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"هناجم. وضع وحقوق الحكومة البريطانية في جزيرة هناجم. شيخ هناجم والشؤون الخاصة به"

المكتبة البريطانية: أوراق خاصة وسجلات من مكتب الهند

IOR/L/PS/18/B405

٢٦ سبتمبر ١٩٢٨ (ميلادي)

الإنجليزية في اللاتينية

ملف واحد (٤ ورقات)

رخصة حكومة مفتوحة

المؤسسة المالكة

المرجع

التاريخ/ التواريخ

لغة الكتابة

الحجم والشكل

حق النشر



حول هذا السجل

مذكرة تُقدّم نظرة عامة على علاقة بريطانيا بجزيرة هناجم.

الأمر التي تشملها المذكرة:

• مقدّمة عن موقع باسعيدو وأهميتها الاستراتيجية؛ استخدام البريطانيين للجزيرة؛ أفراد قبيلة بني ياس؛

• الوضع الدولي لهناجم - المطالبة الفارسية ومطالبة مسقط بها؛

• امتياز التلغراف البريطاني في هناجم - تاريخ من سنة ١٨٦٨ - واستخدام الموقع كقاعدة للسلطات

• ١٩٢٦-١٩٢٨: التأكيد مجدداً على المطالب الفارسية - الجمارك؛ استفسار من الحكومة الفارسية بشأن حق الحكومة البريطانية في التملك في باسعيدو وهنجام؛ طرد شيخ هنجام في مايو ١٩٢٨؛ ودراسة الإجراء المتخذ في هنجام في حال وجود اعتداء فارسي بموجب امتياز التلغراف؛

• العلاقات بين شيخ هنجام وبلاد فارس: ١٩٠٤-١٩٢٨ - خلاف بين المسؤولين الفارسيين والسكان العرب، وطرد الشيخ وعودته.

تتضمن المذكرة ملخصاً يتناول تفاصيل الوضع والحقوق القانونية للحكومة البريطانية في هنجام، والرغبة في الاحتفاظ بالامتياز. إضافة إلى ذلك، توجد قائمة بالنقاط المُحالة إلى اللجنة الفرعية للخليج العربي، ووجهات النظر التي أعربت عنها حكومة الهند.

كتبها جون جيلبرت لايتوايت من مكتب الهند.

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INDIA OFFICE B. 405.
P. 5267/28.

HENJAM.

Position and Rights of His Majesty's Government in the
Island of Henjam.

The Sheikh of Henjam and his Affairs.

Introductory.

Henjam is an island $5\frac{1}{2}$ miles long and about 3 miles broad, situated off the south coast of the island of Kishm, from which it is divided by a strait a mile wide and 6-12 fathoms deep in the fairway. It contains a valuable anchorage at Masheh Bay, while at the settlement of Ghail, some 3 miles from the village of Henjam, there is an almost inexhaustible supply of fresh water. The island in addition contains saltmines of some value. Its position off the Persian coast at a point where the Persian Gulf is so narrow that the Arabian coast is ordinarily visible gives it considerable strategic importance.

Lor. ii, 629-31.

2. Since 1869 (with an interval between 1881 and 1904) a station of the Indo-European Telegraph Company has been maintained on Henjam with the concurrence of the Persian Government; since 1911, when the Admiralty coaling depôt was transferred to it from Basidu, the island has been employed by His Majesty's ships stationed in the Gulf as their principal base, and a canteen and playgrounds are maintained in the Telegraph Concession by the Naval authorities. The climate of Henjam is, however, extremely trying in the summer, and the view was expressed in 1903 that it would not be a suitable site for a defended naval establishment.*

G. of I. précis of
corres. on Henjam
and Basidu, p. 65.

* Tel. from Viceroy
to S. of S. for I.,
Aug. 4 1903. Lor. ii
629.

3. The island, the only place of importance on which is the village of Henjam, an Arab settlement dependent principally on pearl fishing, is inhabited by Arabs belonging to the Beni Yas tribe of the Arabian coast. The Beni Yas are said to have migrated to it from the Arabian coast about a century ago,† with the permission of the Sultan of Muscat, at a time when Henjam was definitely claimed and administered by that State. They are reported consistently to have refused to acknowledge Persian sovereignty or to accept Persian nationality, and to have made it clear that they would rather leave Henjam than become Persian subjects. They have inter-married throughout with the Beni Yas of the Arabian coast; their commercial dealings and their pearling ventures are all connected with that tribe; their Sheikh is the father-in-law of the Trucial Sheikh of Dabai, and the ruling family of Dabai and their subjects claim to have 3½ lakhs of rupees sunk in the concerns of the Henjam branch of their tribe.

