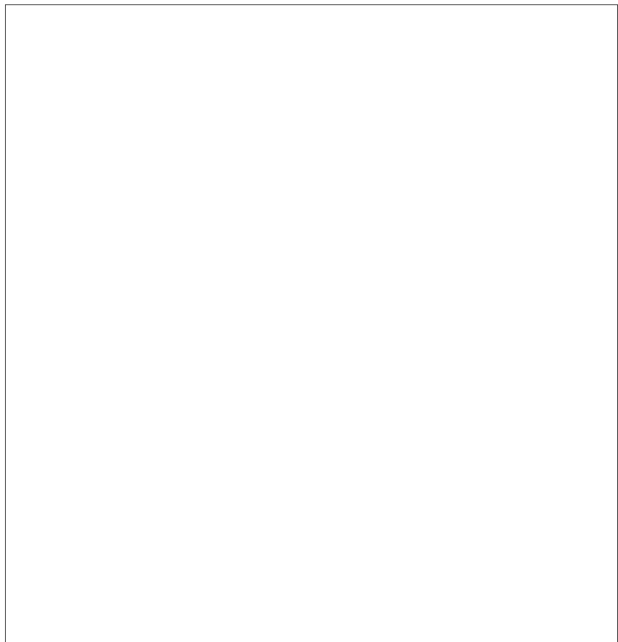
1984

UN Secretary General meets separately with President Kyprianou and Turkish Cypriot leader Denktash in series of "proximity talks."

1985

UN Secretary General holds summit, but talks quickly break down.

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**Other Boundaries
and Disputes**

**Other Middle Eastern Boundaries
and Territorial Disputes**

The design of this report permits updating of border information. Changes and additions will be disseminated to holders of this Digest as necessary.



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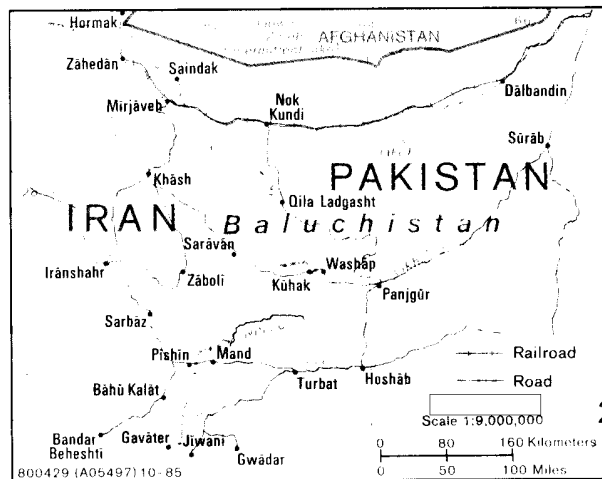
**Other Middle Eastern Boundaries
and Territorial Disputes**

Most of the remaining Middle Eastern international boundaries have been delimited and demarcated for many years. Although unforeseen events and incidents are always possible, the characteristics of the boundaries and their recent history suggest that prospects are slight for a border dispute. Available *International Boundary Studies* (IBS) prepared by the Office of the Geographer, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, are listed on the following pages.

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Boundary Length
(kilometers)
Iran-Pakistan 909
Status: Demarcated (1958-59)
Treaty: Iran-Pakistan Agreement (February 1958)
IBS: No. 167, March 1979



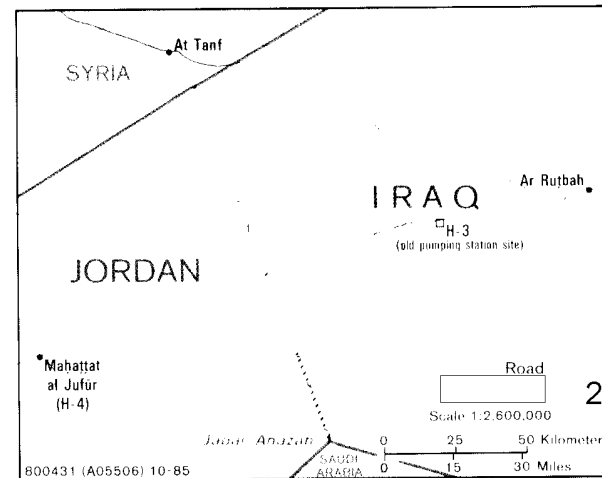
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Iran-Turkey 499
Status: Demarcated (1937)
Treaty: Teheran Convention (1932)
IBS: No. 27, January 1964



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Iraq-Jordan 134
Status: Delimited (1984); probably demarcated (1984)
Treaty: Agreement (March 1984) ratified in April (Jordan) and May (1984). Adjusts boundary initially delimited in 1932.
IBS: No. 98, April 1970 (outdated by 1984 agreement).



