



Britain's position on the German activity in the Arabian Gulf 1870-1914

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Abstract- The last years were at the nineteenth century and early twentieth century, it was characterized by the increase in the intensity of European activity in the waters of the Arabian Gulf, especially Britain, Russia and Germany, which entered late to the arena of conflict and competition for control of maritime trade routes and access to raw materials, taking advantage of the Ottoman Empire's need for loans, and to economic and military support. It was suffering from political and military backwardness compared to these European countries.

Britain tended to resist European activity in the Arabian Gulf, to the politics of threats, appeasement and negotiations, so we find the appeasement policy is reflected in the settlements it made with France in 1904, and with Russia in 1907, then its attempt to agree with Germany to supervise the Baghdad railway line in the event it extends to the Arabian Gulf, that was actually done in June 1914, as for the politics of threat, it was revealed in the speech of Lord LansDowne on May 5. 1903, in the British House of Lords.

Britain's adherence to the Gulf being a region of its influence, prevent any other country from accessing it. There was no doubt that this statement is an affirmation of the policy that Britain adopted in the Arabian Gulf. It was the policy of deporting any country trying to have a center in the Arabian Gulf, then the declaration of World War I in 1914 had an opportunity for Britain to tighten its control over the Gulf and make it its own sphere of influence.

Devoted this research to studying an important aspect of that conflict. The British government's position on German activity for the period from 1870-1914 in areas considered Britain's sphere of influence forbidden to other European countries.

Keywords: Arabian Gulf, Britain, European countries.

I. INTRODUCTION

The first topic

The beginnings of German activity in the Ottoman Empire in the late nineteenth century

Germany entered the arena of international conflict and competition late, in comparison to the rest of the European countries, such as Britain, France, and Tsarist Russia, because of her preoccupation with achieving her inner unity, which was achieved with the rise of the German Empire in 1871, this gave a strong impetus to its rapid economic and political development, later pushed her into the colonial fray. That was the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, in search of markets and raw materials (Yahia, 198, p. 446). And finding outlets and commercial centers for them in the eastern regions in general and the Arab Gulf region in particular, due to its important strategic location and the natural resources in it, this was naturally accompanied by the development of its armed forces of various types, sea and land (Al-Tikriti, 1986, p. 42). This was how Germany began to emerge as a power on the international stage, aggressively seeks to obtain colonies for her in the East under the sun, this was confirmed by its Foreign Minister B. Bulow at the end of the nineteenth century in the Rheindstag, saying: "The time has gone when other peoples divided the land and interests among themselves, while we the Germans are satisfied with the blue sky only ... that we also demand a place for ourselves under the sun" (Al-Tikriti, 1986, p. 43).

Therefore, Germany moved with its ambitions towards the East, following a policy known as the Drangnachosten. Gradually, its economic and political activity began to erupt in the Ottoman Empire, especially the countries of the Arab Mashreq that are subject to it, because of its natural resources and an important strategic location, in the future, it could be a fertile place for German capital investment (Al-Dulaimi, 1989, p. 148). Especially since Germany has adopted the principle of not dividing the Ottoman Empire's property, but more than that, it worked to strengthen its relations with it by providing a helping hand to it in most areas. It did not show any colonial intentions towards it, the Ottoman Sultan Abdul

Hamid II (1876-1909) welcomed the German friendship to confront Russian and British ambitions (Shareef, 1965, p. 80).

It must be noted that what prompted Germany to move towards the Ottoman Empire, the change that occurred in the policy of the Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid II, his departure from Britain and France is due to what Britain did in occupying Egypt in 1882. Likewise, when France occupied Tunisia in 1881. The Ottoman Sultan considered that an attack on the property of the Ottoman Empire in Africa, no longer believed in them the time when the sultan did not possess the necessary military force to push back the British and French, on their goal of occupying these two important countries in the body of the Ottoman Empire (Al-Dawood, 1961, p. 193). Therefore, I am pursuing diplomatic methods to resist the colonial projects of the British and French, in addition to that, the traditional hostility between Tsarist Russia and the Ottoman Empire, and Russian ambitions to occupy the Ottoman Empire in the Balkans, and continuous wars between the two during the nineteenth century, such as the Crimean War 1853-1856 and the Ottoman - Russian War in 1877. This hostility cleared the way for the German - Ottoman rapprochement, hoping to rely on a strong ally to confront Britain and France. Those who aspire to the property of the Ottoman Empire in North Africa, Iraq, the Levant, Palestine and the Arabian Peninsula, and to restore the glory of the Ottoman Empire (Muhammed, 1961, pp. 133-136).