† P. 461/06.

Lr. from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., 279 S.,
July 20-1 1928,
P. 4626.

4. A Persian Customs agent has been maintained in the island since 1905, and a Customs post was established in the area of the Indo-European Telegraph Department's concession, with the knowledge and approval of His Majesty's Government, in 1927. There is also a Persian Post Office alongside the Customs House, the difficulties caused by the anti-British activities of the postmaster of which have come to notice on various occasions recently, and have formed the subject of representations at Teheran.‡

‡ Teh. tel. to F.O.,
213, July 6 1928,
P. 3501/28.

International Status of Henjam.

5. The international status of Henjam has formed the subject of considerable discussion in the past, claims being preferred to it by Muscat and by the Trucial Sheikh of Dabai (subject, however, to the overriding claim of Muscat§) as well as by Persia. The Persian claim is based on the assertion that Henjam is and always has been a Persian possession, dependent from Bunder Abbas, and that such authority as was exercised in it in the first half of the last century by Muscat was exercised by that State under its lease from Persia of Bunder Abbas and its dependencies. Muscat

§ Teh. Desp. 54,
Feb. 27 1906
P. 2827/06.

3135 75 1028

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claims, on the other hand, that Henjam has never been a Persian possession, and that no specific reference to it was at any stage made in connection with the lease from Persia of Bunder Abbas and its dependencies.

* Lrs. from Pol. Res. to G. of L. June 28 1811, p. 1305/11; Oct. 8 1911, P. 1880/12. Précis, pp. 21-7.

Tch. Desp. 123, July 2 1804, P. 3005.

† paras. 18 and 17-20, *infra*.

6. Careful examination of the available evidence suggests that the claims of Muscat are substantial.⁶ But despite the representations in favour of Muscat of the then Political Resident, Persian sovereignty was formally recognised in 1868 by His Majesty's Government and the Government of India; in the year 1904 His Majesty's Government further informed the Persian Government that "there was no intention . . . to support any such claim [to sovereignty] on the part of the Sheikh of Dabai, or to repudiate the authority of the Persian Government over Henjam"; and their recognition of Persian suzerainty has been reiterated on various occasions since that date, and particularly in the last two years.[†] In the circumstances, while the Muscat claim has never been abandoned, it seems impracticable for His Majesty's Government, in view of their consistent recognition of Persian sovereignty over the last 60 years, to take any action at this stage to challenge the position of Persia.

The British Telegraph Concession at Henjam.

Précis, pp. 34, 35, 37.

7. The basis of the position in Henjam of His Majesty's Government is the Telegraph Concession secured from the Persian Government in 1868. Prior to that date the occupation of Henjam (with the approval of the Imam of Muscat, under whose effective control the island then was) had been considered in 1820 in connection with the removal to the south Persian coast of the British military detachment stationed on the Arabian coast at Ras-al-Khaima; but, as in the case of Basidu (*cp.* Memorandum on p. 10, para. 10), an emphatic repudiation of the power of Muscat, "itself a dependency of Persia," to grant concessions in Henjam and Kishm, "which are dependencies of Bandar Abbas," was received from Persia and the matter was not pursued.

8. There appear to have been no developments of importance until 1865. In that year the transfer to the island of the telegraph station maintained on Cape Musandim on the Arabian coast was proposed by the Indian Telegraph authorities. After considerable discussion as to the rival claims to suzerainty of Persia and Muscat, it was decided in 1868 that Persia was the only Power which could object to the establishment of the station on the island, and it was agreed that a formal request for permission for its erection should be made to the Persian Government by His Majesty's Minister in Teheran.

Précis, p. 26.

