

VIKRAM TALWAR

*Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II
Members of the Royal Family
Mrs. Sonia Bonici & Members of Staff
Buckingham Palace
London SW1A 1 AA
United Kingdom*

MOTHER'S TESTIMONY (Withdrawal of British Troops from Iraq)

Inspired by the strength, courage and perseverance of the entire mother's, who witnessed human pain and suffering, Kamlesh was born in the port city of Basra in Iraq, on December 19th, 1929. Born in a Hindu Kshatriya family, my grand father, Devi Dayal Chopra served the British armed forces during World War I.

In 1914 when the British discovered that Turkey was entering the war on the side of the Germans, British forces from India landed at Al Faw on the Shatt al Arab and moved rapidly toward Basra.

As the war ended Devi Dayal Chopra, a noble and a true Kshatriya, settled to reconstruct the port city of Basra. For what he was able to give strengthened our testimonies in fulfillment of a promise, for millions of people in hope of a better future.

Demands of the future, a stable government, efficient and effective legal procedures, courts and municipal authorities with establishment of public health and education facilities were least of what the merchants required. Landlords pressed for grants of land, building of infrastructure, canals, roads, and for the provision of tested seeds and live stock.

Established in Sanatam Dharma, was a humble beginning as Devi Dayal restored hope, in building faith, serving and strengthening families and providing relief to the disabled. The civil government of postwar Iraq was headed originally by the high commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, and his deputy, Colonel Arnold Talbot Wilson.

Costing the British taxpayers both manpower and money, trust was the very essence which gave the Iraqi leaders an opportunity for a self government under new administration after the revolt in 1920.

In obedience to his faith, strength in character and image, a British sepoy, Devi Dayal Chopra, with the help of a local Arab and earnest money, built a workforce and employment, with his charitable trust, to overcome sources in commerce and trade.

VIKRAM TALWAR

My mother was young but she remembers, riding the first Royals Royce in Basra. She greeted with her mother, several guests who stayed in their bungalow and a rest house, for the needy. After the Iraq settlements Devi Dayal Chopra, moved his family to Lahore now in Pakistan just before partition in 1947.

It is upon the same principle mothers all over the world, are challenged, in distrust. Work responsibilities of the future prepared us in a calling, to surrender to the will of the almighty God, as I sought forgiveness, and on February 27th, 2005 redeemed in the everlasting covenants, with bonds of emotion and obligation to the family:

“And thus he was baptized and the Spirit of God descended upon him and thus he was born of the Spirit and became quickened in the inner man.” Moses 6:65.

With Lord’s strength, and in prayer, we maintained our physical independence. A mother was able to support her children through college as she decided to continue her journey in the midst of world economic crisis and mortality of world events.

Guided by the spirit of almighty God, Lord’s revelations translated in a prayer for the nation. With little savings and retirement funds, we fulfilled a promise with President George W. Bush in 2006 and the Commonwealth day message 2007.

In pre-mortal creation we are redeemed in the great plan of salvation and as a Latter-day Saint, it is one of the heaven’s best gifts to mankind. Drawing upon such difficult experiences, in his lifetime, Joseph and Emma Smith were able to give much needed comfort to many families. His teachings are inspired understanding of the Savior’s atonement.

For what we were able to give, strengthened our testimonies in the works of righteousness. From before Creation of the earth, our Savior’s have been our only hope for "peace in this world, and eternal life in the world to come"

“But learn that he doeth the works of righteousness shall receive his reward, even peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come.” (D&C 59:23).

If we follow the same principle, in truth as a golden thread, in obedience on to every faith, from the beginning of time, Abraham, to modern day revelations of Joseph Smith, then our testimonies will transcend, with true character and deepening our foundation, in the works of the future.

On this Sunday March 22nd 2009, let us pray to the almighty God and fulfill in hope, a mother’s calling to redeem us in the works and in His name.

Amen!

VIKRAM TALWAR

Vikram Talwar

In 1914 when the British discovered that Turkey was entering the war on the side of the Germans, British forces from India landed at Al Faw on the Shatt al Arab and moved rapidly toward Basra. By the fall of 1915, when British forces were already well established in towns in the south, General Charles Townshend unsuccessfully attempted to take Baghdad. In retaliation, the Turks besieged the British garrison at Al Kut for 140 days; in April 1916, the garrison was forced to surrender unconditionally.