German - Ottoman relations developed remarkably after 1880. The Ottoman Sultan asked the German Chancellor Otto von Bismarck (1862-1890) to equip him with German officers to train the Ottoman army, but Bismarck apologized for accepting this request. Political factors related primarily to German-Russian relations, nevertheless, Bismarck continued to be considered a friend of the Ottoman Empire, and an ally to it in any war that takes place between it and Tsarist Russia. The German commander, Von Der Goltz, persuaded the German weapons laboratories to supply the Dardanelles. The Ottoman Navy was also equipped with a number of torpedo boats and modern rifles, to rearm the Ottoman army, this step was to rearm the Ottoman army, an important factor in strengthening German-Ottoman relations (Shaker, 1976, p. 122).

Evidence of German influence in the Ottoman Empire was also evident in the German military missions, which trained the Ottoman army, most notable is the expedition of General Der Koltz in 1883, which became popular within the ranks of the Ottoman army, during his work that lasted eleven years, during which he accomplished important works in this field, as it developed the Ottoman army in terms of discipline, organization and training (Al-Khatrash, 1974, p. 149).

The arrival of William II to the German throne in 1888, to a rapid development in German-Ottoman relations, the tsar has devised a new policy for his country, the year 1890 is the beginning of a new German policy called (world politics). One of its most important features is the intensification of colonialism and capital investment. The German Kaiser visited the Ottoman Empire twice, the first was in 1889 and the second in 1898, during the visit to Sultan Abdul Hamid II, he confirmed the depth of the German people's friendship to the Ottoman Empire, to win his friend and get more privileges from the Ottoman Sultan. Who pledged to grant the concession to extend a railway line from Haydarpaşa in Konya, passing through Eskişehir (Al-Daswae, 1976, p. 122).

The concession was granted to a group of Germans, representatives of the Ottoman Anatolian Railway Company, in order to extend the line from Konya to Baghdad, then the line will be extended to the Arabian Gulf in December 1899. The financier for the company was the Deutsche Bank. The concession was signed in its final form in 1903. It was giving Germany the right to establish a river port in Baghdad, and the movement of ships in the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, as well as the right to explore for oil, excavations began in 1904 (Shaker, 1976, pp. 514-515).

Germany also succeeded before this in opening consulates, and the appointment of a number of German consuls in various regions in Iraq and the Persian Gulf. the first German consul in Baghdad, Herr Richarz, was appointed on September 20, 1894 (Lwremer, 1976, p. 3957).

In the year 1896 a German political commissioner was appointed in Bushire, the following year, a German consulate was opened to take care of German interests, and a maritime agency was established in the same port (Al-Mashahdani, 1997, p. 172), in the year 1905, a German consulate was opened in Mosul (Al-Dulaimi, p. 184), a German consul was appointed in Basra in the same year (Lwnkric, 1985, p. 117).

This activity indicates the penetration of German influence in important and strategic areas of the Ottoman Empire, represented by Iraq and the Arabian Gulf. It was one of the areas of penetration of German influence in the Ottoman Empire in general and the Arab Gulf region in particular. It was the railway projects, which was one of the effective means of transportation that the colonial countries resorted to in the process of penetration, so can serve herself. It fulfills its interests in controlling the wealth of the countries that impose its control over it. Transportation is an important and essential factor in the process of controlling and seizing the capabilities and goods of countries (Lwnkric, 1985, p. 48).

We will confine ourselves to our discussion on this subject about the Berlin-Baghdad railway. It was scheduled to reach the head of the Arabian Gulf (Basra and Kuwait), because we wanted in this study of Britain's position on German activity in the Persian Gulf 1870-1914, this issue concerns us more than others, by virtue of our location at the head of the Arabian Gulf, and because it is the line that passes through our country, Iraq, and ends at its south. Shedding light on the importance of this line for the state of Germany and the Ottoman Empire, at the same time, we see the British position on such a project that threatens its interests in the Arab Gulf in particular and the Arab region in general.

We have already mentioned in our conversation on the previous pages, that Germany expanded its influence in the Ottoman Empire in the years 1889 and 1898, has resulted in the visit of the German Emperor William II of the Ottoman Empire, about the emergence of the Berlin - Baghdad railway project. The concession obtained by the Anatolian Steel Company, which is supervised by the German Bank (Al-Shijairi, 2001, pp. 134-138). This railway was supposed to reach the Arabian Gulf, the choice of the Germans fell on the Kazma area in Kuwait at the head of the Arabian Gulf, to be the final stop of the line. However, the Sheikh of Kuwait's association with a secret agreement with Britain in 1899 was a protection treaty, made him reject the demands of the German mission, which visited Kuwait early 1900 for this purpose (Al-Qahwati, 1980, p. 268).