9. The necessary sanction was granted by the Shah on 29th March 1868, subject to a proviso that "the number of employees and the extent of the buildings should not at any time be allowed to exceed those explained in the Memorandum received from the British Legation." The exact scope of the concession, and the area within which it was to operate, having subsequently formed the subject of considerable controversy with Persia, it may be placed on record that the Memorandum in question stipulated for a staff of 15 Europeans, to include a Telegraph Superintendent and his assistant, an apothecary, and a storekeeper; and for a telegraph office containing instrument room, battery rooms, Superintendent's office, verandah, &c.; a dwelling house for the Superintendent and his assistant; a barrack for 10 or 12 clerks, a house for apothecary and medical stores; a large shed for telegraph stores and material; a house for the storekeeper, and a shed for inferior material and coal store for the telegraph steamer when cruising, together with sundry out-offices for cooking houses, native servants, stables, &c. The cable appears to have been landed at Henjam towards the end of December 1868 and a telegraph station to have been opened shortly after.

Précis, p. 26.

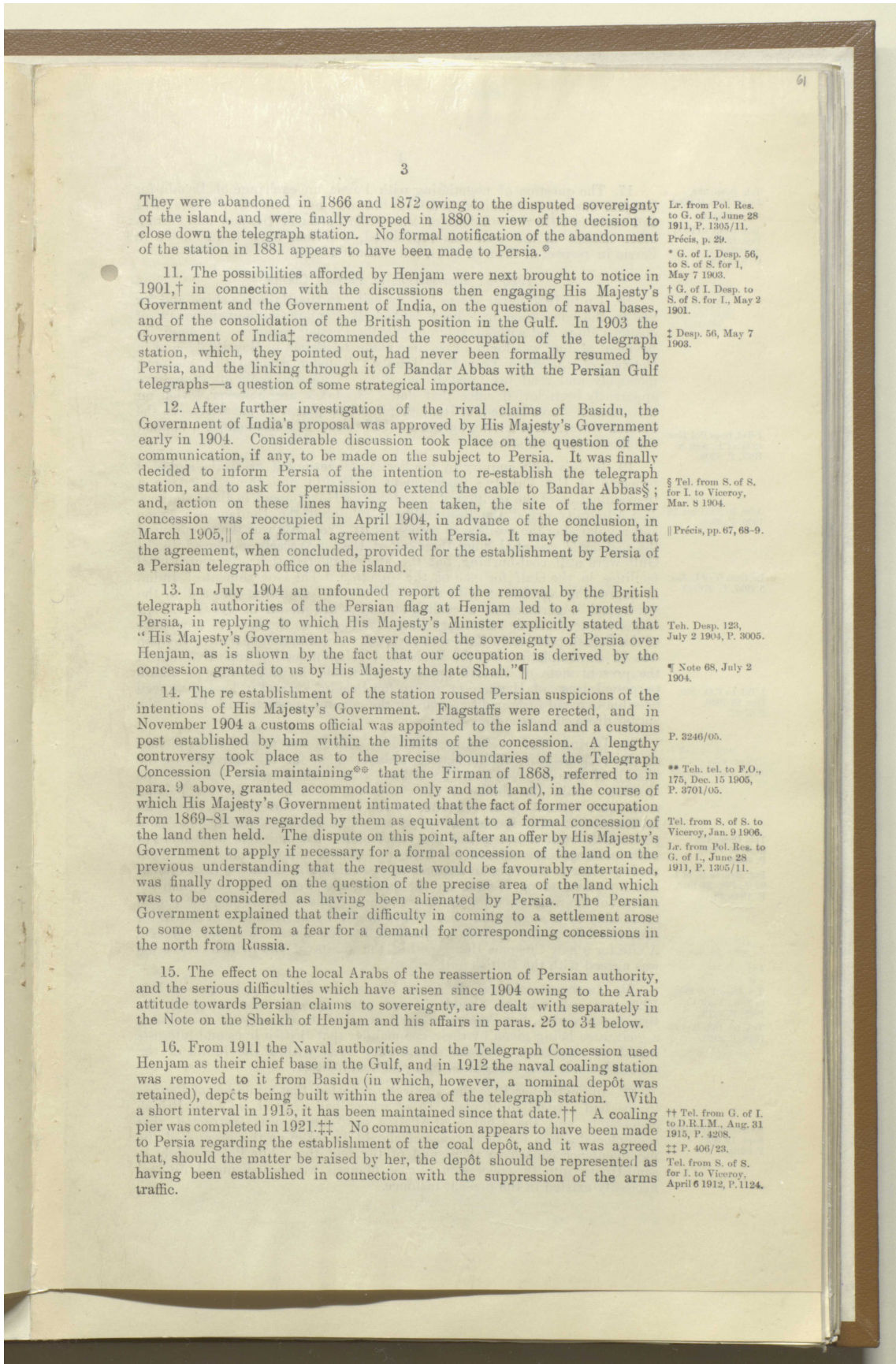
Précis, p. 27.

