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BRITAIN, HER MIDDLE EAST MANDATES AND THE  
EMERGENCE OF SAUDI-ARABIA, 1926-1932:  
A STUDY IN THE PROCESS OF BRITISH POLICY-  
MAKING AND IN THE CONDUCT AND DEVELOPMENT  
OF BRITAIN'S RELATIONS WITH IBN SAUD

BY

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TO

MY WIFE AND OUR TWINS

## ABSTRACT

The aim of this study is to analyse Britain's relations with Ibn Saud between 1926 when he conquered the Hejaz and 1932 when reconciliation between the Saudis and the Hashemites was achieved. From analysis of the policy-making process it is hoped to establish the causes of Britain's involvement in Arabian affairs and the part which Britain played in the creation of Saudi Arabia.

My thesis is divided into six chapters. Chapter I covers early attempts made by Britain and Ibn Saud towards the establishment of a close relationship, and examines the reasons which retarded these endeavours until 1925.

Three main stages can be noted in Anglo-Saudi relations during the period under review:

- 1 - January 1926 to May 1927. During this stage Ibn Saud was busily engaged in establishing his authority in the Hejaz seeking for this purpose support from Britain, from other Great Powers and throughout the Muslim World. Chapter 2 investigates the attitudes of the British Government and of the British Muslims, particularly the Indians, towards the Saudi conquest of the Hejaz. Chapter 3 analyses the making of the treaty of Jeddah (1927) throwing new light on British interests in Arabia and the means of protecting them. It also explores the British decision-making process.
- 2 - June 1927 to December 1930. With Anglo-Saudi relations now established on an equal footing, fresh troubles, in November



1927, arose on the border areas with the Mandates and immediately threatened all the agreements reached. Chapter 4 analyses the ensuing crisis and the unresolved dilemma posed by the Ikhwan and the frontier posts question. Chapter 5 examines the hitherto unexplored area of contacts and deliberations which led to Anglo-Saudi collaboration in suppressing the Ikhwan rebellion.

3 - January 1930 to December 1932. The opportunity was now more favourable for Britain to promote reconciliation between the Saudis and the Hashemites. Chapter 6 is entirely devoted to this successful achievement.

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## CONVENTIONS

The following conventions have been generally adopted throughout the thesis.

### Transliteration:

When an Arabic name or word or location has a form which is generally accepted in English I have normally used it. In some cases, however, I have preferred to render certain names and locations in their correct Arabic pronunciations. In the case of names like al-Rashid or locations such as al-Madinah I have felt it more accurate to preserve the prefix 'al' as part of the word since it is so in Arabic. Locations and tribe names which end in their Arabic form with the letter 'ا' were accurately transliterated by adding an 'h' rather than an 'a' to the word such as Haddah and 'Utaibah. I have given a full transliteration of the titles of Arabic works and names of their authors according to the system I mentioned above. I have tried to use as few Arabic words as possible in the main body of the text.

### Abbreviations:

I have used as few abbreviations as possible, indicating after first use of full name or title, where I would subsequently abbreviate.



### Quotations:

Quotations are reproduced exactly as in the source, but any word appearing in brackets is my own. There are many variant spellings in English of the same Arabic name or word in the original sources. Since the sense is always clear I have preferred not to burden the quotations with the addition of the correct transliteration used in my own text.

### Appendices:

Some of the appendices are a direct reproduction of the original texts. Others are compiled from different sources. I have included 'biographical notes' at an appendix for easy reference and to save footnote space.

### Footnotes:

Authors' surnames are given without their initials. Their works are designated in full at their first appearance - thereafter a brief title has been given. When a footnote refers to more than one source, the first of them relates, where relevant, to a quotation. For the sake of accuracy I have referred to documents by the individual paper-number, the file-number, the index number and the volume-number. When simultaneous reference is made to documents in the same file or volume, I have not repeated the file or volume number.

### Bibliography:

The bibliography includes full titles and the places and dates of publication of the editions I have used. All works are alphabetically indexed.

