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The Position of Great Britain Towards the Baghdad Railway 1898-1914

Yusuf Husayn Yusuf 'Amr

ABSTRACT

The interest of Great Britain in the Baghdad Railways originated from its interests in Iraq, the Arabian peninsula and the Arab Gulf as a base and necessity to protect its colonies in India and its routes of transport to them, When relations between Britain and the Ottoman State worsened after Berlin Conference of 1878, the Ottoman State granted the right of concession for railways, in particular that of the Baghdad railway, to Germany. Initially, successive British governments did not oppose this German concession, since the real danger for British interests in the East came from Russia, not from Germany, but the situation soon changed when Britain learned that the Baghdad Railway line would be linked to the Arabian Gulf, which Britain considered to be a danger threatening its interests in Iraq, the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabian Gulf and consequently India and its routes of transport to there. Therefore, Britain worked to make the construction of the Baghdad Railways fail or at least to resist its link to the Gulf, and succeeded in that respect.

KEYWORDS: Baghdad Railway, Great Britain, Ottoman State, Sultan Abdul Hamid II