Précis, p. 64.

Précis 85.

10. The telegraph station was maintained from 1868-9 to 1881, when its abandonment was approved. Proposals for the transfer to Henjam of the naval coal depôt at Basidu and the acquisition of the island from Persia in exchange for Basidu were considered in 1865-6, 1872 and 1880.

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They were abandoned in 1866 and 1872 owing to the disputed sovereignty of the island, and were finally dropped in 1880 in view of the decision to close down the telegraph station. No formal notification of the abandonment of the station in 1881 appears to have been made to Persia.*

Lr. from Pol. Res. to G. of I., June 28 1911, P. 1305/11.

Précis, p. 29.

* G. of I. Desp. 56, to S. of S. for I., May 7 1903.

† G. of I. Desp. to S. of S. for I., May 2 1901.

‡ Desp. 56, May 7 1903.

11. The possibilities afforded by Henjam were next brought to notice in 1901,† in connection with the discussions then engaging His Majesty's Government and the Government of India, on the question of naval bases, and of the consolidation of the British position in the Gulf. In 1903 the Government of India‡ recommended the reoccupation of the telegraph station, which, they pointed out, had never been formally resumed by Persia, and the linking through it of Bandar Abbas with the Persian Gulf telegraphs—a question of some strategical importance.

12. After further investigation of the rival claims of Basidu, the Government of India's proposal was approved by His Majesty's Government early in 1904. Considerable discussion took place on the question of the communication, if any, to be made on the subject to Persia. It was finally decided to inform Persia of the intention to re-establish the telegraph station, and to ask for permission to extend the cable to Bandar Abbas§; and, action on these lines having been taken, the site of the former concession was reoccupied in April 1904, in advance of the conclusion, in March 1905,|| of a formal agreement with Persia. It may be noted that the agreement, when concluded, provided for the establishment by Persia of a Persian telegraph office on the island.

§ Tel. from S. of S. for I. to Viceroy, Mar. 8 1904.

|| Précis, pp. 67, 68-9.

13. In July 1904 an unfounded report of the removal by the British telegraph authorities of the Persian flag at Henjam led to a protest by Persia, in replying to which His Majesty's Minister explicitly stated that "His Majesty's Government has never denied the sovereignty of Persia over Henjam, as is shown by the fact that our occupation is derived by the concession granted to us by His Majesty the late Shah."¶

Tel. Desp. 123, July 2 1904, P. 3005.

¶ Note 68, July 2 1904.

14. The re-establishment of the station roused Persian suspicions of the intentions of His Majesty's Government. Flagstaves were erected, and in November 1904 a customs official was appointed to the island and a customs post established by him within the limits of the concession. A lengthy controversy took place as to the precise boundaries of the Telegraph Concession (Persia maintaining** that the Firman of 1868, referred to in para. 9 above, granted accommodation only and not land), in the course of which His Majesty's Government intimated that the fact of former occupation from 1869-81 was regarded by them as equivalent to a formal concession of the land then held. The dispute on this point, after an offer by His Majesty's Government to apply if necessary for a formal concession of the land on the previous understanding that the request would be favourably entertained, was finally dropped on the question of the precise area of the land which was to be considered as having been alienated by Persia. The Persian Government explained that their difficulty in coming to a settlement arose to some extent from a fear for a demand for corresponding concessions in the north from Russia.

P. 3246/05.

** Tel. tel. to F.O., 175, Dec. 15 1905, P. 3701/05.

Tel. from S. of S. to Viceroy, Jan. 9 1906.

Lr. from Pol. Res. to G. of I., June 28 1911, P. 1305/11.

15. The effect on the local Arabs of the reassertion of Persian authority, and the serious difficulties which have arisen since 1904 owing to the Arab attitude towards Persian claims to sovereignty, are dealt with separately in the Note on the Sheikh of Henjam and his affairs in paras. 25 to 34 below.

16. From 1911 the Naval authorities and the Telegraph Concession used Henjam as their chief base in the Gulf, and in 1912 the naval coaling station was removed to it from Basidu (in which, however, a nominal depôt was retained), depôts being built within the area of the telegraph station. With a short interval in 1915, it has been maintained since that date.†† A coaling pier was completed in 1921.‡‡ No communication appears to have been made to Persia regarding the establishment of the coal depôt, and it was agreed that, should the matter be raised by her, the depôt should be represented as having been established in connection with the suppression of the arms traffic.