The British quickly regrouped their forces, however, and resumed their advance under General Stanley Maude in December 1916. By March 1917 the British had captured Baghdad. Advancing northward in the spring of 1918, the British finally took Mosul in early November. As a result of the victory at Mosul, British authority was extended to all the Iraqi wilayat (sing., wilayah-province) with the exception of the Kurdish highlands bordering Turkey and Iran, the land alongside the Euphrates from Baghdad south to An Nasiriyah, and the Shia cities of Karbala and An Najaf.

On capturing Baghdad, General Maude proclaimed that Britain intended to return to Iraq. He stressed that this step would pave the way for ending the alien rule that the Iraqis had experienced since the latter days of the Abbasid caliphate.

The proclamation was in accordance with the encouragement the British had given to Arab nationalists, such as Jafar al Askari; his brother-in-law, Nuri as Said; and Jamil al Midfai, who sought emancipation from Ottoman rule. The national - lists had supported the Allied powers in expectation of both the Ottoman defeat and the freedom many nationalists assumed would come with an Allied victory.

During the war, events in Iraq were greatly influenced by the Hashemite family of Husayn ibn Ali, sharif of Mecca, who claimed descent from the family of the Prophet Muhammad. Aspiring to become king of an independent Arab kingdom, Husayn had broken with the Ottomans, to whom he had been vassal, and had thrown in his lot with the British.

Anxious for his support, the British gave Husayn reason to believe that he would have their endorsement when the war ended. Accordingly, Husayn and his sons led

VIKRAM TALWAR

the June 1916 Arab Revolt, marching northward in conjunction with the British into Transjordan, Palestine, and Syria.

Anticipating the fulfillment of Allied pledges, Husayn's son, Prince Faisal (who was later to become modern Iraq's first king), arrived in Paris in 1919 as the chief spokesman for the Arab cause. Much to his disappointment, Faisal found that the Allied powers were less than enthusiastic about Arab independence.

At the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, under Article 22 of the League of Nations Covenant, Iraq was formally made a Class A mandate entrusted to Britain. This award was completed on April 25, 1920, at the San Remo Conference in Italy. Palestine also was placed under British mandate and Syria was placed under French mandate. Faisal, who had been proclaimed king of Syria by a Syrian national congress in Damascus in March 1920, was ejected by the French in July of the same year.

The civil government of postwar Iraq was headed originally by the high commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, and his deputy, Colonel Arnold Talbot Wilson. The British were confronted with Iraq's age-old problems, compounded by some new ones. Villagers demanded that the tribes be restrained, and tribes demanded that their titles to tribal territories be extended and confirmed. Merchants demanded more effective legal procedures, courts, and laws to protect their activities and interests. Municipal authorities appealed for defined powers and grants-in-aid in addition to the establishment of public health and education facilities. Landlords pressed for grants of land, for the building of canals and roads, and for the provision of tested seeds and livestock.

The holy cities of An Najaf and Karbala and their satellite tribes were in a state of near anarchy. British reprisals after the murder of a British officer in An Najaf failed to restore order. The Anayzah, the Shammar, and the Jubur tribes of the western desert were beset by violent infighting. British administration had yet to be established in the mountains of Kurdistan. Meanwhile, from the Hakkari Mountains beyond Iraq's northern frontier and from the plains of Urmia in Iran, thousands of Assyrians began to pour into Iraqi territory seeking refuge from Turkish savagery. The most striking problem facing the British was the growing anger of the nationalists, who felt betrayed at being accorded mandate status.

The nationalists soon came to view the mandate as a flimsy disguise for colonialism. The experienced Cox delegated governance of the country to Wilson while he served in Persia between April 1918 and October 1920. The younger man governed Iraq with the kind of paternalism that had characterized British rule in India. Impatient to establish an efficient administration, Wilson used experienced Indians to staff subordinate positions within his administration. The exclusion of Iraqis from administrative posts added humiliation to Iraqi discontent.

Three important anticolonial secret societies had been formed in Iraq during 1918 and 1919. At An Najaf, Jamiyat an Nahda al Islamiya (The League of the Islamic Awakening) was organized; its numerous and varied members included ulama

VIKRAM TALWAR

(religious leaders), journalists, landlords, and tribal leaders. Members of the Jamiyat assassinated a British officer in the hope that the killing would act as a catalyst for a general rebellion at Iraq's other holy city, Karbala. Al Jamiya al Wataniya al Islamiya (The Muslim National League) was formed with the object of organizing and mobilizing the population for major resistance.

In February 1919, in Baghdad, a coalition of Shia merchants, Sunni teachers and civil servants, Sunni and Shia ulama, and Iraqi officers formed the Haras al Istiqlal (The Guardians of Independence). The Istiqlal had member groups in Karbala, An Najaf, Al Kut, and Al Hillah.