## Introduction

From the 16th Century onwards/<sup>the</sup>European maritime Powers, and particularly Britain, became increasingly interested in Arabia's coasts. By the outbreak of World War I Britain had succeeded in establishing her authority and influence in Aden, in the Trucial Coast and in Kuwait, leaving/<sup>the</sup>suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire unchallenged along the coasts of the Hejaz, the Yemen and al-Hasa. Central Arabia, however, where the Ottoman Caliph's authority was recognized, remained isolated from contact with any outside Powers. It was left to European travellers in the 19th and 20th centuries to discover the heart of Arabia. Their enterprise began to fill in the blank map of Central Arabia and to provide fascinating accounts of tribal life and nomadic customs. Among those travellers was Captain William Henry Irvine Shakespear - the British Agent at Kuwait, who in 1911 drew Britain's attention to the growing influence of 'Abd al-'Aziz Ibn 'Abd al-Rahman Al-Saud and sought permission to make official contact. This was refused on the ground that Britain had no interests in Central Arabia.

By capturing al-Hasa from the Turks in 1913, Ibn Saud now held power in a coastal area and so achieved a place, which the outbreak of the War in 1914 was to magnify, in Britain's policy calculations. Shakespear



was now instructed to make immediate official contact and to conclude a treaty of alliance. Although the treaty was made, no close relationship developed because, with the progress of the war, Britain's interest shifted decisively towards the Sharif of Mecca.

After the war it was again Ibn Saud who forced Britain to take notice when, after conquering Hail in 1921, he brought his Ikhwan warriors to the borders of Britain's newly established Mandates. A definition of boundaries between these Mandates and Ibn Saud's possessions was urgently needed. For the first time the situation in Central Arabia directly concerned British interests. Indeed, Ibn Saud's ambitions and those of his Ikhwan followers now posed a direct threat. Britain's endeavours to establish settled borders on the European model conflicted with nomadic practice and protracted negotiations ensued. Though a compromise in vague terms was reached, areas of dispute, aggravated by Ibn Saud's own feud with the Hashemites, remained open.

While Britain continued to try to resolve these problems, Ibn Saud, once again, forced attention on himself when, in 1924, he started his conquest of the Hejaz. Deciding to remain neutral in that struggle, Britain sought immediate assurances from Ibn Saud concerning the Mandates and eventually, in November 1925, the Haddah and Bahrah agreements were signed. As the conqueror of the Hejaz and future guardian of

the Holy Places of Islam, Ibn Saud could no longer be regarded as a petty Arabian chief. His attitudes now were important not only in relation to the Mandates but also to Britain's wider Imperial interests throughout the Islamic world.

The situation on the spot was both changing and filled with complexities. The detail which often seemed to baffle Britain's policy-makers is difficult to unravel without an understanding of desert politics and of the relationship between Ibn Saud and the Hashemites and other neighbouring Arab rulers and between him and the various groupings, in particular the Ikhwan, among his own people. British policy-making was further complicated by the number of departments concerned; the Foreign Office directly for Arabia; the Colonial Office for the Mandates; the Air Ministry for their defence; and the India Office directly because of its Gulf responsibilities and indirectly because of its concern about the Holy Places of Islam. Although some coordination had been achieved by setting up the Middle East Department under the Colonial Office in 1921, points of view continued to differ and decision-making was always laborious. In spite of this handicap and of all the local difficulties Britain's dialogue with Ibn Saud was maintained and most of the issues were successfully negotiated.

To appreciate the development of this new relationship with Ibn Saud the following factors must constantly be borne in mind:

1. The whole question of Islamic public opinion within the British Empire.
2. The local leaders in the Middle East and their conflicting ideas and ambitions.
3. Bedouin society with its changeable loyalties and tribal feuds.