German activity in the Arabian Gulf was not limited to the Berlin - Baghdad railway project, which was to be extended to Kuwait at the head of the Arabian Gulf. The confusion and fears arose around it, fearing the extension of the German influence to the Arabian Gulf. Its threat to the interests of other European countries that have influence in the Arabian Gulf for a long time, for example Britain, France and Tsarist Russia. Rather, the British-German competition extended to the fields of international trade and river navigation, especially the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, German ships in the Arabian Gulf competed with British ships in the field of commercial shipping. So a number of German companies were established, which practiced commercial activity in the Arabian Gulf. One of these companies was the Johan Roth Corporation, which was founded in 1890. It had a distinct role in the German commercial activity in the port of Bushehr and the rest of the Gulf ports. Next in importance is the BerkBojman company and their companies, Messrs Berk - puttmunn and co, which was established in Baghdad in 1894, had a distinct role in commercial activity as well (Qassim, p. 500). Then comes the British company Pete Ling, while in 1895 a shipping line was established between the German city of Berlin and the city of Basra. Two ships arrived from him to Basra, but it dissolved in the following year (Al-Temimi, 1975, p. 129). In 1896, the Robert-onhoas company was established in the German city of Hamburg to exploit seashells in the city of Linga (Qassim, p. 504). Its scope of work has expanded and it has opened branches in Basra, Bandar Abbas, Bushehr, Bahrain and Muhammarah (Qahwati, 288).

German business activity increased, with the Arabian Gulf ports at the beginning of the twentieth century, its activity became tangible, a commercial agency was opened in Bahrain in 1901 (Qassim, p. 504). The intensity of the German-British commercial competition in the Arabian Gulf ports reached a dangerous point in 1906, when the Winkhouse company obtained a power of attorney from the German Hamburg American Company for steamships, to establish a shipping line aimed at transporting goods between Germany and European ports, reaching the Arabian Gulf and back, as well as transporting pilgrims from the Arabian Gulf ports to the Red Sea (Qahwati, p. 288). Germany deliberately reduced the fares of transport on its ships with the intention of harming British trade (Nawar, p. 205).

Despite the British commercial carriers taking center stage in the Arabian Gulf. However, commercial companies increased and expanded their commercial activities. So that the German export and import trade reached, the prohibition of German activity was also evident in the Shatt al-Arab region, when the German government supported one of the companies to obtain a concession for the dredging of the Karun River Valley, who enters within the property of Sheikh Khazal Al-Kaabi, Prince of Muhammarah, Sheikh Khazal had special relations with the British government. The costs of this project were estimated at one million pounds, when Germany asked the Persian government for a concession for this project, Sheikh

Khazal objected to this at the instigation of the British government, which hastened on its part to send one of the engineers to lay down an English project for the valley dredging. Thus, Britain was not neglecting to follow the German advance and move in the coasts of the Arabian Gulf. It does not allow Germany to establish relations with the sheikhs of the Gulf, during this particular period, Britain bound the Gulf rulers to a long-term protection treaty. In order to block the way for other European countries that are greedy for the wealth and position of the Arabian Gulf from concluding any treaty or agreement with the sheikhs (Qassim, p. 507).

The second topic:-

Britain's position on the German influence in the Arabian Gulf

Britain stood in opposition to German activity in the Ottoman Empire's possessions in general, and in the Arabian Gulf in particular, as it directly threatens British interests in the Arabian Gulf and endangers them (Al-Dulaimi, p. 173). This was why the British capitalists threw all their weight to stir up British public opinion. In opposition to German activity in the Arabian Gulf, especially the Berlin-Baghdad railway project, especially ship owners and shipping companies, those who looked at the threat to their maritime trade in the event that the European centers of industry reached the Arabian Gulf by sea (Ali, 1953, pp. 124-125). British opposition has reached its climax in the British House of Lords, Lord Lansdown was proclaimed in the British House of Commons on May 5, 1907, saying: "I say without the slightest hesitation that we will view the establishment of a naval base or a fortified port in the Arabian Gulf from any other country as a serious threat to British interests and we will resist that with all our means" (Al-Tikriti, 1978, p. 61). That was why the British government exercised pressure on Sultan Abdul Hamid II in an attempt to deport him from Germany, in this regard, Britain refused the Ottoman government's request to approve an increase in customs taxes in the Ottoman Empire.

At the same time, I tried to influence both Russia and France to refuse as well, British sources highlighted the British government's opposition to German influence in the Persian Gulf, pretending that it does not oppose Germany's right to legitimate trade in the Arabian Gulf, or its right to extend the railways. Rather, the disagreement was centered on what Germany was aiming at from behind that activity, as the English resistance did not increase against Germany in the Persian Gulf, except because it combines commercial activity with political action, note that the German government did not hesitate to declare directly, or in the words of her writers and press that her purpose of this activity is to replace her influence with British influence.