Local outbreaks against British rule had occurred even before the news reached Iraq that the country had been given only mandate status. Upon the death of an important Shia mujtahid (religious scholar) in early May 1920, Sunni and Shia ulama temporarily put aside their differences as the memorial services metamorphosed into political rallies. Ramadan, the Islamic month of fasting, began later in that month; once again, through nationalistic poetry and oratory, religious leaders exhorted the people to throw off the bonds of imperialism. Violent demonstrations and strikes followed the British arrest of several leaders.

When the news of the mandate reached Iraq in late May, a group of Iraqi delegates met with Wilson and demanded independence. Wilson dismissed them as a "handful of ungrateful politicians." Nationalist political activity was stepped up, and the grand mujtahid of Karbala, Imam Shirazi, and his son, Mirza Muhammad Riza, began to organize the effort in earnest. Arab flags were made and distributed, and pamphlets were handed out urging the tribes to prepare for revolt. Muhammad Riza acted as liaison among insurgents in An Najaf and in Karbala and the tribal confederations.

Shirazi then issued a fatwa (religious ruling), pointing out that it was against Islamic law for Muslims to countenance being ruled by non-Muslims, and he called for a jihad against the British. By July 1920, Mosul was in rebellion against British rule, and the insurrections moved south down the Euphrates River valley. The southern tribes, who cherished their long-held political autonomy, needed little inducement to join in the fray. They did not cooperate in an organized effort against the British, however, which limited the effect of the revolt. The country was in a state of anarchy for three months; the British restored order only with great difficulty and with the assistance of Royal Air Force bombers. British forces were obliged to send for reinforcements from India and from Iran.

Ath Thawra al Iraqiyya al Kubra, or The Great Iraqi Revolution (as the 1920 rebellion is called), was a watershed event in contemporary Iraqi history. For the first time, Sunnis and Shias, tribes and cities, were brought together in a common effort. In the opinion of Hanna Batatu, author of a seminal work on Iraq, the building of a nation-state in Iraq depended upon two major factors: the integration of Shias and Sunnis into the new body politic and the successful resolution of the age-old conflicts between the tribes and the riverine cities and among the tribes themselves over the food-producing flatlands of the Tigris and the Euphrates. The 1920 rebellion brought

VIKRAM TALWAR

these groups together, if only briefly; this constituted an important first step in the long and arduous process of forging a nation-state out of Iraq's conflict-ridden social structure.

The 1920 revolt had been very costly to the British in both manpower and money. Whitehall was under domestic pressure to devise a formula that would provide the maximum control over Iraq at the least cost to the British taxpayer. The British replaced the military regime with a provisional Arab government, assisted by British advisers and answerable to the supreme authority of the high commissioner for Iraq, Cox. The new administration provided a channel of communication between the British and the restive population, and it gave Iraqi leaders an opportunity to prepare for eventual self-government. The provisional government was aided by the large number of trained Iraqi administrators who returned home when the French ejected Faisal from Syria. Like earlier Iraqi governments, however, the provisional government was composed chiefly of Sunni Arabs; once again the Shias were underrepresented.

At the Cairo Conference of 1921, the British set the parameters for Iraqi political life that were to continue until the 1958 revolution; they chose Faisal as Iraq's first King; they established an indigenous Iraqi army; and they proposed a new treaty. To confirm Faisal as Iraq's first monarch, a one-question plebiscite was carefully arranged that had a return of 96 percent in his favor. The British saw in Faisal a leader who possessed sufficient nationalist and Islamic credentials to have broad appeal, but who also was vulnerable enough to remain dependent on their support. Faisal traced his descent from the family of the Prophet Muhammad and his ancestors had held political authority in the holy cities of Mecca and Medina since the tenth century. The British believed that these credentials would satisfy traditional Arab standards of political legitimacy; moreover, the British thought that Faisal would be accepted by the growing Iraqi nationalist movement because of his role in the 1916 revolt against the Turks, his achievements as a leader of the Arab emancipation movement, and his general leadership qualities.

As a counterforce to the nationalistic inclinations of the monarchy and as a means of insuring the king's dependence, the British cultivated the tribal shaykhs, whose power had been waning since the end of the nineteenth century. While the new king sought to create a national consciousness, to strengthen the institutions of the emerging state, and especially to create a national military, the tribal shaykhs supported a fragmented community and sought to weaken the coercive power of the state. A major goal of the British policy was to keep the monarchy stronger than any one tribe but weaker than a coalition of tribes so that British power would ultimately be decisive in arbitrating disputes between the two.