During the 1920s and early 1930s Britain's dominant position in the Middle East was virtually unchallenged by any of the other Great Powers. For various reasons neither France, nor Italy, nor Russia, nor the United States emerged as serious rivals. British policy-makers, therefore, seemed to have a clear field. In what amounted otherwise to an almost complete power vacuum Ibn Saud had little option but to incline towards Britain. Britain, however, only gradually came to appreciate the value of establishing close relations with him. The success of subsequent negotiations depended less on policy decisions in London than on the diplomatic skill of individual negotiators on the spot and on Ibn Saud's own imperative need to secure British backing. Among the British envoys Sir Gilbert Clayton, by his personal dedication to the cause of Anglo-Saudi friendship, by his patient manoeuvring and by his appreciation of some of the realities of Bedouin society, played the outstanding role.



This study is not intended to provide an account of Ibn Saud as the creator of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, but is confined to the development of Anglo-Saudi relations and to Britain's part in the making of the Saudi Kingdom. Inevitably involved as an Imperial Power, as a Mandatory Power and as an Islamic Power, Britain's contribution to Ibn Saud's achievement was incidental rather than deliberate. Britain was not disposed to let his ambitions threaten her own interests and effectively blocked his road, as she had Mohammad Ali's in the 19th century, when these appeared in danger. Support for Ibn Saud was clearly conditional on restraint, which unlike Mohammad Ali he accepted, where his dream of wider Empire was concerned. What would have happened without Britain to hold back Ibn Saud? Would he have been able, with Ikhwan allegiance no longer in question, to conquer the rest of the Arabian Peninsula including Syria and Mesopotamia? If so, it is fascinating, if idle, to speculate on how different the whole subsequent course of Middle East history might have been.

Four studies have been recently published which deal, either directly or indirectly, with the creation

of Saudi-Arabia.<sup>1</sup> None of them examines British policy-making in the period under consideration. I met Miss C. Helms in the summer of 1979. She told me that she was particularly interested in the geographical, religious and anthropological factors which involved political consciousness and was not interested in a historical approach. I had no access, however, to her thesis before its publication in 1981. I was interested to find that, although looking at Saudi Arabia from quite different angles and using different primary sources, our general conclusions were very similar. Her main source was the India Office Library documents whereas I relied mostly on the Foreign Office, Colonial Office, Air Ministry, and Cabinet Office records in the Public Record Office. Material was of course sometimes duplicated because copies of correspondence had been exchanged and therefore sometimes we have made identical quotes. But there is very little overlap because she has concentrated on the