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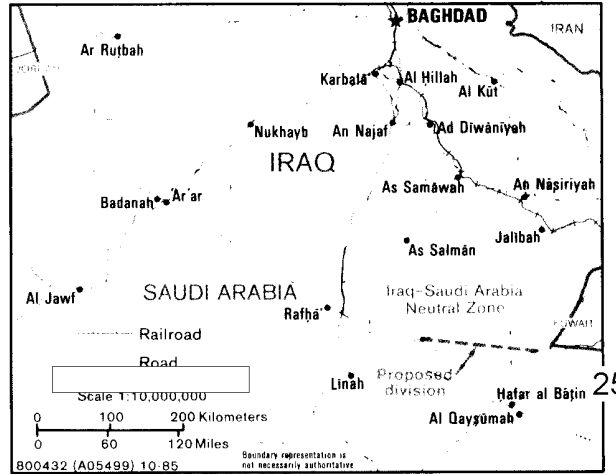
Boundary Length
(kilometers)

Iraq-Saudi Arabia 686

Status: Delimited, demarcation to follow
Treaty: Iraqi-Saudi Treaty (December 1981)

IBS: No. 111, June 1971, (outdated by 1981 agreement)

Note: A diplomatic note from Saudi Arabia's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 14 February 1983, to the American Embassy in Jiddah stated that the Neutral Zone was to be divided, making the border "as straight as possible." Although no official demarcation agreement has been received, a recent (1984) Saudi map and other information strongly suggest that the Neutral Zone has in fact been divided and the new boundary established.

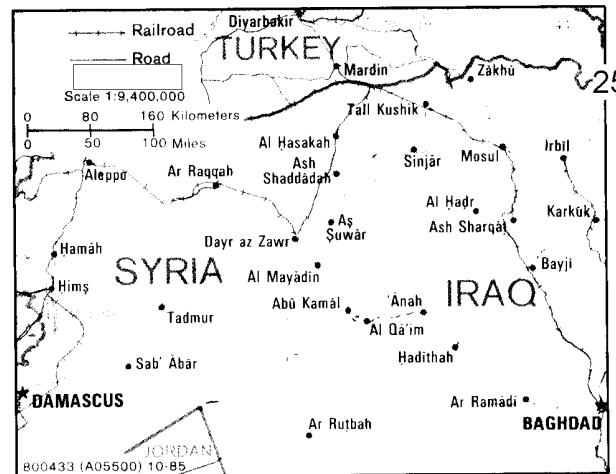


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Iraq-Syria 605

Status: Several short sections demarcated; remainder delimited
Treaty: League of Nations Commission (September 1932)

IBS: No. 100, March 1978



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Iraq-Turkey 331

Status: Demarcated initially (1926-27); agreement to redemarcate signed in late 1981

Treaty: Treaty of Angora, United Kingdom, Iraq, and Turkey (June 1926)

IBS: No. 27, January 1964

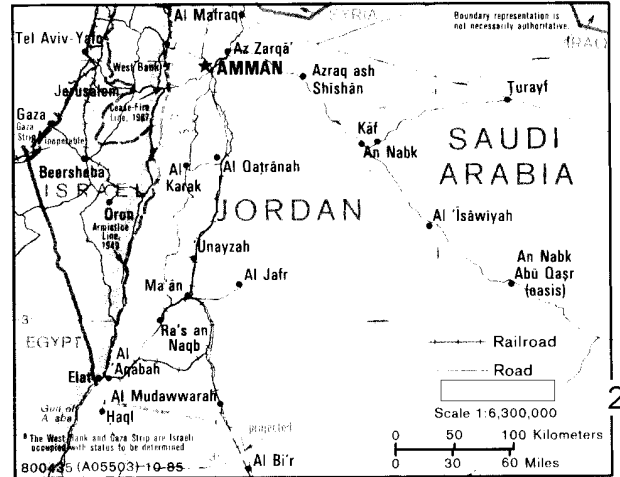


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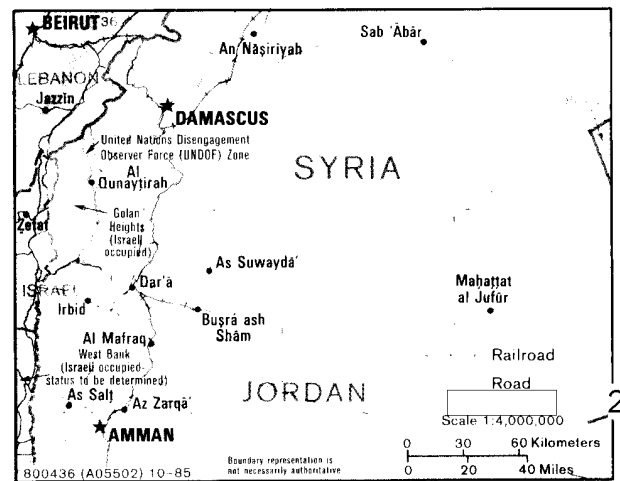
Boundary Length
(kilometers)

