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Gun Running in Arabia: The Introduction of Modern Arms to the Peninsula, 1880-1914

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Modern breech-loading rifles flooded into Arabia and the region around the Persian Gulf between 1880 and World War I. This work examines in detail, and analyzes, the introduction of modern arms to Arabia, the origin of those arms, the trade patterns by which they were moved, and the international and local political factors that affected the

trade. The international arms trade was driven by three major factors. First, the rapid technological development of small arms in the nineteenth century fed the market, resulting in the availability of hundreds of thousands of obsolete military rifles for resale. Each time new rifles were adopted by the armies of Europe, old stocks were dumped on the private arms market.

Second, international politics and European colonial rivalry contributed to the growth and maintenance of the arms trade. The French Consul at Muscat protected the trade in the Persian Gulf, while French arms dealers commanded a substantial portion of the trade. British efforts to slow the flow of arms through Muscat was hampered by European politics.

Third, the internal politics of the region created a demand for the modern arms. Inside Arabia, the resurgent Saudis fought Rashidis and Hashimites in a series of wars, while other tribal raids and wars further built the demand for modern rifles: if one group had modern weapons, its enemies felt a need for them also. Outside Arabia, a strong demand for weapons in Persia and on the Northwest Frontier of India helped pull weapons to the markets of the Gulf.

This thesis deals first with the changing technology of weapons in the nineteenth century, so that the military

impact of the new weapons can be understood. The types of modern rifles introduced to the Peninsula is then reviewed, finding that the Peabody-Martini and the Martini-Henry, and their numerous variations, were the weapons most commonly imported in the decades around the turn of the century. With this information as background, the international politics of the arms trade are examined. Emphasis is on the Anglo-French rivalry at Muscat that gave treaty protection to French arms dealers. European fears that modern arms would reach Africa and make colonial control of the continent difficult or impossible led, in 1890, to the arms control provisions of the General Act of Brussels. The Act did not, however, extend to Arabia.

The heart of the work is a detailed examination and analysis of the arms trade in and around Arabia. The arms trade in the region was centered in two main entrepots, Djibouti in French Somaliland and Muscat in southeast Arabia. By the late 1890s, the bulk of the trade was passing through the Suez Canal before transshipment at one of these ports. Just over half of the arms reaching Muscat were exported to Persia and the Northwest Frontier, with the remainder reaching Arabia or Mesopotamia. The patterns of the private arms trade were complex, both at sea and on land, and are discussed at length.

The political use of weapons by the Ottoman

Government, and by European states, contributed to the flood of guns into Arabia. The Ottomans, in particular, used their stocks of obsolete weapons to arm their client tribes in Arabia. Ottoman purchases of Sniders, Martinis, and finally Mausers, gave them a constant supply of older rifles for distribution. The arms trade in Arabia was controlled by international and local political developments, and fed by the availability of modern arms on the international market. The trade was complex and impossible to prevent so long as the European states and the Ottomans continued to sell or distribute obsolete rifles as new guns were adopted.

GUN RUNNING IN ARABIA:

THE INTRODUCTION OF MODERN ARMS TO THE PENINSULA

1880-1914

by

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A Snider Squibbed in the jungle -
Somebody laughed and fled,

And the men of the first Shikaris
Picked up their Subaltern dead,

With a big blue mark in his forehead
And the back blown out of his head. [1]

War, death and modern weapons swept through Arabia in the opening years of the century, as they now sweep across the plains of southern Mesopotamia. The great powers of the world and of the region supported their allies, sought to undercut their rivals or tried to block the perceived advance of their enemy. The trade in modern arms became the focus of international contention, and a cause of wealth, death and victory: it was at once the cause and the result of international and regional conflicts. This work examines in detail, and analyzes, the introduction of modern arms to Arabia, the origin of those arms, the trade patterns by which they were moved, and the international and local political factors that affected the trade. Throughout most of the period, Britain sought to protect her position in the region, and the sea routes to India, while France sought to undermine that position. The arms trade in Arabia was not unique. Nations behaved then as they had for millennia, and

as they do now.

Arms and national policy cannot be separated. Writing about a more recent period, George Thayer notes that the increased availability of modern weapons following World War II has been accompanied by an increased level in regional violence. He suggests that graphs of the availability of arms and of the level of violence would match. [2] To argue whether arms or violence came first is to renew a chicken or the egg argument. What is clear is that both arms and a desire for violence are, and must be, present at the same time. This was true for Arabia.

The change to modern arms in Arabia primarily involved a shift from muzzle-loading muskets to single-shot breech-loading rifles, followed by the introduction of still more modern magazine-fed rifles. The General Act of Brussels in 1890 sought to prevent modern arms from entering central Africa, and provided a working definition of those weapons. Article IX of the Act distinguished between the old "flint-lock guns, with unrifled barrels, and common gunpowder, known as trade powder"; and modern "arms for accurate firing, such as rifles, magazine guns, or breech-loaders, whether whole or in detached pieces, their cartridges, caps, or other ammunition intended for them." [3] The increased firing speed, range and accuracy of the rifled breech-loader made it far more dangerous than its

predecessor.

Wyman Bury, a British official from Aden, pointed out the danger to the Ottoman Government, and by extension to the European colonial powers, of the modern arms he saw in Yemen in 1914.

> This covert traffic has gradually undermined the pillars of Ottoman rule, ... Now the population is as well armed as the forces of government, far more numerous, and, on their own ground, more formidable, man for man. [4]

The pattern of the arms trade to Arabia is simply traced. In the 1880s, the international arms trade was centered at Zanzibar, and was primarily aimed at Africa. With the controls of the Brussels Act, the trade shifted north to Muscat and fed into Persia, Afghanistan, and Arabia. Much of the trade moved directly from Europe through the recently opened Suez Canal to Djibouti or Muscat for regional distribution. At Djibouti and Muscat the arms were purchased by local captains or transshipped by the European firms based at those ports. This pattern remained in place until the turmoil of World War I. (Figure 1.)

The arms trade in Arabia was driven by three major forces. First, the volume of trade was made possible by the rapid development of small arms in the nineteenth century. European armies began introduction of breech-loaders in the 1840s: over the next sixty years, military rifles evolved

more quickly than at any time in the history of firearms. The armies of Europe and the Ottoman Empire adopted in quick succession muzzle-loading rifles, single-shot black powder breech-loading rifles, magazine-fed black powder rifles, and finally smokeless powder magazine-fed rifles. Each time new rifles were adopted, old stocks of weapons were dumped on the private international market. There was a constant flow of reliable, though obsolete, weapons into Arabia. An arms trade would have existed without the rapid technological changes, but those changes served as a pre-condition for the size and importance of the trade that developed.

Second, the trade was driven by international and colonial politics which often determined the course of the arms trade, and encouraged its growth. The political disputes of Europe were of primary importance in the rapid technological changes in the arms themselves, as a series of wars swept across the continent. These same rivalries effected European colonial policy. In particular, the rivalry between Britain and France led to French protection of the arms trade in the Red Sea and the Persian Gulf. The arms trade became, in part, a tactic used by the French to undermine the British in the region. It is important to remember that Britain had more at stake in the region than did France: anti-British activity in the Red Sea and Persian Gulf threatened the sea lanes to India, while arms reaching

the Northwest Frontier of India threatened the stability of that important border. And as Anglo-French rivalry ebbed with the rise of Germany as a common threat, the French allowed controls on the trade.

Third, the trade was driven by the internal politics of Arabia and of the region in general, which created a local demand for modern arms. It must be remembered that the market for arms in Afghanistan and on the Northwest Frontier accounted for up to half of the arms entering the region. Within Arabia, the resurgence of the Saudi state under Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, and the wars he fought against Rashidis and Hashimites created a constant demand for weapons. In addition, the raids and counter raids of many smaller groups also required guns and ammunition. And when the enemy had modern rifles, if became a matter of survival for a tribe to obtain the new guns themselves.

The internal Arabian demand for modern arms meshed with the external European and American desire to dispose of surplus arms: the need to buy modern rifles matched the need to sell old rifles. Taken together, the international and the internal political rivalries were the most important factors shaping and driving the arms trade in Arabia. The British objected again and again to the arms trade, yet they continued to sell surplus weapons to the international market in Britain or South Africa, while fighting the arms

market in Muscat. Samuel Cummings, founder of Interarms and perhaps the largest private arms dealer in the world today, has said: "In the final analysis, the morality of armaments boils down to who makes the sale." [5] Sam Cummings would have been at home in the arms markets of Muscat or Djibouti.

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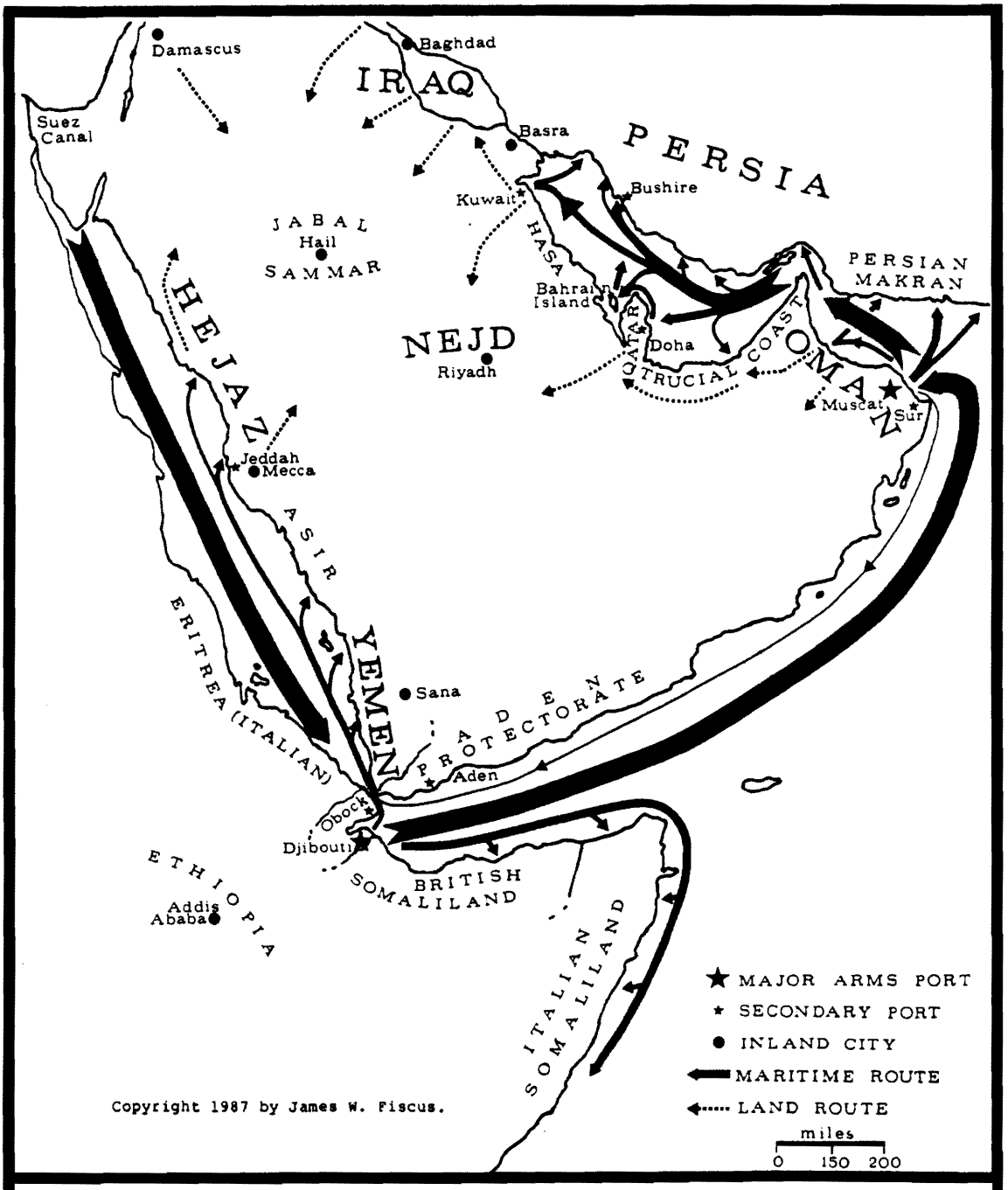

Figure 1. Map showing the arms trade routes around Arabia in about 1900.
The relative volume of the maritime trade routes is graphically estimated by the size of the routes on the map. Land routes only indicate general position.

CHAPTER I

DEATH AND TECHNOLOGY

THE TRADITIONAL ARMS OF ARABIA

Before examining the arms trade itself, it is necessary to review the traditional weapons present in Arabia prior to the introduction of modern, breech-loading, rifles. This will lead directly to a review of the rapid technological changes made in military rifles in the nineteenth century. These changes, and the resulting availability of obsolete weapons on the international arms market, helped drive the arms trade in Arabia. The arms trade would clearly have existed without the rapid changes then underway, but it would have operated on a much smaller scale, and would have been very different.

In 1853, Richard Francis Burton disguised himself as a Turk and traveled south from Egypt through the Hejaz to Mecca and Medina. The book he wrote about his expedition contains valuable descriptions of the traditional arms of the Arabian Peninsula. Burton reported the local "sheikhs" commonly carried a crooked dagger (the Jambiyah), a sword, a short javelin, and a matchlock or a flintlock (called by British sources a firelock). A cartridge-case, powder

flask, flint and steel, priming horn and other equipment were carried on a bandoleer. A pair of long-barreled, flintlock pistols decorated with silver were also common. [1]

Later, Burton repeated that matchlocks and flintlocks were the major guns carried in the central Hejaz, adding that double-barreled guns were rare. All of the weapons were imported into Arabia from Egypt, Syria, and Turkey. Local gunsmiths could repair, but not make, the guns, which were often kept for generations. Pistols had recently been introduced to the Hejaz and were well liked, in part because they came from Constantinople: a pair of flintlock pistols was ten times higher in price than in England. [2]

Burton's trip to Arabia occurred just as the armies of Europe were adopting breech-loading rifles as their major service arms. These first service breech-loaders were soon replaced with still more modern rifles, and the old stocks flowed onto the international market. At the time of Charles Doughty's travels near Hail during 1876-78 it appears that the new rifles were present but still uncommon, for the main weapons he mentions are old muzzle-loading muskets or rifles. Any breech-loaders he saw elicited special comment. In particular, he reported regarding Mohammed ibn Rashid, that "The Prince Mohammed is pitiless in battle, he shoots with an European rifle". [3]

By the start of the twentieth century, however, modern guns had largely replaced the older weapons, at least for combat, and the Martini-Henry (and its variants) had become the most common modern rifle in Arabia. In a dispatch dated July 10, 1907, United States Consul Magelssen at Baghdad reported on the types of weapons carried by the bedouin "Arabs in Turkish Arabia":

> The Bedouins ... are nearly all armed with spear, sword and rifle, and some tribes carry Martini-Henri rifles almost to a man. [4]

To understand the importance of the change first to Martinis and later to magazine-fed rifles and to smokeless powder, it is necessary to understand the changing technology of weapons in the late nineteenth century.

THE INCREASED DEADLINESS OF MODERN WEAPONS

In Palestine in the decades after 1850, a number of European observers reported that the battles for power between the "leading families in the mountains north and south of Jerusalem" were conducted with larger forces than in the past, and that they led to a far greater level of destruction. (The situation was aggravated by the withdrawal of Ottoman troops for the Crimean War.) [5] With more and better weapons available, the deadliness of even local clashes increased. With reason, Lorimer blames the arms trade for "intensifying anarchy and bloodshed in

Central Arabia and in some of the smaller states" of the Middle East. [6] The first great nineteenth century change in small-arms technology had occurred decades before the events discussed here.

The dominant infantry weapon of the Napoleonic Wars was the smoothbore, muzzle-loading musket firing a round lead ball. The musket was fired through the use of a flintlock mechanism. In 1798-99, the discovery of fulminate of silver and fulminate of mercury provided for the first time an explosive that could be ignited by concussion. By 1814, a percussion cap was developed for use in firearms. The percussion cap was soon in use for both small-arms and artillery. [7] The new caps eliminated one of the major uncertainties inherent in the old muskets. The flintlocks misfired "about every seventh shot," while the new percussion caps misfired less than one time in two hundred. [8]

Muskets were still inaccurate and slow, however. British tests with a percussion musket in 1846 illustrate the problem. With the barrel elevated five degrees, the weapons had a maximum range of only 650 yards. At more normal firing distances, they were still inaccurate. Ten shots were fired at targets eleven and a half feet by six feet in size, at a range of 250 yards: all ten missed. To hit a target at 200 yards, the musket had to be aimed five

and a half feet above it; while at 600 yards, the aiming point was 130 feet over the target. Black powder muzzle-loading muskets had an effective combat range of 150 yards or less. [9]

Accuracy could only be improved by greatly increasing the amount of powder used, with the inevitable danger of the gun bursting when fired; by rifling the barrel so that the projectile spun, giving it greater stability in flight; or by improving the powder. Rifling was the best solution available at the time. But while rifling improved the accuracy of firearms, it also made them slow to re-load, and limited their use in combat. To ensure that the lead balls fit firmly into the grooves of the barrel, they had to be slightly larger in diameter than the bore. This required that they be forced down the barrel, often with the help of a mallet. While irregular troops and skirmishers did use rifles, they were too slow for use on the line by regulars.

Between 1850 and 1860, most European armies introduced various cylindro-conoidal bullets, for rifled muzzle-loaders. The most famous of these was the French Minie, adopted in 1851. The British adopted their own version with the Pritchett bullet used in the Pattern 1853 Enfield. [10] The caliber of the bullets used in the various guns changed dramatically at the same time. The British musket used during the 1840s had a caliber of .753:

three-quarters of in inch in diameter. The Minie fell to .702, and the Pattern 1853 declined further to .577, nearly a quarter of an inch smaller than the old musket bullets. [11]

The new bullets solved two of the major problems of the old muskets. First, they were cylindrical, and had less resistance in the air and greater stability in flight. Second, to allow their easy use in rifles, they were slightly smaller than the bore and thus slid easily down the barrel. To avoid loss of gas and pressure when fired and to impart spin, however, the bullet still had to fit tightly into the rifling of the barrel. This was accomplished by designing the projectile so that its rear expanded as the powder exploded, wedging it tightly into the grooves of the rifling. The combined effect was dramatic, as noted by Colonel Trevor N. Dupuy, formerly director of a United States Army study on the lethality of weapons:

> The introduction of the rifle musket and its conoidal bullet ... was to have the greatest immediate and measurable revolutionary impact on war of any new weapon or technological development of war before or since. When and if tactical nuclear weapons appear on the battlefield, presumably they will have an even greater effect. But certainly not even the high-explosive shells, airplanes, or tanks of the twentieth century were to have effects of contemporary scale and significance comparable to the rifled musket in its early days.
>
> The principal reason for this dramatic rise in the lethality of small arms ... was that with the rifled musket every infantryman had a weapon with

> the same effective range as the largest and most powerful cannon - in other words to the limit of effective vision, or the crest of the next hill or ridge. [12]

The increased range and accuracy of the new rifles had the immediate effect of greatly augmenting the strength of a defensive position and of infantry in general. An enemy force could be fired upon, with good effect, over a much greater distance than in the past.

The evolution of gunpowder complimented the developments in rifle design. The first major change came in about 1860 with the principle of progressive combustion. The black powder was compressed into higher-density pellets, slowing the rate of its combustion and the building of pressure from the expanding gas. Older gunpowder created high pressure through a sudden release of gas in the weapon. Progressive combustion led to a release of gas throughout much of the bullet's passage down the barrel. The result was higher muzzle velocities from lower maximum breech pressure, and a flatter trajectory. [13] Minor additional improvements were made in black powder until it was finally replaced by smokeless powder.

At about the time that the new rifled musket was placed in service, developments occurred that would soon allow the full introduction of breech-loaders. The percussion cap, powder, and bullet were combined into a

single metallic cartridge. The first service breech-loader was the Prussian needle-gun (adopted in 1842). Other European states soon followed Prussia's lead. It appears, for example, that the British began converting their stocks of Enfield muskets into breech-loading Sniders within a year or two of the Enfield's introduction. By the late 1870s, the major armies of Europe were all armed with breech-loaders using metallic cartridges, and having steel barrels. [14]

The Martini-Henry of 1871 became the most common rifle in Arabia by the early years of this century. It well illustrates the late black powder breech-loaders. The British Martini-Henry fired a 480 grain, .45 caliber bullet, with a muzzle velocity of 1,350 feet per second. [15] Speed and ease of re-loading were the major advantages of breech-loaders over muzzle-loaders. In Arabia, cavalry - mounted on either camels or horses - was of far greater importance than it was in Europe. And breech-loaders can be easily re-loaded while mounted.

The next major development in rifle design came with the wide introduction of magazine-fed breech-loaders. These took the improved ballistics of the new bullets and the smooth loading of the metallic cartridges and greatly increased the speed with which the rifles could be fired. Most European rifles eventually followed the design of the

German Mauser in the 1890s. A number, including the tube-magazine fed Mauser purchased by the Ottomans, were developed for use with black powder. The heavy fouling caused by black powder, however, slowed the introduction of new designs. The first magazine-fed rifles had scarcely been introduced into the armies of Europe before the French invention of smokeless powder in 1886 made them obsolete.

Smokeless powder had several major advantages over black powder. It did not foul the gun as badly, it did not give away the shooter's position or obscure his vision, and it was slow-burning. [16] The slow, progressive, combustion of smokeless powder gave much higher muzzle velocities than had been possible with black powder. The difference becomes clear when one considers the reaction between the projectile and the explosive gasses in the gun barrel as the powder burns.

Progressive combustion black powders burn at a fairly steady rate, giving an even pressure that forces the bullet out of the barrel: however, if the gun is long enough, the projectile still begins to lose velocity before leaving the barrel. With the progressive explosion of smokeless powders, the rate of combustion and the resulting gas pressure builds throughout the explosion: as a result, the projectile accelerates throughout its time in the barrel. For projectiles with the same mass, the new powders provide

a much higher muzzle velocity and resulting impact. (The formula is mass times velocity, squared.)

Changes brought by the powder are illustrated by comparing three models of the Mauser. The single shot black powder Model 1871; the tube magazine-fed Model 1887, the last of the black powder Mausers; and the Model 1890, the first of the smokeless powder Mausers. The last two were both sold to the Ottomans. The Model 1871 fired a 660 grain bullet of 11mm. caliber at about 1,427 feet per second [17]; the black powder Model 1887 (Turkish) fired a 284 grain, 9.5mm caliber bullet with a muzzle velocity of about 1,758 feet per second [18]; while the smokeless powder Model 1890 (Turkish) fired a 154 grain bullet of 7.95mm. caliber with a muzzle velocity of about 2,720 feet per second. [19]

There was thus a near doubling in the muzzle velocity between the 1871 and 1890 Models, with most of the improvement coming from the introduction of smokeless powder. The contrast is even greater with the old Martini-Henries: the British Service cartridge, as noted, had a muzzle velocity of 1,350 feet per second, while the Turkish version had a muzzle velocity of 1,380 feet per second. [20] When the Martini is compared with the Model 1890 Mauser's 2,720 fps, the improvement is dramatic.

The increased muzzle velocity of early single-shot

breech-loaders over muzzle-loaders and then of black powder over smokeless powder is vital. While the smaller bullets of the later guns had less wind resistance to hinder their flight, the most important difference was their velocity. Each round would fall the same distance per second (ignoring wind resistance) after leaving the barrel of the rifle. Thus, the higher the muzzle velocity, the further the round would travel before striking the ground. The flatter trajectory permitted more accurate aiming over longer distances. A shot that would merely announce a man's presence and fall short of his enemy with an older rifle would kill with the newer. Technology might well outpace an actual intent to kill.

The second major change of tactical importance was in the increased rate of fire of bolt-action magazine-fed rifles compared with single-shot breech-loaders. The British found that troops using the Martini could fire between eight and twelve aimed shots per minute [21], while the new magazine rifles could fire up to 30 aimed shots in the same time. [22] The extra use of ammunition could be a problem, as pointed out by al-Nuri in his conversation with Musil (below, Chapter II), but the ability to shoot quickly in battle could be a matter of life or death.

The dates for the introduction of these changes can be quickly listed for review: cylindro-conoidal bullets for

rifled muzzle-loaders, c.1849-1860; breech-loading rifles, c.1848-1871; bolt operated magazine-fed rifles (especially when combined with smokeless powder), c.1885-1895; smokeless powder, c.1885-1890. [23] The international market could move obsolete weapons quickly. For example, some older breech-loaders reached Central Africa in about 1886, within a year of their replacement in Europe. [24] Generally, however, changes took a number of years to reach Arabia. The delay seems to have shortened as the speed of technological change increased and as European nations modernized their own stocks in the years leading up to the First World War.

An additional factor that affected the use of the weapons in Arabia, as elsewhere, was the reliability of early breech-loading ammunition. In early Martini-Henries, for example, the base of the cartridge case was actually a separate piece of metal. (In the case of the British Service Martini, a coiled brass or iron case was used, before conversion to a solid brass case. [25]) When the rifle become hot, the fired shell could rip apart, forcing use of a special extraction tool to dig out the casing before the next shot. [26] Sources for Arabia do not mention the problem, and it may have been corrected before the weapon reached the area.

The rapid changes made in the technology of infantry rifles in Europe, and the resulting dumping of older guns on

the world market, made the large scale introduction of modern arms to Arabia possible. It is, of course, inevitable that modern weapons would have eventually reached Arabia. But that eventuality could have represented a very long time indeed had the major powers not been burdened with enormous stocks of rifles that had became obsolete, and had they chosen to destroy these rifles rather than sell them to arms dealers. But they did not destroy them, and technological change helped drive the arms market in Arabia, and elsewhere.

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26. Conversation with A. Nisbet.

CHAPTER II

THE SWEEP OF TECHNOLOGY

With a general understanding of the changing technology of military rifles during the period as background, the types of rifles actually found in Arabia can now be examined. This information will itself serve as background for the later examination of the arms trade.

MODERN RIFLES IN ARABIA

By the first decade of this century, the Martini-Henry was the most common modern rifle in Arabia. The 1907 dispatch by the United States Consul in Baghdad [1] reports the prevalence of the Martini. At about the same time, British officials in the Persian Gulf made a detailed study of the tribes and weapons of the region. (c. 1905-07) The study was undertaken for the Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, then being prepared by J.G. Lorimer of the Indian Civil Service. The results of their study are scattered throughout Lorimer's work. There was still a considerable variety of guns in the region, some tribes being well armed, while others had few breech-loaders and still carried flintlock muskets. [2] In general, however, the old flintlocks and matchlocks were considered "entirely out of date", and it is

the Martini that is cited again and again in Lorimer as the standard modern rifle. [3] By 1896, Martinis were used to pay customs duty on arms imported into Bahrein. [4]

The several variations of the Martini, and their different compound names, are easily confused. All are often referred to simply as Martinis. The two elements in a compound rifle name refer to the type of breech operating mechanism and to the barrel design. The rifle eventually called the Martini started as the Peabody Rifle in the United States. A Swiss designer, Martini, altered the breech mechanism, creating the Peabody-Martini sold to the Ottomans in 1873. [5] The British then replaced the original barrel with their own, called the Henry, yielding the Martini-Henry. Martini rifles in Arabia could be either the Peabody-Martini or the Martini-Henry, with the sources seldom distinguishing between the two designs.

Martinis are mentioned specifically for the Ajman Tribe of Hasa and eastern Arabia, [6] the Sheikhdom of Dubai, [7] the Muntafik Tribe of Iraq, [8] the Mutair Tribe of central Arabia, [9] the towns of the Oman Sultanate, [10] and Riyadh in Nejd. [11] In addition, un-named breech-loaders are cited for Jabal Sammar and the region around Hail. [12]

During 1905-06, dispatches from the Military Attaché

of the British Embassy in Constantinople, Lieutenant Colonel Maunsell, also note the presence of Martinis in Mesopotamia [13] and with the Iraqi section of the Sammar Tribe. [14] As early as 1905, however, the acting British Consul at Basra reported that while the Muntafik Tribe carried Martinis, some of the tribes allied to it were already armed with Mausers. [15] The Martini was dominant, but still more modern rifles were entering the arms trade in Arabia.

Observations made by travelers to Arabia in the years before World War I further document the distribution and use of modern rifles in different parts of the Peninsula. In 1912, the Dane Barclay Raunkiaer traveled from Kuwait to Riyadh and then back to the coast of al-Hasa. Raunkiaer's trip broke his health, and he died shortly after returning home. The information he obtained at so high a personal price is of great value. He found that carbines were far more popular than rifles, that the Martini-Henry carbine was the weapon "most in use," and that it had "been known in Arabia for over a generation." Mausers were "met with now and then." Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait, for example, had a paid guard of about 150 men who were armed with Martini-Henry and Mauser carbines. [16] Raunkiaer believed the major importation route for the Martinis was through Muscat after shipment from Djibouti. He added a description of the way in which the Martini-Henry was altered by the

local Bedouin tribes:

> No sooner has an Arab taken possession of such a carbine than he sets about making alterations. As a result it assumes a distinctly Arab character, while at the same time it loses most of its value as a firearm. First and formost the backsight - an offense to the Arab's sense of beauty - is knocked off, the foresight goes the same way, and where the sights have been, strips of tin or brass are bound round the barrel and kept polished. After thus making short work of the means of sighting, the Arab pursues the process of embellishment by paring as much wood as ever he can off the weapon, to make it lighter, and after the stock has finally assumed its form, he studs it with innumerable little nails with brass heads disposed in various patterns. That done, the formidable arm is put safely in the leathern holster, which has its place on the camel saddle behind the rider. [17]

Charles Doughty in the 1880s had noticed the same practice of cutting off the sights during his visit to Hail when a local gun-smith handed him "an army rifle [from India] whereupon I found the Tower mark; the sights - they not understanding their use! - had been taken away." [18]

Raunkiaer's description is both reasonable and partly confirmed, but in blaming aesthetics for the alterations he was assuredly wrong. Of the alterations he described, I suggest that only the studs were primarily decorative. The others were practical. The paring of excess wood from the carbines would have not only reduced the weapon's weight, but also would have shifted its balance point and made it easier to handle while mounted. The wrapping of the carbines was a needed protection against sand and dirt, and

was a method apparently used in most parts of the Peninsula. The question of the sights is more difficult, but becomes clear on analysis.