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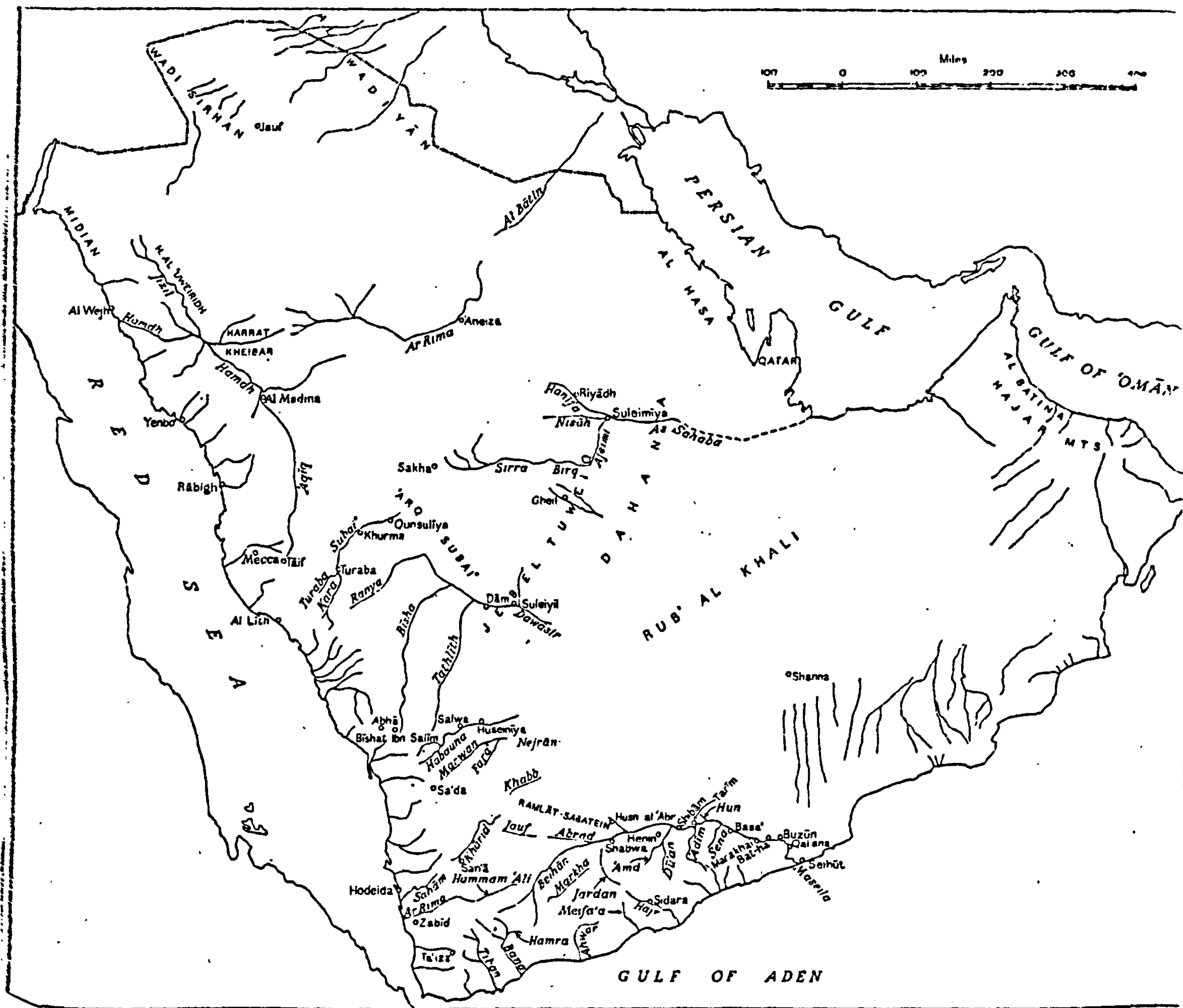
1. These are:

1. Troeller, G.G., The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud (London 1976)
2. Iqbal, M., Emergence of Saudi Arabia: A Political Study of King Abd al-Aziz ibn Saud 1901-1953 (Shringar 1977)
3. Habib, J.S., Ibn Saud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Nejd and Their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom, 1910-1930 (Leiden 1978)
4. Helms, C.M., The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia: Evolution of Political Identity (London 1981)

internal factors leading to the 'cohesion' of Saudi Arabia from the beginning of the century to 1929 whereas I have confined myself to Britain's involvement between 1926-32. In fact we are only concerned with the same period during the years 1926-29 and here I have discovered no contradictions in our findings. My own final draft was complete before I read her book and, while gaining valuable background knowledge from it, I found no occasion to change or modify anything which I had written.

As already indicated the bulk of my own research has been in the Public Record Office. I have been through all the F.O., C.O., Air Ministry and Cabinet files for the period 1926-32. I felt that there was no need for me to delve in detail into the India Office papers, particularly since copies of any significant communications were available in the Foreign Office papers, and since the role of the India Office in Middle East policy-making declined after 1921. I have consulted the private papers of the key figures in Arabian affairs. I have also endeavoured to consult all publications (books and articles) written by participants in Arabian affairs.





Arabia

Source : Admiralty, Western Arabia and the Red Sea.

## CHAPTER ONE

### BRITAIN AND ARABIA, 1910-1925

- Anglo-Saudi Relations and the Making of the Treaty of Darain, 1910-15
- Arabia during the First World War and after, 1915-20
- Reorganization of the Middle East Policy-Making System, 1920-21
- The Nejd Northern Frontier Delimitation and the Frontier Disputes, 1921-25



Anglo-Saudi Relations and the Making of the Treaty of  
Darain, 1910-15

The first meeting between Ibn Saud and any official British representative took place when he visited the Shaikh of Kuwait in 1910. Captain W.H.I. Shakespear, the British Political Agent there, welcomed the chance thus provided to make contact with the Amir of Nejd, who happened to be a close contemporary in age and who had already aroused his interest and curiosity. He was evidently much impressed by Ibn Saud, who made the most of his opportunity to convey, however informally, to a representative of Great Britain his own burning ambition to restore the Kingdom of his ancestors in Arabia.<sup>1</sup>