†† Tel. from G. of I. to D.R.I.M., Aug. 31 1915, P. 4298.

‡‡ P. 406/23.

Tel. from S. of S. for I. to Viceroy, April 6 1912, P. 1124.

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Teh. Desp. 324,
July 6 1926, P. 2604.
* P. 1305/11.
Teh. Desp. to F.O.,
Dec. 12 1914,
P. 5068/14,
P. 1024/18.

17. The question of negotiating with Persia an exchange of Basidu for Henjam was again examined in 1911,* but was not pursued, while in 1914 and again in 1918 the purchase or lease from Persia of Henjam and certain other islands in the Gulf was considered, a formal offer being made to Persia in respect of them in 1914, but without result.

1926-8: Reassertion of Persian Claims.

† Tel. from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., Aug. 5
1927, P. 4208.

18. Up to 1926 naval stores "in transit" to His Majesty's ships and for use in the concession had been landed at Henjam without payment of customs dues and without reference to the Persian customs. A claim for payment of duty was for the first time made by Persia in May 1926; and in October of the same year His Majesty's Minister decided that customs, monopoly, and road tax must be admitted. The duties in question have apparently been levied since that date. No taxes are, however, levied on Government stores landed at Henjam for transhipment to naval vessels, the Persian Government having agreed in 1927 to the establishment of a bonded warehouse for such stores.†

Adm. to F.O., Oct. 15
1926, P. 3629.

19. In July 1926 enquiry by the Persian Government as to the rights of property of His Majesty's Government in Basidu and Henjam led to a re-examination of the position of His Majesty's Government in those stations. The Admiralty urged the desirability of retaining the Henjam concession and regularising the position in respect of it. Not only was the retention of the coal depôt essential, since three out of the four vessels employed in the Gulf were still coal-burning, but the station offered the only recreational facilities in the Gulf for men of the squadron. The Government of India, in expressing agreement with the views of the Admiralty, referred to the strategical importance of a coaling station at the mouth of the Gulf. An endeavour to conclude an arrangement with Persia on the basis of surrender of the British position in Basidu in return for consolidation of that in Henjam was in contemplation, but the Minister at Teheran having reported that in the present state of Persian opinion "it would be impossible to obtain perpetual lease of Henjam in return for Basidu‡"; and it having proved possible to avoid further discussion of the general question with Persia, the matter dropped for the time being.

Lr. from G. of I., Jan.
6 1927, P. 376/27.

† Tel. to F.O., 239,
Dec. 28 1926,
P. 67/27.

20. During 1927 there arose difficulty with Persia (to which suspicions of the responsibility of His Majesty's Government for the activities of the Sheikh of Henjam—see para. 28 below—contributed) as the result of the erection within the limits of the concession of a house for the Persian postmaster without prior reference to His Majesty's Government, and again in connection with the expulsion of a Persian nakhuda who had without permission built a hut within the concession. An amicable settlement of both incidents was secured, and both the Minister and the Political Resident made it clear to the Belgian customs officials that His Majesty's Government had no claim to or designs on the island, and wanted no more than the control of the concession for sanitary reasons. The customs officials reacted favourably to a suggestion that Basidu might be surrendered in return for consolidation of the position at Henjam, but the matter was not pursued. A site for a new Customs House within the limits of the British concession was agreed with the British authorities.

Teh. Desp. 455,
Sept. 21 1927,
P. 4969.

Pol. Res. to G. of I.,
93 S., Feb. 23 1928,
P. 1595/28.

Tel. from Pol. Res.
to Teh., April 15
1928, P. 2279.

Teh. tel. 163, May 11
1928, P. 2465.

21. On the occasion of the expulsion of the Sheikh of Henjam in May 1928, not only was the Sheikh refused permission to take refuge in the British concession, but Persian troops were allowed to occupy the concession, a guarantee being given by their commander that British lives and interests would be respected. Persian sovereignty even within the limits of the concession was thus recognised in a practical manner.

P.O. tel. to Teh., 196,
Sept. 19 1928,
P. 5210.