If a shooter is not trained, and trained well, to use sights he will find them an obstruction. The shooter must break the old habit of sighting down the barrel, and learn to concentrate on holding the proper sight picture on the target. This training requires a considerable use of ammunition, and ammunition was generally in short supply in Arabia. And without effective training, a quick conversation to the use of sights would have been difficult and expensive. In addition, the sights of a military rifle are easily knocked out of adjustment, and the regular use of ammunition is needed to readjust them. As a final point, it is important to remember that when firing at relatively short ranges (up to about 200 yards) sights on a rifle are only needed for target shooting. Both men and animals are large enough to be easily hit without precision sights.

Reporting on the northern parts of the Peninsula, Alois Musil noted that for hunting the Ruwala used muzzle-loading muskets and rifles with percussion caps or flintlocks. However:

> For fighting, the Rwala have rifles of as-sam', as-sehani and Mauser makes. Among the common Bedouins before the World War the sam', an old English military gun, was the most popular. A genuine one cost 40 to 45 megidijjat ($36-$40.50)

> and was imported chiefly from Egypt; an imitation, tuggarijje, which came from India, sold for 28 to 30 megidijjat ($25.20-$29). The sehani is a Turkish military rifle, a Martini; the umm sunki kind of sehani could be bought for 50-60 megidijjat ($36-$45). All modern rifles are called Mausers by the Bedouins. Breechloaders are not liked by the Rwala and the rifles fitted with breechblocks, ummu-s-sba, are less sought after than those without. The original Mausers, especially the Mannlichers, cost 50-60 megidijjat ($45-$54); the imitations, tuggari, were sold for as much as 20 megidijjat ($18) less. ... In the camp of every tribe an expert mechanic may be found, who can repair guns and manufacture cartridges. [19]

It is likely that economics had much to do with the preference for muzzle-loaders for hunting. Ammunition for the modern guns was both expensive and in short supply, while a flintlock could have been fired again and again for little cost. And while percussion caps would have had to be imported, their cost would have been much lower than the cost of brass ammunition. In addition, over the average distances involved in hunting (about 200 yards) a well made and smoothed lead ball is sufficiently accurate. [20] During hunting, reloading and firing speed is seldom vital, while during combat it can become a matter of survival.

It immediately seems apparent that Musil was either not an expert on the military weapons he discussed, or he chose not to report accurately on these weapons. He refers to the Austrian Mannlicher as a sub-type of the German Mauser, while it was in fact a different weapon. The mistake is odd, for Musil traveled with Herr Thomasberger of

Austrian Military Intelligence on some of his expeditions, [21] and used weapons himself throughout his travels. When he states that the Ruwala preferred breech-loaders without breechblocks, he appears to refer to a developing preference for the newer magazine-fed rifles over the Martinis and Sniders. As this would have meant a change from black-powder to smokeless powder, the superiority of the cartridge may have been a more important factor than the rifle's action.

Direct evidence that the Ruwala did not object to breech-loaders is provided in another of Musil's works where he reported a conversation with a prince of the Ruwala shortly after the start of World War I. The prince said that the best modern weapons were made by the "Alman" (Germans), and the next best by the "Namsa" (Austrians). [22] The German guns would have been Mausers, and the Austrian guns Mannlichers: both were magazine-fed breech-loaders. The advantage of smokeless powder and the problems of scarce ammunition, in addition to the difficulty of changing old shooting habits are illustrated by Musil's story of a meeting near Damascus with Sheikh al-Nuri of the Ruwala in November, 1908:

> An-Nuri showed me a Mannlicher carbine of the 1898 Model which I had given him. Being used to the Martini rifle, he could not accustom himself to the Mannlicher lock and had had it changed to the Martini type. This pleased him beyond measure and made him boast that his carbine carried much farther and better than the Martini. To my mild reproof that he could have loaded the original

> Mannlicher with five cartridges, while now he had to be satisfied with only one, he replied that at least he would not have to waste so much ammunition as before. [23]

The identity of the "old English military gun," the sam', is unclear. Because he recognized the Turkish service Peabody-Martini, it seems very likely that Musil would have identified the British service version of the Martini as well, had it been the gun in question. It also seems unlikely that he would have identified any of the magazine-fed Enfields that succeeded the Martini in British service as being "old." Thus, the best candidate for the sam' is the Snider breech-loading conversion of the old Enfield muzzle-loading musket. As this weapon was the standard service rifle of the Ottomans and the British before the Martini-Henry, it would have been easily available through Turkish sources, or from surplus European stocks.

The availability of arms in south western Arabia was affected by a number of factors, including Government of India regulations. Wyman Bury suggested, in 1911, that in outfitting an expedition to the interior of Aden and Yemen, the traveler should arm his men with breech-loading carbines, with a simple breech design and using "high velocity smokeless powder." He then noted that the .303 Martini-Medford (I believe this to be a version of the British service Martini-Henry modified to take the newer

Enfield cartridge) would have been a good choice, but that Government of India regulations banned use of that caliber. The same regulations banned the ammunition for the "Snyder" (Snider) and the Martini-Henry. Bury ended by suggesting that the Mauser .350 saddle-carbine answered "all requirements." [24]

In early 1914, Bury discussed the lack of military protection for Sana, Yemen, in the absence of Turkish troops: "modern commercial enterprise has armed the remotest tribesmen with modern weapons. ... There the city stands in her isolation and arrogance like a fat heifer among wolves, ..." [25] Even the local Arab gendarmerie, the Zaptieh, were at a disadvantage. They served beside Turkish regular infantry, and were also responsible for most Ottoman dealings with the Yemani population. However, they were armed with an early pattern Mauser using black powder cartridges fed from a tubular magazine under the barrel. The smoke from the black powder was "a serious drawback in mountain warfare." [26] The Mausers observed by Bury were likely part of the shipment of black powder Model 1887 Mausers ordered by Turkey in that year, and discussed in Chapter VII.

The irregular troops in Yemen were not alone in their use of the old Mausers, however. Bury reports that Izzet Pasha's 1911 campaign included Turkish troops of "several

European battalions" armed with "modern Mausers, burning smokeless powder." However:

> They have returned with their rifles, and all ammunition of that caliber has been shipped back to Europe or Asia Minor. Yamen is garrisoned with Asiatic battalions, armed with the same weapon as the Zaptieh, and the one or two European battalions that are still left there are similarly armed. [27]

Thus by 1914, on the eve of World War I, Turkish provincial forces were still using the old-model Mausers.

CHANGES DURING WORLD WAR I

The situation regarding tribal arms changed with the great influx of arms during World War I, particularly in the area near Mesopotamia. In 1915, British troops at Basra were fired on nightly by Arab irregulars fighting for the Ottomans. A variety of rifles were in use, and they could be identified easily by their sound. "Heavy Martini bullets droned, Mausers fizzed, and individuals were sometimes recognized by the noise made by their particular weapons, ..." The irregulars took advantage of breaks in the fighting to strip the battlefield of rifles dropped by the dead and wounded. [28]

By the end of World War I magazine fed modern rifles appear to have largely replaced the older weapons. Bertram Thomas reported on the tribes of Northern Arabia and Iraq following the war, stating that they "re-armed themselves

with modern rifles of which the gleanings of the battle-fields had provided a bounteous harvest." Sir Arnold Wilson analyzed the results of the World War I arms glut in central Iraq in 1917, for both farmers and bedouin:

> ... the population as a whole had contrived to provide itself with modern weapons and abundance of ammunition, to such effect that the price of a Mauser or Lee-Enfield, which before the War stood at £ 20 or £ 25, had dropped to £ 5 or less. British and Turkish rifles had been picked up on fields of battle or stolen on the lines of communication in thousands; ammunition had been accumulated on a scale hitherto undreamt of. ... In one British camp over seventy boxes of 1,000 rounds each were dug up and stolen from under the noses of the sentries. Every narrative of the period testifies to the ingenuity displayed in these predatory activities and the nervous irritation they caused. ... the only action taken, at the instance of the military authorities and at their expense, was to purchase rifles and ammunition from any tribesman who would sell. More than half a million rounds, several hundred good rifles and as many useless ones were thus purchased, but the measure did more harm than good. Prices did not rise in the open market. The rifles and ammunition freely issued to our Allies on the Syrian side, together with captured Turkish arms, soon filled the gap, and the money we paid went to purchase more and better rifles. [29]

The inundation of Arabia with modern arms during the Great War - and the battles fought around the northern edges of the Peninsula by the combatants - were the sharpest examples of international politics effecting the region during this period. But World War I was only the final of a series of international events to influence the arms trade in Arabia. Technological change was the first leg driving the arms trade, European colonial rivalry was the second.

NOTES

1. See Chapter I.

2. Lorimer, Volume II-A, pages 65-67, 634-37 and passim.

3. Lorimer, Volume II-B, page 1287.

4. See Chapter VI.

5. See Chapter VII.

6. Lorimer, Volume II-A, pages 54-59.

7. Lorimer, Volume II-A, pages 454-56.

8. Lorimer, Volume II-B, pages 1272-74.

9. Lorimer, Volume II-B, page 1291.

10. Lorimer, Volume II-B, page 1390.

11. Lorimer, Volume II-B, pages 1592-93.

12. Lorimer, Volume II-A, page 936, and Volume II-B, page 1732-52.

13. Bidwell, The Affairs of Arabia, in Two Volumes, London, Frank Cass and Company Limited, 1971, Volume I, Part II, page 33.

14. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 33.

15. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 18.

16. Raunkiaer, Barclay, Through Wahhabiland On Camelback, London, Routledge & Kegan, 1969, pages 36 & 39.

17. Raunkiaer, pages 71-72.

18. Doughty, Volume I, Page 601.

19. Musil, Alois, The Manners and Customs of the Rwala Bedouins, New York, American Geographical Society, 1928, pages131-32.

20. Doughty, Volume I, Page 456.

21. Winstone, H.V.F., The Illicit Adventure, London, Jonathan Cape, 1982, passim.

22. Musil, Alois, Arabia Deserta, New York, American

Geographical Society, 1927, page 442.

23. Musil, Palmyrena, New York, American Geographical Society, 1982, page 111.

24. Bury, The Land of Uz, London, Macmillan and Co., Ltd., 1911, pages 349-50.

25. Bury, Arabia Infelix, page 82.

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28. Baker, A.J., The Neglected War, London, Faber & Faber, 1967. Rifle types, page 62; number of irregulars, page 67; collection of rifles, page 221.

29. Thomas, B., Alarms and Excursions in Arabia, Indianapolis, The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1931, page 24. Wilson, A., Loyalties, New York, Greenwood Press, 1969 reprint of 1930 edition, page 259-60.

CHAPTER III

INTERNATIONAL POLITICS AND THE ARMS TRADE

THE GENERAL ACT OF BRUSSELS

The rapid changes in technology have been reviewed as a precondition for the arms trade as it developed in Arabia. The international political rivalries that shaped and directed the course of the trade can now be studied.

The arms trade in Arabia was influenced by, and often controlled by, international political considerations not directly related to the region. This influence was felt in three major ways: first, the wars and rivalries of Europe drove the evolution of weapons, and thus helped create the vast stock of surplus rifles dumped on the world market; and second, general colonial rivalry in Africa led to controls on the arms trade there and the shift of the trade north; and third, the rivalry between Britain and France protected, and in fact encouraged, the arms merchants and hindered British efforts at control.

Between 1849 and 1871 two new, unified, states rose to influence in Europe while a series of major internal wars shifted and re-shifted the balance of power. The increasing

power of Italy and Germany and the relative decline of Austria and France coincided with a desire by the two new states to gain overseas colonies. During the 1870s and 1880s, Germany and Italy sought to catch up in the race for colonies while France recovered from its defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. Britain, at first, stayed on the outside watching, then began to participate in Europe's series of shifting alliances. During the Berlin Congress in 1878, Britain resumed a strong role in European politics, gaining a better position in the Middle East at the expense of Russia. [1] Despite France's defeat in 1870-71, the alliances formed during the 1880s were primarily directed against France or Russia by Germany, Austria and Italy.

The shifting of alliances continued until the final changes at the start of World War I. The various alliances had a constant effect on events in and near Arabia, and on the arms trade. Colonial rivalry, in particular, was soon seen as a threat to the peace of Europe itself, and the European powers began seeking ways to control their competition.

Two important agreements on Africa preceded the Brussels Conference and helped settle the colonial situation on the East Coast of Africa, thus easing Anglo-German tensions. In 1886 Britain and Germany signed an agreement stating that both recognized the "sovereignty of the Sultan

of Zanzibar over the Islands of Zanzibar and Pemba ... as well as over the Islands of Lamu and Mafia" and over a strip of the African coast opposite the islands. In addition, the agreement set the boundaries of the German and British areas of influence in East Africa. [2] The 1886 Agreement favored Germany, in that Britain agreed to Germany's area of influence in East Africa. A second Agreement four years later favored Britain, for Germany approved Britain's declaration of a Protectorate over Zanzibar and yielded parts of various African areas of influence to Britain. [3] The new Zanzibar Protectorate (1890) put Britain in a stronger position to attack the southern link in the slave trade and the related arms trade.

More than bilateral action was needed, however. In August, 1889 King Leopold of Belgium, on the suggestion of Britain, invited seventeen states to a conference at Brussels to discuss the African slave and arms trades. Many of the nations receiving invitations were uncertain of British motives in requesting the conference, and of whether they should attend. The French feared that the conference was a British attempt to isolate France, while the United States wanted to do nothing to help the colonial powers. Other states had a variety of concerns, but in the end the conference convened, and after much work produced the General Act of Brussels for the Repression of the African

Slave Trade. The Act included a lengthy section designed to control the arms trade in much of Africa. [4] As discussed below, the arms provisions of the Act helped force a northward shift in the arms trade from Africa to the lands around Arabia. Arab vessels that carried slaves from Africa to the markets of the Peninsula often also shipped guns.

The linking of the slave trade and the arms trade by the Brussels Act was symptomatic of a growing problem for the colonial powers in the 1880s; the peoples they wished to control were obtaining modern weapons that threatened to make their resistance more effective than it had been. British Consul-General Euan-Smith at Zanzibar stated the dangers in June, 1888 dispatch to the Foreign Office:

> The great question is that regarding the import of arms and ammunition into East Africa. This trade has now assumed proportions of which your Lordship may possibly be unaware. Formerly the arms so imported were cheap and worthless weapons manufactured to last for a maximum period of some two or three years and after that time becoming useless and worn out. Now, however, arms of precision and breech-loading rifles and ammunition are being imported in very large quantities and are rapidly taking the place of the flintlock and muzzle-loading cheap muskets. ... Unless some steps are taken to check this immense import of arms into East Africa the development and pacification of this great continent will have to be carried out in the face of an enormous population, the majority of whom will probably be armed with first-class breech-loading rifles. [5]

The major goal of the Brussels Convention may, in fact, have been to prevent modern arms from reaching central

Africa, and not suppression of the slave trade. [6] There was apparently a direct link between the slave and arms trades. While White believed that the act was aimed primarily at the slave trade, she noted that the slavers were generally armed with guns and were "the backbone of resistance to white penetration." [7] This linkage extended to many of the slave and arms traders active in the seas around Arabia.

Regardless of the balance of motives behind the Conference, the General Act of Brussels established two different maritime control zones, one for control of the slave trade, and one for control of the arms trade. Figure 2 shows both zones. The signers of the Act asserted high moral goals for their control of the arms trade, while implicitly admitting the fear of armed "natives" that apparently motivated their agreement.

In regard to the arms trade, the General Act of Brussels provided, in part:

> ARTICLE VIII
>
> The experience of all nations that have intercourse with Africa having shown the pernicious and preponderating part played by fire-arms in operations connected with the slave-trade as well as internal wars between native tribes; and this same experience having clearly proved that the preservation of the African population whose existence it is the express wish of the powers to protect, is a radical impossibility, if measures restricting the trade in fire-arms and ammunition are not adopted, the powers decide, so far as the present state of

> their frontiers permits, that the importation of fire-arms, and especially of rifles and improved weapons, as well as of powder, ball and cartridges, is, except in the cases and under the conditions provided for in the following Article, prohibited ...
>
> (The Act ordered the establishment of governmental warehouses in the African colonies of the signers, and required that arms only be removed from the warehouses for the use of colonial governments, authorized European travelers, or persons working for Europeans. Article IX then specified which weapons were to be controlled and which could still be sold to the natives.)

ARTICLE IX

> ... authorization shall ... be refused for the withdrawal (from the government warehouses) of all arms for accurate firing, such as rifles, magazine guns, or breech-loaders, whether whole or in detached pieces, their cartridges, caps, or other ammunition intended for them. ...
>
> The above rule as to warehousing shall also apply to gunpowder.
>
> Only flint-lock guns, with unrifled barrels, and common gunpowder known as trade powder, may be withdrawn from warehouses for sale. ... [8]

Most of the signers of the General Act ratified it without trouble. [9] The French Chamber of Deputies, however, refused to agree to the Articles allowing for the visit, search and detention of merchant vessels at sea by the warships of the other signers. (Articles XXI-XXIII and XLII-LXI) France had never allowed foreign warships to search vessels flying the French flag, and would not do so now. French honor would not be sacrificed. But neither would the British give up the enforcement clauses that they

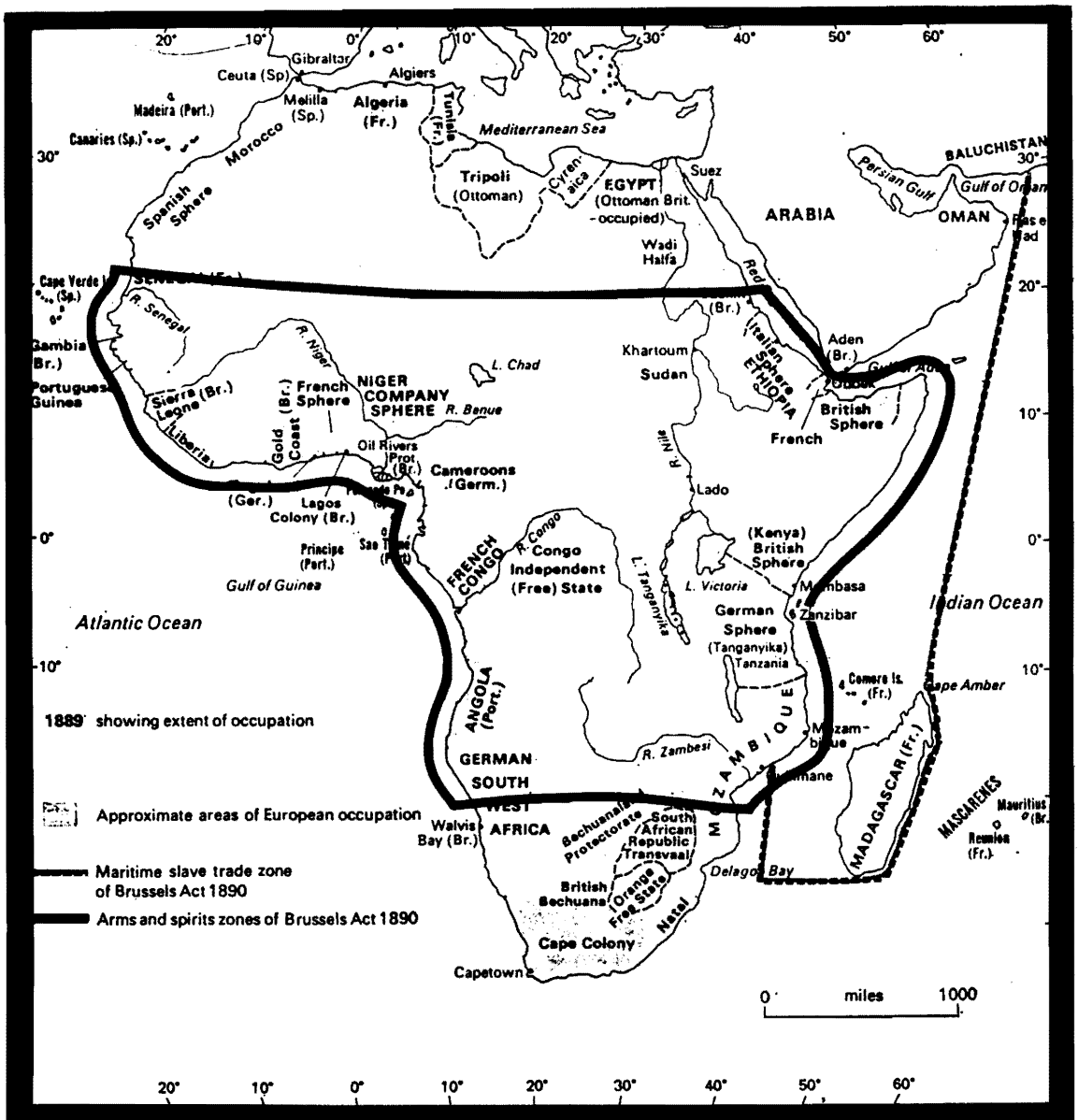

Figure 2. Map of the Maritime Slave Trade and Arms Control Zones of the General Act of Brussels.

Miers, S., Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade, New York, Africana Publishing Co., 1975, page 371. Adapted by the author.

considered vital. To save the treaty, an unusual compromise was reached: France was allowed to exclude the offending passages from its ratification, while the other signers approved the entire treaty. [10]

As a result the French were in a position to avoid any real regulation on the use of their flag, and they freely issued it to native craft engaged in both the slave and arms trades from Omani ports. This protection for the arms trade became vital and was to bedevil the British until the eve of World War I.

USE OF THE FRENCH FLAG TO PROTECT THE ARMS TRADE

International Law allowed a state to authorize use of its flag by any vessel, and under any circumstances, that it chose. Throughout the period this right was fully accepted by both Britain and France in regard to any persons who were residents in any of their formal colonies or protectorates. The acceptance of this principle is clear from the comment by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague in the Muscat Dhows Case that:

> ...generally speaking it belongs to every sovereign to decide to whom he will accord the right to fly his flag and to prescribe the rules governing such grants... [11]

The General Act of Brussels, however, modified this right for its signers, and its modification became critical

to efforts to control the arms trade. Early disputes over flag rights in the region were generally related to the use of the French flag to protect the slave trade, and the earlier process by which native craft gained this protection is important.

Traditionally the sailors of the region used the red Turkish flag, making it difficult to determine the exact origin of a vessel. As late as 1900, the traditional flag was still in general use in the Persian Gulf, and was viewed as the proper flag by the Arab sailors of both Oman and Kuwait. It was not until after the turn of the century that distinct local flags were put into service. [12] In the 1847, however, a decree by the Ottoman Sultan prohibited Turkish vessels from engaging in the slave trade, and the British Navy was allowed to search suspected Turkish ships. [13] During the 1840s most of the Gulf rulers had signed agreements allowing the Royal Navy to act against the slave trade.

Additional local agreements followed. In reaction, Arab sailors began "to conceal their operations by use of the French flag, which secured them against search by British vessels". [14] For a number of reasons, the arms trade began to build strongly after 1883, and by 1891, use of the French flag had:

> ... become somewhat common among the subjects of

> the Sultan of Oman. In 1892 the practice appeared likely to be extended to the vessels of Trucial Oman, and in the same year slave cargoes began to reach Basrah under French colours.

Lorimer carefully added a caveat regarding the involvement of the French Government at this time:

> It should be mentioned, however, in extenuation of the responsibility of the French Government, that use of their flag by slave traders was often unauthorized and fraudulent. [15]

Use of the French flag by slavers and arms traders along the east coast of Africa was little more than an irritant to the British. The real crisis developed when the French Consul in Muscat began to distribute French papers to local Arabs. This practice was to severly limit the ability of the British to strike at the arms trade.

TREATY PROTECTION FOR THE ARMS TRADE AT MUSCAT

International Law assumed that all states were sovereign and independent, but unless there were political or military factors involved, the colonial powers did not extend this doctrine to the nations and peoples they wished to control. By the 1890s, the British were in effective control of most of the Gulf littoral, or were in a position to extend their control without interference from any other European power. However, European politics created in the mid-nineteenth century in Oman a shield that maintained the technical independence of the Sultanate, and protected the arms trade.

Britain and France began to take an interest in Oman late in the eighteenth century when the Sultan at Muscat ruled both Oman and Zanzibar, commanding much of the internal shipping of the Indian Ocean region. British interest, in particular, rose and fell in accord with the shifts of European politics and French activity in the area.

Muscat remained neutral during the Anglo-French War in 1793. But it was a neutrality of trade. In 1796 the British feared that Sultan ibn Ahmed had leaned toward the French, following reports that Muscati vessels carried information on British shipping to the French colony of Ile de France (Mauritius), and that Frenchmen were "frequently passing through Muscat" to Persia and the Levant. Also, Muscati merchants were "doing a thriving business" trading British goods captured by the French and were running the British blockade of the Mascarenes Islands. The Governor of Bombay sent an officer to Muscat to investigate. [16]

By an Agreement signed in 1789, the Sultan promised not to give the French or the Dutch a trading or military base within his territory "whilst warfare shall continue between the English Company and them" [17] A further agreement in 1800 called for an East India Company Agent to be stationed at Muscat.

Notwithstanding these agreements, throughout the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, French privateers from Ile de France used Muscat as a base for shelter and supplies while attacking British shipping in the Indian Ocean. Goods captured by the French were sold to Muscati merchants, and both the merchants and the Sultan regularly purchased captured English ships and goods at Port Louis. Captured ships were re-sold throughout the Gulf and even at Calcutta. [18]

Seyyid Said bin Sultan began his rule in 1806, and was faced with a renewal of the Anglo-French war. Said kept his French option open. He maintained the long-standing trade with Port Louis, and in 1807, concluded an agreement with the French Governor of Ile de France allowing for a French commercial agent at Muscat. [19]

Both during and after the war, Said's policy was based on his desire to remain independent. While he saw the British as his protectors, both in the Gulf and in East Africa, [20] he did not cut himself off from the French. In 1817 a French merchant from Bourbon visited Muscat and sought to revive the old Ile de France-Muscat trade. Said accepted the idea, and trade was soon underway, [21] sanctioned by a commercial treaty with the Governor of Bourbon that gave most-favored-nation rights to both parties. [22] Said was thus able to use France's recovery

from defeat, and her renewed interest in trade and colonies, as a counter to British influence.

Throughout the remainder of the century, British policy in the region was often based on fear. When the Egyptians were in control of central Arabia and the Trucial Coast, the British feared an expansion of Egypt's power, believing that France was behind Mahomet Ali's expansion. Later, they feared direct French action against the routes to India. Lord Palmerston, following in Pitt's tradition, stated the danger: "the mistress of India cannot permit France to be mistress directly or indirectly of the road to her Indian dominions." [23] Whether the danger came directly at sea, or indirectly through arms reaching the Northwest Frontier, the need to protect India largely determined the British reaction to the arms trade.

Britain and France were not the only powers involved in the Indian Ocean, however, for the United States had a growing role in world trade. While The United States had no colonial ambitions in the Middle East, her commercial activity led to the signing of a treaty with Muscat in 1833 that undercut any possible legal monopoly by the two European states. This agreement was Muscat's first treaty directly with a Western state, [24] as the earlier agreements had been signed with British and French colonial officials. A similar commercial treaty was not signed with

Britain until 1839 and with France in 1844. [25] The Treaty allowed the United States to send a consul to Muscat, and established the rules for future relations. It is of particular importance that the Treaty was requested not by the United States, but by Said. [26]

It is probable, given Said's desire to balance British and French influence, that he sought relations with the United States as a counter to both European powers. And if this was his goal, he was successful, for this Treaty helped insure Oman a legal status not available to the other states of the Gulf.

The next important step in securing international protection for Oman's legal independence was a commercial treaty with France, signed on November 17, 1844, by Captain Romain-Desfosses and Said. It was similar to a treaty signed with the British in 1839 granting commercial and extraterritorial rights. The Treaty granted trading and consular rights in Oman that France later used to protect the arms trade. These included the right to "purchase, sell or rent land, houses or warehouses" in the Sultan of Muscat's territory. Any "premises occupied by the French, or by persons in their service" was protected by the Treaty and could not be "forcibly entered without the permission of the French Consul." [27] In addition:

ART. 4. The subjects of ... the Sultan of

> Maskat, actually in the service of the French, shall enjoy the same privileges which are granted to the French themselves; but ... (convicted criminals lost such protection) ...
>
> ART. 5. The two ... parties acknowledge reciprocally the right of appointing Consuls to reside in each other's dominions, ... and such Consuls shall at all times be placed on the footing of the Consuls of the most favored nations. ... The French Consul shall be at liberty to hoist the French flag over his house. [28]

Said was able to maintain his independence fairly well until his death in 1856. Unfortunately for the unity of his state, his sons Thwaini and Majid each claimed the entire succession. The British were not willing to allow a civil war to be fought between Muscat and Zanzibar across the Indian Ocean, and they moved to prevent the fight from developing.

The rivals for the throne agreed to arbitration by the British India Government, and in 1861 Lord Canning, Viceroy of India, issued his Award. The Omani empire was partitioned into a rich African section ruled from Zanzibar, and the poor Arabian/Persian section ruled from Muscat. [29]

The Canning Award called for an annual payment of 40,000 Maria Theresa Talers ($MT, equal to £8,500) by the newly created Sultan of Zanzibar to the Sultan of Muscat, to compensate for his loss of income from the African sections of the combined state. The payment was "not to be understood as a recognition of the dependence of Zanzibar

upon Muscat." In exchange for the money, the Sultan of Muscat abandoned "all claims upon Zanzibar." [30]

The effect of the Award on Oman was to be dramatic. The British had influenced the internal politics of the Sultanate during Said's reign, but not decisively. [31] Following the Award, Britain was drawn deeply into the affairs of Oman, for after 1866, she assumed responsibility for payment of the money. The Award became vital to any pretender, both economically and politically. British payment of the subsidy to a claimant served as recognition of his position, and no sultan held power long when it was withheld. British support kept unpopular Sultans in power, while the lack of British support led to the fall of popular rulers. [32]

The Canning Award soon became an issue between Britain and France, for under France's 1844 Treaty with Oman, her legal rights in the Sultanate were equal to those of Britain. In 1860, French interest in obtaining a large building for their use in Zanzibar aroused British concern. The British Ambassador to France told the French that Britain would agree to no limit on Zanzibar's independence or to a foreign power gaining territory there. The conflict between supporting Zanzibar's independence while limiting that country's right to sell land certainly escaped both the British and the French.