Since his appointment as a British Agent at Kuwait in 1909, Shakespear had gradually extended his sphere of interest into Central Arabia. His love for travelling into the desert "had filled up large blanks on the map".<sup>2</sup> Having previously served in Persia and Muscat, and now, from Kuwait, he made annual excursions into the unknown hinterland. These travels provided an occasion for further meetings with Ibn Saud. For instance, in March 1911, during the course of an extended tour to the South, a meeting occurred, which was to have momentous consequences. Shakespear was obviously impressed,

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1. Winstone, Captain Shakespear (London 1976) p.18.
  2. Carruthers, 'Captain Shakespear's Last Journey', Geographical Journal, LIX (1922) pp.321- 34, 401- 18.

and the outline of a new British policy in Arabia was formulated in his mind. Subsequently, he was repeatedly to press his views on the British Government. Shakespear listened to Ibn Saud's story from his own lips. The Amir expressed regret that Britain had not responded to overtures previously made indirectly, by his father, in 1904 when a British Agent was first appointed in Kuwait. He spoke of his ambition to drive the Turks from al-Hasa and al-Qatif and of his desire for recognition by Britain. Shakespear rightly assumed that the Amir had concluded that any expedition against the Turks "would be fruitless until the ability of the Turks to bring in troops by sea was limited, and that was only possible through the English".<sup>1</sup>

Convinced that the Amir was genuinely seeking British recognition, Shakespear informed London of this approach. The reaction was negative. Ibn Saud's ambitions and his possible means of gratifying them seemed totally irrelevant in the context of British interests. Britain's concern was with the coasts and not Central Arabia. The maintenance of good relations with Turkey in the Gulf area was too important to jeopardize by giving gratuitous encouragement to one of her potential enemies.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Shakespear to Cox, 8 April 1911, quoted in: Busch, Britain and the Persian Gulf (London 1967), p.340. Shakespear reported fully on his meeting with Ibn Saud in 1914, see: Memo. 2, The Chief Political Officer, in charge Iraq section, Arab Bureau to the Director, Arab Bureau, Cairo, 12 January 1917, (Philly Papers) 15/4, St. Antony's College, Oxford (Thereafter: 'Arab Bureau Memo'.)
  2. Troeller, 'British Policy towards Ibn Saud 1910-1926', Cambridge Univ. Ph.D. thesis 1971), p.66. The thesis has been published under the title: The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud (London 1976) without change ; 'Arab Bureau Memo'.



Turkey, at that time, was already facing the emergence of an Arab nationalist movement in Syria. While Arab discontent grew, Turkey also became involved in<sup>a</sup> war with Italy to save Tripoli and then in the Balkan wars. Ibn Saud welcomed Turkey's difficulties and felt, early in May 1913, that the moment was opportune to expel her forces from al-Hasa. His operations were successful even without the assistance which he had tried to obtain from Britain. This secured for Ibn Saud the first of his two main objectives. For Britain, however, cooperation with Turkey remained the top priority, and on 29 July, negotiations, started in 1911 to settle interests in the Gulf area, culminated in a convention. In that convention al-Hasa was defined as part of the Ottoman sanjaq of Nejd.<sup>1</sup> Since Turkish suzerainty over Nejd was only nominal, Ibn Saud's seizing of al-Hasa seemed implicitly to be recognised by Turkey.