22. In September 1928 the Admiralty reported that a number of Persian troops had arrived in Henjam, 15 of whom had crossed into the British concession, and the Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran was instructed that semi-official action for their removal should be taken on the ground of the inconvenience caused by them, and of the fact that while Persia's right to send troops into the concession in case of need was not disputed, no real necessity existed in the present instance.

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23. The incidents at Tamb and Basidu in the summer of 1928 necessitated consideration of the action to be taken at Henjam in the event of Persian aggression under the Telegraph Concession there; and in September 1928 the Admiralty suggested that the Senior Naval Officer should be authorised to take action on the lines approved in the case of Basidu (compare page 22, para. 25). The Foreign Office, however, expressed the view that, having regard to the weakness of the British position at Henjam, and to the desirability of regularising that position, in agreement with Persia, and of securing the maintenance of the use of the concession as a naval depôt and recreation ground, for which Persian permission had never been obtained, the Senior Naval Officer should be instructed that conflict with the Persian authorities in the island, military or civil, should be avoided in all circumstances save in a grave emergency when British lives and property are in danger, and that even then force should be used only in the last resort.

Adm. to F.O.,
Sept. 15 1928.
F.O. to Adm.,
Sept. 22 1928
P. 5210/28.

Henjam Wireless Station.

24. The history of the wireless station established at Henjam in 1916, the present importance of that station, and the threat to its continued maintenance constituted by the Persian prohibition of the import of spare parts, is dealt with in the Memorandum on Wireless in the Gulf on page 2.

Relations between the Sheikh of Henjam and Persia: 1904-28.

25. The Arab Sheikh of Henjam, now over 80 years of age, is the direct descendant of the Arab leader to whom permission to occupy Henjam was granted by the Sultan of Muscat about 1826. He is the hereditary ruler of the Arabs of the Beni Yas tribe who inhabit the island; he claims, as do his people, never to have acquiesced in Persian claims to sovereignty over Henjam or to have acquired Persian nationality, and so recently as 1927 he informed the Officer Commanding H.M.S. *Lupin* that he regarded action in Henjam by the Persian customs authorities against his property as a violation "of his rights, as he considered himself a subject of the Sultan of Muscat."* The general attitude of the Sheikh and his subjects on the question of Persian nationality, and their close relations with the Trucial Sheikdoms of the Arab coast, and particularly with Dabai, are described in para. 3 above.

* Report from
S.N.O., Adm. to I.O.,
Aug. 10 1927, P. 3045.

26. His Majesty's Government, on the other hand, have, as already stated, consistently held that the island of Henjam belongs to Persia, and that the claims of the Sultan of Muscat, on which the Sheikh of Henjam to some extent bases his attitude, cannot be entertained.

27. The gradual assertion of Persian authority in the island since the establishment on it of a customs port in 1904 (see para. 14 above) has led during the last 25 years to considerable friction between the local Persian officials and the Arab inhabitants. Tension was particularly marked between 1904 and 1907,† during which period an appeal to the Sultan of Muscat‡ by the Henjam Arabs led to a visit to the island by His Highness in 1905, and a formal protest by him to His Majesty's Government against Persian action. A proposal to transfer the Arabs to Basidu was rejected by His Majesty's Government in 1906 on political grounds. Difficulty again arose in 1914.§

† F.O. tel. to Tel.,
34, Feb. 20, 1906.

‡ Tel. from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., Dec. 27
1905, P. 301/06.

§ Tel. from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., Dec. 7
1905, P. 1923/06.

¶ Lr. from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., May 10
1914, P. 2407/14.

A serious incident would appear to a large extent to have been avoided in the past owing to the knowledge of the Sheikh that His Majesty's Government recognise Persian sovereignty, and the fact that the Persian customs post lies within the boundary of the British concession.

28. Ill-feeling of long standing came to a head, however, in April 1927, when, consequent on the seizure by the Persian customs officials of a dhow belonging to the Sheikh of Henjam *en route* to Khassab on the Arabian coast and carrying Rs. 3,000 in cash, the customs post, though within the British concession, was attacked and looted by the Sheikh and his followers, the Customs Mudir being killed, the local Persian Postmaster wounded, and more serious disturbances being prevented only by the landing of a

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S.N.O. to Pol. Res.
April 18 1927,
P. 2368.

British naval party, the valuable services rendered by which were gratefully acknowledged subsequently by the Governor of the Gulf Ports.