The French Foreign Minister, M. Thouvenel, said France had no such interests and agreed to a document, signed March 10, 1862 by which both nations guaranteed that neither would seek territory from Muscat or Zanzibar. [33] The Agreement implicitly accepted the Canning Award. It was short but vital to the future independence of Oman, with the British and French stating that:

> ...taking into consideration the importance of maintaining the independence of His Highness the Sultan of Muscat and of His Highness the Sultan of Zanzibar, have thought it right to engage reciprocally to respect the independence of these Sovereigns. [34]

In one of the stranger twists that occurred between British officials in London and India, the Government of India was not told of the agreement until 1890, after it suggested a British Protectorate over Oman. The Agreement prevented a full protectorate, and thus saved Oman from a direct take-over by the British. It also served in part as the basis for France's involvement in Oman at the end of the Century. [35] Because of French treaty rights in Muscat, Britain's influence in the Gulf did not go unchallenged.

EUROPEAN RIVALRY AND THE FRENCH FLAG

The shifting of European alliances and the settlement of African colonial matters had, by 1890, led to a rapprochement between Britain and Germany. This in turn,

strengthened the alliance between Russia and France. Russia's primary concern was British action, mainly in the Middle East, while France was chiefly worried about Germany. France, however, was engaged in colonial rivalry with Britain, and a Franco-Russian agreement was reached in August, 1891. [36] As a part of the general entente, France and Russia decided to act together to limit British power in the Gulf. Both sent warships to visit Muscat. [37]

The French tried three inter-related approaches to disrupt British influence in Oman and the Gulf. First, they tried to gain a coaling station in Muscat; second, they issued the French flag to Omani vessels, knowing that it would be used to protect the slave and arms trades; and third, they supported and encouraged the arms trade through Djibouti and Muscat. They supported these attacks on British influence with anti-British propaganda, printed in Arabic and distributed throughout the Gulf. [38] The major facts of the flag dispute are simply stated.

Around the time of the 1891 Franco-Russian agreement, French consuls at Aden, Obock, and Zanzibar began giving French sailing papers and flags to Omanis (mainly from Sur). The action was connected to the colonial and imperial faction in the French Chamber of Deputies, and in 1892 a member of that group, M. Deloncle, demanded the appointment of a French consul at Muscat "to keep a register of French

protected subjects." Deloncle believed that a strong French position in the Gulf would allow cooperation with Russia, and would encourage a possible Franco-Russian alliance. [39]

The Foreign Ministry agreed, and in 1894 the new French Consul arrived in Muscat. Paul Ottavi was to serve in the Gulf until 1902, when he was transferred to the Zanzibar consulate. Kumar describes Ottavi as "an accomplished diplomat with a flair for intrigue", then adds: "Against him the Government of India pitted a series of officers whose diplomatic experience was limited to the congenial task of twisting the tails of the princes of India." [40] Ottavi soon began to issue French sailing papers and the French flag to Omani dhows.

Sultan Faisal ibn Turki was at first afraid that the French would try to establish a protectorate over the Omanis to whom they had issued sailing papers, and that they might try to detach Sur from the Sultanate. In early 1895, however, Faisal was faced with a rebellion by conservative Ibadi forces wanting to re-unite Oman and Zanzibar. The rebels seized Muscat and forced Faisal into a harbor fort. He asked the British for aid, and was refused on grounds that British policy was neutrality, unless Indian interests were involved. Faisal appeased his enemies, but did not forget Britain's refusal to come to his aid. Kumar states

that there is no direct evidence revealing Ottavi's role in the 1895 rebellion, but believes that the French Consul offered the Sultan military aid. Soon after Faisal's appeasement of the rebels, and their departure from Muscat, a French warship arrived. [41]

Landen, citing French diplomatic papers, provides more information on these important events:

> ...Ottavi offered to help the Sultan ward off Masqat's attackers and had the gunboat TROUDE sent to the city. TROUDE arrived too late to actively support the sultan but the incident indicated France's good will, as well as the power at her disposal and ushered in a four-year period of French ascendancy in the court of Sultan Faysal. [42]

During these years, the arms trade grew in volume and importance. Anglo-French colonial rivalry threatened to break into outright war during the Fashoda Crisis four years after the visit of the French warship to Muscat. The Boer War, however, pre-occupied the British between 1899 and 1902 and helped keep them from devoting time to the Gulf and Arabia. By the time the British could again turn to the Gulf and the arms trade, both France and Britain had begun to see Germany as their chief danger.

The impending alliance did not, of course, end problems in the Gulf. In May, 1903, fear of a Russian effort to gain a port in the Gulf led the British Foreign Minister, Lord Lansdowne, to make a declaration in the House of Lords

on the British position in the Gulf:

> ... our policy should be directed in the first place to protect and promote British trade in these waters. In the next place I do not ... suggest, that these efforts should be directed toward the exclusion of the legitimate trade of other Powers. ... In the third place - I say without hesitation we should regard the establishment of a naval base or a fortified port in the Persian Gulf by any other Power as a very grave menace to British interests, and we should certainly resist it with all the means at our disposal. [43]

The Russian danger was soon removed. With the outbreak of the Russo-Japanese War in January, 1904 - and Russia's defeat in the war - Russia was effectively removed as a significant factor in the Gulf. In addition, negotiations had been started in 1903 by Britain and France that led to the signing of the Anglo-French Entente in April, 1904. While the Oman dispute was not directly included in the Entente, it was agreed to submit the dispute over use of the French flag by Omanis to the Permanent Court of Arbitration at the Hague. With the German threat in Europe, problems in the Gulf became of secondary importance, while the Entente was primary. [44]

The Hague Court issued its decision [45] on August 8, 1905. The result of these rulings was to void any papers issued after 1892 to persons who had not themselves been French protégés before 1862. The Court also ruled that the 1844 French-Omani Treaty only extended extraterritorial

protection to persons who were "in the employ of French citizens", and that the dhow owners simply flying the French flag were not in that classification. [46] The Court added that to extend extraterritorial protection to persons not covered by the 1844 Treaty would limit the independence of Muscat, and thus violate the 1862 Anglo-French agreement protecting the Sultanate. However, if a dhow met all of the conditions established by the Court and was entitled to fly the French flag, it would be protected by that flag in Muscati waters. That protection, however, did not extend to the owners or crew when ashore, and French papers could not be inherited.

In the historical and legal dispute over naval visit and search, the French had won. Vessels flying the French flag were still exempt from the jurisdiction of anyone but the French when at sea. As Busch phrases it, "Britain won on land, France at sea." [47] And this meant that France had lost in the political struggle for influence in Oman. Her right to issue her flag to Omani sailors had been effectively ended.

Landen argues that the 1894-1904 flag dispute in Oman led to two major results. First, the Sultan was shown how strong Britain was in the Gulf, and was forced more directly under British influence. This helped with control of the arms trade. Second, Oman remained technically independent,

never becoming as dependent upon Britain as the Gulf states of Arabia. Oman was saved from the direct protectorate desired by the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon. [48]

In terms of the international politics of Europe, the dispute was a minor obstruction to the developing Anglo-French Entente. [49] Once the pressure of events in Europe appeared to mandate that alliance, the dispute over use of the French flag and French encouragement of the arms trade were solved with relative speed. The solutions came, however, only after the French had significantly supported the arms trade for nearly two decades in an effort to strike at the British position in the area.

NOTES

1. Langer, W.L., European Alliances and Alignments, 1871-1890, 2nd. Edition, New York, Alfred A. Knopf, 1962, pages 160-62.

2. Hertslet, E., The Map of Africa by Treaty, In Three Volumes, Reprint of the 3rd. Edition, London, Frank Cass & Co., Ltd., 1967, Vol. III, page 882. Complete text, pages 882-886.

3. Coupland, R., The Exploitation of East Africa, 1856-1890, Northwestern University Press, 1967, page 484. The text of the 1890 Agreement is at Hertslet, Vol. III, pages 899-907.

4. Beachey, The Slave Trade of Eastern Africa, New York, Barnes and Nobel, 1976 has a detailed discussion of the Conference in chapters 5 and chapter 6.

5. Beachy, Arms Trade, page 453.

6. Engelbrecht, H.C., Merchants of Death, New York, Dodd, Mead and Company, 1935, page 267. Despite the Brussels Act controls Ethiopia smuggled in enough arms through Djibouti to defeat the Italians in 1896 at the Battle of Adowa.

7. White, Freda, Traffic in Arms, London, League of Nations Union, 1932, pages 13-14.

8. Firearms provisions: Malloy, Volume II, pages 1970-1974; For the full text, pages 1964-1992; Map of control zones, Miers, S., Britain and the Ending of the Slave Trade, New York, Africana Publishing Company, 1975, page 371.

9. Beachey, "Arms Trade", page 457-460, notes that enforcement was spotty at first and slow to become effective.

10. Miers, page 293. Miers adds that the French did agree to follow an earlier set of regulations regarding the slave trade. See: Hertslet, Vol. II, pages 524-25, for the text of the French note to the Convention stating France's position.

11. Scott, J.B., The Hague Court Reports, Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Division of International Law, New York, Oxford University Press, 1916, page 96.

12. Busch, B.C., Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1967. In re: Oman, page 155. In re: Kuwait, pages 195, 305 & 377.

13. The Sultan's decree was sought by the British partly because of her political struggle with Russia for influence in Constantinople. Beachey, page 163 The decree was restated in an Anglo-Turkish treaty signed in 1880. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2481.

14. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2495.

15. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2497.

16. Kelly, J.B., Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1795-1880, Oxford, the Clarendon Press, 1968, pages 65-66.

17. Hurewitz, Volume I, page 64.

18. Coupland, R., East Africa and its Invaders, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1938, page 106, quoting Miles, Countries and Tribes of the Persian Gulf.

19. Coupland, Exploitation ..., page 8.

20. Coupland, Exploitation ..., pages 8-9.

21. Coupland, East Africa - Invaders, page 421

22. Coupland, East Africa - Invaders, page 152.

23. Coupland, East Africa - Invaders, pages 461-62.

24. Hurewitz, Volume I, page 108.

25. Coupland, East Africa - Invaders, page 315.

26. Miller, H., Editor, Treaties and Other International Acts of the United States of America, Volume III, Washington, D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 1933, page 803. For the full text of the treaty see pages 789-810.

27. Hurewitz, Volume I, pages 127-30.

28. Hurewitz, Volume I, page 128.

29. Landen, R., Oman Since 1856, Princeton, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, 1967, page 200.

30. Hurewitz, Volume I, page 168, quoting the text of the Award from Aitchison.

31. Landen, page 199.

32. Landen, page 201.

33. Kelly, page 550. As will be seen from the text of the statement, Kelly appears to over-state the scope of the agreement.

34. Hurewitz, Volume I, page 169.

35. Landen, page 275. Zanzibar was not so fortunate, for in the rush by the European states to establish colonies in Africa, and the following efforts to agree on spheres of influence, the French agreed to a formal British Protectorate over Zanzibar.

36. Taylor, A.J.P., The Struggle for Mastery in Europe, 1848-1914, Oxford, The Clarendon Press, 1957, pages 333-37.

37. Skeet, I., Muscat and Oman: End of an Era, London, Faber and Faber, 1974, page 51-52.

38. The coaling station crisis and many of the details surrounding the flag issue are well covered by Busch, Chapter VI.

39. Landen, page 246.

40. Kumar, R., India and the Persian Gulf Region, 1858-1907, London, Asia Publishing House, 1965, page 77.

41. Kumar, R., page 77.

42. Landen, pages 246-47.

43. Landen, page 266. Text: Lorimer, Volume I, Part I-A, pages 369-70.

44. Landen, page 255.

45. Reprinted in full in Scott, pages 93-109.

46. Scott, page 100. Hurewitz cited the Aitchison translation of the same clause as persons who were "in their service."

47. Busch, page 184. In Oman, the dispute dragged on until 1909 while the details of who was and was not a protege were worked out.

48. Landen, pages 255-56.

49. Landen, page 256.

CHAPTER IV

THE PRIVATE ARMS TRADE

The international arms trade had two major elements: the private trade, between individuals and companies; and the governmental trade, the purchase of arms by governments or the direct distribution of arms by governments. Of the two, the private shippers were responsible for the largest part of the trade to Arabia. The dealers were primarily British or French, with Belgian and other Europeans engaged from time to time. Once the arms were in the region, Arab vessels from around the Peninsula delivered many of them to their final ports of destination. The next three chapters examine the private trade in detail, concluding with a discussion of the distribution routes within Arabia.

THE EARLY PATTERN OF THE ARMS TRADE

The arms trade to the Arabian Peninsula fed through two main entrepôts: Djibouti and Muscat. The major route for European guns was through the Suez Canal to Djibouti, and then on to Muscat. While weapons were shipped from both ports directly to the Peninsula, most international concern centered not on the Arabian section of the traffic, but on shipments to European colonies in Africa. The British became

particularly concerned with arms reaching the Northwest Frontier of India. It is, in fact, because of British concern over the threat to India that we have much of the information available on the arms traffic to the Peninsula.

The British first began to recognize the threat during and shortly after the Third Afghan War of 1878-81. Weapons captured from the tribesmen of the Northwest Frontier were traced to India: they had been shipped by sea from Bombay to the Persian coast, and then moved overland to Afghanistan. As a result of these findings, the British Government of India banned the export, or re-export, of arms from India, as reported by Lorimer:

> In 1880, when it was placed beyond doubt that large quantities of percussion caps exported from India to Persia were reaching the Afghan troops at Herat and elsewhere, the Government of India ... instructed the Government of Bombay to abstain from granting licenses for the export of heavy consignments of arms and ammunition to Persian Gulf Ports, and to watch carefully the import of such articles at Karachi and on the coast to the westward. On the 1st October in the same year a notification was published by the Government of India to legalize the detention at Indian ports of cargos of arms and ammunitions of war consigned to the Persian Gulf from other countries. [1]

While there was no "large or systematic trade ... as yet ... in the Gulf", the British encouraged the Shah of Persia to ban the export of percussion caps from his country in 1881. Lorimer asserts that the Shah had become interested in "the purely Persian aspect of the question", so that

later in the same year he also prohibited the importation of arms and ammunition into his country. [2] The suggestion that the Shah acted in his own interest, and not primarily that of Britain, is reasonable. Keppel reports that during this period (and until 1897) the trade was "chiefly confined to Persia and the countries at the head of the Gulf and on its southern shore", most of it through Bushire, and that many of the guns imported to Persia were purchased by the Bakhtiari tribe of the southern mountains. [3] It was clearly in the Shah's interest to try to stop modern arms from reaching a powerful tribe that regularly opposed his central authority.

Following the Shah's order, the British Resident at Bushire warned "the principal firms doing business there under British protection" of the arms trade ban. Despite the new Persian law, and the warning from the Resident, the trade grew. In 1884 a "Persian Armenian firm under British protection," Messers A. and T.J. Malcom, began to import guns at Bushire. They were joined in the trade three years later by "Messers. Fracis, Times and Co., a Parsi and English house." But not all of the trade was in British hands, for in 1881 a French company at Muhammareh imported a shipment of breech-loading rifles and ammunition. Strangely, the shipment was "first seized by the local authorities, but was subsequently returned and sold off by

the owners at a very low price." [4] Busch confirms the laxity, and says that the Shah's ban was not enforced. Thus, only British and Indian firms were likely affected at all. [5]

The Arabian section of this early trade may have been nearly as important as the Persian, for Keppel maintains that:

> At the same time, we may be sure that large quantities of rifles found their way into the possession of the semi-independent nomad tribes of the Arabian interior, especially among those chiefs who feared the aggressive designs of their powerful neighbor, Turkey. [6]

The trade was growing, and shifting slowly from percussion caps to more modern arms. The total trade at Muscat was "now considerable," and danger to the Northwest Frontier was again feared. Both the size and nature of the trade were investigated in 1891 by Sir Robert Sandeman, Agent for the Governor-General of India in Baluchistan. Sandeman found that guns were being imported mainly at the ports of Gwadar and Chahbar on the Makran and southern Persian coasts, and secondarily at Ormara (Makran) and Muscat. The guns were apparently being shipped from Zanzibar, and were old smooth-bore American muskets of "little value." In addition, the numbers were small, for at Gwadar only about 300 a year were being imported. There may have been a greater immediate threat from the residue of the

Indian trade, for "There was also a considerable importation of lead, gunpowder and percussion caps on the Makran coast, chiefly from Bombay." [7]

The British reaction was to demand that the Sultan of Muscat, who still had sovereignty over Gwadar, ban the arms trade in that port. On March 3, 1891, the Sultan "at the instance of the Government of India" issued a proclamation forbidding "the importation and exportation of arms and ammunition at Gwadar." [8] The Shah of Iran was also led to renew and strengthen his 1881 ban on the trade, because of continued trade by British and Parsi arms dealers in Tehran.

Until the 1890s, most of the arms trade in the Indian Ocean had been directed toward Africa, where the demand was large. Demand from the Gulf, however, increasingly drew the traders north. The geographical shift from Africa is first noted by Lorimer in connection with the refusal of the Government of Bombay in 1888 to permit transshipment of "1,477 guns, 44 pistols, and 32,050 bullets at Zanzibar for Bahrain." [9] The shifting of the trade continued, and was accompanied by the growth of the trade from Europe through the Suez Canal.

SHIFT OF THE INTERNATIONAL ARMS TRAFFIC TO ARABIA

Several major factors encouraged development of the direct arms trade from Europe to Arabia, and determined the

timing of its growth.

First, the logistics of shipping from Europe became easier with the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the growth of trade through the Canal in succeeding years. In the first years after the Canal came into service, however, Aden was the only coaling station available on the Red Sea route, ensuring an advantage for the British. This changed in the years immediately preceding the growth of the arms trade in the region.

France had purchased Obock (on the north coast of the Gulf of Tadjoura, across from the later French base of Djibouti) in 1859. Nothing substantial was done with the land until the early 1880s, when colonial wars in Indo-China and Madagascar, required a coaling station under direct French control that would end her ships' dependence on Aden. In 1881 a trading company, the Compagnie Franco-Ethiopienne, established a coaling station and factory at Obock. Three other French firms soon followed: the Société Français d'Obock and the Factoreries Françaises in 1882, and the Compagnie Mesnier in 1883. Because of the geographical limits of Obock, France moved her main base across the Gulf to Djibouti in 1888. [10] The development of Obock and Djibouti was spurred when the British reacted to the 1884 Tonkin affair by closing Aden to French warships in January, 1885. The French were forced to re-examine their need for a

dependable coal station in the region, and decided to develop Obock and Djibouti. [11] Between them, the two ports were vital to the arms trade, with Djibouti rapidly becoming the major transshipment point for weapons imported from Europe.

Second, as discussed above, the design of military rifles developed rapidly in this period, with guns recently placed in service quickly becoming obsolete. The major technical change affecting the arms trade around 1890 was the conversion from black-powder to smokeless powder. Following the French introduction of the new powder in 1887, all major European powers were forced to put new weapons in service, and as with any extensive conversion, the old stocks of weapons entered the international market. Many were repaired and shipped from Belgium at this time. [12] And many of them reached Arabia and the Gulf.

The danger from the flow of old military rifles into colonial territory was noted by a British missionary in Uganda, writing to the British Consul-General at Zanzibar in April, 1888. While his comments deal with Africa, the danger would soon extend to Arabia and the Northwest Frontier of India.

> The fact that almost all the European Powers being at present about to adopt magazine rifles, will not be without its effect on East Africa. Discarded Martini-Henry, Mauser, Gras and other breech-loaders will now be poured into the

> Zanzibar market and unless prompt measures are taken to the contrary these will soon be in the hands of all the tribes of the interior. [13]

Closer to Arabia, the obsolescence of the Ottoman stocks of Sniders and Martinis, and their replacement with Mausers between 1887 and 1893, made the older weapons available for use by provincial forces and for distribution to client tribes in the Peninsula, as discussed in Chapter VII. This influx of breech-loaders would have driven rival tribes and political groups to also seek modern arms.

Third, the arms embargo imposed by the Government of India apparently closed a major regional source of weapons, requiring a turn to European sources of supply. During the mid-nineteenth century, the United States had dominated the international arms market because of its lead in manufacturing technology. By the late 1880s, however, the change to smokeless powder allowed the Europeans to dominant the market. [14]

Fourth, the decline in the traditional shipping industry in the Gulf forced local sailors to find other cargoes if they were to survive. Muscat's former prosperity had been largely based on her role in commerce as a regional entrepot, but European steamers made direct shipment from India and Europe both possible and cheaper. During the decade from 1862 to 1872 the traditional entrepôt system was destroyed by a combination of the steamers and the split of

the Sultanate after the Canning Award. By the 1890s, a large percentage of the local and regional trade was being carried by the foreign steamers, and the local shippers were being put out of business. [15]

With the decline of Oman's "legal" shipping trade in the 1870-1900 era, only the smuggling and slaving ports remained prosperous. Landen cites the examples of Wudam and Sur:

> Wudam, in 1840 a tiny al-Batinah settlement of palm frond huts with approximately 100 people, by 1900 had become a smuggling center counting 40 seagoing vessels which frequented other Gulf ports, India and the Yemen. More important as a center of illicit commerce was Sur. ... After the 1860s, with the virtual disappearance of the sultan's navy, Masqat's hold on the port became almost nonexistent. As seamen flocked there to escape taxes and supervision, Sur became the largest sail port in Oman during the late nineteenth century. Its population of 12,000 made it the largest single city in Oman in 1900, ... At the time, over 100 seagoing ships were based at Sur, but even this figure represented a drop from the total of 300 baghalas reportedly operating out of the port in the 1830s. [16]

Fifth, the East African arms trade began to die after the General Act of Brussels, signed in July, 1890, banned that section of the traffic. Lorimer suggests the connection:

> On the East Coast of Africa the arms trade was an auxiliary of the slave trade, and a blow was struck at it in the General Act of the Brussels Conference ... The contraction of the African market compelled manufacturers and exporters to seek another outlet for their goods, and the unfortunate result was the diversion of the

> African arms trade to the Persian Gulf, which, lying altogether above the 20th. parallel of north latitude, was not subject to the arms clauses of the Brussels Act. [17]

Some idea of the volume of the African trade just before it began to shift toward the Gulf is given in British records from the Zanzibar Consulate. In the first half of 1888, over 37,000 long guns (called only "fire-arms," but distinguished from pistols), three million caps, over 70,000 cartridges, and other military supplies, passed through the Zanzibar Customs House. [18] The result of this high volume of trade was clear in the interior of Africa, for one Arab leader near Stanley Falls was reported to have 10,000 rifles available. [19] This flood of weapons from the Africa trade was soon to sweep toward the Persian Gulf.

NOTES

1. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2556.

2. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2556-57.

3. Keppel, A, Gun-Running and the Indian North-West Frontier, London, John Murry, 1911, pages 49-50.

4. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, pages 2556-57.

5. Busch, page 271.

6. Keppel, pages 49-50.

7. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2557.

8. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2557-58.

9. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2557.

10. Thompson, V., and R. Adloff, Djibouti and the Horn of Africa, Stanford, Stanford University Press, 1968, pages 5-8.

11. Brunschwig, H., "Une colonie inutile, Obock, 1862-1888", in Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, Paris, 1968, pages 44-45.

12. Thompson & Adloff, Page 9.

13. Beachey, "Arms Trade", page 453.

14. Cannizzo, C. The Gun Merchants, New York, Pergamom Press, 1980, page 1, citing the paper: Wenger, Lowell E., "The U.S. and the International Small Arms Trade in the Nineteenth Century," presented to the Ohio Academy of History, Columbus, Ohio, April, 1978.

15. Landen, pages 99-100.

16. Landen, page 122.

17. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2557.

18. Beachey, "Arms Trade", page 453.

19. Beachey, "Arms Trade", page 455.

CHAPTER V

THE PRIVATE ARMS TRADE IN THE PERSIAN GULF REGION

THE INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND EFFORTS AT ITS CONTROL

When the arms trade first shifted north from East Africa, it ran primarily from Zanzibar to Muscat. Between April 1890 and June 1892 some 11,500 guns were landed at Muscat. Lorimer outlines the trade:

> A large proportion of these were brought by the Sultan of Zanzibar's steamers, and the three principal Khojar merchants at Matrah were now engaged in the trade. Direct shipments from Europe had also begun, and at the end of 1890 a consignment of 420 Enfields from Austria-Hungary for Khojar merchants at Gwadar was stopped at Karachi. More than half the arms received were, even at this period, re-exported from Masqat to Kuwait, Bahrain and other ports in the Persian Gulf: thus early was the development of Masqat into the chief arms emporium of the Middle East foreshadowed.[1]

The trade became far more complex as time passed, and in 1913 Lt. Col. C.C.R. Murphy, then British naval and military intelligence officer for the Gulf, wrote about the years immediately before the opening of a bonded arms warehouse at Muscat (1912):

> The arms traffic problem in the Gulf was like a jig-saw puzzle, with pieces scattered about up and down the Persian and Arab littorals, in Mekran, Fars, Arabistan, and Mesopotamia. [2]

To trace the traffic in the Gulf, and to try to determine the numbers and types of weapons remaining in Arabia, Muscat, and general activities and controls throughout the Gulf will now be examined. Chapter VI will review the arms trade in the other Arabian ports of the Gulf and in the Red Sea.

THE ARMS TRAFFIC THROUGH MUSCAT AND THE OMANI PORTS AND GENERAL CONTROL MEASURES

Sir Robert Sandeman had found the arms trade insignificant, and still anchored at Zanzibar, when he investigated about 1889. Matters changed quickly as the direct Europe trade grew. By 1891 over a quarter of Muscat's import income, worth about 1,000,000 Rupees, came from the arms trade, and firms engaged in the trade could make a profit of between 20 and 30 percent. [3]

Lorimer stresses the Sultan of Oman's motives for allowing the arms trade:

> Year by year the trade continued to expand at Masqat, where it was in all respects legal and was favorably regarded by the Sultan on account of the large profit he derived from the import duty on arms. [4]

The only immediate British reaction came because of reports that arms from Muscat were being re-exported to the Somali and Banadir coasts of East Africa. The British pressured the Sultan, and he acted "to satisfy the scruples

of the British Government" by prohibiting - in April, 1892 - the re-export of arms from "his territories" to Africa. International politics began to play a part in the traffic, however, when the Sultan refused to grant British war-ships the right to search Omani vessels for arms "from a fear that his subjects might be led to seek French maritime protection in increasing numbers." [5] As a result of this, the ban on the Muscat to Africa traffic had little effect.

The arms traffic at Muscat increased rapidly, and by 1895 was considered by the British to have assumed "formidable dimensions," for during 1895-96 an estimated 4,350 rifles and 604,000 cartridges were imported there. In the next year, 1896-96, the trade grew further to some 20,000 rifles and approximately 2,777,000 cartridges. All of the rifles entering Muscat were breech-loaders, for the old muzzle-loaders could no longer be sold in the region. Lorimer mentions specifically that Sniders and Martini-Henries were among the guns shipped to the Gulf. The timing of this European sale of older single-shot black-powder weapons is consistent with the earlier conversion by European armies to magazine-fed rifles and smokeless powder, and the resulting availability of surplus arms for the international market. The "cost price of a rifle was at this time £3.10.0 to £4" with a "selling price" at Bushire of between £8 and £10. Two pounds of this was

used to bribe local Persian officials. [6]

The guns imported into Muscat during these years (1891-97) were almost "entirely of British origin," with, however, a "good many Belgian rifles made at Liege" and "a small number" of guns from France. [7] The main arms dealer in Muscat was the British firm of Joyce and Kynoch. Two-thirds of the British weapons were imported directly from London, likely through the Canal with a possible stop at Aden, while the remaining third were transshipped from Bushire. The German Government, it is interesting to note, apparently prohibited Germans from joining the Muscat trade for fear that the guns would end up in Africa. [8] France, with no major colonies on Africa's East Coast would not have felt a similar danger in that part of the world. Lorimer reports the distribution of the weapons imported at Muscat:

> Some were disposed of locally to tribesmen from the interior of 'Oman, some to visitors from other parts of the Gulf, and some to Nakhudas (i.e., captains: author's comment) of coasting vessels; but the greater quantity were re-shipped to Trucial 'Oman, Bahrain, Qatar and Kuwait, or were smuggled into Persian and Turkish territory in the Gulf concealed in bales of goods and cases of Halwa or dry limes; while a few were even dispatched to minor ports in the Red Sea at which there were no customs houses. [9]

After its first flurry of activity against the arms traffic in 1880-81, the Government of India largely ignored the arms trade in the Gulf. The rapid growth in the number and quality of arms imported in the 1890s soon drew the

attention of the Indian military command. In late 1896, following a revolt by the tribes on the Indian-Afghanistan border, the British "became desirous of knowing the destination of the enormous quantities of military material which were now being poured into the Gulf." [10] It was found that 60 percent of the arms entering the region ended up in Persia, 25 percent in the "Turkish possessions in the Gulf," and 15 percent in "non-Turkish Arabia."