Once Ibn Saud had gained control of a coastal area, he wrote from "the land of his fathers and grandfathers" to Sir Percy Cox, the Political Resident in the Gulf, on 13 June: "in view of my friendly feelings I desire to be on the same terms with you as existed between you and my ancestors". Recognition by Britain seemed to him important not only for the securing of his present gains but for the achievement of his future ambitions. Britain, however, was only prepared to "continue to maintain the friendly relations which have been sustained in the past", should he "abstain from all action

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1. See Memorial of the Govt. of Saudi Arabia, (Cairo 1955) ii, p.376 (Thereafter: Saudi Memorial); See also: Arab Bureau Memo. The convention concerns the boundaries of Kuwait, Qatar and Bahrain as well as Turkey's recognition of Britain's position in the Gulf. It was never ratified because when this was due the two Powers were only hours away from war. For text see: Kelly, Eastern Arabian Frontiers (London 1964) p.107. For Ibn Saud's own preparations to conquer al-Hasa see: Attar, sagr al-jazirah (Beirut 1972) pp.393-409.

calculated to disturb the status quo or to create unrest among Arab Principalities".<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the sudden invasion of al-Hasa by Ibn Saud created a delicate situation for Britain. Having just concluded a settlement with Turkey it was difficult for Britain to raise the question of the status of Nejd and possible recognition of Ibn Saud, without running the risk of jeopardising Anglo-Turkish relations. The British reply, sought, therefore, simply to protect British interests in the Gulf as defined by the Anglo-Turkish convention of 1913.

Having now failed to secure British backing Ibn Saud did not dare formally to throw off his Turkish allegiance. On the contrary, he reverted to diplomacy with Turkey and claimed to be maintaining loyalty to the Sultan.<sup>2</sup> Secretly however, he made his concept of independence known to the Arab nationalists. He also continued to entertain hopes of a changing British attitude. On Britain's part, there was a growing awareness that Ibn Saud had emerged as the most powerful ruler in Central Arabia. In fact Britain had never had an Arabian policy, but she had reacted to events in Arabia whenever they seemed to affect her Gulf interests.<sup>3</sup> The case for establishing a direct relationship

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1. Quoted in: Kelly, op.cit., p.108.

2. Qasem, al-khalij al-arabi, 1914-1945 (Cairo 1973) pp. 4-5.

3. Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East - 1', International Affairs, 29 (1953) pp.22-42; Troeller, op.cit. pp.78-79, 81-83; Cunningham, 'The Wrong Horse - a Study of Anglo-Turkish Relations before the First World War', St. Antony's Papers, xvii (1965) pp.56-76.

with Ibn Saud now seemed to commend itself.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, a major step was taken when Cox instructed Shakespear and Trevor, the Political Agent in Bahrain, to meet Ibn Saud in December 1913 in order to explain to him the British position and to assess his readiness to co-operate with Britain's policy in the Gulf. At this first formal meeting Ibn Saud showed the British Political Agents six points suggested by the Turks to be included in a proposed treaty with him. Presumably he deliberately revealed the draft to gain Britain's confidence and to secure their involvement, even proposing that Britain should be invited to mediate in the settlement. Three of these points were prejudicial to British interests. Ibn Saud was to commit himself (i) to exclude all foreign merchants and agents from al-Hasa; (ii) to refrain from communicating with foreign powers; (iii) to undertake not to grant concessions to any foreign company.<sup>2</sup> The immediate result of this meeting was to strengthen the friendly relationship already established between Shakespear and Ibn Saud. This was to prove useful for British interests and policy in the Gulf.

The Foreign Office protested on 9 March 1914 to the Turkish ambassador in London against the three points above

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1. See full account in: 'Memorandum on British Commitments to Bin Saud' by: Political Intelligence Department, Foreign Office, 28 Jan. 1927, E594/119/91, F.O.371/12244. (Thereafter: F.O. Memo.); See also: British Documents on the Origins of the War, (London 1938) X, pp.190-4.

2. F.O. Memo.

mentioned. Turkey was reminded that British interests in Ibn Saud's territories had been defined in the Anglo-Turkish convention of 1913 as follows: Ibn Saud should not meddle in the affairs of the Gulf Emirates; he should co-operate in the observation and maintenance of the Maritime Truce; and British traders should be freely admitted to his province. Significantly it was urged that Turkey should "refrain from hostile action by sea against El-Hasa coast without first consulting us [the British] and giving us an opportunity of friendly mediation".<sup>1</sup>