29. The Sheikh was rebuked by the Senior Naval Officer for his encroachment on the territory of the concession, which was, he alleged, the result of misunderstanding; and was reminded that he had been warned in June 1926 that should Persia take punitive action against him he need not look for protection to His Majesty's Government.

30. The Customs Mudir was replaced towards the end of 1927, but punitive action by Persia was delayed till the spring of 1928. In May of that year an armed Persian force landed on the island and expelled the Sheikh, who fled with his subjects to the Trucial Coast, leaving behind certain of the women of the tribe. He had been warned that if he sought refuge in the British Concession he would be surrendered, and the Persian troops on arrival were permitted to enter and camp in the concession on the ground that it was Persian territory.

Lr. from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., June 21
1928, P. 3979.
Tel. from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., 722,
June 13, P. 3077.

31. The expulsion of the Sheikh, and in particular the fact that he had been refused shelter in the British Concession, produced a serious situation on the Arab coast (see paras 18 and 19 of the Memorandum on the Trucial Chiefs on p. 530). The Political Resident, apprehensive of the effect on Trucial feeling of the adoption of a detached attitude by His Majesty's Government, suggested that His Majesty's Government might act as intermediaries, with a view to ascertaining whether Persia would be prepared to accept any terms on which the Sheikh could return on acknowledging Persian sovereignty and paying blood money. His Majesty's Government, in agreement with the Government of India and the Chargé d'Affaires at Teheran, decided, however, that intervention on behalf of the Sheikh would be likely to do more harm than good; that a local settlement was clearly the right solution, and that if any influence was exercised with Persia it should be both unobtrusive and local.

Tel. from Viceroy,
June 18, P. 3167.
L.O. to F.O., June 23,
P. 3176.
F.O. to Teh., 152,
June 26, P. 3383.

32. The question of action on behalf of the Sheikh, in view of the situation on the Trucial Coast, where feeling, further aggravated by the Tamb incident, continued to run high, formed the subject of considerable discussion during August and September 1928. In September 1928 the Sheikh of Dabai reported, however, that a Persian Envoy from Henjam had arrived inviting the Sheikh and all his people, except the actual murderers of the Mudir, to return; and the Senior Naval Officer, aware of the reluctance of His Majesty's Government to intervene, advised that the Sheikh of Henjam must decide for himself. On 20th September the Political Resident reported that the Sheikh, with his men, had returned to Henjam, where he was understood to be awaiting the arrival of Persian officials to effect a settlement.²

Pol. Res. to G. of I.,
286, Sept. 20,
5125.

33. Matters rest at this point. The Government of India had previously suggested that the Trucial situation now made it desirable to inform the Dabai Arabs that while His Majesty's Government could not admit "non-amenability of Sheikh of Henjam, as a resident on soil recognised by us as Persian, to Persian authority in respect of his Henjam holding, we are prepared to represent views of Sheikh of Dabai and Beni Yas tribe . . . to Persian Government and use our good offices on behalf [of the Sheikh of Henjam] provided he is prepared to make full restitution for the murder of Customs Mudir. Matter might then be dealt with in autumn negotiations on basis of full acknowledgment of Persian sovereignty over Henjam. Issue of nationality should be avoided if possible, but, if it is to be raised, capital could be made . . . of status of (? Persians) resident on the Arab coast and in Iraq, and of Persian nationality law with its recognition of *jus sanguinis*."

Tel. from S. of S.
for I. to Viceroy,
2909, Sept. 20,
P. 5125/28.

34. The Government of India have been asked whether their views are affected by the return of the Sheikh to Henjam. The Chargé d'Affaires, Teheran, who had sounded the Persian Government as to the return of the Sheikh, has meanwhile expressed the view that failing a specific undertaking by Persia that he "be permitted to return in full liberty, he runs a certain risk, and we cannot accept responsibility for what may happen."

Teh. tel. to F.O.,
279, Sept. 21,
P. 160/28.

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Summary.

35. The island of Henjam has been recognised by His Majesty's Government on several occasions as a Persian possession in terms such as to preclude a challenge to the Persian claim based on support of the rival claims of Muscat. The position in the island of His Majesty's Government depends solely, in law, on the concession granted for a telegraph station in 1868. That concession in terms permitted only the erection and maintenance of certain specified buildings, and the retention of a specified staff, for telegraph purposes. The wireless station subsequently erected, the naval coal depôt, the naval canteen and recreation grounds, all therefore represent an encroachment by His Majesty's Government for which legal justification cannot be pleaded.