While the investigation was underway, London and Government of India officials debated whether or not large numbers of guns were reaching the Northwest Frontier. The men in the Gulf, however, saw a clear danger. The British Persian Gulf Resident at Bushire, Lt. Col. M.J. Meade, wrote unofficially to Curzon (who was not yet Viceroy of India), that "the blood of our poor fellows lies at the door of those who have carried on this traffic." [11] He officially reported to W.J. Cunningham, Secretary of the Foreign Department of the Government of India, on the danger to the Gulf itself:

> Unless the arms trade is put a stop to, the whole of the population on both sides of the Gulf will very shortly be armed with breach loaders, and have plenty of ammunition, and this will ere long become a serious danger to the peace of the country, and possibly to ourselves. [12]

Figure 3 shows the growth of that part of the Muscat trade that passed through Omani customs between 1895 and

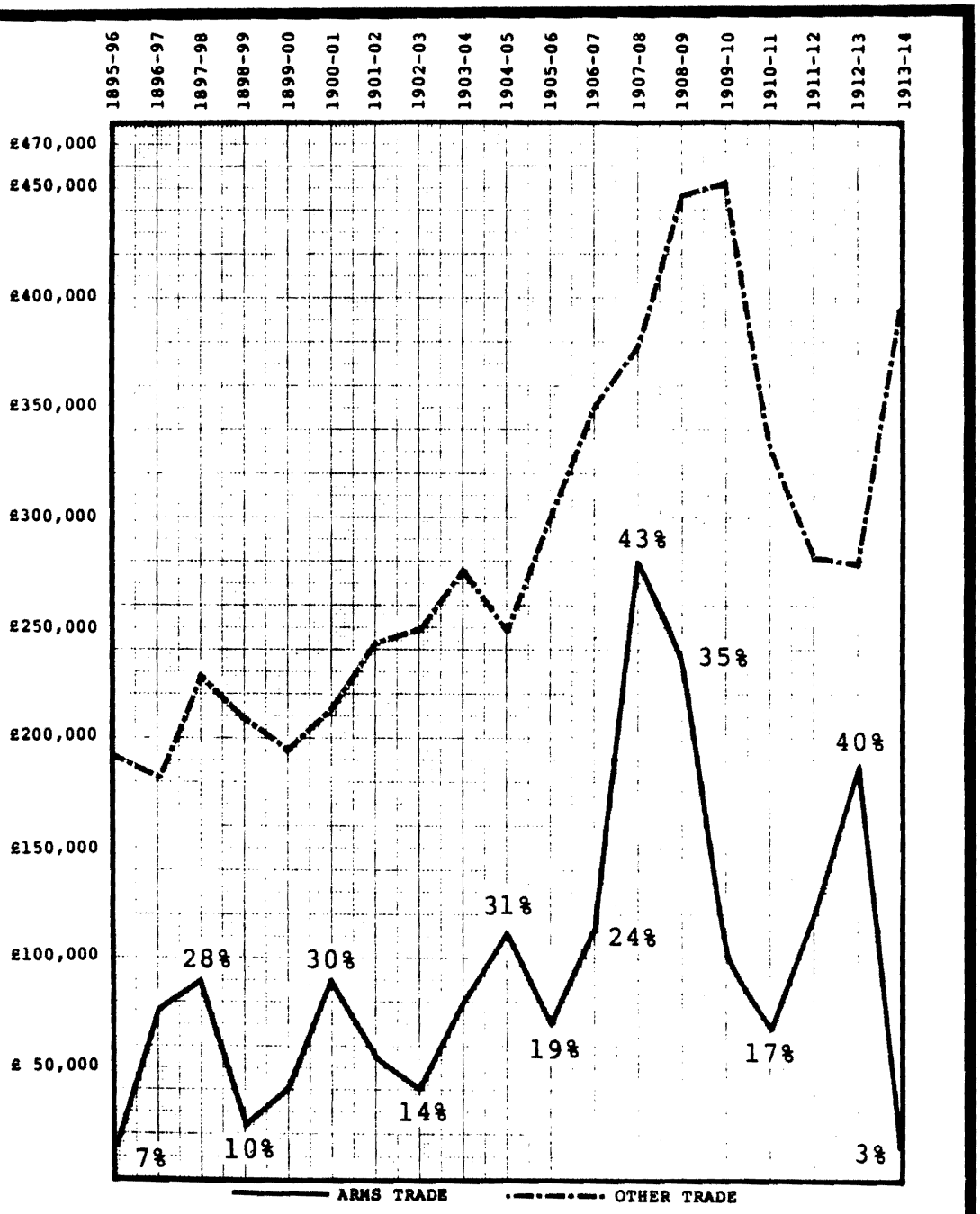

Figure 3. Graph of legal arms imports at Muscat, comparing value in pounds sterling of arms trade and non-arms trade from 1896-97 till 1913-14.

Data From: Busch, C.B., Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914, Berkeley, U. of Calif. Press, 1967, page 394.

1914. As Busch notes, this represents the legal trade, and does not include the unreported smuggled arms. [13] This information does, however, give a general feel for the growth of the arms trade through Muscat.

The situation was, indeed, becoming more serious as the volume of the trade grew. Phillips, who was an advisor to the Sultan of Oman in the 1950s and may have based his figures on Omani records, states that in 1897 over 30,000 breach-loaders were imported into Muscat. He identifies the arms as coming mainly from British and French traders, and mentions by name "Messrs. Joyce and Kynoch" and "the notorious Baluchi arms trader Ali Musa Khan." Phillips states that the traders made an eventual profit of twenty to thirty percent on the arms. The trade brought the Sultan of Oman revenue of about $MT 4,000 per. month. [14] Muscat had become, in Lorimer's words, "the greatest market for arms of precision in the Middle East." [15]

Using the British estimates cited above, this would mean that some 7,500 rifles were imported through Muscat to the "Turkish possessions in Arabia," while another 4,500 reached "non-Turkish" Arabia. However, as the estimated division of the arms in the region was made at a time when shipments were still being made directly to Persia, it is likely that a higher percentage of the 1897 shipments ended up in Arabia. It is clear, however, that the majority of the

guns reaching the Gulf were Martinis, and Lorimer even identifies one tribal leader of southern Persia as a "Martini Khan." [16]

The theft of ammunition from Royal Navy ships at Muscat gives additional information on the types of rifles then on the market in Oman. In 1898 the British authorities recovered, "chiefly from the bazaar," 3,800 Martini-Henry and 100 Lee-Metford cartridges. Lorimer does not say how much ammunition was stolen and not recovered. The Martini still predominated, but the new magazine-fed Lee-Metford had now entered the market. [17]

The British moved against the arms trade, with their main attack at first directed against the trade between England and Persia that endangered the Northwest Frontier. The Shah of Persia, concerned about the power of the gun-running tribes of southern Persia, agreed to enforce his earlier ban on the importation of arms. In December 1897 he agreed to the confiscation of all arms that had been illegally imported into his country, and granted the British the right to search Persian merchant ships in the Gulf for arms. Any confiscated weapons were to be given to the Shah. [18]

The Shah then joined the British in warning the Sultan of Oman that the import of arms into Persia was illegal.

The Resident, Lt. Col. Meade, approached the Sultan to obtain his consent. The Sultan was reluctant to issue a proclamation because it would reduce his revenue from the import duty on arms. Strong British pressure, and the expectation that he would be given the confiscated weapons, led the Sultan to comply. In January 1898, Sultan Faisal issued a proclamation that allowed British and Persian ships to search vessels flying their own, or Omani, flags when in Omani waters, and allowed the search of Omani vessels in Persian or Indian waters. Further, "if these arms and ammunition are intended for Indian and Persian ports, and if they are the property of British, Persian or Muscat subjects" they could be confiscated. [19]

The timing was important, for the steamer BALUCHISTAN was known to be on the way to Muscat with a large shipment of arms: British officials wanted the authority to intercept her. [20] The vessel was owned by the London firm of F.C. Strick & Company "(the Anglo-Arabian and Persian S.S. Co.)," and was a respectable 2,409 tons. The weapons were owned by Fracis, Times and Company. The arms had been "partly consigned to Persian ports," but because of the Shah's decree, the destination was changed to Muscat. The ship was intercepted by H.M.S. LAPWING outside of Muscat harbor in late January 1898, and the arms seized. Five hundred cases of arms, a total of 7,856 rifles and 700,000 rounds of

ammunition, were removed to the British Consulate. After several years' delay because of a legal challenge from Fracis, Times and Company, they were handed over to the Sultan. The Company lost two suits against the British Government, and was driven into bankruptcy. [21]

The private arms merchants in Britain responded to the attacks on the trade by protesting to the Foreign Office in London. They were joined in the protests by ship owners, manufacturers, exporters, underwriters and others with a financial interest in the trade. Lorimer's disgust is clear from his reaction:

> The nefarious business itself was even depicted in moving terms as an 'honest trade, carried on for nearly twenty years, and now threatened with extinction by the action of the British Government.' [22]

The protests failed to prevent further attacks by the British government, and customs records at Muscat show a drop in the value of arms imported from Britain from £81,000 in 1897-98 to £18,000 in 1898-99. [23]

To control arms traders under their authority, the British passed two Acts in 1900. First, the Government of India issued an Arms Act that "prohibited the consignment of arms and ammunition to the Persian Gulf through Indian ports without transshipment, transshipment having already been made illegal in 1880." [24] There was little effect from

this action: the "bulk" of the weapons reaching the Gulf were shipped directly from Europe, and it was easy to ship all of them without stopping in Indian territory. Thus, the British Government itself passed the Arms Exportation Act, allowing "the Sovereign to prohibit by proclamation the export of arms and ammunition from the United Kingdom" to any place where "they might be employed against British troops or subjects." Enforcement was hampered, however, because the Admiralty ruled that it did not have the power to search "even British vessels for arms on the high seas," but could only act in British, Persian or Omani waters.

The effect of the acts is not certain. Between 1900-01 and 1902-03, Muscat customs records show a sharp drop in the numbers of British arms reaching the Gulf. British participation in the arms trade appears, however, to have then risen and fallen several times in the next decade and a half. (Figure 4) Busch, does not define the customs term "British", but implies that it refers to the ownership of the arms and the nationality of the importing firm, and not to the nationality of the delivering ship or to the national origin of the arms themselves. Busch took the customs records from the administrative reports of the British Persian Gulf Resident and the Political Agent at Muscat, and notes that they can give only a rough indication of the course of the trade because of fluctuations in

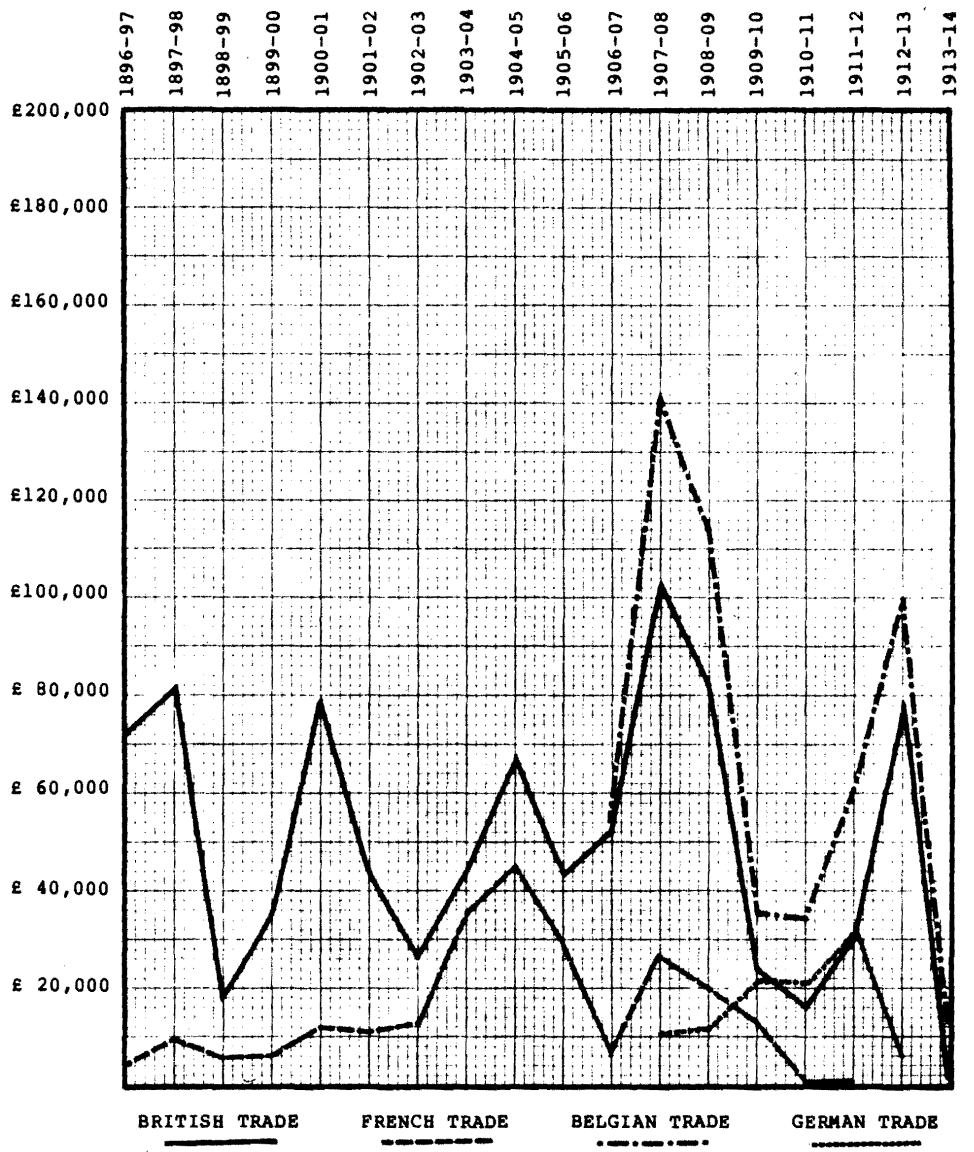

Figure 4. Graph of arms imports reported by Muscat customs, showing the relative value in pounds sterling of the trade of various nations from 1895-96 till 1913-14.

Data From: Busch, C.B., Britain and the Persian Gulf, 1894-1914, Berkeley, U. of California Press, 1967, page 394.

exchange rates, smuggling, and misleading or incomplete reporting of data. He believes, however, that the general trends and the relative trading positions of the European powers is accurate. [25] Used to compare the arms trade of the European nations, the customs data casts a doubt upon Lorimer's repeated statement that British firms were being driven out of the Muscat arms trade. In all years reported, British trade exceeds that of France. And after French trade was effectively ended in 1911-12, British trade increased sharply. The apparently significant Belgian trade is scarcely mentioned by Lorimer, and the German is not mentioned at all. Both came after the main years covered by his work.

The two British arms control acts had, in any case, little effect on the number of arms reaching the Gulf, and the main result was to ensure that arms would not be carried on British ships. The weapons imported to the Gulf, even when carried on British ships, were increasingly of non-British manufacture. The trade was not seriously hindered. It simply shifted to firms and vessels not under British authority. [26] The French were eager to pick up the trade abandoned by the British.

In March, 1899, Monsieur Goguyer, a man who became the major French arms dealer in the Gulf, arrived in Muscat and opened his business. Goguyer had been a French diplomat in

Tunisia, and spoke Arabic, and his arms dealings "was backed by French newspapers and some influential politicians of the Colonial Party in Paris." [27] His background clearly raises the possibility the Goguyer was acting in a semi-official role in the Gulf, as part of a general French desire to discomfort the British. Goguyer told Indian merchants in Muscat that: "his operation would be exempt from British interference, as he would export arms purchased from him in native vessels flying the French flag." [28] In May, Goguyer traveled to Bahrein, apparently in an effort to expand his markets. His business was slowed by a lack of capital, but by 1901 it was increasing rapidly, and by 1903 he had competition from a Russian firm and another French firm operating out of Djibouti. [29] The entry of the French firms into the arms trade in the Gulf was soon reflected in a shift of the nationality of manufacture of the weapons.

> When the trade began at Masqat the arms and ammunition imported, though a proportion were of Belgian manufacture, were exclusively of British provenance; but in 1899-1900 about one-seventh of the imports were from France, and by 1905 the proportion of French arms had risen to four-tenths. [30]

According to British diplomats at the Brussels Arms Conference, by 1908, the French share of the Muscat trade had risen to 49% of the total, the British had fallen to 24% while the Omani sector stood at 27%. Goguyer's firm was responsible for 60% of the French trade. [31] These figures

are different from those provided by the customs data. For 1907-08, they show French trade as equal to 9.4% of the total arms trade; and for 1908-09, equal to 8.4% of the trade. The highest percentage of the arms passing through customs in these years are, in fact, attributed to Belgium a point not mentioned by Lorimer. The conflict may well be in appearance only, for a high proportion of the French trade was carried by dhows from Djibouti, and probably did not pass through customs.

The size of Goguyer's operation in Muscat lends support to the diplomatic estimates that his share of the arms trade equalled 30% of the total trade (60% of the French 49% share of the trade). General H.H. Austin, assigned as British Naval Intelligence Officer in the Gulf in 1909, reports that in that year British authorities estimated that Goguyer's warehouse held "not less than 100,000 arms of many different types, including most patterns of modern magazine rifles, and certainly not less than 10,000,000 rounds of ammunition for these arms." [32] This large a stock of weapons would have allowed the firm to continue in business after its imports declined during these years.

As the nationality of the traders began to shift, the volume of the trade itself increased. For the five months from June through October, 1899, Lorimer reports that

"British subjects alone" sold at least 3,792 rifles at Muscat. During the first half of 1902, import duty was paid at Muscat on 8,732 rifles and 726,110 cartridges, and in "the year" 1904-05 Lorimer estimates that over 20,000 rifles were imported. [33]

The trade also appears to have shifted slightly. In 1896, as noted above, 60% of the arms entering the Gulf were shipped to Persia. In 1899 a British study at Muscat found that 55% of the weapons imported there had been shipped to Persia, while 5% were still in Oman and the remaining 40% had been shipped to Kuwait and Trucial Oman, presumably including Bahrain. [34] While this indicates a growth in the Arabian section of the trade, it must be remembered that many weapons shipped to Arabian ports were later exported to Persia.

The Government of India proposed in 1902-03 that an international effort be made to control the arms trade. They suggested that those states with treaty rights in Muscat - France, the United States, and Holland - be asked to modify their treaties with the Sultan so that he could act to control the arms trade. The dispute over the use of the French flag by Omani vessels made this impossible, and the British turned to imposing such controls as they could. It was now generally illegal for arms to be imported into India, Persia, "Turkish" Arabia, Bahrein, Kuwait and British

and Italian Somaliland. For the British, then: "the contest resolved itself into a crusade against smuggling from Masqat to all neighboring countries." [35] The crusaders, of course, could not touch vessels protected by the French flag.

Efforts to control the arms trade by requiring first British subjects (in 1898) and then Omani subjects (1900) to report any sale or purchase of arms failed to cut the trade, and seem only to have further shifted the trade to other nationalities. Even an order by the Sultan requiring a special permit for arms being shipped legally from Muscat to other Omani ports did little. In 1899, the British reported that "hardly a vessel left the harbor (i.e., Muscat) which did not carry arms for places abroad." [36]

Possibly because of controls at Muscat, the main Omani port for the internal trade of the Batinah coast north of Muscat, and areas inland of the coast, appears to have been "Masna'ah." A caravan route then ran inland from the coast to Rustaq and Nizwa. In addition, Persian trade was often transshipped through Sohar. The Muscat trade was so vigorous that if there was not a Royal Navy ship at Muscat, there was a "general exodus" of native vessels carrying arms. [37] The level of the smuggling illustrates the difficulty with the customs information.

French activity in the Gulf was centered in Oman, and was tied in with the dispute over use of their flag and with the various Muscat treaties, discussed above. The French had, however, a more direct method of influencing the Sultan. Faisal ibn Turki, Sultan from 1888-1913, was seldom on good terms with the British, who regularly used the Canning Award subsidy to try to enforce their will. The British establishment of a Protectorate over Zanzibar in 1890 had further increased Faisal's concern over British ambitions against his own territory.

To meet his constant need for money, Faisal obtained numerous loans. By 1905, he was about $MT 100,000 in debt. When the British offered him $MT 20,000 to send his son on the pilgrimage to Mecca, he rejected their offer. Faisal turned instead to the non-British arms dealers of Muscat for money. In particular, he took loans from Goguyer several times. Even after the British Agent at Muscat was allowed to lend up to 20,000 rupees on his own authority, Faisal continued to borrow from the local market. The Sultan wished to avoid British control, and the arms dealers gave him an alternative source of money. [38] The French loans also strengthened Faisal's interest in a continuation of the arms trade.

Muscat's arms trade flourished. In 1906, some 45,000 rifles and a million cartridges passed through the port.

British concern continued to center on the number of rifles that left Muscat and passed through Persia on the way to Afghanistan. In 1907, the Muscat Agent estimated that 200 rifles a week were shipped to Makran (or 10,400 for the year through one section of the coast alone), and the total trade was high enough in 1908 for the Indian Chief of Staff to estimate that 30,000 rifles reached the Northwest Frontier in that year. [39]

Other factors were at work, too, for following the end of the Boer War (1899-1902), an old Lee-Enfield could be purchased from South African surplus for £ 6, and resold on the Northwest Frontier for £65-80. [40] The trade in the Lee-Enfields illustrates again two of the major aspects of the arms trade: the sale of surplus arms at the end of a major war; and the disposal of obsolete weapons, for after the Boer War, the long Lee-Enfield was replaced (1907) in British service by the Short Model Lee-Enfield. [41]

The arms control provisions of the General Act of Brussels (1890) were scheduled to be reviewed soon, and the Foreign Office began to look toward that conference for relief from the arms trade. Officials on the scene in the Gulf, however, did not see much real hope in an expansion of the arms control zone to the Red Sea and the Gulf. The Commander-in-Chief of the Royal Navy's East Indies Station, for example, advised the Admiralty not to expect an expanded

zone to have any effect, and noted that the presence of Djibouti within the existing Zone failed to hinder the traffic in that Port. [42] Without French co-operation, the trade could not be stopped.

Even after the conference reconvened in 1908, there was a sharp division of opinion between the Foreign Office and officials in the Gulf. The British in the Gulf wanted to keep any international control group out of the region, which they saw as a primarily British area of concern. They also warned London that any real limit on the trade would require the approval of Sultan Faisal at Muscat, and that his assistance would only come if he were compensated for the loss of his income from the trade. When Italy pressed for the extension of controls, the British delegate sharply discouraged the proposal. However, if the French could be made to come around on the issue, it was clear that the British would agree to the extension of the control zone. [43]

The importance of the French role in the trade was made clear by the British delegate, Sir Arthur Hardinge, in a conversation with the French delegate, Count d'Ormesson. The Count responded that Goguyer had strong support in the Chamber of Deputies and in the French press, and that any discussions should be in private. Hardinge noted that only France stood in the way of an extension of the control

zone. [44] Goguyer's political protection was vital, in view of the important roll he played in the Muscat trade. During a recess in the conference, discussions centered on a French proposal to trade the British African colony of Gambia for French help in ending the arms trade at Muscat. This was not acceptable to Britain. The conference reconvened in May, 1909 long enough for an announcement that no agreement had been reached, and adjourned until fall. Private discussions failed to break the deadlock, and the conference finally ended on December 30, 1909. [45]

The French appear to have been chiefly motivated by their political rivalry with Britain, though economic interests clearly played a part. Abdullah summarizes French action during the period:

> French citizenship and the French flag were granted to the inhabitants of Sur; the French attempted to establish a coal depot in Bandar Jissah, south of Muscat, for their maritime line; they conducted extensive anti-British propaganda; and they played a large part in the flourishing arms trade in Muscat. The principal aim of the French in all four activities was to undermine British influence and extend their own. [46]

Undercutting another power's political position was not uncommon in Colonial rivalries. For example, during the 1880s in East Africa, the Germans and the British apparently armed the tribes each other's areas of interest. [47] The French were following an old tradition, as, it seems, were the British.

During the discussions of 1908-09, the British could not understand why the French were so willing to protect the activity of their arms dealers at Muscat. Part of the answer was found in the economic motive alone, for the dealers were wealthy and had high political connection. [48] There appears, however, to have been a special reason for the French support the arms trade in the Gulf:

> The French (i.e., the French Government) tolerated arms trading in the Gulf because of a similar British trade in Morocco, which allowed the infiltration of weapons through the Algerian frontiers. [49]

Thus, France had apparently linked the Gulf trade with wider issues, and tit for tat has always been fair in power politics.

Regardless of the French motives for delay, India did not wait for diplomacy in Europe. At the end of his Appendix on the Arms Trade, Lorimer reviews the status of the Gulf and Muscat trade in 1907:

> Since 1902 the arms trade has been nominally prohibited at every port, except Masqat, in the Gulfs of Persia and 'Oman; but smuggling and connivance at breaches of the law are so universally prevalent that arms and ammunition continue to be distributed from Masqat over the length and breadth of the Gulf region, ... the importations at Masqat ... are still on the same scale as before the general prohibition of the trade in 1902; but they now represent the whole, or nearly the whole, instead of part only of the trade. It has been proved, at the cost of immense expenditure of energy by British establishments, that the illegal dissemination of arms from the

> free port of Masqat cannot be prevented, or even appreciably hindered, by naval means; also that measures, however efficacious, taken in British Baluchistan do not and cannot influence the course of the Afghan traffic; while officers who have studied the question on the spot in Persia agree that the Government of that country are incapable ... of putting down the trade across Persia between Masqat and Afghanistan. [50]

With the total trade at Muscat in 1908 of about 80,000 rifles, India felt it could not wait for international negotiations: the number of imports reaching the Northwest Frontier had cut the price of a rifle in half, and the fears of well armed tribesmen fighting the frontier forces was growing. Early in 1909, the India Office asked for an increased Naval force to carry out a truly effective the blockade of the Persian coast. By the end of the year, the new ships were beginning to impose fairly effective controls against the trade, [51] and customs records show a drop in the trade from £237,650 in 1908-09 to £101,850 in 1901-10. The trade continued to fluctuate widely. [52]

Lorimer's judgment of the blockade remained valid, however, particularly in view of its high cost. (In 1910 the blockade cost £175,000). [53] The naval expenses can be compared with the value of the trade shown in the customs records. In 1907-08, a peak year, the legal trade was valued at £ 279,000, while in 1910-11 it fell to £ 68,000, a reduction of £ 211,000. [54] The naval blockade helped, but it was not cost effective. As long as the arms market was

open at Muscat, a large number of weapons would slip through. The new approach was to use the blockade to show the Sultan that Britain could, if it chose to devote sufficient naval power to the job, end the arms trade by itself, and then pressure him into concessions. At the same, the growing Anglo-French alliance against Germany was aiding diplomatic action to end the arms trade: in 1910 France agreed to a one year prohibition of the Muscat trade. As a part of any final agreement, however, the French demanded compensation for their arms dealers. [55]

In December, 1910, an armed clash occurred at Dubai between sailors from H.M.S. HYACINTH and local Arabs. (Discussed below in Chapter VI.) One result of this crisis was to show the French how serious the British were about the arms trade in the Gulf. Early in 1913, France dropped the proposal to exchange of Gambia for helping end the arms trade, and suggested that the matter could be settled locally through compensation for the arms dealers. Before this offer could be fully considered, it was withdrawn, and the exchange of Gambia again demanded. This was unacceptable, and matters stalled. [56]

Action was needed, for the French were responsible for a higher and higher percentage of the arms trade. Sir Arnold T. Wilson summarized the observations he made in 1911 on the national origin of the arms and the arms traders in

the Gulf:

> I had ascertained, by examining rifles and boxes of ammunition, that practically the whole trade was conducted by French firms, though many of the rifles and some of the ammunition were made in Germany. There was little British-made ammunition and very few British rifles. The few I saw antedated the South African war by several years and had probably passed through several hands and many countries. [57]

With the French unwilling to help, even with the anti-German alliance in place, Percy Cox suggested a local solution. He proposed that the Sultan of Muscat establish a bonded warehouse, effectively under British direction, to control the export of all arms from Muscat. After receiving approval, Cox wrote to Sultan Faisal in November, 1911. Cox's letter threatened to end "those cordial relations which have now so long existed between the British Government and Your Highness and your ancestors" if Faisal did not break relations with the arms dealers. The Sultan agreed to the warehouse and the new control regulations on condition that the British deal with any resulting action from the French; that the regulations not violate any of Oman's existing international treaties; that he be given time between the the announcement and enforcement of the regulations; and that he be compensated for the reduction in the income he received from the duty on arms. [58]

After the preliminary agreement, it still took time to work out the details of the regulations, and to obtain

Faisal's signature. Cox was forced to promise, in writing, that Britain would "dispose of" any problems that might develop with other states; that the Sultan would be compensated for his losses; that the regulations would not hinder the importation of arms needed by Omanis; and that the agreement would not extend British rights to act within Omani territory. [59]

The internal politics of Oman impelled Faisal's agreement to the warehouse. Underlying tribal and religious splits in the country were easily inflamed by events, and the tribes of Oman were already angry with the Sultan because of his co-operation with the British in ending the slave trade. Gertrude Bell, in an intelligence dispatch written in 1916, reported that one of the reasons Faisal had issued the regulations was to stop weapons from reaching his internal enemies. Faisal: "saw in the suppression of the arms trade ... a distinct advantage to himself, since his rebellious subjects became unable to furnish themselves with weapons to use against him." [60]

After additional details of the arms control measures were clarified, the Sultan issued the regulations for the warehouse in late June, 1911:

> Whereas large quantities of arms and ammunition are at present stored without proper control in private buildings distributed in this our town of Muscat ... have resolved to remedy this state of affairs ... by the construction and establishment

> of a special Customs Warehouse ... for the storage of arms and ammunition under safe precautions ... Firstly, on or about the 1st September next all arms and ammunition or parts thereof imported into my territories will be taken directly from the steamer to the Control. ... Secondly, similarly all arms dealers in my territories will be required to deposit stocks remaining in their hands on 1st September in the said warehouse. ...[Thirdly, payment of duty] ... Fourthly, the withdrawal of arms from the warehouse will be regulated by the issue of special licenses, prepared by the superintendent [of the warehouse] and signed by myself. Fifthly, such licenses will not be granted to traders, but only to approved individual purchasers ... on the production of satisfactory proof that the number , quantity, and destination of the arms and ammunition, etc., to be withdrawn from the warehouse are free from justifiable objections. ... [61]

Local reaction to the controls was strong. The Sheikh of the Ibadhi sect: "roused the country by his preaching, in which he represented the arms warehouse as a device of the English to deprive the tribes of Oman of modern weapons ..." In May, 1913, the Imam of the Hinawa tribes joined the rebellion. [62] The British sent two Rajput regiments from India in July, 1913, to defend Muscat and the Sultan. The city was safe, but the Sultan clearly had little authority far beyond its gates. The civil war lasted until 1920. [63] Still, local problems could be controlled

The French Consul also objected, however. He maintained that restrictions on trade were as illegal under the various Muscat treaties as complete prohibitions would be. His view was repeated by the French Ambassador in London. Their initial reaction quickly moderated, and the

Ambassador made it clear that compensation for the French arms dealers was the vital issue. [64] With the growing tensions in Europe, both parties felt strong pressure to settle the Muscat dispute, particularly as the Muscat Dhows issue had been resolved at the Hague. Germany had become the common threat to both Britain and France.