Ultimately, the British-created monarchy suffered from a chronic legitimacy crisis: the concept of a monarchy was alien to Iraq. Despite his Islamic and pan-Arab credentials, Faisal was not an Iraqi, and, no matter how effectively he ruled, Iraqis saw the monarchy as a British creation. The continuing inability of the government to gain the confidence of the people fueled political instability well into the 1970s.

VIKRAM TALWAR

The British decision at the Cairo Conference to establish an indigenous Iraqi army was significant. In Iraq, as in most of the developing world, the military establishment has been the best organized institution in an otherwise weak political system. Thus, while Iraq's body politic crumbled under immense political and economic pressure throughout the monarchic period, the military gained increasing power and influence; moreover, because the officers in the new army were by necessity Sunnis who had served under the Ottomans, while the lower ranks were predominantly filled by Shia tribal elements, Sunni dominance in the military was preserved.

The final major decision taken at the Cairo Conference related to the new Anglo-Iraqi Treaty. Faisal was under pressure from the nationalists and the anti-British mujtahids of An Najaf and Karbala to limit both British influence in Iraq and the duration of the treaty. Recognizing that the monarchy depended on British support-- and wishing to avoid a repetition of his experience in Syria--Faisal maintained a moderate approach in dealing with Britain. The twenty-year treaty, which was ratified in October 1922, stated that the king would heed British advice on all matters affecting British interests and on fiscal policy as long as Iraq was in debt to Britain, and that British officials would be appointed to specified posts in eighteen departments to act as advisers and inspectors. A subsequent financial agreement, which significantly increased the financial burden on Iraq, required Iraq to pay half the cost of supporting British resident officials, among other expenses. British obligations under the new treaty included providing various kinds of aid, notably military assistance, and proposing Iraq for membership in the League of Nations at the earliest moment. In effect, the treaty ensured that Iraq would remain politically and economically dependent on Britain. While unable to prevent the treaty, Faisal clearly felt that the British had gone back on their promises to him.

After the treaty had been signed, Iraq readied itself for the country-wide elections that had been provided for in the May 1922 Electoral Law. There were important changes in the government at this time. Cox resigned his position as high commissioner and was replaced by Sir Henry Dobbs; Iraq's aging prime minister, Abd ar Rahman al Gailani, stepped down and was replaced by Abd al Muhsin as Saadun. In April 1923, Saadun signed a protocol that shortened the treaty period to four years. As a result of the elections, however, Saadun was replaced by Jafar al Askari, a veteran of the Arab Revolt and an early supporter of Faisal.

The elected Constituent Assembly met for the first time in March 1924, and it formally ratified the treaty despite strong (and sometimes physical) opposition on the part of many in the assembly. The assembly also accepted the Organic Law that declared Iraq to be a sovereign state with a representative system of government and a hereditary constitutional monarchy. The newly ratified constitution-- which, along with the treaty, had been hotly debated--legislated an important British role in Iraqi affairs.

The major issue at stake in the constitutional debate revolved around the powers of the monarchy. In the final draft, British interests prevailed, and the monarchy was granted wide-ranging powers that included the right to confirm all laws, to call for a

VIKRAM TALWAR

general election, to prorogue parliament, and to issue ordinances for the fulfillment of treaty obligations without parliamentary sanctions. Like the treaty, the constitution provided the British with a means of indirect control in Iraq.

After the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty was ratified, the most pressing issue confronting the newly established constitutional monarchy was the question of boundaries, especially in the former Ottoman wilayah of Mosul, now known as Mosul Province. The status of Mosul Province was complicated by two factors, the British desire to gain oil concessions and the existence of a majority Kurdish population that was seeking independence apart from either Iraq or Turkey.

According to the Treaty of Sevres, concluded in 1920 with the Ottoman Sultan, Mosul was to be part of an autonomous Kurdish state. The treaty was scrapped, however, when nationalist leader Mustafa Kamal (1881-1938--also known as Atatürk) came to power in Turkey and established control over the Kurdish areas in eastern Turkey. In 1923, after two failed British attempts to establish an autonomous Kurdish province, London decided to include the Kurds in the new Iraqi state with the proviso that Kurds would hold government positions in Kurdish areas and that the Kurdish language would be preserved. The British decision to include Mosul in Iraq was based largely on their belief that the area contained large oil deposits.