36. The position of His Majesty's Government in the island is further complicated by the fact that the Arab inhabitants, who claim to be Trucial subjects, and who dispute Persian sovereignty, tend to look to us for protection against Persia. The reactions on British interests on the Trucial Coast of the attitude towards them of His Majesty's Government make it extremely desirable to take any action reasonably possible in their interests. Any such action, at the same time, is viewed with deep suspicion by Persia, and represents from the Persian standpoint an additional argument for terminating the British connection with the island.

37. The importance of maintaining that connection is, however, considerable. The strategic value of control of an island which commands the mouth of the Gulf, which has a good water supply and a good anchorage, needs no emphasis. The maintenance of the coaling depôt at present situated on it is desirable so long as the Persian Gulf Squadron contains coal burning units; while the recreational facilities at present afforded to that squadron at Henjam are not available elsewhere in the Gulf. As will be seen from the Memorandum on Wireless on pages 22 to 24, the island is of substantial importance in connection with wireless arrangements in the Gulf, while it might conceivably be of importance in certain circumstances in connection with the air route.

38. The omens are not favourable to the conclusion with Persia of an arrangement on lines satisfactory to His Majesty's Government, who have little to offer in exchange. It seems likely, as matters stand, that an offer to surrender the position at present occupied by His Majesty's Government in Basidu as the price of regularisation of the position in Henjam will prove less attractive to Persia than had at one time been hoped. It may, however, prove possible as part of the general settlement to secure the retention of the Telegraph concession, contracted to the essential needs of His Majesty's Government, on a long lease from Persia, on the basis of recognition, as at present, of full Persian sovereignty, and the importance of obtaining this may be held to justify the making of concessions in return to Persia which would in other circumstances have been disproportionate. Should it unfortunately prove impossible to arrive at an understanding with Persia, the arguments for consideration of the practicability of establishing a station on the Musandim Peninsula will be very appreciably strengthened.

39. The importance of the Sheikh of Henjam and his affairs derives from his connection with the Trucial Coast rather than with Henjam. It is to be hoped that the matter may have adjusted itself before negotiations with Persia are resumed. Should it not have done so, the balance of advantage appears, on a broad view, to lie with representations on his behalf to Persia by His Majesty's Government in the capacity of the disinterested friend of both parties, on the general lines set out in para. 33 above, coupled with the exercise of such pressure as is possible on the Sheikh and his subjects to recognise the *status quo* in Henjam.

Points referred to the Persian Gulf Sub-Committee.

40. The following points have been referred to in connection with the deliberations of the Persian Gulf Sub-Committee:—

- (a) Position of His Majesty's Government in Basidu, Kishm and Henjam (P.G. 6 2 (a) 5).

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(b) Whether the existing coaling depôts on Kishm [Basidu] and Henjam can without disadvantage be moved to Bahrein? (Conclusions of 1st meeting of Sub-Committee.)

Views expressed by the Government of India.

41. The Government of India, who recognise that His Majesty's Government have no rights of ownership in Henjam, consider that "the naval advantages offered by Henjam with its deep anchorage render regularisation of our position desirable, and we still feel that we should seek to receive this in exchange for our firmer rights in Basidu, a solution as old as our original occupation in 1868 [cp. para. 10, *supra*]. Not that we anticipate possibility of acquiring a lease in perpetuity. The time appears to have passed for any such veiled form of transfer of sovereignty. Long lease or concession seems all that we can now hope for. We should be prepared to contract area to our essential needs."

Tel. from Viceroy,
1685 S., Aug. 23
1928, P. 4559/28.

Tel. from Viceroy,
July 23 1928 P.G. 9.

Lr from Pol. Res.
to G. of I., 275 S.,
July 21 1928,
P. 4482.

42. On the question of the practicability of moving the coaling station from Henjam to Bahrein, the Government of India, while they remark that it is primarily a matter for the Admiralty, consider that *prima facie* the move is practicable. The Political Resident, who refers to the fact that the Henjam anchorage "is absolutely indefensible from guns placed on Kishm Island," has suggested on this point that His Majesty's Government should be prepared to consider moving elsewhere, but that "if the Persians attempt to make us move, then we must demand sufficient time to prepare some other place, and must avoid any idea of being turned out in an undignified manner."

INDIA OFFICE,
26th September 1928.

J. G. L.