As the September deadline set forth in regulations approached, the British feared that any action to enforce them against the French would lead to a real clash between the two allies. But the dispute could not be ended that quickly. The regulation was considered to have come into effect in September, but no action was taken against the French arms merchants. They continued to hold their own stocks of weapons. The new dispute involved the nature of any compensation granted: the British were willing to compensate French arms merchants for business losses; they were not willing to compensate France for a loss of treaty rights. Tension grew and France demanded full compensation, while Britain was not prepared to admit that the treaties had been violated. [65] Both nations claimed to see the issue as a point of honor.

The Entente proved, however, more important to France than the Muscat arms trade. A real crisis, otherwise nearly assured, was avoided. In May, 1913, France agreed to delay consideration of the treaty rights if compensation were paid

to the arms dealers. After some squabbling, the matter was settled. Britain paid the French firms of Dieu and Goguyer £ 64,494 for their stocks of arms and their predicted profits. At the same time, France renounced:

> the right of invoking, on behalf of French citizens, the privileges conferred on these by the Treaty between France and Muscat, 1844, in so far as such privileges and immunities are opposed to the regulations and laws for the prevention of the contraband trade in arms and ammunition in Mascat. [66]

Some 9,000 rifles were confiscated from the arms merchants in Muscat. Along with ammunition seized, the value of the weapons was estimated to be £ 40,000. Many of the rifles proved useful during the World War: 3,000 were used to help defend the Mohammera oilfields in Persia, 2,700 were shipped to India, 2,600 were sent to England and used for training, while the remainder were destroyed or sold in Oman. The naval blockade remained in effect until after the start of the World War, and was finally ended in August, 1915. [67]

The new controls at Muscat seem to have finally succeeded in stopping the arms traffic through Muscat. In addition to the purchase of European owned stocks, firmer action was taken against dealers not protected by a European power, including "the banishment for 5 years of the notorious Baluchi arms trader Ali Musa Khan." The warehouse, and the related measures, "stopped 90% of the former illegal

trade" at Muscat. [68] The customs records, for example, show that the value of arms imported at Muscat fell dramatically from £ 184,050 in 1912-13, to £ 13,550 the next year. The French trade had all but ceased in 1910-11, while British trade rose sharply in 1912-13, before nearly ending itself in 1914. [69]

Figure 3 charts the rises and falls in the Muscat arms trade compared with the non-arms trade. For most of the 1895-1914 period there is a general correlation between the two figures. In 1913-14 they part sharply, however, with the level of the arms trade dropping to the lowest level of the entire period while general trade rose dramatically. Ironically, the flow of private arms had been stopped just before for the massive influx of weapons during World War I. The spoils left by the Turkish and British armies, or given to the tribal allies of both, would soon dwarf the former private trade.

NOTES

1. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2558. The guns mentioned had to be old rifled muzzle-loaders, given the service dates of Enfield breech-loaders.

2. Murphy, C.C.R., Soldiers of the Prophet, London, John Hogg, 1921, page 208.

3. Phillips, Oman: A History, Great Britain, Reynal & Company, 1967, pages 156-57.

4. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2558.

5. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2558. All quotes.

6. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Pages 2558-59.

7. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2556.

8. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, pages 2558-59.

9. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2556.

10. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2560.

11. Busch, page 272.

12. Busch, page 272.

13. Busch, pages 390 & 394.

14. Phillips, page 156-57. All quotes.

15. Lorimer, Volume I, Part I-A, page 303.

16. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2561.

17. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566.

18. Lorimer, Volume I, Page 2560-61.

19. Busch, page 27f3.

20. Busch, page 273, citing British Demi-Official Correspondence.

21. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2562. During the delay, the rifles "suffered much from neglect." For the ownership of the arms: Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2565. Number of cases: Busch, page 273.

22. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2564.

23. Busch, page 394.

24. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2565. All quotes.

25. Busch, page 390.

26. Busch, page 274-75.

27. Abdullah, M.M., The United Arab Emirates, New York, Barnes & Noble Books, 1978, page 28.

28. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2566.

29. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566.

30. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566.

31. Busch, page 281.

32. Austin, H.H., Gun-Running in the Gulf and Other Adventures, London, John Murry, 1926, pages 13-14. Additional information on Goguyer's operation is given in Appendix A.

33. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2566.

34. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566.

35. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566-67.

36. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2567.

37. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2567.

38. Busch, page 227.

39. Busch, page 278.

40. Busch, page 278.

41. Smith, pages 57 & 211.

42. Busch, page 279.

43. Busch, page 280-81.

44. Busch, page 281.

45. Busch, pages 282-286.

46. Abdullah, U.A.E., page 28, citing Lorimer and French diplomatic documents for this statement.

47. Beachey, Arms Trade, page 457-59.

48. Busch, page 286.

49. Abdullah, U.A.E., page 28, citing French diplomatic papers of 1910 and 1913 in support of his statement of the French motive.

50. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2586.

51. Busch, page 286-87.

52. Busch, page 394.

53. Busch, page 288.

54. Busch, page 394.

55. Busch, page 288.

56. Busch, page 290-91. An interregnum between French governments from February to June, 1911, added to the delay.

57. Busch, page 275.

58. Busch, page 293.

59. Busch, page 296.

60. Bell, G., The Arab War, London, The Golden Cockerel Press, London, 1940, page 21.

61. Busch, page 295.

62. Bell, G., page 21.

63. Busch, page 303.

64. Busch, page 296.

65. Busch, page 297-98.

66. Busch, page 301.

67. Busch, page 301-02.

68. Phillips, pages 156-57.

69. Busch, Appendix D, page 394.

CHAPTER VI

THE PRIVATE ARMS TRAFFIC IN THE SECONDARY GULF PORTS AND THE RED SEA AND THE INTERNAL DISTRIBUTION OF ARMS IN ARABIA

While Muscat was the major arms entrepôt in the Persian Gulf, the secondary ports of Arabia served as the final points of entry to the Peninsula north of Oman. Thus, as the trade developed in Oman, it also developed along the Arabian coast to the north.

SECONDARY GULF PORTS

Bahrein

During the later 1890s, Bahrein became a major secondary port for arms sold in the Gulf. Shipments from Europe were generally transshipped to the Sheikhdom via Muscat, and then sold to Arab or Persian tribesmen and traders. In 1894-95, the question of whether the Al Bu Ali tribe of Qatar owned Bahrein, or whether the island was independent, arose as it had at various times in the past. Sheikh Isa of Bahrein was threatened with an attack from Qatar, and it took the destruction of the Al Bu Ali's boats by a British warship to prevent an invasion. [1] The danger

faced by Sheikh Isa now helped drive the growth of the arms trade in the central Gulf.

The Sheikh was, understandably, disturbed by the danger. During the threatened attack, there had been fewer than one hundred rifles in his territory. In January 1896, the Sheikh acted to improve his supply of arms. He issued a proclamation establishing a special fine (customs duty) on any arms imported to Bahrein equal to one-fourth of their value. Then, he granted a special exemption, amounting to a monopoly on imported arms, to his Wazir. The concession prevented the re-sale of arms to residents of Bahrein, Qatar or the Arabian coast north of Oman. The conditions of the monopoly were designed to insure a steady supply of arms for the Sheikh, for it required the concessionaire to pay "an annual royalty of 30 Martini rifles and 6,000 cartridges in addition to customs duty in kind at a rate of three rifles in every hundred and 200 cartridges per rifle." [2] Again, the rifle is the Martini, by 1896 clearly the standard arm of the region.

The concession was transferred first to an Arab merchant, Agha Muhammad Rahim, and by him to Fracis, Times and Company. The trade increased "with phenomenal rapidity." Lorimer traced the increase in the arms trade at Bahrein by its value: in 1894-95 it equalled £990; in 1895-96, £6,360; in 1896-97, £94,725; and in 1897-98,

£311,386. [3] Within four years the arms trade increased by over 300 times. Without giving percentages of the trade going to each place, Lorimer states that the arms imported to Bahrein were sold to visitors from various Persian or Arabian regions. For Arabia he mentions Kuwait, Nedj and Oman as the major destinations, with Bahrein itself and Qatar as secondary destinations. A substantial number of arms were clearly reaching Arabia by way of Bahrein. [4]

The trade through Bahrein was soon disrupted by the Sheikh himself. In April, 1897, Sheikh Isa "became alarmed at the growth of the trade" and ordered that it be suspended for four months. Shortly thereafter, a disagreement developed between Agha Muhammad Rahim and Fracis, Times and Company over the distribution of profits, and in January 1898 the Sheikh "attached" the Company's entire stock of weapons. Some 2,667 rifles and 637,500 cartridges were seized. [5]

Isa appears to have had several reasons for his actions. In his Appendix on the Arms Trade, Lorimer assigns two possible motives: first, that the Sheikh was concerned over the selling of arms to his own people; and second, that Agha Muhammad Rahim had asked the Sheikh to act because of his dispute over profits with Fracis, Times and Company. Rahim was, however, also the British political representative in Bahrein, and Lorimer notes that while the

Sheikh's:

> action was not in any way prompted by the British authorities, but it may have been instigated by Agha Muhammad Rahim, who, ... had recently become aware that the British Government , ... viewed that traffic with disfavor.

Lorimer then notes that Lt. Col. Meade, visited Bahrein in February, 1898, examined the arms, and refused to either take control of the weapons or intervene for Fracis, Times and Company to gain their release. [6]

Lorimer's position that the British were not behind the seizure of the arms is undercut by a statement he makes elsewhere. An incident in 1899 made the British question the "power" and "loyalty" of Sheikh 'Isa of Bahrein.

> A warehouse belonging to the Shaikh, in which had been deposited a quantity of arms, the property of the Anglo-Parsi firm of Fracis, Times and Co. BUT AT THE TIME UNDER SEQUESTRATION AT THE INSTANCE OF THE BRITISH POLITICAL AUTHORITIES, was feloniously entered by night; [7]

Two Hindus guards, who were British subjects, were wounded. The "ringleaders" were one "Sharidah," a "high-handed official of the Shaikh ... his son Fahad, and one Amir Salih-bin-Rashid, an old favorite servant of the Shaikh." After British pressure, the men were exiled from Bahrein for a year and indemnity paid to the injured men. [8] Despite Lorimer's denial in his Arms Appendix of any British role in the Sheikh's seizure of the arms, it is clear that they in fact helped bring about the

confiscation.

The arms were held until 1906, when the Sheikh returned them to Fracis, Times and Company "in a much damaged condition, on the understanding that they should not be sold in Bahrein, or Qatar, or on the Arab Coast." [9] By this time, however, the company may already have been bankrupt as a result of losing its legal cases against the British Government. The arms trade at Bahrein was further damaged by concerted British action. During his February, 1898 visit, Lt. Col. Meade pressured the Sheikh into signing an agreement banning the import and export of arms in Bahrein. Any arms were to be confiscated, and British and Persian war ships were given the power to search Bahreini vessels in Bahreini, British or Persian waters. The agreement was effective, and only "small seizures" were made after this. [10] A major secondary arms port had been closed for the moment.

During 1904-1905, political and commercial activity again picked up in Bahrein. A clash developed involving the British, French and the Sheikh. In 1904, the French Ambassador in London, supporting French subjects interested in pearling in the Gulf, asked "if there would be any objection to inclusion of Bahrain in the jurisdiction of the French Vice-Consulate at Bushehr." The Government of India suggested that London delay an answer until related issues,

presumably the problems at Muscat, had been settled. The French traders soon left Bahrain, and the French Government did not ask again. [11] This was not the entire picture, however. Lorimer later reports on what was probably the same group of French merchants:

> In the summer of 1905 Baharin was visited by a French family interested in the pearl trade, who were joined there by M. Goguyer, the notorious Anglophobe arms dealer of Masqat. A memorial against his own treatment by the British Government, which was sent by Shaikh 'Isa a little latter to the Secretary of State for India and to the Viceroy of India, was probably inspired by M. Goguyer. [12]

British officials either believed that there was a link between the French pearling interests and the arms trade of M. Goguyer, or were simply reacting xenophobically to the presence of the French in the Gulf. Lorimer's thinking is interesting because of his apparent belief that Sheikh Isa would only object to British action if he were put up to it by a third party.

As the direct trade with Persia became more difficult, a number of arms were shipped first to Qatar, then on to Bahrein where they were sold to Persian buyers. While technically outside of the Arabian trade, the process is of some importance in showing local resistance to the British control efforts. The main traders involved were based in Qatar, but neither they nor their Persian customers would directly visit each others ports. Instead, they used

Bahrein as a transshipment point. The new British Political Resident, Major Percy Cox, was not able to stop the trade, for it seems that both Sheikh Isa and his son gave it protection. [13]

Communications in 1905 provide insight into the likely operation of the smaller arms smugglers. A number of British dispatches decried acts of piracy committed by "Ahmed-bin-Selman" in the Gulf near Bahrain. They specifically note that he took refuge in "Turkish territory" with the approval of the Ottomans. (The Arabian coast north of Qatar was clearly Turkish territory, and Qatar was claimed by the Ottomans.) While the piracy seems to have been a very small affair, it nevertheless gained the attention of the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, and the military Commander in Chief, Lord Kitchener and precipitated questions regarding the failure of Sheikh Isa to deal with the pirate. The piracy was seen as threatening British prestige. [14] Arms shipments are not specifically mentioned, but the link between the two was generally firm enough to be likely in this case. The pattern of the arms trade thus involved shipments between Bahrein, el Hasa, and other areas of the Gulf, with the pirates probably stationed on the mainland.

Kuwait

The arms trade at Kuwait began later than that of Muscat: only after Sheikh Mubarak took power from his brother in 1896 did it start at all. The volume was so small at first that the trade did not attract British attention until 1899, when "fairly large quantities of arms" were reported being shipped from Muscat to Kuwait. The "customs contractor of Kuwait port" attached a duty of $MT 2 per rifle, and Sheikh Mubarak added a "royalty" of $MT 4. The volume of the trade was still apparently small, but the British were concerned. [15]

The British feared that Kuwait would replace Bahrein as "the principal arms mart of the upper Persian Gulf." The new Political Resident, Lt. Col. C.A. Kemball, visited the Sheikh in May, 1900, and gained a control agreement similar to that signed earlier at Bahrein. The agreement banned the arms trade at Kuwait and allowed for the search of Kuwaiti vessels. Even though Sheikh Mubarak "entered into these agreements with unexpected readiness," they failed to limit the trade for several reasons, according to Lorimer. Kuwaiti vessels were still sailing under the Turkish flag, making it "inexpedient" for the British to search them. In addition, the British felt that to limit the trade at Kuwait would have "been to influence materially the course of Central Arabian affairs." [16] And the British consistently

resisted taking action that would draw them geographically and politically deeper into Arabia. It is certain that Sheikh Mubarak was fully aware of the inability of the British to enforce the agreements when he signed them. [17]

The British fear that stopping the trade at Kuwait would affect internal Arabian affairs is important, for it reveals a major arms route to central Arabia. Lorimer states that:

> Ibn Sa'ud of Southern Najd drew his supply" of arms from Kuwait, and that "It is probable that, with the exception of those received through Qatar, nearly the whole of the arms and ammunition imported into Najd for use in the wars of 1900-1904 were brought into the country through Kuwait. [18]

The arms entering Kuwait that did not pass on to Nejd were smuggled into Turkish and Persian territory.

The Saudi need for arms caused additional concern to the British, for it gave an opening to other powers wishing to enter the Gulf. In 1903, the Russian cruiser BOYARIN and the French cruiser INFERNET visited Kuwait; Abdul Aziz ibn Saud was in the Kuwait at the same time. The Captain of BOYARIN, joined by the Russian Consul from Bushire, visited Abdul Aziz twice, and the Saudi leader's brother visited the Russian ship, where he received a five gun salute. Commander Kemp or H.M.S. SPHINX "suggested" to Abdul Aziz that it was:

> ... undesirable that foreign European countries should interfere in the affairs of Nejd, and suggested that he should refuse any offers made to him on behalf of the Russian Government, and that, as Great Britain was the predominant Power in the Persian Gulf, and intended to remain so, it would not, in the end, pay him to do anything of which she disapproved.
>
> Abdul Aziz ... pointed out the Amir of Nejd (i.e. Ibn Rashid) received money and support from the Turkish Government, and that it was necessary for him to have money to retain the support of the Arab tribes in his efforts against the Amir.
>
> I think it likely that Abdul Aziz will take anything from the Russians he can get, and that Mubarak will back him up in doing so, and it is possible that some definite arrangement was entered into on this occasion. [19]

No direct evidence that the Saudis received Russian arms has been found, though the Russian steamer TROUVER did deliver a large shipment (25 cases of arms) to Kuwait several years later. The TROUVER shipment may have been the result of the 1903 conversations between the Russian officers and the Saudis. [20] In any case, the threat was enough to worry the British, and it may help explain why they were willing to aid the arms supply through Kuwait to Nejd: better the private arms dealers, than the Russian or French Governments.

Kuwait continued to be a major supply point for the Saudis, and in September, 1904, Percy Cox reported that "Small supplies of food, arms, and ammunition proceed to the interior almost weekly," thus giving a steady source of supplies. [21]

The trade through Kuwait increased rapidly, it seems, after a visit by the "ubiquitous" French dealer from Muscat, M. Goguyer. Goguyer stayed in Kuwait "practically as the guest of the Sheikh." He began shipping arms from Muscat "as the Shaikh's private property." In August, 1904 over 40 cases of rifles were landed at Kuwait, and stored in the Sheikh's warehouse. Early in 1905, the rate of import was estimated by the British to be about 1,000 rifles per month. Of these, about 42% arrived by steamer, while 58% were shipped by "native vessels." [22] Captain Knox, British Political Agent in Kuwait, reported in February, 1905, that every two weeks the British India steamer delivered 200 rifles to Kuwait. Dhows carried the rest of the 12,000 rifles imported each year. All came from Muscat. A Martini sold at Kuwait for $MT 36 and a Mauser for $MT 42. A good rifle could be resold to the bedouins for $MT 100. [23] Lorimer estimates that Sheikh Mubarak received an annual income of some $MT 50,000 from the arms trade. Mubarak "denied" that there was any arms trade through Kuwait, while Goguyer "asserted that he held written authority from the Sheikh to import arms into Kuwait." [24]

Half of the Kuwaiti imports were resold to buyers from Persia, half to buyers from "Turkish" territory, including Nejd. While Kuwait was vital to Nejd's supply of arms, Nejd was not as important to Kuwait's arms trade. Most of the

arms sold to "Turkish" territory went to the area of Iraq between Basra and Baghdad. [25]

Captain Knox's report gives an insight into the nature of Goguyer's organization and activity in the Gulf. Goguyer had a permanent agent in Kuwait, Haji Abdullah Thahaba, to oversee the market in the sheikhdom. Apparently, Thahaba charged so high a price for his guns that he sold few if any directly. Knox stated that: "He is not a fool, and it is more likely that his trade is a blind, while the information that he sends to Goguyer at Muscat is no doubt useful in regulating Muscat prices." [26] If Knox was right, Goguyer maintained a complex and sophisticated organization in the Gulf.

Despite official objections to the Kuwaiti arms trade, there is evidence that the British tolerated, and may have actually supported, the shipment of guns to Sheikh Mubarak and then to the Saudis. They were not, however, as interested in arming the Al Saud, as they were in safeguarding Kuwait's independence from the Ottomans. A May 1904, dispatch from the Government of India to the Secretary of State for India noted that:

> Our influence with the Sheikh of Kowait has increased concurrently with the success of his friend, Bin Saoud, and if, as a result of active intervention on our part for the purpose of preventing Mubarak from helping Bin Saoud, and of preventing the importation of arms, Turkish influence were allowed to determine the supremacy

> of the Turkish nominee against Bin Saoud, our prestige at Koweit must suffer materially, and it would probably ... mean absorption of Nejd by the Turks. [27]

If Nejd fell to the Ottomans, Kuwait would be out-flanked, and could easily be attacked by the Ottomans or their surrogates, the Al Rashid. Thus, the British "might be compelled once more to render Mubarak active assistance against the Turks." The authorities in India wished to influence events in central Arabia by allowing the Saudis to continue importing weapons. [28]

British actions regarding the Kuwaiti arms trade did not escape public attention in the Gulf. An article appeared in the September 16, 1904, issue of the Cairo paper Al-Ahram, signed by its "Special Correspondent at Muscat", A. Rahim. Major Grey, the Political Agent at Muscat, believed the true author to be Goguyer. [29] The general tone of the article is strongly anti-British. Throughout, it accuses the "English" of conspiring to separate Kuwait and Iraq from Ottoman authority. (Irony rings through the twelve years between the Al Ahram article and the Anglo-French Sykes-Picot Agreement dividing the middle east between them.) The heart of the article, however, is a description of the method supposedly used by the British to ship arms to Sheikh Mubarak for the Al Saud and other groups in "rebellion" against the Ottomans.

> All that he (i.e. Mubarak) requires comes from

> India, ... Mail steamers call once a week at Koweit via Muscat; and the Koweit merchants ship every week hundreds of rifles and ammunition, &c., to Koweit. ... they write on the cases containing fire-arms 'cases containing sweetmeats;' and those holding cartridges, 'dried limes.' The Customs officials at Muscat do not inquire about the contents of the cases, while the English officers, who last year made such a noise, when they found a Frenchmen carrying six revolvers, shut their eyes when these cases are concerned. ... Thus Ibn-i-Saood obtains his arms from Koweit and the latter from the English; and so the English are the agents who supply the Arabs with arms. [30]

After this description of a semi-official arms trade through Kuwait, the article charges that the British had incited most of the inter-tribal trouble in Iraq and northern Arabia, all with the goal of seizing control of Kuwait and Iraq itself. The Ottomans were urged to "seek the aid of the French and the Russians, in order to defend yourselves against this aggression; nothing else will prevent their (i.e., the English) intrigues." [31]

While much of the article is an anti-English philippic, its description of the arms trade at Kuwait rings true, and is generally confirmed by Major Grey, in a dispatch analyzing the article. He first states that he believes the article to have been written by Goguyer, then tacitly admits the general truth of Al-Ahram's report on the arms trade.

> (3.) The article clearly implies that arms are imported into Koweit by the English. M. Goguyer knows well that the (apparent) inconsistency of publicly forbidding and privately encouraging the importation of arms by us would be thoroughly

> understood by the natives in the present circumstances, and the manner in which the ideas are expressed in this extract bears the stamp of his ingenious manipulations.
>
> (4.) It is possible that the writer's remarks concerning the conveyance of arms to Koweit by merchants in mail steamers are made in the hope of inducing action to be taken, which will leave the Koweit field in possession of those who send their consignments in dhows, as M. Goguyer does ... [32]

This semi-official British role in the supply of arms to Arabia through Kuwait is not directly supported by other British sources, and few non-British sources have been available. It is reasonable, however, to believe that the British did approve of the Kuwaiti trade, and Muscati customs records show a substantial British involvement in the trade throughout the period. [33] The British had no reason to prevent British arms and influence from reaching Nejd. Their primary reason for acting against the arms trade was to prevent weapons reaching tribes or groups overtly hostile to them - whether on the shores of the Gulf, or on the Northwest Frontier.

The arms trade continued to be extremely active at Kuwait through Lorimer's final comments on the 1905-1907 period. In 1906 the Kuwait Political Agent, Captain Knox, pressed the Sheikh to stop the trade, but there was only a "slight lull" as a result of the protest, and "by the month of September, 1906, it was once more in full vigour." [34] Even if the British had acted consistently in opposition to

the arms trade at Kuwait, it could not be ended as long as "the tap at Muscat was not shut off." [35]

"Turkish" Arabia: Iraq and el Hasa via Kuwait

Information on the private arms trade into these regions is limited. Lorimer mentions the 1901 capture by the Ottomans, just off the Qatar coast, of arms "intended for Shaikh Jasim-bin-Thani." During 1904-05 some arms apparently reached Iraq from Persia and Kuwait. In these years, at least, the Gulf ports do not appear to have been a supply point for the Al Rashid, for Lorimer notes that:

> The Turks seem to have done nothing to facilitate the obtaining of rifles and ammunition from the Gulf by Ibn Rashid of Jabal Shammar, their nominal representative in Central Arabia, during the war in Central Arabia. [36]

It was clearly in Ottoman interests to control as much of the arms supply reaching their client as possible. They would not have wanted the Rashidi to develop a reliable, independent, source of supply. In any case, the Ottoman's supplied the Al Rashid from Iraq and Syria. [37]

THE TRUCIAL COAST PORTS AND SMALLER PORTS

The arms traffic along the Trucial Coast was closely linked to the traffic at Muscat, and developed during the same years, reaching its peak between 1896-98. According to Lorimer, the trade appears to have been mainly for internal

consumption, but with some export to Persia. Lorimer specifically credits the decline of the Trucial Coast arms trade to the "glutting of the local market and to the absence of communications with profitable markets in the interior." The trade was first centered at Ajman, then became "general" along the coast, being carried on mainly by Dubai. [38]

During its short period of operation, the arms trade on the Trucial Coast is described by Heard-Bey as a "sizeable" part of the region's imports. She notes that rifles were the "most treasured possession" of tribal Arabs, and that there was a high demand for modern arms. She, however, states that many guns were re-exported to the "tribes in Makran and other areas of the Persian Coast." [39]

Even though the trade along the Trucial Coast appears to have been fairly modest in size, controls were soon imposed by the British. In 1902 the sheikhs of the Coast signed agreements to prohibit arms and ammunition from being imported to or exported from their territories. The agreements were motivated in part by the sheikhs' apprehension over the arming of their own people, and in part by pressure from the British Resident, Col. Kemball. Compared with the thousands of weapons seized at Muscat, only a few hundred Martini-Henries are mentioned by Lorimer

as present in 1902. [40]

In the 1905-07 period, the arms trade along the Trucial Coast was at "a standstill" [41], despite local political trouble and the visit of M. Goguyer. In 1906 Sheikh Zayed of Abu Dhabi was involved in a territorial dispute with Sheikh Rashid of Umm al-Qaiwain. Zayed was trying to make his state dominant on the Trucial Coast, while Rashid was trying to weaken the alliance headed by Zayed. In 1906 Zayed "collected and armed his adherents" in preparation for an attack on Umm al-Qaiwan territory." The matter took on wider dimensions from the British point of view when it was reported that Goguyer "... had visited Umm al-Qaiwain." Percy Cox entered the dispute, and forced a settlement of the political dispute between the Sheikhdoms after threatening a bombardment of Abu Dhabi. [42] The ending of the crisis further undercut the local market for arms, again cited by Lorimer as a factor in the failure of the Trucial Coast trade. [43]

The trade on the Trucial Coast flared to notice with an incident on December 27, 1910, that played a part in the ending of the Muscat trade. [44] H.M.S. HYACINTH was patrolling along the coast when her captain learned of a cache of arms at Dubai. He sent men ashore to search the town, and was met with armed resistance by some of the local population. Before the fighting was over, thirty-seven

Arabs had been killed. In addition, four sailors died while ten were wounded or missing. The Gulf Resident, Percy Cox, and the Commander-in-Chief East Indies arrived quickly to clean up the mess. [45]

The British, typically, demanded compensation from the Sheikh, to the tune of 50,000 Rupees (Rs.) and 400 rifles. They also demanded that the Sheikh accept a british agent and facilities. The Sheikh's reaction was strong. While he would pay compensation, he would not accept an agent, and even protested to the American Consul in Muscat, presumably in the hope of assistance. Before Cox and the Royal Navy could enforce their demands, however, London ordered them to drop the idea of a British agent and facilities, lest these demands disrupt Anglo-Turkish negotiations over Qatar. The matter was resolved when the Sheikh handed over the money and the guns. [46] Britain was generally reluctant to extend its influence or control inland, but the arming of the sheikhdoms and tribes of the Trucial Coast was seen as a possible threat to their maritime interests in the Gulf. Thus, unlike the situation at Kuwait and in Nejd, they moved quickly to stop the trade on the coast.

Qatar

The small ports of Qatar together formed one of the most important routes for the import of arms into southern Nejd during the period of 1898-1905. The Ottoman claim to Qatar prevented the British from taking any direct steps to stop the shipment of weapons through the peninsula. Lorimer gives no hard information on the volume of the early trade. [47]

By the end of 1906, the British appear to have gained more solid information on the Qatar trade. There was a "flourishing trade" at the port of Dohah on the west coast of the peninsula, where some 2,000 rifles a month were delivered by "native craft" sailing from Muscat. The arms cost about Rs 15 more per rifle than at Muscat, and an import duty of Rs 3-8-0 was charged by the Sheikh of Dohah. The bulk of the arms, some 75%, were sold to the "Central Arabian market," with the remaining 25% going to Bahrein for "sale to Persians." [48] Thus, some 1,500 rifles a month were passing through Qatar for Nejd in 1906.