Before the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, the British- controlled Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC) had held concessionary rights to the Mosul wilayah. Under the 1916 Sykes-Picot Agreement--an agreement in 1916 between Britain and France that delineated future control of the Middle East--the area would have fallen under French influence. In 1919, however, the French relinquished their claims to Mosul under the terms of the Long- Berenger Agreement. The 1919 agreement granted the French a 25 percent share in the TPC as compensation.

Beginning in 1923, British and Iraqi negotiators held acrimonious discussions over the new oil concession. The major obstacle was Iraq's insistence on a 20 percent equity participation in the company; this figure had been included in the original TPC concession to the Turks and had been agreed upon at San Remo for the Iraqis. In the end, despite strong nationalist sentiments against the concession agreement, the Iraqi negotiators acquiesced to it. The League of Nations was soon to vote on the disposition of Mosul, and the Iraqis feared that, without British support, Iraq would lose the area to Turkey. In March 1925, an agreement was concluded that contained none of the Iraqi demands. The TPC, now renamed the Iraq Petroleum Company (IPC), was granted a concession for a period of seventy-five years.

In 1925 the League of Nations decided that Mosul Province would be considered a part of Iraq, but it also suggested that the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty be extended from four to twenty-five years as a protection for the Kurdish minority, who intensely distrusted the Iraqi government. The Iraqis also were to give due regard to Kurdish sensibilities in matters of culture and of language. Although reluctant to do so, the Iraqi assembly ratified the treaty in January 1926. Turkey was eventually reconciled to the loss by being promised one-tenth of any oil revenues that might accrue in the area, and a tripartite Anglo-Turco-Iraqi treaty was signed in July 1926. This

VIKRAM TALWAR

settlement was to have important repercussions, both positive and negative, for the future of Iraq. Vast oil revenues would accrue from the Mosul Province, but the inclusion of a large number of well-armed and restless Kurds in Iraqi territory would continue to plague Iraqi governments.

With the signing of the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty and the settling of the Mosul question, Iraqi politics took on a new dynamic. The emerging class of Sunni and Shia landowning tribal shaykhs vied for positions of power with wealthy and prestigious urban-based Sunni families and with Ottoman-trained army officers and bureaucrats. Because Iraq's newly established political institutions were the creation of a foreign power, and because the concept of democratic government had no precedent in Iraqi history, the politicians in Baghdad lacked legitimacy and never developed deeply rooted constituencies.

Thus, despite a constitution and an elected assembly, Iraqi politics was more a shifting alliance of important personalities and cliques than a democracy in the Western sense. The absence of broadly based political institutions inhibited the early nationalist movement's ability to make deep inroads into Iraq's diverse social structure. Thus, despite the widely felt resentment at Iraq's mandate status, the burgeoning nationalist movement was largely ineffective.

Nonetheless, through the late 1920s, the nationalists persisted in opposing the Anglo-Iraqi Treaty and in demanding independence. A treaty more favorable to the Iraqis was presented in December 1927. It remained unratified, however, because of nationalist demands for an unconditional promise of independence. This promise eventually was made by the new high commissioner, Sir Gilbert Clayton, in 1929, but the confusion occasioned by the sudden death of Clayton and by the suicide of Abd al Muhsin as Saadun, the most powerful Iraqi advocate of the treaty, delayed the writing of a new treaty. In June 1929, the nationalists received their first positive response from London when a newly elected Labor Party government announced its intention to support Iraq's admission to the League of Nations in 1932 and to negotiate a new treaty recognizing Iraq's independence.

Faisal's closest adviser (and soon-to-be Iraqi strongman), Nuri as Said, carried out the treaty negotiations. Despite widespread opposition, Nuri as Said was able to force the treaty through parliament. The new Anglo-Iraqi Treaty was signed in June 1930. It provided for a "close alliance," for "full and frank consultations between the two countries in all matters of foreign policy," and for mutual assistance in case of war. Iraq granted the British the use of air bases near Basra and at Al Habbaniyah and the right to move troops across the country.

The treaty, of twenty-five years' duration, was to come into force upon Iraq's admission to the League of Nations. The terms of the treaty gained Nuri as Said favor in British eyes but discredited him in the eyes of the Iraqi nationalists, who vehemently opposed its lengthy duration and the leasing of air bases. The Kurds and the Assyrians also opposed the treaty because it offered no guarantees for their status in the new country.

VIKRAM TALWAR

P.O. BOX 372 • OXFORD NJ • 07863 U.S.A. PHONE/FAX: 908 689 5071