While Ibn Saud was asked to postpone the conclusion of the proposed agreement with Turkey, another Anglo-Turkish convention was concluded in March 1914, by which British and Turkish spheres of influence in south western Arabia were defined. Britain therefore now favoured Turko-Saudi understanding. This decision provoked differences between London and India over Ibn Saud's status. While London considered his expansion to the Gulf coast as a useful barrier between the Trucial Oman and the Ottoman influence in the north, India's fears about his ambitions in the Gulf area increased. Taking no initiative in Gulf affairs, Britain informed Ibn Saud that she could not assist him in any struggle against Turkey, because they had already come to a comprehensive understanding on Arabian affairs.<sup>2</sup> Britain's policy was in fact still wavering. There were conflicting views in the Foreign Office and, as one critic minuted:

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1. Quoted in, Troeller, op.cit., p.90; see also F.O. Memo.

2. See: Qasem, op.cit., pp.1-14; Kelly, op.cit., p.111; Abdullah, The United Arab Emirates (London 1978) pp.170-171. For the Saudi point of view see: Saudi Memorial, pp.384-99.



"I have always felt that the policy we are pursuing towards Ibn Saud is fraught with grave danger to the integrity of Turkey, and I was always personally strongly opposed to the interviews which took place between him and our officials,"<sup>1</sup>

Thus, to Ibn Saud only one option - the Turkish option seemed open. Negotiations with the Turks proceeded smoothly, and on 15 May a treaty was signed. Accordingly he was offered "the Vilayet of Nejd .... for life". He accepted the title of "Wali and Military Commandant of Nejd" and engaged to fly a "Turkish flag". Foreign correspondence was to be conducted solely through the Porte and in case of war he was "to come to the assistance of the Sultan".<sup>2</sup> Ibn Saud agreed to these terms only because "he was assured privately that even the small measures of sovereignty accorded to Turkey could never be claimed".<sup>3</sup> The treaty was, however, put to the test by the outbreak of the First World War and found wanting as will be seen.

Shakespear, still in favour of supporting Ibn Saud, agreed that "Turkey has not the power to coerce Arabia". He indicated that "a combination of all the Arab tribes" was possible, and "the expulsion of Turkish troops and officials" from the Arab lands, and "the establishment of an independent Arabia" under

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1. Quoted in Saudi Memorial, ii, p.393.
  2. For a summary of the treaty see: F.O. Memo. A confirmation of the appointment of Ibn Saud as Wali of Nejd was made by the Turkish Ambassador in London in a note to F.O. on 9 July 1914. See: Kelly, op.cit., p.110. Apparently Ibn Saud did not sign the treaty although it had been sent to him for signature. The Saudi Govt. later confirmed this. See Saudi Memorial, ii, p.931; see also: Attar, op.cit., pp.406-409.
  3. Saudi Memorial, ii, p.931.

Ibn Saud's leadership remained the Arabs' best hope. He wrote to the India Office:

"I have heard the subject discussed so often along these lines, and by so many widely separated chiefs, that I cannot avoid the conclusion that the Turkish Government is riding for a very bad fall."<sup>1</sup>

Sir Arthur Hirtzel, permanent secretary at the India Office, replied on 18 June to Shakespear that: "if H.M.G. are to support Ibn Saud, his interests must somehow be harmonised with those of the Turks, or at least shown not to conflict with them."<sup>2</sup>

However good Shakespear's judgement was Britain's relations with both Ibn Saud and Turkey had to be revised when the war broke in Europe. The Turkish question accordingly took on a new dimension. If Turkey joined Germany, it was then argued, Britain's whole position in the Middle East would be threatened. Against that contingency it was decided that no time must be lost in seeking both reliable allies in Arabia and a knowledgeable emissary to make contact. Implementation of this decision to support military operations against Turkey and to counteract the effect of the Ottoman Caliph's proclamation of a jihad (Holy War)<sup>3</sup> became even more urgent in November when Turkey and Britain were formally at war. From Britain's

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1. Quoted in: Winstone, op.cit., pp.190- 91.