Mesopotamia and Kuwait

The Ottomans maintained fairly tight control of guns in Iraq, and except for the official transfers to client tribes, the region does not seem to have been a major source of arms, excepting those imported through Kuwait, until

World War I. British interest, in fact, centered on Ottoman imports later used in the War. Murphy discusses the arms trade in Iraq under Turkish rule, and notes:

> As far as gun-running was concerned, the center of interest was not Basrah itself, but a place called Magil, on the right bank of the Shatt-al-'Arab about four miles above that city. By arrangement with the Turkish Government all materials for the Baghdad railway arriving at Basrah from overseas were dumped here without being examined by the Turkish customs officials. A good many rifles were smuggled ashore with the railway material, and no doubt most of them were used against us in the Great War. [49]

The Persian Coast

Information available about the arms trade along the Persian coast gives a general indication of the volume of trade, and of the types of weapons imported to the Gulf. In his Appendix on the Arms Trade, Lorimer deals extensively with the arms imported along the Persian coast of the Gulf, and into Persian Makran. Referring to the 1898-1905 period, he notes the capture of shipments ranging from a few hundred to over 1,500 rifles. Lorimer repeatedly mentions the Martini-Henry as the weapon being imported. No other gun is named. [50]

Slowly, it seems, the major Persian ports in the Gulf were brought under control by the British and the Imperial Persian Customs, and by 1905-1907 results were noticed. While the controls may well have slowed the arms traffic in

Persia, the main effect was to shift the trade to the smaller ports, where control was not possible. In particular, the central section of the Persian coast, opposite Bahrein and Qatar, became a major area of activity. [51]

Persian Makran, the district of the Persian coast bordered by the Gulf of Oman, was important to the trade with Afghanistan, and was thus carefully investigated. In 1906, Captain McConaghey, Assistant Political Resident in British Makran, investigated the Karwan District (inland from the coast) and found that:

> ... almost every inhabitant ... was armed with some sort of breech-loading rifle; ... The weapon most prized was the Martini-Henry rifle or carbine of English manufacture; but the .303 carbine (i.e., the magazine-fed, smokeless-power Lee-Metford) had begun to find favour with the well-to-do classes. The arms carried by the poor were generally obsolete military rifles of Russian, French or German models, ... [52]

DJIBOUTI AND THE RED SEA PORTS OF ARABIA

Much less information on the arms trade in the Red Sea is available than for the Gulf. Fortunately, Bidwell has reprinted a number of British diplomatic dispatches that give some information on the Red Sea trade. The major British concern was with the general pattern of the trade, involving the shipment of arms from Djibouti to Arabia, and

then back to Africa. The trade was considered a problem not because of the entry of weapons into Arabia, but because of their re-exportation to Africa. Beachey discusses the pattern of the trade shortly after its shift from southern Africa:

> This new pattern of the arms trade, as seen by British Residents at Aden, Muscat, and Berbera, was as follows: Suri Arabs, from Sur, south of Muscat, were engaged in carrying dates from Sur, Bussorah, and other ports on the Arabian coast, to Aden and then to the North Somali ports. After discharging their dates, they would proceed to Jibouti, where the trade in arms was practically unchecked, though no doubt contrary to French orders. At Jibouti the dhow masters purchased arms with the proceeds from their sales of dates. These arms were then taken down and sold at the Benadir coast ports on the way to Zanzibar, where they usually went for a return freight for the south-west monsoon, which gave the dhows a fair wind back to Sur and the Persian Gulf. The whole operation might entail up to a year. It was lucrative and the work was not arduous. Profits were high. [53]

The winds may have played a major part in the pattern of the Djibouti trade. The local captains thought it better to sail from the French colony to Arabian ports such as Ras al Ara, Mokke, and Macullah, in Yemen or Aden for transshipment to vessels from the African coast than to sail directly down the coast. Beachey suggests that one group of dhows exported the arms from Djibouti, while another group carried some of the guns back to Africa by way of the monsoons. This pattern clearly supported the substantial Arabian section of the business: the British Resident at

Aden, in fact, reported in 1901 the capture of French Gras rifles, early single-shot breech-loaders, those captured being dated 1874. [54] By sailing first to Arabia the native vessels gained an additional benefit, evading any French attempts to enforce the Brussels Act. This, of course also allowed the French to claim that they did not allow arms to be shipped to Africa.

Much of the trade was apparently carried in dhows flying the French flag. Captain Dugmore reported in 1894 that weapons could easily be purchased from a company in Aden for later delivery on vessels protected by the French flag. The Captain implies a direct French military role in the trade at this time, noting talk at Aden that "there can never be any difficulty in getting arms into the country so long as there is a French man-of-war at Zanzibar." The Arab sailors captured with arms reported that there was no official inspection at Djibouti, in any case, to stop the export of arms. And Suri vessels were now gaining the protection of the French flag through a method similar to that used earlier during the height of the slave trade. The owners simply purchased plots of land at Djibouti which they visited once a year, and were issued French papers. [55] This was eight years before Ottavi began distributing the flag at Muscat.

The volume of trade through Djibouti was very high,

and while many of the arms imported there were transshipped to Africa, a high proportion clearly ended up at Muscat or other Arabian ports. Beachey reports that in the four weeks from August 7, to September 3, 1902 five steamers arrived at Djibouti: three were French, one British and one Belgian. They delivered 985 cases of arms, normally loaded with twenty rifles per case, for a total of about 20,000 guns, and 625 cases of cartridges, at about 1,600 per case, for a total of some one million rounds of ammunition. In addition, a large amount of lead was delivered. All within a month. During one nine day period in August, 1902, ten dhows left Djibouti, each shipping an average of 80 to 100 rifles with some 100 rounds per gun. [56]

The Italians had started their conquest of Eritrea in the 1880s, and despite their defeat by the Ethiopians in 1896 at the Battle of Aduwa, they continued to occupy the coastal region. Both the British and the Italians faced raids and armed resistance from Mohammed bin Abdullah (the Mad Mullah) in their respective Somaliland colonies. The fighting lasted from 1899 till 1905, when he gained recognition for a semi-independent region in the Italian colony. Despite this settlement, fighting continued at various levels of intensity, and only ended after Abdullah's death in 1920. [57] Both powers thus faced military opposition in African colonies easily supplied by arms

traders from Djibouti.

Throughout the first years of the century, the British and the Italians expressed considerable concern about the shipment of arms from Djibouti to Arabia, and then back to Africa. During 1905, the British and Italian ambassadors to Paris approached the French government hoping to obtain French cooperation in controlling the Djibouti trade. On June 20, 1905, the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Lansdowne, wrote to the British Ambassador to France to report the French reply. The French Minister of Marine claimed that control measures on the African coast were adequate, and that a French warship was not needed in the area:

> Moreover, the Governor of the French Somali Coast reports that since his arrival in the Colony on the 5th. August, 1904, no native vessel flying the French flag has been reported to him as carrying arms or ammunition intended to be landed at any point of the French Coast, or of the neighboring Italian or British Colonies. [58]

The transshipment of arms via Arabia allowed the French Government to deny any knowledge of the illegal African arms trade, while still protecting that trade, and the trade to Muscat. Lansdowne understood what the French were doing, and continued:

> Your Excellency will perceive that the above observations of the French Ambassador contain no allusion to the export of arms from Jibouti to the opposite Arabian Coast for re-exportation to that of Africa. As this is the manner in which the

> traffic is chiefly conducted, it will doubtless be necessary again to approach the French Government on the subject. Before doing so, however, I have thought it advisable to consult the Italian Government, ... [59]

Given French failure to respond to the problem as seen by the British, the Foreign Office agreed to an India Office proposal to send the British Resident at Aden to Djibouti and Berbera to directly investigate the arms traffic. It was expected that the French would cooperate with the investigation. Later, however, they rejected the contention that any further regulations were needed to control the arms trade. [60] Unfortunately, Bidwell fails to print the Resident's report which probably includes detailed information on the Djibouti arms market.

Throughout the seas surrounding Arabia, there was continued trouble with piracy, and the general pattern indicates that those native vessels engaged in occasional piracy were also involved in the slave trade and the traffic in arms. British diplomatic dispatches, printed by Bidwell, contain repeated mention of piracy along the Yemeni coast. And British authorities appear to have used the excuse of suppressing pirates to attack slavery and the arms trade, in both the Gulf and the Red Sea.

The charge that the native craft were pirates was of considerable practical importance to the British, for if upheld, it stripped the vessel and crew of any real legal

protection against search and seizure. Lauterpacht states the international law that applied, and still applies, to pirates:

> A pirate and his vessel lose ipso facto by an act of piracy the protection of their flag State and their national character. Every maritime State has, by a customary rule of the Law of Nations, the right to punish pirates. And the vessels of all nations, whether men-of-war, other public vessels, or merchantmen, can chase, attack, and seize the pirate on the open sea, and bring him home for trial and punishment by the courts of their own country. [61]

In late September, 1905 H.M.S. FOX was sent to the Red Sea, with orders to cooperate with the British Vice-Consul at Hodeida, Yemen. They were to obtain compensation for certain recent acts of piracy and "unless local authorities immediately destroy pirate boats, this had better be done by His Majesty's ship." [62] The FOX, with the aid of Turkish troops, entered the pirate harbor and seized ten boats, but had to return for reinforcements before attacking the villages. [63] The Ottoman Government objected to the Fox's action. [64] It is not clear as to whether the vessels were actually pirates, or if the British were using an excuse to destroy boats engaged in the arms trade.

A full report on the operation was sent on October 7, 1905, by Captain J.B. Eustace, Senior Naval Officer, Aden Division, from aboard H.M.S. FOX. The events had been precipitated by the destruction in June of the sambok

ALWANI, a boat under British protection, by pirates from the Yemeni coast. Captain Eustace issued three demands to the Ottoman military and civil authorities of the Hodeidah district. First, he demanded the payment of compensation, $MT 3,717 plus £ 490; second, and most important for the subject of this paper, he demanded "destruction of all piratical boats between Hodeidah and Ras Mutenina, (i.e., Ras Miteina) belonging to the Zaranikhs or Karashias"; and third, the arrest and punishment "as soon as possible" of the culprits. He then began planning a combined military-naval expedition against the "pirates" at "Ghuleifaka" (i.e., Gulfeika, some ten miles south of Hodeidah.) [65]

The compensation was fully paid, in part immediately, in part after H.M.S. FOX informally blockaded Hodeidah. The first military operation, undertaken by FOX and two Turkish gunboats with 100 Ottoman troops, was only able to capture a few Yemeni samboks (small coastal vessels). After returning to Hodeidah, the British determined that the Mayor of Hodeidah, Seyyid Ahmed Pasha, had warned the tribesmen of the expedition. A second expedition on October 2-5, using the Turkish gunboats and British launches armed with Maxim machine guns, captured or destroyed a number of samboks. Captain Eustace specifically mentions the capture of the sambok MOTASSAHIL, "belonging to the Chief of the Karashia

tribe." The boat was involved in the arms trade:

> As she had evidently just landed a cargo of arms (an arms chest with a newly-broken lid was found in her), at the request of Commodore Arif I ordered her seizure. ... Subsequent information at Hodeidah showed that this sambok "Motassahil" is a well-known gun-runner. When searching her the Turkish officials with me told the interpreter not to report or see any of the evidence of gun-running. I, however, personally assisted, so they were unable to deny the facts I pointed out. [66]

The expedition was not a great success, because the samboks were small enough to be pulled inland and many had been hidden. Captain Eustace did not believe that the problem of piracy could be ended without a fairly large land force to search for and destroy the boats. This would have to await the subjugation of the region by the Ottomans, who were then fully involved inland with the revolt of the Imam Yaya. Because of this, and the poor quality of the Ottoman naval officers, no further action could be taken. Captain Eustace reported, however, that the Governor of Hodeidah was:

> ... most grateful for my information upon the arms traffic and smuggling of arms now going on into Yemen. Upon my showing him a telegram from Perim of the 6th October, with the names of two dhows carrying arms, the dates of their departure from Jibuti, and destination, the Governor ordered the dhows seized. [67]

The general pattern of the Yemen trade was reported by Captain Eustace in a dispatch, unfortunately not reprinted by Bidwell, but discussed in a letter from Lord Lansdowne to

the Italians on November 13, 1905:

> From this (the Eustace report) it would appear that canoes (i.e., samboks) leave Obokh frequently for Kadduha, southward of Mukha, with from 80 to 100 rifles in each, and although no arms can officially leave Jibuti, there is said never to be any difficulty in obtaining a clearance from Obokh by vessels engaged in this trade. ... owing to the disarmament of the Arabs of Yemen by the Turks, the former are now endeavoring to rearm themselves, and find Kadduha a very suitable place, as the Turkish troops did not stop at Mokha, and never visited Kadduha. [68]

The interesting aspect of the Lansdowne note is that it shifts the emphasis from the re-export of arms from Arabia to the internal Arabian demand for weapons. It is important to remember that the Imam Yaya, in leading a revolt against the Ottomans, was also protesting the British position in the Aden Protectorate. Thus, Lord Lansdowne had to be concerned over the possibility that some of the smuggled arms would reach Aden. At the very least, this would have threatened order in Aden, and at worst, British control. British concern over the arms trade was great enough for Lord Lansdowne to order the Resident in Aden to investigate and report on the trade. Unfortunately, Bidwell again fails to reprint this report. [69]

The Ottomans were clearly aware of the threat to their position in Yemen posed by the arms trade. In November, 1905, the British Military Attaché in Constantinople reported the reorganization of the coastal districts of

Yemen, and an order to increase the size of the Turkish naval flotilla guarding the coast against gun-runners. Several weeks later, the Ambassador reported the departure from the Golden Horn of the ships to be stationed in Yemen. [70]

DISTRIBUTION OF ARMS WITHIN THE PENINSULA

After weapons had been landed at Muscat and the other ports of Arabia, local traders distributed them throughout the Peninsula. In addition, Ottoman troops in need of money frequently sold their own weapons on the blackmarket, while still other weapons were distributed directly by the Ottoman Government to client tribes. [71] Many of these weapons were later sold or captured, and thus spread further. The distribution routes were complex.

Local traders, stationed throughout the Peninsula, were a major source of arms for the tribes. Musil discusses the operations of one trader operating in the northern edge of the Nefud of north-central Arabia during May, 1909. A Sulabah tribesman brought news to the Ruwala camp that a trader, with "eight camels carrying weapons and goods for clothing" had arrived from Karbala (called by the messenger "al-Mashad") and was staying with the Slejb in al-Bwejtat. The trader was based in the Iraqi city, but when operating in the desert lived with the Krese clan of the Sammar tribe

in the northern section of the Skara oasis, and the Krese were enemies of the Ruwala. [72] The Iraqi trader probably obtained his goods from the arms market in Kuwait.

Tribal political alliances placed the arms trader in a bind: he wanted to continue selling to the Krese and the Sammar, as he had been doing, and still expand his market to the Ruwala and their allies, the Maazle clan that lived in the southern part of Skara. In dealing with the Krese the trader "alienated" the Ruwala and Maazle. (Musil does not show the Maazle as belonging to either the Ruwala or the Sammar on his lists of those tribes.) [73]

The trader sent a number of messages to the Ruwala Prince, al-Nuri, asking to trade. The dilemma was clearly drawn in quotes given by Musil:

> "Should we not sell arms to the Krese, how would they treat us?" they pleaded. "They would demolish our houses and rob us of our property; and whether they would spare our necks Allah only knows."
>
> "Ye supply our enemies with arms and ammunition; therefore ye are to blame for their defiance, and I do not want to mediate with ye," responded an-Nuri curtly. [74]

The Ruwala tried to capture the small caravan, but the Sulabah (Slejb) were friendly with both the Ruwala and the Sammar, and helped the trader hide. The Ruwala were unable to track them over the rocky ground.

In his general work on the Ruwala, Musil first reports the types of weapons used by the tribe [75], then discusses the shipping of arms within northern Arabia, revealing the pattern into which the above incident can be placed. Unfortunately, material in this particular book was drawn from both Musil's 1908-10 and 1913-15 travels, and he does not date the shipments he reports.

> All arms were brought from the seaports of Jidda or al-Kwejt. During my stay with Prince an-Nuri he was visited by six trade caravans with war munitions. One of the caravans numbered 210 camels carrying more than a thousand rifles with many thousand rounds of cartridges as well as much lead, gunpowder, and many caps. [76]

The report makes it clear that the Ruwala were still using many old percussion cap rifles, and that they obtained their weapons from ports on both the Gulf and Red Sea coasts. Lorimer, reporting generally on the 1905-06 period, provides important information on the arms route into central Arabia. Talking about the district he called Southern Najd (Nejd), then under Saudi influence, he says:

> The trade in arms is of an exceptional character ... at present it is conducted by Najdi merchants who visit Masqat at least once a year and, after purchasing a stock of arms, introduce them into Southern Najd by way of Qatar, ... [77]

In late 1906, the arms flow through Qatar was substantial, with 1,500 rifles a month, or a rate that would yield some 18,000 a year, entering central Arabia through the port of Dohah alone. [78] In addition to the shipment

of arms through Qatar, a large number of the arms imported at Kuwait were intended for the Saudi forces, and, after Qatar, that port appears to have been their most important point of supply. [79] While 200 to 300 camels a week carried goods from the Hasa port of Oqair Nejd, [80] it is unlikely that many arms entered through this route until after Abdul Aziz ibn Saud drove out the Turks in 1913.

Other arms entered Arabia through the small ports of the Red Sea coast. Lorimer specifically notes that the Harb tribe of Nejd and the Hijaz imported its breech-loaders by way of Yanbo. [81] In addition, Musil reports that old British guns were imported from Egypt, [82] probably through Jedda or other Red Sea ports. Lack of information on the Red Sea ports unfortunately prevents a detailed analysis of that section of the arms trade.

CAPTURE OF OTTOMAN WEAPONS

The capture of weapons in war has always been one of the major sources of supply for groups or nations that do not have easy access to manufacturers. Lt. Col. C.C.R. Murphy reported on the the capture of Ottoman weapons after the fall of Kerak in 1910, as discussed in Chapter VIII. Weapons were clearly lost in various Ottoman expeditions against the Saudis, and there would have been a steady leakage of arms during small engagement. But it took a

major revolt to bring major losses.

The 1904-07 revolt in the Yemen proved extremely difficult for the Ottomans to suppress. The British Military Attaché in Constantinople, Colonel H.C. Surtees, reported in early 1906 that by July of the previous year the Ottomans had a total of some 80,000 riflemen in Yemen, supported by artillery. Of these a dispatch from 1905 states that at least 40,000 were armed with Mausers, of various types. [83] (Bury, as noted above, later reported that all of the smokeless powder Mausers used by Ottoman troops were returned to Constantinople after the rebellion.)

During Imam Yaha's revolt, British diplomatic dispatches reported the capture of many weapons from the Ottoman troops. At the fall of Sana alone in April, 1905, they lost some 11,000 rifles and 24 artillery pieces. [84] When luck was with them, the Turks were able to recapture the lost rifles. For example, a dispatch from the Vice-Consul Richardson at Hodeida, Yemen, in October, 1905 first records the Ottoman loss of two guns (artillery), 100 rifles and much ammunition near Sana in August. Two weeks later, an Ottoman force recaptured Sana, and the rebels escaped, "abandoning a considerable quantity of ammunition and numerous rifles." [85] Several months later, a dispatch of January, 1906, from the Military Attaché, Constantinople,

discussed a December, 1905 attack in which the Ottomans first lost "arms, ammunition, and money" followed by a counter-attack in which they recaptured them. [86] Many of the lost weapons, of course, were never recaptured.

CAPTURE FROM TRIBAL ENEMIES

One of the clear benefits from a military victory was the capture of weapons from the enemy. Raids against the long supply lines of the desert were also a good source of arms. The British Consul at Basra, F.E. Crowe, reported to the Ambassador in Constantinople that a:

> ... convoy of arms dispatched to Yussuf-el-Ibrahim from El Katr has been intercepted by Mohamed, brother of Abdul Aziz-bin-Saoud, at El Sirr, some two days from Boreyda. It is said he captured ten loads. [87]

And again, in January or February, 1904, letters from the Consul and from Abdul Aziz ibn Saud reported a Saudi victory over a Rashidi 400 man force led by Husein-el-Jerad. All their weapons were captured, and somewhat later, a convoy of 150 camels with a small treasury (1,000 "Reals") was seized. [88] Capture of enemy arms was an important source of supply, even if it fell far short of the volume obtained by other means.

NOTES

1. Busch, page 134-35.

2. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2563.

3. Converted to pounds sterling from rupees using Busch's rate of Rs. 15 = £1. Busch, page 390.

4. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2563.

5. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2563.

6. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2564.

7. Lorimer, Volume I, Part I-B, Page 932. Emphasis by the author.

8. Lorimer, Volume I, Part 1B, p. 932.

9. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2564.

10. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2569.

11. Lorimer, Volume I, Part I-B, Page 938.

12. Lorimer, Volume I, Part I-B, page 945. The Sheikh's memorial was "submitted" in October, 1905. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2576.

13. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Pages 2576-77.

14. Curzon Note: Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, Page 2. See other discussion of Ahmed-bin-Selman at pages 21, 23-26.

15. Lorimer, Volume I , Part II, Page 2569.

16. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2569.

17. Lorimer, Volume I , Part II, Page 2569.

18. Lorimer, Volume I , Part II, Page 2569.

19. Bidwell, The Affairs of Kuwait, London, Frank Cass and Company, Ltd., 1971, Volume II, Part V, Page 27.

20. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2577.

21. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume II, Part VI, Page 91.

22. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, page 2570.

23. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, page 73.

24. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2569-70.

25. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, page 73.

26. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, page 73.

27. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 4.

28. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 4.

29. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 2-4.

30. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 2.

31. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 2.

32. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, page 3.

33. Busch, page 394.

34. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2577.

35. Busch, page 276. Citing Percy Cox to the Foreign Secretary for India, August, 1906.

36. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2570.

37. Discussed in Chapter VII.

38. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2568.

39. Heard-Bey ,Faruke, From Trucial States to UAE, New York, Longmen, 1982, pages 191-2.

40. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2568.

41. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2575.

42. Abdullah, page 102. In fact, Goguyer visited both Umm al-Qaiwain and Dubai in December, 1905 and January, 1906: Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2576.

43. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2576.

44. Discussed in detail in Chapter V.

45. Busch, page 289.

46. Busch, page 289.

47. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2568.

48. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2576.

49. Murphy, Soldiers of the Prophet, p. 208-09.

50. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Pages 2570-2573.

51. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2577-78.

52. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2579-80.

53. Beachey, Arms Trade, pages 462-63.

54. Beachey, Arms Trade, page 463.

55. Beachey, Arms Trade, page 463.

56. Beachey, Arms Trade, page 465.

57. Dupuy, R.E., and T.N. Dupuy, The Encyclopedia of Military History, Revised Edition, New York, Harper and Row, 1977, pages 849-1005.

58. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, Page 76.

59. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, Page 76.

60. Residents Visit: Letter from F.O. to I.O., August 14, 1905; Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part IV, Page 50. And telegram, August 17, 1905, page 62. French view of regulations: F. Bertie to F.O., and French note to Bertie, September 13 and 15, 1905; Pages 69-70.

61. Lauterpacht, H., Editor, International Law, A Treatise By L. Oppenheim, Volume I: Peace, Eighth Edition, Seventh Impression, New York, David McKay Company, Inc., 1955, Section 278, page 661.

62. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part IV, Page 72.

63. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, Page 10.

64. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, Page 12.

65. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, page 34-38.

66. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, page 37.

67. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, Pages 34-38

68. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, Page 52.

69. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, Page 76-77.

70. Attaché's Note: Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, Page 57. Report of Departure: Page 81.

71. Both of these aspects of the arms trade are discussed in Chapter VII.

72. Musil, Arabia Deserta, page 296.

73. Additional tribal details: Musil, Arabia Deserta, pages 274-75 and 279. Ruwala clans: pages 14-16. Sammar clans: Musil, A., Northern Negd, New York, American Geographical Society, 1928, pages 31-33.

74. Musil, Arabia Deserta, page 296.

75. See Chapter II

76. Musil, Manners and Customs, page 132.

77. Lorimer, Volume II, Part I-B, pages 1356-57.

78. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2576.

79. Lorimer, Volume II, Part II, Page 2569.

80. Lorimer, Volume II, Part 1-B, page 1454.

81. Lorimer, Volume II, Part I-A, pages 634-37.

82. Musil, Rwala, page 131-32.

83. 1905 Dispatch: Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part IV, Page 4. 1906 Report: Part VII, Page 3.

84. Bidwell, The Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, page 36.

85. Bidwell, Robin, The Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part V, page 54.

86. Bidwell, Robin, The Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part VI, Page 17.

87. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume II, Part V, Page 54.

88. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume II, Part VI, Page 47-48.

CHAPTER VII

THE GOVERNMENTAL ARMS TRAFFIC

Modern arms entered the Peninsula through two main channels, private traders and governmental action. While all aspects of the private trade accounted for the greater part of the arms entering Arabia, purchases by the Ottoman Empire - and the distribution of those weapons to Ottoman clients - may have formed the largest single source of modern weapons entering Arabia during the period under study.

OFFICIAL OTTOMAN ARMS PURCHASES

During the nineteenth century, as now, the major powers continually replaced obsolete guns with new weapons. When this happened, or when the end of a war brought demobilization, thousands of rifles were sold to other nations or private arms dealers. The Ottoman government was a major buyer of both new and surplus firearms.

Following Mahmut II's reorganization and modernization of the Ottoman army in 1827, the state factories were unable to supply the modern weapons needed by the army, and throughout the remainder of the Century the Empire became

increasingly dependent upon expensive imported arms. [1] Many of these weapons later appeared in Arabia. To trace them, it is necessary to review Ottoman purchases, and the technical specifications of the rifles involved.

Examples of both the sale of old weapons on the international market and of Ottoman purchases are found after the American Civil War. With the change to breech-loading rifles by the United States Army, old muzzle-loaders were worth little, and many were sold overseas. In 1869 "at least 60,000 government owned Enfield rifles were cleaned and repaired at the Springfield Armory and sold to the Turkish government." [2] In 1869 the Ottomans also expressed interest in buying machinery from the Armory that could make some two hundred Springfield muzzle-loading muskets a day. [3] I do not know if this purchase was actually made.

Modern rifles were also sold by United States companies. In 1870, Winchester sold the Ottomans 15,000 Winchester Model 1866 repeating rifles and 5,000 carbines in caliber .44 Turkish Rim Fire. (These Winchesters were important in the early stages of the Russo-Turkish War of 1877-78.) By 1873, Winchester had a Turkish contract for 2,000,000 blank metallic drill cartridges and 50,000,000 "Snyder" rifle cartridges. The Company also shipped cartridge-making machinery to the Ottomans. [4] Smith

reports that many of these Turkish Winchesters were later converted from lever-action repeaters into the first semiautomatic rifle, using an 1881-83 design by Hiram Maxim. Smith does not say if the rifles were converted while still in Turkish service. [5]

The "Snyder" cartridges mentioned by Deyrup make it probable that the Enfield rifles purchased by Turkey were in fact Snider rifles, for the Snider was an Enfield muzzle-loader converted into a breech-loader. The Model 1853-1866 Snider Single Shot, British service rifle, was based on the invention of American inventor Jacob Snyder. After the conversion a breech plate swung up to allow the loading of a brass cartridge, which expanded on firing to seal the chamber. The gun was caliber .557. [6] The official British name for the rifle appears to have been the Snider-Enfield, and it was only considered a "stopgap" until a better gun was designed. [7]

During the Civil War, the United States imported over 428,000 Enfield muzzle-loading rifles from England and purchased some 670,000 U.S. made Springfields; [8] at the end of the War, over "a million muzzle-loading rifled muskets, caliber .58, in first-class condition" were still held by the United States Government. [9] The "Snyder" cartridges sold by the Springfield Armory to Turkey had to be for use in the Snider rifle. Ottoman use of the Snider

is confirmed by Metschl, who states that it was "exclusively employed" by their army, though he gives no service dates or numbers. [10] Their use of the Snider during the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish war is also mentioned by Yapp, [11] while Lewis notes its use by Ottoman forces in Transjordan in 1869. [12]

At about the same time, the Ottomans began purchase of the rifle that, as discussed above, was to become common throughout Arabia. Springfield Armory Records note that in about 1870 the Providence Tool Company made Peabody-Martini rifles for Turkey, [13] while Metschl reports that in 1873 the Ottoman Government purchased 600,000 Peabody-Martini rifles, .45 caliber, center fire. The rifle in the Nunnemacher Collection has Turkish "figures" on the lock plate and rear sight. [14] The Martinis were used by the Ottomans, along with Sniders, during the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78, [15] with at least 75,000 Ottoman troops armed with one or the other by the time of the War. [16]

Because the Peabody and its successor Martinis became so dominant in Arabia, they are of special importance. Different forms of the rifle entered the international arms market over the years, as the Peabody evolved through a number of designs, several of which later appeared in Arabia. The Peabody was first patented in 1862 by Henry O. Peabody of Boston. His rifle used a falling breech-block,

hinged at the rear, that was opened by levering the large trigger guard down and forward. As with most black powder models derived from the Peabody, it was of .45 Caliber. The gun was tested by the United States in 1865, and performed very well. With the Civil War over, however, the Government had no interest in a new gun:

> Like the British, all we could think of was how to convert our enormous stock of muzzle loaders cheaply, we had no time for new designs. ... and the manufacturers ... were encouraged to seek foreign markets. [17]

The first change in the Peabody was made by a Swiss mechanic, Frederich Von Martini. Martini's major alteration of the rifle replaced the original external hammer with an internal hammer. "The result was a streamlined design retaining the Peabody breechblock but embodying the now famous Martini firing mechanism." [18] This created the Peabody-Martini sold to the Ottomans. Martini submitted his design to the British, who further modified the rifle by adding a Henry pattern rifled barrel. The new weapon was called the Martini-Henry. Both the Peabody-Martini and the Martini-Henry were later common in Arabia, though often simply called Martinis.

Smith discusses the Turkish Peabody-Martini rifle in conjunction with the Romanian Model 1874-78, which was similar. The Turkish rifle was the Martini modification of the original Peabody design. It was issued with a black

powder Center Fire, caliber .45 Turkish shell. The Martini was also made as a carbine. While the Martini was an excellent weapon, magazine-fed rifles soon entered military service, making it obsolete. [19] Following the normal pattern for arms procurement, the Ottomans felt that they had to continue modernization.

In 1887, the Ottomans ordered 500,000 Model 1887 Mauser rifles and 50,000 cavalry carbines in 9.5mm. caliber. The Model 1887s were repeaters with tube magazines, and were the last of the black powder guns made by Mauser, for the invention of smokeless powder by the French in the same year made black powder rifles obsolete. The Ottomans took delivery of 220,000 rifles on the order, then renegotiated with Mauser in 1890 and changed the remainder of the order to the new, smokeless powder, Model 1890. This rifle had a vertical box magazine and came in 7.65mm. Turkish Rimless Caliber. 280,000 were delivered, and in 1893 an additional 150,000 Model 1890s were purchased. Also in 1893, the Ottomans ordered 201,000 modified Spanish Mausers with a staggered built-in box magazine, again in 7.65mm. Turkish. In 1905, a modified Mauser pattern was adopted by the Ottomans, still in Caliber 7.65mm Turkish. [20] (See Table I.)