Jordan-Saudi Arabia 742
Status: Delimited
Treaty: Jordan-Saudi Arabia Agreement
(August 1965)
IBS: No. 60, December 1965



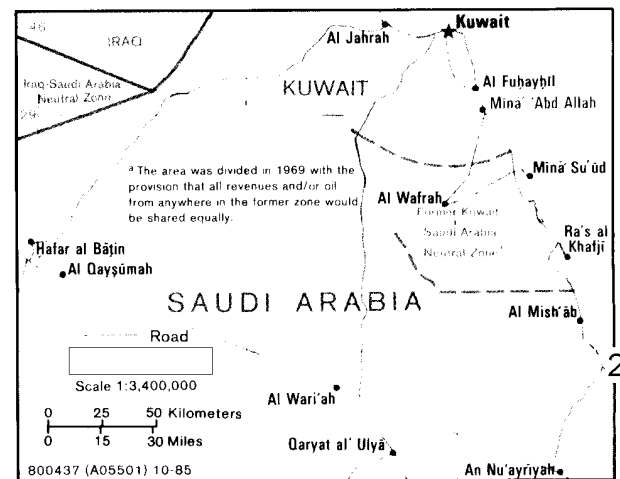
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Jordan-Syria 375
Status: Delimited
Treaty: Anglo-French Protocol (October 1931)
IBS: No. 94, December 1969



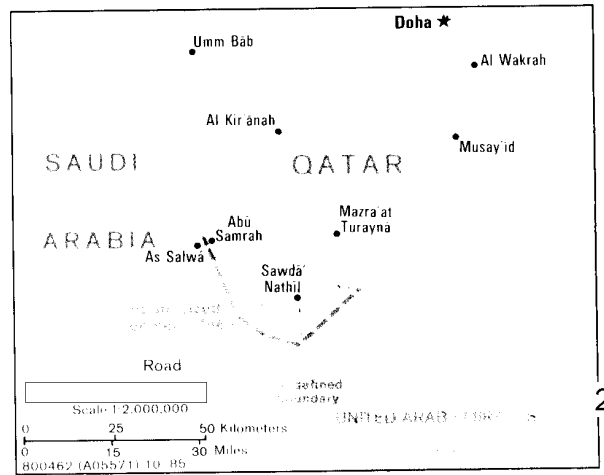
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Kuwait-Saudi Arabia 160
Status: Demarcated (1967)
Treaty: Kuwait-Saudi Arabia Agreement
(July 1965)
IBS: No. 103, September 1970



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Boundary	Length (kilometers)
Qatar-Saudi Arabia	80
Status:	Delimited (1965)
Treaty:	Border agreement between Qatar and Saudi Arabia reached in 1965, exact date unknown.
IBS:	None
	No official confirmation has been received concerning ratification of the agreement nor of plans for demarcation.

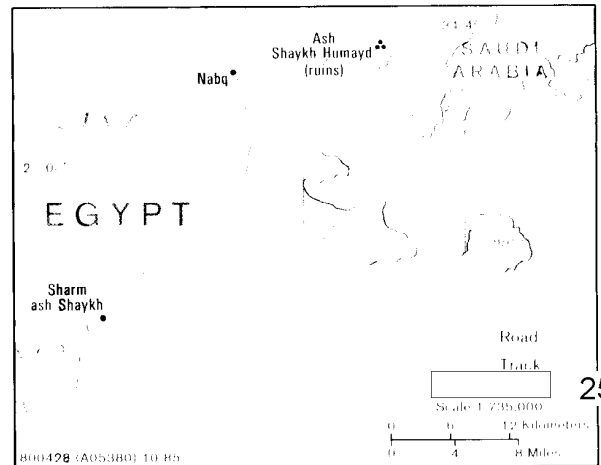


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Territorial Dispute

Tiran and Sanafir Islands

Barren islands, strategically located at the entrance to the Gulf of Aqaba, occupied by Egyptian troops (with the consent of the Government of Saudi Arabia) in January 1950 to monitor shipping. Israeli forces dislodged Egyptians in the June 1967 war and retained possession until the Egyptian-Israeli Peace Treaty became effective in April 1982. A small detachment of multinational forces and observers and Egyptian civil police were deployed on the islands. Egypt claimed islands in 1957 and has since asserted "control" or claimed sovereignty. Saudi Arabia has rejected Egyptian claims.



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