



International Boundary Study

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Jordan – Saudi Arabia Boundary

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INTERNATIONAL BOUNDARY STUDY

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JORDAN - SAUDI ARABIA BOUNDARY

I. BOUNDARY BRIEF

The Jordan - Saudi Arabia boundary has been redelimited as a result of a bilateral agreement signed on August 10, 1965. The new boundary measures approximately 462.4 miles from the Iraq tripoint at Jabal 'Anazah to a point on the Gulf of Aqaba, approximately 11 miles due south of the Jordanian port of Aqaba (Al 'Aqabah). The precise location of this terminal point is not yet certain.

II. BACKGROUND

The new boundary passes through a desert or near desert area of limited economic potential; the frontier is virtually rainless (under 5" everywhere) and almost devoid of population. Scattered wells and access to the Gulf of Aqaba (for Jordan) are the primary points of strategic value.

The frontier region is a tilted plateau with the highest elevations in the west and the lower in the east. The interior district is composed of sand areas interspersed with eroded lava flows which are dissected by dry stream beds. A few peaks attain elevations of 3,000 feet, approximately 1,000 feet above the average elevation of the plateau. The general alignment of the drainage pattern is toward the south and east reflecting the slope of the plateau. Soil, except in the wadi bottoms, is very thin or non-existent.

Close to the shores of the Gulf of Aqaba, the border traverses the escarpment marking the edge of the Dead Sea - Jordan - Aqaba fault valley. The escarpment, in places, looms 4,500 feet above the level of the adjacent sea. However, many dry water courses dissect the escarpment into a series of broken blocks. A narrow coastal plain fringes the shores of the Gulf with relatively easy access to the interior furnished by the numerous wadi beds.

After the end of World War I, Great Britain received a League of Nations mandate for Palestine encompassing Jordan. The British soon divided the mandate for administrative purposes along the Jordan River - Wadi 'Araba line. However, the precise southern limits of Palestine and Trans-Jordan were indefinite. At the time, Britain claimed access to the Gulf of Aqaba, while the Arabians considered Ma'an, about 50 miles to the north, to be within their domain based on its inclusion in the Ottoman vilayet of the Hejaz. The adjacent parts of Arabia were occupied by the independent sultanates of the Nejd and Hedjaz, which later became the core of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (1932). In the middle of the 1920s, Britain began a series of negotiations with the Arabian Sultanates to settle the southern limits of both the Trans-Jordan and the Syrian mandates. The eastern and central sectors were agreed upon in 1925 with the disputed Kaf region being assigned to the Nejd. The western sector of Jordan with the Hejaz, however, could not be agreed upon. Britain ultimately delimited the boundary unilaterally to include within Trans-Jordan a narrow outlet on the Gulf of Aqaba. This action was rejected by the Hejaz and later by the

combined kingdom of Saudi Arabia. King Ibn Saud, however, did agree to maintain the status quo pending a solution to the dispute.

In 1946, Trans-Jordan became independent as the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan, with the boundary problem still unsolved. Efforts were made in 1961 - 63 to settle the question, again to no avail. Finally in 1965, a mutually acceptable line was delimited. Jordan gained an enlarged coastline (19 kilometers) on the Gulf of Aqaba and 6,000 square kilometers of territory in the interior. In turn, 7,000 square kilometers of Jordanian-administered territory were ceded to Saudi Arabia.

The new boundary came into effect on November 7, 1965. The TAP line (Trans-Arabian Pipe Line) crosses the boundary at approximately 31° 13' East. The pipe line is currently the most important economic feature crossing the boundary.

III. ANALYSIS OF THE BOUNDARY ALIGNMENT

According to the provisions of the 1965 agreement, the boundary is delimited as follows:

Article 1

(a) The boundary between the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia starts from a point on Jabal Anaiza [Jabal 'Anazah] i.e., the point of intersection of meridian 39° 18' and parallel 32° 14', and proceeds in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 39° and parallel 32°, and thence in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 37° and parallel 31° 30'. From this point, it proceeds in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 38° and parallel 30° 30', and thence in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 37° 40' and parallel 30° 20', 2000 metres to the north of the Lower Mashash Hadraj, leaving the Lower Mashash Hadraj to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The boundary then proceeds from this point in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 37° 30' and parallel 30°, leaving the Bir al Na'am [Bi'r an Na'am] to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. From this point, it proceeds in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 36° 45' and parallel 29° 52' leaving the Bir Beni Murra [Bani Murrah] and Al-Annab [Al' Unab] localities to the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. From this point, it proceeds in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 36° 30' and parallel 29° 30', and thence in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 36° 04' and parallel 29° 11', which is about 1,000 metres to the north of Halat Ammar, [Hallat 'Ammar] leaving Halat Ammar to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. From this point, the boundary proceeds in a straight line to a point 300 metres to the north of the angle of the North-Eastern Al-Durra Police Post, and thence continues to the sea waters.