OTTOMAN SINGLE-SHOT BREECH-LOADERS AND AMMUNITION

YEAR	RIFLE	NUMBER PURCHASED
??	Snider (Converted Enfield Musket)	?
1869	Enfield (or U.S. conversion)	60,000
1870	Winchester Model 1866 Rifles	15,000
1873	Peabody-Martini Rifles	600,000
1873	Snider Cartridges	50,000,000

OTTOMAN PURCHASES OF MAUSER MAGAZINE RIFLES

YEAR	MODEL	CALIBER	ORDERED	RECEIVED
1887	1887 Rifle	9.5mm. Black powder	500,000	220,000
"	1887 Carbine	" " "	50,000	?
1890	M. 90 Rifle	7.65mm.Turkish Rimless		280,000
1893	M. 90 Rifle	7.65mm. "		201,000
(Modified Spanish Mausers. Cited as Model 1895 Turkish.)				
1905	?	7.65mm.Turkish	?	?
(New pattern adopted.)				

[21]

TABLE I

OTTOMAN PURCHASES OF BREECH-LOADING RIFLES AND AMMUNITION

Smith's figures for the purchase of Mausers up to 1905 total 751,000 rifles and carbines. A contemporary estimate by Vincent Caillard, a director of the British arms firm of Vickers, Sons & Maxim and a former president of the Ottoman Public Debt Council, and Financial Representative of England, Holland and Belgium in Constantinople, gives a substantially higher total for the Mauser models 1887 and 1890 of 1,120,000. As Caillard's estimate appears in the 1911 Encyclopedia Britannica, it may have included the order Smith mentions for 1905. Caillard also notes that the Ottomans had a reserve stock of 510,000 "Martini-Henry" rifles. These, presumably, were the remaining Peabody-Martinis ordered in the 1870s, and mis-labeled by the British source. [22] Given the wars between the two dates, the attrition from the original 600,000 is not excessive.

In addition to the purchases from Mauser, Turkey had in service some British Lee Enfield, Rifle No. 1, magazine fed breech-loaders. This designation, sub-divided into various models, or "Marks," covers weapons made from 1895 until after World War I, and Smith does not give dates of purchase or numbers. He does say that a major design change occurred in the Lee Enfield after the Boer War, when the rifle was shortened to produce the Short Model Lee-Enfield. At the end of the Boer War, thousands of surplus Enfields

from South Africa were sold on the world market, many of them ending up in Arabia. The decision to change the design of the gun no doubt encouraged these sales. [23] It is probable that the Ottoman purchases that I have cited constituted most of the rifles obtained by them, but it is also probable that they did buy additional rifles from time to time.

To understand the number of surplus weapons available for the Ottomans to distribute to clients in Arabia (and elsewhere), an estimate must be made of the size of the Turkish army. Two general categories are of importance, the regular standing field force, and the variety of reserve and irregular forces.

The standing force (nizam) remained remarkably consistent in size during the four decades preceding World War I. At the end of the 1877-78 Russo-Turkish War the Nizam, according to Yapp, stood at about 250,000 men. [24] Caillard estimated the 1904 strength of the Nizam at 230,408. [25] And Shaw states that in 1912 the Ottomans had "no more than 250,000 men under arms." [26] Caillard includes a variety of fully and partially trained reserves, territorial forces, and gendarmes to reach a total figure of 1,795,350 men, but this includes many questionably trained - or even untrained - reserves. A more accurate reserve force is gained by taking Caillard's figures for the active

reserves (ihtiyat), 251,511; and the trained inactive reserve (redif, Class I), 237,026 , both of which had various garrison duties. This gives a total serious reserve strength of 488,537, for a total infantry force of 718,945. In addition, there were over 27,000 cavalry and the gendarmes to be armed. While the total of trained regulars and reserves would still have been under one million men, the Ottomans also had a substantial number of untrained or semi-trained reserves on the rolls in 1904.

The Ottoman military thus had a standing force of about 250,000 in the years before World War I, and a large reserve force. Caillard states that the Ottomans had issued, or had available in stores, 1,120,000 Mausers by 1904 with 510,000 Martinis in reserve. This is substantially higher than Smith's figures for an Ottoman purchase of 751,000 Mausers, but is consistent - allowing for losses - with his figure of 600,000 Martinis. Caillard's total of 1,630,000 Mausers and Martinis is substantially higher that Smith's total of 1,351,000. With either figure, however, it is apparent that after arming their own forces, the Ottomans still had a significant surplus for distribution to clients, as will be discussed later. [27]

The British Military Attaché in Constantinople, Lieutenant-Colonel Maunsell, reported to the Counselor of the Embassy in early November, 1904, on the Ottoman reaction

to recent victories by Abdul Aziz ibn Saud. The Ottomans had already lost one expedition attempting to aid the Al Rashid, and now, rather that send more men were preparing to modernize the arms carried by their troops in Iraq. The dispatch provides important information on how quickly the Mauser was replacing the Martini-Henry.

> The troops of the 6th. or Bagdad Corp are still armed with the old Martini rifle, now much worn, and practically the same weapon as possessed by Ibn Saoud's men. It has now been decided to issue them the Mauser rifle like the rest of the army, and for this purpose 40,000 small-bore Mausers and also six batteries of the newer pattern of 7.5 centim. mountain guns, ..., have been packed up, and are awaiting shipment by an early steamer to Bussorah (Basra). [28]

Throughout the period, the Ottomans appear to have armed their regular army with the best modern rifles available.

EGYPTIAN ARMS PURCHASES

Before WW I the Egyptians used various European rifles, "none truly standard." In 1870, Egypt ordered 60,000 Remington Single Shot Rolling Breechblock rifles in 11mm. (caliber .43) Egyptian. After that order had been partly filled, Egypt defaulted, and many rifles were shipped to France in 1870-71. In 1876 the Egyptians renegotiated with Remington, and the order for the full 60,000 rifles was completed. [29]

Interestingly, thirty-five years after the initial Egyptian order of Remingtons, the British Military Attaché in Constantinople reported (March, 1905) that Ottoman Zaptiehas (i.e. gendarmes) serving as border guards between Aqaba and the Mediterranean were armed with Remington carbines. [30] I have found no mention of a direct Ottoman purchase of Remingtons, and these weapons may be those originally bought by Egypt and later re-sold to local Ottoman commanders. The distribution patterns to the tribes of Arabia show that arms did reach the Peninsula from the Red Sea coast. While no direct evidence has been available, it is likely that some surplus arms from Egypt were sold to Arabian traders.

OTTOMAN DISTRIBUTION TO CLIENTS

The Ottoman Government's distribution of weapons to client tribes in Arabia, both to strengthen them and keep them under a measure of control, was a major source of arms for the Peninsula. During the war between the Saudis and the Rashidis, Turkish shipments of arms to the Al Rashid illustrate both this practice, and the disposal of obsolete weapons on the frontiers of the Empire. In April, 1904 the Persian Gulf Resident, citing newspaper articles, reported that the Ottomans had shipped Ibn Rashid "800 Martini-Henry rifles, 1,000 Sniders, with 60,000 rounds of ammunition, and 4,000 lira - rifles, ammunition, and money having left

Bagdad three days ago." Preparations for the sending of artillery were also reported underway. [31] The distribution of arms was a standard element of Ottoman policy in Arabia.

In his various books, Alois Musil reports the use of arms and ammunition by the Turkish authorities to strengthen some tribes while checking the power of others. In December, 1914, he was traveling with the Emir of the Ruwala tribe, al-Nuri ibn Hazza al-Shaalan and his son, Nawaf. Al-Nuri noted that the Turkish governor of Syria had asked him to remain loyal to the government during the War, and had promised to aid the Ruwala against their enemy (and the main enemy of the Al Saud, at the time), the Sammar tribe led by the Al Rashid. Nawaf objected, declaring that the Turkish Minister of War, Enver Pasha, considered the Emir of the Rashid "his most loyal ally." Nawaf then gave details of a large arms shipment to the Sammar.

> At the beginning of this year he (i.e. Enver Pasha) sent him (i.e. the Rashidi emir) by rail to al-Hegr fifteen thousand Mauser rifles, four hundred thousand cartridges, field guns, and so much gold that ten camels could hardly carry it. Zamel eban Subhan transported the arms to Hajel (i.e., Hail) and distributed them among the Sammar and even the Slejb. Before that the Sammar had barely five hundred good rifles; now they have so many that they sell Mauser rifles in Hajel for two Turkish pounds ($ 9.00) apiece. And what did Enver send these rifles to Eban Rasid for? That he might more easily defeat Eban Sa'ud, who eighteen months before had driven the Turkish soldiers out of the province of al-Hasa. [32]

Later, in his appendix on the Al Rashid, Musil states that the weapons were sent by the Ottomans in late 1913, and that the shipment included only 6,000 Mausers and 60,000 cartridges. Ibn Rashid was also sent an automobile and "a large sum of money." [33] (The Sammar Emir appears to have used his family name as a title, thus being called Ibn Rashid.) Philby reports that in 1912, in reaction to the Saudi capture of al-Hasa, the Ottomans sent Ibn Rashid 12,000 rifles "with corresponding quantities of ammunition and money," and notes that Abdul Aziz viewed this as directed against him. [34] Philby's figures are thus closer to the Ruwala estimate than to Musil's.

Lancaster reports that Musil, a Czech, worked for the Austrian Government and that he "escorted parties of military engineers" through parts of Arabia. [35] Musil's official position went beyond Lancaster's implication. Winstone reports that Musil had met an officer of Austro-Hungarian military intelligence, Herr Thomasberger, while still a student: Thomasberger accompanied Musil on his 1910-12 trip to Arabia. In addition, that trip was taken at the direct request of the Austrian Embassy in Constantinople. [36] It is clear that throughout his trips, Musil was acting for Austrian military intelligence, and in at least one case, he carried the orders of the Ottoman Government to the tribes.

Throughout his travels, Musil acted in a semi-official role for the Austrians, and occasionally for the Ottomans. Thus, it is likely, though not explicitly stated by Musil, that he obtained his own figures on arms shipments from sources in either the Ottoman Government or the Austrian diplomatic service. It is possible, of course, that both figures are accurate, and that the shipment of 6,000 rifles mentioned in Musil's appendix was only one of several shipments in late 1913 and early 1914 that totaled between 12,000 and 15,000 weapons. Of the two sets of figures, however, Musil's lower numbers are probably more accurate for this period than either Philby's or the Ruwala's.

Musil estimated that the Rashid had formerly had a normal "mercenary" force of 10,000 tribesmen who were given arms, ammunition and riding camels by the Emir, but that by 1914 this force had been reduced by defections to 3,000. This force could be supplemented by other tribesmen. Lorimer estimated the heart of Sammar territory around Hail to have a population of about 55,000. [37] Although he reports a fighting force by this time (c.1905) of only 3,000, his normal percentage of fighters is 29% of the total population, a rate that would easily have raised 10,000 troops during the Rashidi's hayday.

Assuming that the figures given by Nawaf were either highly inflated, or represented shipments over a prolonged

period of time, there is still an internal logic to Musil's lower numbers. The normal Rashidi force had been reduced to 3,000, and Musil notes that it was entirely armed with new Mausers. The shipment of 6,000 rifles would have fully re-armed the core of the army and still left a surplus for additional tribal irregulars and for sale.

The 60,000 rounds in the shipment reported by Musil comes to only ten per rifle: this is scarcely enough to sight-in the rifles, much less use them in war. Even the ratio given by Nawaf provides only 26 rounds per rifle. Thus, at either rifle figure, the ammunition provided was insufficient for serious use of all the guns. As discussed above, the Sheikh of Bahrein set a ratio of 200 rounds of ammunition per rifle as his import duty in 1896. [38] Limiting the supply of ammunition, however, gave the Turks greater control over their clients.

Musil suggested that the guns were not properly distributed to the Al Rashid army, but were diverted for the benefit of the chief minister/regent of the weak Emir Saud ibn Abdul Aziz al-Rashid. The minister, Saud ibn Salih al-Subhan, had murdered his predecessor and assumed power in early 1914. He then distributed the newly arrived Mausers "among his supporters and, as these were not very numerous, even among the Slejb, men without honor in Arabia." Further, Musil states, many of the guns also armed "robber bands"

sent by Saud to harass the tribes of the Iraqi and Syrian border regions. [39]

The Ruwala were placed at a serious military disadvantage because of the modern equipment sent the Sammar. Nawaf suggested joining his forces with his father's and attacking Ibn Rashid with the combined army of 5,000. Al-Nuri pointed out that even if the Rashidi forces were only equal to the Ruwala's 5,000, and not the 10,000 or 15,000 he would expect, the chances of success were not good, for the Al Rashid had "plenty of good ammunition, while we must be sparing of bad ammunition." [40] Musil later commented on the proposed attack and on the power of the Rashidi's chief minister, Saud, that "Saud possessed more effective arms than ours and that we should be unable to drive him out of Hajel if he once fortified it." [41] Modern weapons gave a major advantage to a fortified defense.

The Ottomans, moreover, had been supporting the Al Rashid for some time, for when Abdul Aziz ibn Rashid was killed in a clash with the Saudis in 1906, the British Ambassador in Constantinople reported that the Ottomans had given official recognition to his successor. [42] In addition, they sent a military force into Central Arabia in an effort to support the Al Rashid directly: the Ottomans were defeated by the Saudis. [43]

The Ruwala were opposed by other tribes armed by the Turks, for Musil reports on vicious fighting between them and the Fedan in the 1910-1915 era. The Fedan were allied with the Turkish Government, received arms and ammunition from them, and were "stirred" to attack the Ruwala by the Ottomans. [44] The Turks' distribution of guns to the tribes they favored did not, however, guarantee the results they wished.

After the start of the World War, the Turks attempted to stop the inter-tribal fighting that they had previously encouraged. They tried to call the tribes to help fight an expected English attack from Egypt. In December, 1914, Musil spoke with Awde abu Tajeh, "head chief" of the Huwaitat tribe, who were camping with the Ruwala. After a long discussion of the possibilities of, and need for, peace between the tribes, Awde commented on Turkish aid, and the degree to which it brought his obedience:

> So long as there is no peace, I shall not move from the desert. If I become reconciled with Abtan and Eben Rasid, and if my affiliated Hwetat camping in Egypt call to me for help, then I will march there. The Government promises me arms and also gold at some station of the Hegaz Railway. I need both. I shall take both arms and gold but I shall fight him whom my affiliated Hwetat fight. If they arise against the Inkliz (English), I shall combat the Inkliz; if they rise against the Government, I shall massacre the government troops. I shall not separate myself from my fellow tribesmen. [45]

THE BLACKMARKET: PRIVATE SALES BY OTTOMAN TROOPS OR CLIENT TRIBES

The Ottoman Government regularly failed to pay its troops in Arabia, and when their pay did arrive, its value was often reduced by local economic factors and graft. Ochsenwald describes the poor condition of Ottoman troops in the Hijaz in the late 1850s, noting that they were paid with paper currency that was only worth 40 percent of its face value in the markets. To make the situation worse:

> When the troops protested about pay, the governors bought rice from dealers, with a kickback to them and to the governor, and the soldiers were given the rice in lieu of money; then the soldiers, in order to raise cash to purchase necessities, had to sell the rice back to the original dealers at a substantial loss. [46]

The situation in the Hijaz became worse as the Ottomans were pushed into bankruptcy later in the century. And as matters deteriorated, private Ottoman soldiers sold their rifles and ammunition to the tribes. Given the lack of proper pay, and the need to survive, many had little choice. At the same time, it is likely that officers and local officials also sold weapons for personal profit. Musil quotes a 1910 conversation with Afnan ibn Abu Tkeka, whose father was sheikh of the coastal section of the Huwaitat tribe. They spoke at Sarma, just south of the Gulf of Aqaba on the Red Sea coast. Afnan cursed the Turkish Government and attacked it for poor administration that took

money but gave no benefit. He then discussed the condition of the Turkish soldiers in the Hijaz:

> I am sorry for the soldiers who die here or who are killed by our arms. They are destroyed by the climate, to which they are not accustomed, and they are destroyed by us when they steal our goats, sheep, and cows. They are supposed to protect us against our enemies, but they do not venture even so much as a gunshot beyond their barracks and indeed scarcely dare even to thrust their heads outside of doors. IT IS A GOOD THING THAT THEY LET US HAVE THEIR AMMUNITION AND EVEN THEIR FIREARMS BY TRADE OR SALE. [47]

In April, 1915, Musil again noted the sale of weapons by Ottoman troops. He was then traveling near al-Ruhbe, just west of the Euphrates and about 100 miles south of Baghdad. In that area, Turkish deserters and gendarmes sold their rifles to the local tribesmen, the gendarmes later claiming that they had been robbed. At the same time, Musil learned that a number of Mausers the Turks had given the Sammar had been sold in Mesopotamia by members of his own party.

> The negroes of Eben Rashid, too, were willing to sell their own arms or those of anybody else. With reference to this, Nazel told us that Rased and the other slaves who had come with us to an-Negef sold in five days thirty-eight Mauser rifles which had been sent to Eben Rashid by the Turkish Government. [48]

Thus, not only did the weapons given out by the Ottomans fail to guarantee the allegiance of the tribe receiving them, there was a fair chance that the guns would be sold rather than used to support the Ottoman's goals.

BRITISH DISTRIBUTION OF ARMS

Arms shipped to the Al Saud

The role of the British in allowing, and perhaps encouraging, arms deliveries to the Saudis through Kuwait as early as 1904 has been discussed in Chapter VI. Muscat customs figures show a substantial and continuous British role in the arms trade. (Figure III.) As World War I approached, Britain's position becomes clearer. While most of the British involvement in supplying arms to various Arabian factions during the World War are beyond the scope of this work, two examples illustrate the practice in relation to the Saudis. During the summer of 1914, the British expressed their good will toward Abdul Aziz al-Saud by sending him 1,000 rifles and £20,000. They also gave "facilities" at Bahrain to import the ammunition Abdul Aziz needed for his campaign against rebels of the Ajman tribe. Later, near the end of 1916, Abdul Aziz agreed to accept from the British £5,000 a month, 3,000 rifles with ammunition, and four machine guns in exchange for keeping a force of 4,000 men in the field to attack the Rashidi forces around Hail continuously. [49] Arms were to continue to flow into Arabia throughout the War.

Aden

The British distribution of guns to various local rulers in Aden provides a sidelight on the use of obsolete guns to further British policy. In 1914 and 1915 the British authorities at Aden signed agreements with three rulers - the Haushabi Sultan Ali bin Mani, the Alawi Sheikh Ali Nasher, and the Kotaibi (or Quteibi, Aitchison uses both spellings) Sheikh Mahomed Saleh al Akhram - for the protection of local trade. The three rulers were given Martini-Henry rifles and ammunition to help patrol the roads. The 1914 Agreement with the Haushabi Sultan was the prototype for the other two. After standard diplomatic platitudes promising mutual "peace and friendship" between the British and the Sultan, the Agreement reached the heart of the issue, with the Sultan promising to guard the roads and protect travelers going to or from Aden. The Agreement continued:

ARTICLE IV

> To assist him in carrying out the obligations imposed by this agreement the said Sultan Ali bin Mani engages ... to establish suitable posts at El-Mitlah, Am Tannan or such other places on the roads as may be necessary and to maintain a force of 50 men or such less number as the Political Resident, Aden, may agree to; in consideration of which a present of 50 Martini-Henry rifles with 100 rounds of ammunition per rifle will be granted to him by the British Government, and a reasonable supply of ammunition will be furnished to him hereafter for the same on payment. ...

The Haushabi Agreement was signed on September 24, 1914, and renewed on February 11, 1920. [50] [51]

The Martini-Henry was a good rifle, but as a single-shot black powder rifle, it was completely obsolete by 1914. The British were, in effect, dumping old weapons to keep the natives happy. In view of Bury's 1914 report that the tribes of Yemen were armed with magazine-fed smokeless powder rifles, the local road patrols established by the agreements would have been at a serious disadvantage in any fight. The policy of giving obsolete guns to the natives was consistent, however, with Bury's strong warning of the danger of modern arms in the hands of what he called "subject races":

> The relations between governors and governed in Yamen have undergone a radical change during the last decade or two, owing to Turkey's laxity or inability to check the surreptitious import of arms. This covert traffic has gradually undermined the pillars of Ottoman rule, honeycombing the whole vilayet ... Now the population is as well armed as the forces of government, far more numerous, and, on their own ground, more formidable, man for man. [52]

ITALIAN DISTRIBUTION OF ARMS

The first major Italian interest in the Red Sea littoral was manifest in 1869 when merchants from Genoa purchased land at Assab, just north of Djibouti, in an effort to gain advantage from the opening of the Suez Canal.

The Italian Government did not take control of the port until 1882, and made no effort to expand its territory until 1885. International events led to the growth of the colony. After Italy failed to gain territory she desired in Tunisia, she looked for other areas of colonial expansion in Africa. Acting with the encouragement of the British, who wanted support against the Mahdi after the fall of Khartoum, Italy seized the Ottoman Red Sea port of Massawa.

Italian designs were checked in 1887 when they were defeated by Ras Aloua, an ally of Ethiopia, at the battle of Dogali. With the death of Emperor Yohannis of Ethiopia two years later, Italy gained an opportunity to expand her colony. When Menelik of Shoa fought his political rivals for the Ethiopian throne, he took arms and ammunition from the Italians. In return, Menelik recognized Italy's authority over Massawa and territory inland, including the town of Asmara. On January 1, 1890, Italy's territories on the Red Sea coast were formed into the colony of Eritrea.

Italian expansion inland was stopped, sharply and dramatically, when they tried to invade Ethiopia itself in 1896. At the battle of Aduwa in March, 1896, an Italian army of over 17,000 was smashed, 6,000 men killed, 2,000 wounded and 2,000 captured. While the attack had been motivated by internal Italian politics more than by a real desire to seize Ethiopia, the result confined Italy to the coastal

areas until after World War I. [53] The battle also revealed the danger to would-be colonial powers of modern arms in native hands. These events established Italian interests in the region. As noted above, they later joined the British in protesting the arms market at Djibouti.

NOTES

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3. Deyrup, page 212.

4. Deyrup, page 210-11, & note 62, page 282; citing Springfield Armory Records; a contract between Winchester & the Ottomans, c. December 1870; & letter from G. Aristarchi, Ottoman Delegation, to Secretary of State, Benton, November 25, 1873.

5. Smith, pages 64-65, with illustrations.

6. Smith, pages 20-21 and 218. Smith spells the name "Snider," while Deyrup uses "Snyder," after the Armory records. Snider is the more common spelling.

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14. Metschl, Part 1, page 222 and Illustration, Plate 47, No.14. page 383.

15. Yapp, page 349.

16. Owen, page 105.

17. Smith, pages 47-48

18. Smith, pages 48-50.

19. Smith, page 284. The British Service Martini-Henry used a slightly larger .45 caliber shell.

20. Smith, P. 315 & 561-62.

21. Smith, pages 315 & 561-62.

22. Caillard, V.H.P., "Turkey: Geography and Statistics: Army," in, The Encyclopedia Britannica, 11 th. Edition, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1911, Volume XXVII, page 428.

23. Smith, pages 57 and 314.

24. Yapp, "Army Modernization," page 348

25. Caillard, page 428.

26. Shaw, Volume II, page 292.

27. Army size: Caillard, page 428.

28. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume II, Part VI, Page 86.

29. Smith, page 140.

30. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part II, Page 82.

31. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume II, Part VI, Page 27.

32. Parenthesis by the author. Musil, Arabia Deserta, pages 430-31.

33. Musil, Northern Negd, page 248.

34. Philby, Saudi Arabia, Beirut, Lebanon Bookshop, 1968 (reprint of 1955 edition), page 269.

35. Lancaster, W., The Rwala Bedouin Today, New York, Cambridge U.P., 1981, page 3.

36. Winstone, pages 19, 58, 92-3 and 103.

37. Lorimer, Volume II, Part II, page 1738.

38. See Chapter VI.

39. Musil, Northern Negd, page 248-49.

40. Musil, Arabia Deserta, page 432.

41. Musil, Arabia Deserta, page 446.

42. Bidwell, R., The Affairs of Arabia, Volume II, Part VII, Pages 55 and 78.

43. Holden, D. and R. Johns, The House of Saud, New York, Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1981, page 31.

44. Musil, Arabia Deserta, page 398.

45. Musil, Arabia Deserta, pages 437-38.

46. Ochsenwald, William, Religion, Society and the State in Arabia: The Hijaz Under Ottoman Control, 1840-1908, Columbus, Ohio State University, 1984.

47. Musil, page 130. Musil spells the tribe "Hwetat at-Tihama". Emphasis by the author.

48. Musil, A., The Middle Euphrates, New York, American Geographical Society, 1927, page 113.

49. Philby, Saudi Arabia: 1914 Shipment Arms, page 272; 1916 Arms Agreement, page 274.

50. Aitchison, C.U., A Collection of Treaties, Engagements and Sanads Relating to India and Neighbouring Countries, Revised and Continued up to 1929, Volume XI, Reprinted by: Delhi, India, Mittal Publications, 1983. Continued next note.

51. Comments on, and the texts of, the Agreements are in Aitchison: the Haushabi (No. LVI), pages 22 and 140-41; the Alawi (No. LVIII), pages 24 and 143-44; the Kotaibi (No. LXI), pages 26 and 148.

52. Bury, Arabia Infelix, pages 175-76.

53. Baer, G.W., The Coming of the Italian-Ethiopian War, Cambridge, Harvard University Press, 1967, pages 1-4.

CHAPTER VIII

EFFECT OF MODERN ARMS ON THE ARABIAN PENINSULA

The increased deadliness of the modern firearms introduced into Arabia has been discussed in general, but the other effects of modern arms on the Peninsula have not been considered. The use of the new weapons, and their effect on the military and political balance of power is hard to gauge, but some general points can be made. First, however, the general problems created by modern weapons must be reviewed.

INCREASED DEPENDENCE ON EXTERNAL AMMUNITION

The introduction of increasingly modern firearms into Arabia inevitably produced a growing dependence on external sources of ammunition. With muzzle-loaders, ammunition was a comparatively simple matter of lead shot and gunpowder. Even the more complex projectiles fired from the later rifled muskets - such as the Minie with its conical bullet - could generally be replaced with a simple lead ball, although performance would suffer. And while the lead and powder had to be imported, both were cheap and abundant, and could be purchased from many sources.

At first, modern ammunition for breech-loaders came only from modern factories. It was, however, inevitable that reloading equipment would be imported after particular weapons became well established. The major cities surrounding Arabia did have reloading and repair facilities. It will be remembered that al-Nuri of the Ruwala was able to have his Mannlicher's magazine-fed lock replaced with a Martini-style single-shot mechanism by a gunsmith somewhere near Damascus. [1] Lorimer, however, mentions only one center for reloading within Arabia, the town of Dam or Ildam, in Nejd. [2]

The fact that Lorimer only mentions a single site in the interior of the Peninsula should not be taken to mean that facilities were not available. It is most probable that the major towns and tribes the ability to reload ammunition and make minor repairs. Some ten years after Lorimer's study, Musil reports that the northern tribes all had gunsmiths to repair guns and reload ammunition. [3] But even with reloading facilities, the tribes could not meet the demands of war and remained dependent upon an external supply of ammunition. A desire not to waste ammunition, for example, motivated al-Nuri's conversion of the Mannlicher. Shortage of ammunition for the new weapons was a constant problem to military leaders, as illustrated by the dangerous situation of the Saudi forces during the 1902 battle of

Dilam.

Following Abdul Aziz's capture of Riyadh in January, 1902, Rashidi forces were slow to move against the renewed Saudi state. When they finally attacked in the autumn, the two armies met at the town of Dilam, approximately fifty miles south-southeast of Riyadh. Ibn Rashid's forces attacked in the morning, and "came under a withering fire from the well-concealed defenders of the Dilam palm-groves and were forced to retreat in some disorder." The Saudi cavalry counter-attacked, and the cavalry battle continued fiercely until sunset. During the night, the Rashidi forces withdrew, yielding the district to the Al Saud. Abdul Aziz later reported that had Ibn Rashid continued the battle, he would have found the Saudis to be nearly out of ammunition. "The cavalry pursuit had been little more than a gesture of defiance; but it had served its purpose." [4]

The battle illustrates two of the factors involved in the conversion to modern weapons. First, modern weapons greatly increased the strength of the defense. The initial Al Rashid attack would not, in all likelihood, have been repulsed without the high rate of fire of breech-loading rifles. Second, in spite of their effectiveness, the shortage of ammunition for the modern guns nearly led to a Saudi defeat. In the end, Ibn Rashid's tactical leadership failed, preventing him from crushing the resurgence of the

Al Saud. Technology was important, but leadership was more important.

IMPOSITION OF OTTOMAN AUTHORITY FOLLOWED BY SUCCESSFUL LOCAL RESISTANCE

Two incidents from the northern borders of Arabia reveal one of the major influences of modern arms on the history of the region. The introduction of breech-loaders first helped the Ottomans extend their authority, and later helped the tribes resist that authority.