That these justifications put forward by Britain, on which the writers and journalists have based. Lacks objectivity and credibility, because the British in order to mislead public opinion in Britain about the British-German conflict, on the control of the Arab Gulf regions and the issue of the Berlin and Baghdad railways (Qassim, pp. 507-508).

The German activity in the Arabian Gulf had a great impact on increasing opposition to the Berlin-Baghdad railway project, which embarrassed the British government. However, the latter changed its stance towards Germany's Berlin - Baghdad - Kuwait railway project, after an understanding was reached with the British government regarding this important and dangerous project at the same time. The British government thought about the effects that might affect the British core interests in Iraq. In the event that this project is accomplished by the Germans without Britain's participation. Therefore, the British official circles are studying the best means. That Britain can participate in the implementation of the project, condition its complete control of the southern part of the Berlin-Baghdad railway, it was the part extending from Baghdad to the head of the Arabian Gulf. There were hints by managers of the Baghdad Railway Company that they were completely prepared to agree to leave the stretch of Baghdad - the Persian Gulf to Britain, during his visit to London in November 1907, Emperor William II of Germany agreed with Holdane, the British defense minister. That Britain's opposition to the project could be settled if it obtained the establishment and administration of the part extending from Baghdad to the Persian Gulf (Airland, 1949, p. 29).

Accordingly, talks took place between Britain and Germany in June 1914, during which an agreement was reached between the two parties on the fifteenth of June 1914 (Al-Aqad, 1965, p. 232). Britain recognized the importance of the Baghdad railway to global economic development, pledged not to put obstacles to her creation, against Germany's approval of the British capital's contribution to the Baghdad Railway Company, this is first. Britain's control of the southern part of the railway line that ends at Basra. This is

second, in the case of extending the line from Basra to the Arabian Gulf. The approval of the British government must be obtained, provided that Britain is a member of the company's board of directors (Airland, 1949, p. 32).

In spite of the conditions that Britain placed on the Baghdad railway project and its extension to Kuwait, and the reservations and doubts that Britain had regarding the implementation of the project and its danger to British interests, the project was subjected to waves of criticism by the British press when it indicated the futility of Britain's insistence on making Basra an end To the railways instead of Kuwait at the time when the German Foreign Minister announced that his government does not agree to this substitution, unless the Shatt al-Arab becomes navigable, and it is understood from this that Germany will find an open door in front of it that connects it to the Arabian Gulf as if it were completely in Kuwait, but Without incurring large expenses in extending the railway there (Qassim, p. 514; Shaker, p. 521).

The Baghdad-Berlin railway found its way to implementation in Iraq before most countries of the Middle East. On the morning of July 27, 1912, the German head of works in Baghdad, in the presence of all the officials led by the person of the Ottoman governor, as well as (40) specialized engineers of different European nationalities, placed a stone The basis for that section of the Baghdad railway, which was to penetrate the Iraqi territory (Arab Language Journal, 1912, p. 117), and within less than two years the Germans imported more than (40) thousand tons of materials and equipment necessary to implement the first phase of their project, which they completed before the outbreak of the First World War towards (74) miles linked between Baghdad and Samarra, all of which were first-class, according to a British report (Ahmed, 2021, p. 40).

In any case, the Baghdad railway story ended with the German policy being able to convince Russia, France, and finally Britain itself of the benefit of this project, and the German goal of marching towards the East was victorious. However, the outbreak of the First World War prevented the fulfillment of these hopes for which Germany made great efforts, As the opportunity to declare war allowed Britain to concentrate its military forces in the Arabian Gulf, to monopolize control and influence in it, and to assert protection over all its emirates (Qassim, p. 514).

II. CONCLUSION

Germany sought after it was able to achieve its national unity in 1871 and the declaration of its two empires to have colonies in Asia, Africa and important and strategic areas in the world, similar to other European countries such as Britain, France and Russia, so that it can rise economically and politically by itself, so it went to search for areas of influence for it in the East and made it A zone of influence and conflict with the main European countries.

The German-Ottoman rapprochement paved the way for the growth of German interests in the Ottoman Empire in general and the Arab Gulf regions in particular at the expense of Britain, Russia and France, so Germany obtained railway concessions, especially the Berlin-Baghdad railway, these important effective means to penetrate The Ottoman Empire, as well as the important commercial interests.

The British government confronted such activity and promised it a danger to its interests in the Persian Gulf, and since the Arabian Gulf was at that time a British arena of influence that no one would dare to interfere in, then Britain put obstacles in front of this activity and raised public opinion against this German infiltration, and resorted to diplomatic methods, threats and appeasement with Germany in order to preserve its interests in the Arab Gulf region.

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