(b) The boundary referred to in the preceding clause has been fixed and drawn on two maps I-500,000 prepared in 1960 i.e., I 200 "B" Wadi Sirhan and I 201 "B" Al-

Jauf and Sakaka. These were consolidated into one map. This map was signed by representatives of the two parties and considered as an integral part of the agreement.

The precise location of the North-Eastern Al-Durra Police Post, referenced in relation to the terminal point in the west, is not known. Efforts are being made to obtain this information. However, for small-scale mapping purposes, the coastal terminus may be considered to be 29° 21' 30" North and 34° 57' 30" East. The location should be designated as approximate, however, until the precise position is determined.

The boundary will eventually be demarcated.

IV. TREATIES AND OTHER INTERNATIONAL ACTS

The following treaties and other international acts created the former and the present Jordan - Saudi Arabia boundaries. The last agreement, of course, has nullified all of the previous agreements and actions except that the tripoint with Iraq remains at Jabal 'Anazah (Jabal Anaiza).

- A. Agreements with the Sultan of Nejd regarding certain questions relating to the Nejd - Trans-Jordan (and Nejd - 'Iraq) frontiers**
(The Hadda Agreement) signed on November 2, 1925.
(Great Britain, Foreign Office, Command 2566, London: 1925)

The Jordan - Nejd boundary was delimited as follows:

Article 1.

The frontier between Nejd and Trans-Jordan starts in the northeast from the point of intersection of meridian 39° E and parallel 32° N, which marks the termination of the frontier between Nejd and 'Iraq, and proceeds in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 37° E and 31° 30' N, and thence along meridian 37° E to the point of its intersection with parallel 31° 25' N. From this point, it proceeds in a straight line to the point of intersection of meridian 38° E and parallel 30° N, leaving all projecting edges of the Wadi Sirhan in Nejd territory; and thence proceeds along meridian 38° E to the point of its intersection with parallel 29° 35' N.

The Map referred to in this Agreement is that known as the "International" Asia Map 1:1,000,000.

B. Treaty of Jeddah signed on May 20, 1927 with ratifications exchanged on September 17, 1927.
(ibid. Command 2951 (1927), London)

Britain recognized the absolute independence of the Kingdom of Hedjaz and Nedj and its Dependencies. At the same time, the boundary with Trans-Jordan was discussed in an exchange of notes:

C. Exchange of Notes, May 19 and May 21, 1927 at Jeddah.
(included in above)

The first of the Notes dealt with the question of the frontier between the Hejaz and Trans-Jordan, and stated that the British Government regarded the frontier as being defined as follows: - "The frontier between the Hejaz and Transjordan starts from the intersection of meridian 38° E. and parallel 29° 35' N. which marks the termination of the frontier between Nejd and Transjordan, and proceeds in a straight line to a point of the Hejaz Railway two miles south of Mudawara. From this point it proceeds in a straight line to a point on the Gulf of Aquaba [Aqaba] two miles south of the town of Aquaba." In his reply the representative of the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd noted that "His Majesty's Government adhere to their position," and added: "But we find it impossible, in the present circumstances, to effect a final settlement of this question." The reply expressed "willingness to maintain the status quo in the Ma'an-Aqaba district," and to undertake "not to interfere in its administration until favourable circumstances will permit a final settlement."

D. Treaty of London signed March 22, 1946
(ibid., Command 6779 (1946), London)

Trans-Jordan was guaranteed independence with the Hadda Agreement boundaries "if the Saudi Arabian Government so desires." The status quo in the Aqaba region continued to be maintained without a solution.

E. Agreement regarding the Delimitation of the Boundary between the Hashemite Kingdom of the Jordan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia signed in Amman on August 9, 1965; came into force on November 7, 1965.

The text of the delimitation has been quoted in Section III above. In addition the boundary agreement created a zone in which petroleum revenues would be shared equally should oil be discovered in the future.

V. SUMMARY

The Jordan - Saudi Arabia boundary should be shown as an accepted international boundary on official U.S. Government maps. However, pending the receipt of additional

information or of the demarcation protocol or maps, the disclaimer should be utilized to recognize the approximate position of the terminal point on the Gulf of Aqaba. The position of this point should also be indicated as "approximate" at present.

No boundary maps are available for compilation purposes at present. However, straight lines connecting the following points will produce a correct and accurate representation of the boundary:

TP No. 1 Jabal 'Anazah; 32° 14' North and 39° 18' East;
tripoint with Iraq

TP No. 2 32° North; 39° East

TP No. 3 31° 30' North; 37° East

TP No. 4 30° 30' North; 38° East

TP No. 5 30° 20' North; 37° 40' East

TP No. 6 30° North; 37° 30' East

TP No. 7 29° 52' North; 36° 45' East

TP No. 8 29° 30' North; 36° 30' East

TP No. 9 29° 11' North; 36° 04' East

TP No. 10 29° 21' 30" North) indicate as approximate position
34° 57' 30" East) of coastal terminal point.

This International Boundary Study is one of a series of specific boundary papers prepared by the Geographer, Office of Research in Economics and Science, Bureau of Intelligence and Research, Department of State, in accordance with provisions of Bureau of the Budget Circular No. A-16.

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