During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Ottomans began to bring uncontrolled territory in Mesopotamia and the Levant under their administration. The Euphrates road to Palmyra was secured, and much of Transjordan was placed under direct Turkish administration. Tactically, the process involved the use of military and police posts as the basis for wider patrols. A number of conditions, both in the Empire at large and in the local districts, aided the Ottomans. The greatest difference between this expansion and earlier attempts to establish control, however, was that the Ottomans now had a marked superiority in weapons over the tribes. [5]

Beginning in the 1860s, Turkish troops were armed with modern breech-loaders. For example, during a successful 1869 expedition against the Beni Sakhr of Transjordan the

Ottoman troops used Sniders, and by the late 1870s the Turks were using the "much dreaded" Winchester in their expeditions against the tribes. "Companies of mule-borne riflemen, operating from the new garrison centers and posts, proved very effective," and "for the first time the Turkish soldier found himself superior to the bedouin warrior, and the whole balance of force was changed." [6]

The balance of arms, however, shifted again. As a part of its attempt to modernize its military, the Ottoman Government made a strong effort to increase the coverage of military conscription throughout the Empire. When the Druze of the Hauran area resisted in 1909-10, they were easily disarmed and forced to submit to conscription. Lt. Col. C.C.R. Murphy reported what happened when an attempt was made to confiscate breech-loading rifles and impose conscription upon the Arab tribes around the town of Kerak. [7] Murphy later became Persian Gulf Intelligence Officer, and was in Damascus for an important meeting of British military intelligence officials. During his stay in the region, he met with Arab leaders from Al Ahad, the military section of a secret society interested in starting a general Arab revolt in Syria and Mesopotamia. [8]

Following the success against the Druze, the Wali (governor) of Damascus advised similar action against the Arabs near Kerak. The Ottoman government agreed, and ordered

extra troops sent to Kerak November 1910, to disarm the tribes and enforce conscription. The commander of the Hauran area, an Arab, Sami Pasha, advised against the operation. Orders to disarm and to comply with conscriptions were, however, sent to the tribes. The commander of the Turkish forces at Kerak called in the local sheikhs to obtain their comments. They advised him to set a "strong girdle of posts" around Kerak to impress the tribes with the government's power; by December 4, sixteen posts had been established around the town, each having two guns (artillery) and forty riflemen. The remainder of the garrison, whose numbers are not given, were stationed in Kerak's citadel. This meant that the "bulk" of the Turkish infantry and "nearly all the guns" were in the outposts. [9]

At sundown on December 4, "without the slightest warning" the Arabs of Kerak opened fire on the Turks. They were joined by "hordes" of Arabs from outside the town. The outposts were quickly taken, with two Turks from each kept alive to man the guns, which were now directed against the citadel. The Arabs looted the local treasury and bazaar before moving to attack the Hejaz Railway. In these attacks, stations at Lubin, Jizeh, Qatraneh and al-Hassa were destroyed; telegraph lines and equipment was destroyed and railroad tracks were torn up at intervals for over 80

miles. 800 Turkish troops were killed, along with many officials. The tribesmen who staged the attack vanished. [10]

The official Turkish reports said the Arab attack had been caused by cuts in the tribal subsidy given to protect the railway, and that the attack had also been incited by the Druze. Murphy states that this was false, that the attack had been only against Turks, although four Christians were killed accidentally in the streets, and that no Druze were involved. Turkish soldiers and officials were the targets of the revolt. He added that several thousand Arabs were involved from the "Mujelli, the ruling Keraki family; and the Hamaideh, Atami, Salaiteh, Hajaiyah, Saidin, Ghawarni, Jawabari and several other tribes." The Ruwala, Huwaitat and the Beni Sakhr were not "actively concerned" though the Beni Sakhr failed to protect the railway, as they had been paid to do. [11] Peake, citing Audeh Bey Qusus - a "Christian notable" who at the time of the revolt lived in Kerak and who later (c.1939) became the Attorney General of the Jordan Government, and other sources, confirms Murphy's report of Arab tactics. [12] Vatikiotis also agrees with Murphy, noting that the rebellion "did not in any way represent an Arab challenge to Turkish authority" but was a reaction "against growing administrative control of their area." [13]

The inability of regular military officers to understand and deal with irregular forces and tactics has been common throughout history. Murphy does not comment on the rifles used by either side in the fight, but the Turkish troops would, at the very least, have been armed with Martinis and probably carried older Mausers. Their attackers would very likely have been unable to gain such an easy victory unless they too were armed with breech-loaders, and Gubser specifically reports that the Turkish orders that precipitated the attack called for the confiscation of breech-loaders. [14] The qualitative gap between the rulers and the ruled had been closed, and was closed further by the Turkish weapons captured in the raid.

While Musil does not mention this raid, he reports that before this section of the railway had opened in 1906, the Ottoman government had paid the Beni Sakhr a subsidy to protect and guide pilgrims passing through their territory. After the railroad opened, the Government stopped both the tribe's subsidy and the salary of its sheikh, Talal ibn Fajez. In September, 1908, Talal visited Damascus in an effort to straighten out the problem of payment, but found the governor unable to obtain a decision from Constantinople. When Musil met Talal in October, the Sheikh was "very bitter against the governor and said he did not know what his kinsmen might yet compel him to do." [15]

Even if the subsidy had been renewed by the time of the 1910 raid, a residue of bad feeling among the Bani Sakhr probably contributed to their failure to protect the railway after the Kerak raid.

THE USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN WAR

Technology has always played a part in war, as it did in Arabia during the period under study. But technology has rarely been a primary factor in determining victory. Rather, the use made of the technology - the tactics and strategy that applied the technology to a particular situation - has generally been the deciding factor. Technology can seldom overcome poor tactical doctrine or poor leadership. All of the major tribes and factions fighting in Arabia had modern arms. While it is probable that there were many incidents where one side had better weapons than its enemy, between the major tribes such an imbalance was transitory.

The most important effects of modern arms came from the nature of the arms themselves, from factors common to the technology. The rapid increase in the deadliness of the guns is the first of these. Colonel T.N. Dupuy directed a study for the United States Army in 1964-65 on the comparative lethality of weapons. The study analyzed weapons ranging from swords through a one-megaton nuclear

airburst, and produced a "Theoretical Lethality Index" for each. The analysis was based upon the "range, rate of fire, accuracy, reliability, radius of damage, etc." of the weapons. [16] The study is interesting in its attempt to compare the deadliness of weapons, several examples of which are reproduced in Table II, with [bracketed] comments by the author:

Hand to Hand (sword, pike, etc.)	23
Longbow	36
17th. century musket	19
18th. century flintlock	43
Early 19th. century rifle	36
Mid-19th. century rifle/conoidal bullet [The Minie or the Pattern 1853 Enfield.]	102
Late 19th. century breech-loading rifle [The Snider or the Martini-Henry.]	153
Springfield Model 1903 rifle (magazine) [Equal to the Mauser or the Enfield smokeless powder magazine-fed rifles.]	495
World War I machine gun	3,463

TABLE II

DUPUY'S THEORETICAL LETHALITY INDEX

Dupuy's study is useful because it graphically displays the progressive improvement in small arms technology. In particular, the rapid increase in the deadliness of rifles between the early and the late

nineteenth century is dramatic, and shows clearly why both the armies of Europe and the tribes of Arabia were driven to modernize their weapons as the technology changed. But it remained for the parties in a war to use their new weapons well.

Again, leadership, not technology, determined the victors in Arabia. It is true that machineguns and cannon were beginning to reach the Peninsula in the decade before World War I, but not in significant numbers. It is only necessary to look at that war itself to see that when the technology was equally matched, leadership (or lack of sound leadership, in the case of the European powers in that war) determined the results. Philby gives an example from Arabia in 1918 comparing the leadership of the Saudis with that of the Hashimites. While it comes a few years after the main period considered here, it illustrates the point.

Both sides were receiving arms from the British to fight the Ottomans or their allies, the Al Rashid of Hail. The Hashimites, in particular, were very well supplied. But they controlled neither their weapons nor their men. Philby reports that various tribal leaders would approach the Hashimites and swear "undying loyalty":

> But no sooner had they received an appropriate number of rifles and boxes of ammunition - to say nothing of bags of gold - than they loaded up their beasts and returned to their pastures, to take no part in their patrons' operations except

> perhaps to return a second or even a third time to replenish the stocks of ammunition exhausted by sales in the markets of Najd. [17]

The weapons the British gave the Hashimites to fight the Turks were thus sold on the open market, much as the guns sent the Al Rashid by the Turks were sold in Iraq. Abdul Aziz ibn Saud, on the other hand, maintained strict control over his men. He believed that it was to his benefit for all men to be armed, and made no effort to control the sale of guns within his territory, "but with ammunition it was a different matter." Abdul Aziz supplied his men with ammunition for war and raids, while acting to control the ammunition market in Nejd. His agents purchased all ammunition that they found in his territory, and placed it in the state's arsenal. Further, he tried to prevent the re-export of ammunition to Persia. While the Hashimites distributed guns and ammunition without maintaining control, the Saudis carefully managed their own weapons. [18] The Hashimites actually had easier access to weapons than did the Al Saud, but they failed to control and use them effectively.

NOTES

1. Musil, Palmyrena, page 111.

2. Lorimer, Volume II, Part I-A, pages 363-65.

3. Musil, Rwala, page 132.

4. Philby, Saudi Arabia, page 241.

5. Lewis, page 263.

6. Lewis, page 263.

7. Kerak is located a mile or two west of the Dead Sea, near its southern end, and is about halfway between the Dead Sea and the important Hijaz Railway.

8. Winstone, pages 62 & 68.

9. Murphy, page 28.

10. Murphy, page 28.

11. Murphy, page 28.

12. Peake, F.G., A History of Jordan and its Tribes, Coral Gables, U. of Miami Press, 1958, pages 93-4 & 137 n. 32.

13. Vatikiotis, P.J., Politics and the Military in Jordan, New York, Praeger, 1967, page 36.

14. Gubser, P., Politics and Change in Al-Karak, Jordan, New York, Oxford U.P., 1973, page 106, citing British Consular records from Damascus.

15. Musil, Palmyrena, pages 17-18.

16. Dupuy, Evolution, page 92.

17. Philby, H. St.J. B., Arabia of the Wahhabis, London, Constable & Co., Ltd., 1928, page 111.

18. Philby, Wahhabis, pages 111-12.

CONCLUSION

Gunmetal, exposed to the sun of Arabia, soon becomes hot enough to sear flesh. The human emotions that lead to the use of weapons in war burn as sharply as sun-baked steel. The political policies that make arms available, and the trade that distributes them to the world appear cold. But they are also fired with emotion.

The factors that drove the arms trade in Arabia were themselves driven by a mix of cold commercial interest, and hot emotions stirred by international and local rivalries. Nor was the technology driving the arms trade without emotion, for there is emotion in science and engineering. And the desire for scientific discovery was fueled by fear of enemies, both new and traditional. The international rivalry between Britain and France was driven by emotion, and only cooled with the growth of a threat to both powers. The local demand for arms was a mix of emotion-driven national and tribal resistance to foreign invasion - on the Northwest frontier, and elsewhere - with a cold analysis of strategic and tactical needs by local leaders. Xenophobia in part drove the local need for arms, as surely as the British reacted xenophobiclly to the presence of any other power in the region

The mix of hot and cold, and the mix of three major factors directed the arms trade in and around Arabia. The general pattern of the trade is clear (Figure 1), but many of the specifics remain uncertain. Because most of the available sources are British, and because those sources accuse the French and other Europeans of being the major participants in the arms trade, it is probable that British participation in the arms trade appears smaller here than it actually was. The customs data for Muscat (Figure 3) show that in all years reported, the British trade was higher than that of the French, and was only exceeded by the Belgians for the last seven years of the period, years unfortunately not covered by Lorimer, who might have provided valuable information.

More detailed work on the British records for the Gulf and the Red Sea, and serious attention to the French records could be vital to fully understanding the arms trade in Arabia. In particular, the records of the French Consulate at Muscat and the records of the Goguyer company should be carefully examined. Despite the remaining issues, there is no question that modern arms flooded into Arabia and the Gulf in the later decades of the nineteenth century. The technology has changed, it has become easier to kill on a momentous scale, and the flood continues.

DISCUSSION OF SOURCES

The great majority of the information available on the arms trade to Arabia comes from British sources, most of these dealing with the Persian Gulf. Lorimer is the most important primary source that has been re-published, and made generally available in the United States. Bidwell's collections of British diplomatic papers is also important, and provides information on areas of Arabia outside of the Gulf. In addition to these governmental sources, a variety of memoirs have been published by British officials who dealt with the arms trade. Bury's two books read as if they were taken directly from his intelligence reports. Murphy is also good in this regard. Austin, Keppel, Thomas and others give information, but their books were written for a general audience, and do not give enough detail on military affairs. Philby comes between the two styles, depending upon which of his books is involved.

The few non-British sources are important when trying to obtain a full picture of the trade, but few of those available give much information. The best primary source available is the collected writing of Alois Musil, who traveled throughout Northern Arabia. Musil worked for Austrian Military Intelligence, and provides excellent

information. Unfortunately, the series of books Musil published after World War I were intended for a civilian audience. Somewhere in the Austrian records there may still exist Musil's intelligence reports: they should be found and published. Barclay Raunkiaer's short book gives information on the types of rifles he saw, but little on the trade itself.

Many excellent secondary sources have been available. The best of these is Busch, with Landen and others providing good information. The great lack is in non-British sources. Only one French work has been available. Review of numerous bibliographies, and Index Islamicus, reveal little European work on the arms trade in Arabia. It appears that even the French have failed to study the trade at Djibouti.

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The Author was "Finance Minister and Wazir to H.H. the Sultan of Muscat and Oman, 1925-1930", and a former British political officer in the Gulf region.

Troeller, Gary, The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud, London, Frank Cass, 1976, 309 pages, bibliography, index.

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Article by "Counselor to the King of the Hejaz and Minister of Education". A good, short, review of the Unitarian movement in Arabia.

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Winter, J.M., Editor, War and Economic Development, New York, Cambridge University Press, 1975, 316 pages, bibliography, index.

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Zahlan, Rosemarie Said, The Origins of the United Arab Emirates, New York, St. Martin's Press, 1978, 297 pages, bibliography, index.

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APPENDIX A

PRIVATE FIRMS ENGAGED IN THE ARMS TRADE

The following is a list of firms cited by name in the sources available.

FIRMS ACTIVE IN THE PERSIAN GULF

Joyce and Kynoch

The British firm of Joyce and Kynoch is cited by Lorimer as being the main arms dealer at Muscat between 1891 and 1897. However, he gives little additional information on the company. [1] The company is mentioned again by Phillips as being a major trader at Muscat. [2]

Fracis, Times and Company

The Anglo-Parsi firm of Fracis, Times and Company (apparently headquartered, at least for some time, in London at 27 Leadenhall Street [3]) opened its first office in the Gulf in 1887 at Bushire. In 1891 one of the partners of the firm moved to Bushire, presumably to oversee the business. Additional offices opened at Bahrein in 1895 and Muscat in 1896. For reasons not given by Lorimer, but which were probably related to increased controls by the British, the

English partner sold his interest in the company by 1896. The arms trade proved profitable for the firm, and Lorimer notes that by "the middle of 1897" they had made profits of "not less than £40,000." [4]

During the later 1890s and the early years of this century, a number of the firm's weapons were captured on the Northwest Frontier of India by British troops and officials. The weapons were identified by various stamped marks, ranging from the letters "F.T.C." and a double-headed eagle "the device of Messrs. Fracis, Times and Company" to the mark on a captured revolver of "Made for Fracis, Times and Company, London." [5]

Because Fracis, Times and Company was owned by British subjects, the firm was easily brought under control. In 1897-89 they filed suits against the commander of H.M.S. LAPWING because of his capture of the BALUCHISTAN and against the Persian Gulf Resident, Lt. Col. Meade, over the seizure of arms in Bahrain and Bushire. By 1901 they had lost both cases, and been "reduced to bankruptcy." Both Conservative and Liberal Governments refused to indemnify the firm's London underwriters for any of the loss. [6]

The Firm of M. Goguyer

The exact name of Goguyer's firm is not given by Lorimer. He opened his Muscat office in March, 1899, and soon prospered. [7] By the 1904-1905 period, M. Goguyer "appeared to transact most of his business" between Muscat and Kuwait, with the bulk of the arms shipped on that route reaching the Al Saud. [8] He appears to have maintained a complex and sophisticated organization in the Gulf, with one agent - Haji Abdullah Thahaba - reported by the British as stationed at Kuwait. Goguyer may have used agents to monitor the market so that he could establish his price for arms at Muscat. [9]

M. Goguyer, a former French diplomat in Tunisia, spoke Arabic. While in Muscat he wrote anti-British articles for the Paris paper "Depeche Coloniale." In his arms dealings, Goguyer "was backed by French newspapers and some influential politicians of the Colonial Party in Paris." The firm's activities seem to have continued until 1914 and the Anglo-French settlement at Muscat. [10]

Goguyer was heavily engaged in the trade with Afghanistan, and Lorimer reports that in 1907 there were some 100 Afghans in Muscat, "more than half of whom appeared to be living there at the expense of M. Goguyer." [11] According to British diplomats at the 1908 Brussels Arms

Conference, Goguyer carried on a very high proportion of the entire Muscat trade: in 1908, French traders were responsible for 49% of the arms trade at Muscat, and of that 49%, Goguyer was responsible for 60%. [12] Goguyer died late in 1909, and the business was passed to his sons. His total stock was estimated in 1909 at some 100,000 weapons of various types and 10,000,000 rounds of ammunition. Goguyer had started with "very slender resources", and in the ten years he operated managed to accumulate "a considerable fortune (reputed to be £40,000) at the time of his death." [13]

By February, 1914, when the British paid the Goguyer firm compensation for the loss of its stocks and future profit after the establishment of the Muscat arms warehouse, the company was sill being run by his sons. [14] British reports of Goguyer's activities carry a strong flavor of Francophobia, and while his firm's trade was clearly important, the British may have inflated its importance relative to British trade.

Baijeot and Company

The French firm of Baijeot and Company, operating out of Djibouti, opened an office at Muscat in 1905. [15]

The Firm of Dieu

The French firm of Dieu was active in the arms trade at Muscat. Dieu was paid compensation for the loss of its property and future profit in 1914 after the establishment of the bonded warehouse by the Sultan. [16]

Keverkoff and Company

The Russian firm of Keverkoff and Company, with its headquarters in Odessa, opened an office in Muscat in 1903 for the shipment of arms. [17]

TRADERS ACTIVE ON THE PERSIAN COAST

A. and T.J. Malcolm and Company

The company A. and T.J. Malcom, a "Persian Armenian firm under British protection," first imported arms through Bushire in 1884. [18] In November, 1900, the firm was still active at Bushire, when some 380 Martini-Henries and 183,000 cartridges were seized from them. [19]

Belgian Firms

In 1900, an un-named Belgian firm was shipping about 5,000 rifles a year into Bushire, for delivery to an Armenian arms dealer. [20] Based upon customs records, there appears to have been considerable additional Belgian trade at Muscat between 1906-07 and 1913-14. Details have

not been available. [21]

German Firms

Muscat customs records show German activity there between 1907-08 and 1912-13. Details have not been available. [22]

FRENCH FIRMS AT DJIBOUTI AND OBOCK

In 1881 the French trading company, the Compagnie Franco-Ethiopienne, set up a coaling station at Obock. Three other French firms soon followed: the Societe Francais d'Obock and the Factoreries Francaises in 1882, and the Compagnie Mesnier in 1883. Because of the geographical limits of Obock, France moved her main base across the Gulf to Djibouti in 1888. [23] Between them, the two ports were vital to the arms trade, with Djibouti rapidly becoming the major transshipment point for arms imported from Europe.

FIRMS OPERATING FROM ZANZIBAR

In 1893, the British consul at Zanzibar reported that in addition to the Sultan of Zanzibar himself, a number of German firms were engaged in shipping arms to Muscat. Two mentioned are O'Swald and Company, and Hansing and Company. The total volume is given at some 1,000 rifles a month. [24]

NATIVE TRADERS IN THE GULF

ACTIVE AT MUSCAT

Ali Musa Khan

A Baluchi arms trader, Ali Musa Khan, is mentioned by Phillips as being active at Muscat in the 1890s, and is described as being "notorious." [25] Following the opening of the bonded arms warehouse at Muscat in 1911, and the associated controls on the arms trade, Ali Musa Khan was banished from Muscat for a period of five year. [26] His activity is discussed in detail by Austin. [27]

Islam Khan

Lt. Col. C.C.R. Murphy, then naval and military intelligence officer for the Gulf, was sent by Percy Cox (following the Oman rebellion of 1913) to Galag on the Mekran Coast of Persia to talk with Islam Khan, a "gun-running chief" of the area. Islam Khan's camp was surrounded by guards armed with rifles. Islam Kahn:

> gave assurances of his friendship toward the British Raj, of his future good behaviour, and all the rest of it, in the most approved style. However, the interview did achieve certain results and passed off successfully. [28]

Murphy does not give specifics of the talk, or of Islam Khan's connections with Muscat.

Traders Reported at Kuwait

A February, 1905, dispatch from Captain Knox at Kuwait mentioned five men as the "principal" arms dealers at Kuwait: "Haji Mohammed Ali, Marafi, of Persian extraction"; Mohammed Taqui, "also Persian"; Mohammed Jaueyfi; Mubarak Sayer; and Goguyer's agent, Haji Abdullah Thahaba. [29]

NOTES

1. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2556.
2. Phillips, page 156-57.
3. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2574.
4. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2563.
5. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2574.
6. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Pages 2564-65.
7. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566.
8. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2569-70.
9. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, page 73.
10. Abdullah, page 28.
11. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2582.
12. Busch, page 281.
13. Austin, page 13.
14. Busch, page 301.
15. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566.
16. Busch, page 301.
17. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2566.
18. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Pages 2556-57.
19. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2571.
20. Lorimer, Volume I, Part II, Page 2570.
21. Busch, page 394.
22. Busch, page 394.
23. Thompson and Adloff, page 6.

24. Beachey, "Arms Trade", page 462.

25. Phillips, pages 156-57.

26. Phillips, pages 156-57.

27. Austin, pages 30-35.

28. Murphy, page 207-08.

29. Bidwell, Affairs of Arabia, Volume I, Part III, page 73.

APPENDIX B

THE DEMAND FOR ARMS IN ARABIA: ARMIES AND POPULATIONS

THE GENERAL POPULATION

The size of the Arabian population and of the various armies in Arabia provide a rough measure of the demand for modern arms in the Peninsula. Overall estimates of the Arabian population are uncertain. Issawi prints a World War I British Admiralty estimate:

> The population of Arabia cannot be estimated with any approach to accuracy. It is usually guessed to be from five to eight millions. The lower of these figures is probably nearest to the truth. If we allow two and a half millions of settled and nomadic to the whole Red Sea slope from Midian to Yemen (the last-named, with Asir, holding two-thirds of the total); one and a half to the southern districts and the gulf littoral, inclusive of Hadramaut (Oman alone has about half a million); half a million to all the Central settled districts together; and one million Central nomads, we are probably over the mark. [1]

Issawi immediately suggests that the five to eight million British estimate be compared with one from the Encyclopedia of Islam, New Edition, which gives a total population not over ten million. [2] In any case, even the lower population estimates would have been sufficient to support the number of fighters suggested below.

ARMIES

The Army of the Al Saud

Some months after the Saudi defeat of Ibn Rashid at Dilam in 1902, near the end of the 1902-03 campaign season Shaikh Mubarak of Kuwait asked for Saudi help against a large Rashidi raiding force. Abdul Aziz "no doubt influenced by the urgent need of replenishing his ammunition" after the earlier fighting appeared near Kuwait town with a force Philby reports may have approached 10,000 of his own troops. He was joined by a Kuwaiti army of 4,000, thus providing "an impressive demonstration of force in the eastern desert." The Al Rashid and their allies did not press an attack. [3]

When Abdul Aziz later attacked and captured the towns of Kassim, Buraida, and Anaiza in April, 1904, the British Consul at Jeddah reported that he used a "strong following of more than 5,000 men ...." Following the capture of Anaiza, which did not resist strongly, Abdul Aziz took the title of Emir of Nejd. [4]

Estimates of the strength of desert armies varied rather widely. In August of the same year, the British Resident at Kuwait, Major Knox, sent Percy Cox a copy of a report given him by Sheikh Mubarak on the Saudi army then operating against the Al Rashid. Mubarak reported a Saudi

force "said to be 10,500 infantry strong, with 1,800 horse." Knox did not believe the figures, and commented "It will probably be found advisable to divide the numbers given for Bin Saood's forces by ten to arrive at a just appreciation of his fighting strength." [5] Even if Mubarak's figures are high, Knox's cut to 1,500 infantry and 18 cavalry is absurd, and not consistent with other estimates.

The Army of the Al Rashid.

During the height of Sammar power under Muhammad ibn-Rashid, who ruled in Hail from 1869-97, the Emir maintained a large bodyguard under his direct control. This force, described by Musil, appears to have served as the core of the Rashidi army as well.

> The bodyguard of the prince was formed by about four hundred slaves, who dwelt in groups of twenty each and were supported by the prince. Besides these he had at his disposal about as many young volunteers, called, together with the slaves, ragagil as-sjuh (men of the head chief), all of whom he had to arm and pay. [6]

Writing about the general period of 1914-15, Musil described the military organization of the Sammar tribe led by the Al Rashid as they entered the final years of their fight against the al Saud. He first noted that the monetary standard, the Maria Theresa dollar - called locally the "rejal abu suse," or the rial showing a person with short

hair - had dropped in value in the territory of the Al Rashid. Measured against the Ottoman megidijje (worth about 90 cents U.S.) the Maria Teresa had moved from one and a half to one to two to one. In the territory of the Al Saud the old value still held. Musil then discussed the tax and military situation.

> The Sammar paid their tribute to Eben Rasid in rejal abu suse, one rejal for every five camels. This tax, called zeka, was not paid by the chiefs. As a rule, out of every clan of any importance forty to eighty men were exempted from the tax. These were men who, at the order of Eben Rasid, took active part in his military campaigns. Although he gave them arms, ammunition, and riding camels, they received no pay, getting a share of the spoils instead. Each chief was obliged to appear before Eben Rasid every month or two (tasjir). Eben Rasid relied mainly on his mercenary troops, his slaves, and his settlers. Whenever he proclaimed a gihad (religious war) against Eben Saud, he had up to five hundred white tents (hejme) in which his men, both cavalry and infantry, lived; but when he made a raid on the Bedouins, the number of white tents amounted to only about one hundred. On such occasions he was accompanied by many Arabs mounted on camels (gejs), for whom tents were never taken. Eben Rasid was obliged to support the mercenaries. The settlers did not pay the zeka in money but contributed a part of their crops instead, and these contributions in kind were stored away in magazines (bejt al-mal) and were issued again to the slaves and mercenaries. Usually twenty men messed together. [7]

Taking Musil's figure of twenty men to a mess to mean twenty to a tent, a figure supported by the organization of the earlier force of bodyguards, this would give him a "mercenary" army of some 10,000 men that could have been supplemented by additional tribal forces. The force used on

a standard raid would have been 2,000 plus other tribal forces. This estimate is confirmed by a statement from Emir al-Nuri of the Ruwala. As discussed in Chapter VII, when considering a large-scale attack on the Sammar led by ibn-Rashid, al-Nuri estimated the possible enemy strength at between 10,000 and 15,000, most armed with modern rifles. [8] These figures appear much too high, however, represent the forces available to the Al Rashid at this late date.

In his appendix on the Al Rashid, Musil states that when Saud al- Rashid proclaimed a jihad against the Al Saud in 1914, he was only able to muster 1,000 townsmen and 2,000 bedouin, all armed with new Mausers. [9] These figures reflect the failure of the minister, Saud al-Subhan, to hold the Rashidi forces together.

The figures for the full muster of the Al Rashid army are, however, consistent with the population estimate given by Lorimer, writing in about 1906-07. He estimated that the region of Jabal Sammar - under the titular authority of the Al Rashid - had a total settled population of 28,000 and a bedouin population of 27,000. [10] This population of 55,000 should have been able to provide a military force of 10,000, but it is most unlikely that this figure represented the paid troops of the Al Rashid. The estimated strength of 10,000-15,000 implied by Musil and supported by the expectations of al-Nuri, was probably the full muster of the

Sammar and their allies when they had been united under Muhammad ibn-Rashid. As the force put in the field by a large alliance, the numbers would be in the same range as the 14,000 man figure given by Philby for the combined Saudi-Kuwaiti army of 1902-03, discussed earlier.

The Army of Kuwait.

Estimates of Kuwaiti forces varied widely. The British "News-Agent" at Kuwait provided an estimate of Sheikh Mubarak's forces in November, 1900 that the Gulf Resident, Lieutenant Colonel Kemball, believed to be "exaggerated, though I have no reason to doubt that he can put a considerable body of men into the field." The Agent reported that the Sheikh was prepared for war against the Al Rashid, and had a force of "15,000 cavalry and 40,000 camels," while Sheikh Sadun of the Muntafiq who was allied to Mubarak, had "5,000 cavalry and 20,000 camels. Ibn Rashid is said to have had only some "2,000 cavalry and 10,000 camels." [11]

Several months later, in February, 1901, Commander Phillipps of H.M.S. SPHINX forwarded the latest military estimates of the British "Secret Agent at Koweit, Haji Ali-bin Ghulum Reza" to Kemball. This report lists the following tribes and approximate number of men from each with Mubarak: Matier = 4,000; Owazen = 10,000; Rashaidah =

7,000; Ajman = 9,000; Adwaiesh = 5,000; Beni Hajar = 3,000; Beni Khaled = 6,000; Sheikh Sadoun = 10,000 for a total of the allied forces of 54,000. To this are added Mubarak's own forces of 10,000 to give him a total army of 64,000. Ibn Rashid is estimated to have 10,000 men with him. [12] A month later, March 19, 1901, the "News Agent" reported from Kuwait that Mubarak, now nearing Nejd, had an army of "about 70,000." At the same time, a garrison of about 4,000 had been left to protect Kuwait. [13] These figures are absurdly high.

A more accurate report was later given by Lt.-Col. Kemball after Mubarak's defeat by Abdul Aziz ibn Rashid. Kemball lists the forces of the parties before the battle at some 5,000 for Mubarak, not counting his allies, and 7,000 for the Al Rashid. Mubarak's casualties were reported to be heavy, with 2,000 "killed in action or subsequently perished in the desert." [14]

NOTES

1. Issawi, C. The Economic History of the Middle East, 1800-1914, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1966, page 332.

2. Issawi, page 332.

3. Philby, Saudi Arabia, page 242.

4. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume II, Part VI, Page 31-32.

5. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume II, Part VI, Page 92.

6. Musil, Northern Negd, page 252.

7. Musil, Northern Negd, page 4-5. Parenthesis by Musil.

8. Musil, Arabia Deserta, page 432.

9. Musil, Northern Negd, page 255.

10. Lorimer, Volume II-A, pages 1738-39.

11. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume I, Part III, Page 3.

12. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume I, Part III, Page 15.

13. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume I, Part III, Page 27-28.

14. Bidwell, Affairs of Kuwait, Volume I, Part III, Page 45.