2. Ibid., see also: Arab Bureau Memo.

3. For Holy War in Islam: 'jihad', see: Khadduri, War and Peace in the Law of Islam (London 1979), chapters 5 and 6, pp.55-82.



point of view , Ibn Saud as far as any military operations in Mesopotamia were concerned and the Sharif of the Hejaz, Husain Ibn Ali, as far as any Egyptian based operation was concerned, were two key figures among Arab leaders.

While the British policy-makers were evaluating Britain's position during the autumn of 1914, Shakespear was welcomed to Whitehall "with open arms". He was no longer "the meddling nuisance who sought to change Britain's entire policy". It was quickly decided that he should go back to Arabia with the title of "Political Officer on Special Duty" responsible directly to Sir Percy Cox and charged with the task of preventing the outbreak of unrest in Central Arabia, "and in the event of war with Turkey to ensure that no assistance should be rendered from that quarter". He was given the authority to negotiate with Ibn Saud an agreement to that effect. Before his arrival in Arabia, war had been declared.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud was, accordingly, informed of Shakespear's impending visit and offered guarantees for his defacto position vis á vis Turkey. Turkey herself lost no time in approaching Ibn Saud, who took advantage of the general situation to open hostilities against Ibn al-Rashid. The Turkish mission failed to reconcile the two Arab chiefs, because of Ibn Saud's insistence on the reduction of his family's traditional enemy to a "rightful

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1. Winstone, op.cit., pp.193-194; see also: Busch, Britain, India and the Arabs (London 1971), p.232.

state of vassalage". Until he achieved this purpose, Ibn Saud made it clear that he could spare no troops for Turkey in Iraq.<sup>1</sup> At this early stage of war Ibn Saud's attitude was one of neutrality, even before he was approached by any British official.

When the British message of 3 November reached Ibn Saud with promises and guarantees for his independence, he replied that he would be "one of the greatest helpers" to the British side, and he remained "unshaken" in his long-standing desire to meet Shakespear. Meanwhile, the Shaikh of Kuwait used his good offices to encourage Ibn Saud to take the same pro-British attitude as he and the Shaikh of Mohammarah.<sup>2</sup>

On Shakespear's arrival in Kuwait, on 7 December, he found that a message from Ibn Saud awaited him suggesting an urgent meeting.<sup>3</sup> At the same time he found both the Shaikh of Kuwait and Cox fully engaged in preparing to receive Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, then on his way to the Gulf to secure Arab co-operation for Britain. Shakespear was asked to wait for the Viceroy,<sup>4</sup> but he preferred to proceed directly to Ibn Saud. On 31 December, he found the Amir in a bad mood,

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1. Arab Bureau Memo.; F.O. Memo.

2. Messages between the Sheikh of Kuwait and Ibn Saud are cited in: Winstone, op.cit., pp.196- 97. For the attitude of the Shaikh of Mohammarah, see: Qasem, op.cit., p.12.

3. Winstone, op.cit., p.198.

4. See an account of Lord Hardinge's trip to the Gulf in his My Indian Years (London 1945) pp.111- 14; see also: Qasem, op.cit., pp.16-17.

for during Shakespear's absence in London, difficulties had arisen between the Amir and the British agents at Kuwait and Bahrain (Gray and Trevor).<sup>1</sup> Showing sympathy for Ibn Saud, as was indicated by a despatch to Cox, their discussions proceeded. The Amir described the offer of 3 November as "vague" for it did not define Britain's obligation. Shakespear understood that Ibn Saud

"had no intention of abandoning his [actual] neutral position with freedom to make his own arrangements with the Turks until he held a signed and sealed treaty with the British Government; nor would he move a step further towards making matters either easier for us [Britain] or more difficult for the Turks so far as the present war was concerned, until he obtained in that treaty some very solid guarantee of his position with Great Britain practically as his suzerain."<sup>2</sup>

For Ibn Saud there was, in fact, no compelling reason to join either party. He had just dismissed the Turkish deputation empty handed and, he felt himself entitled to insist upon explicit guarantees of recognition and security.<sup>3</sup> Although he was personally inclined to join the British, and risk Wahhabi displeasure since the Wahhabis regarded even the Turks as infidels, he was also determined to look for the best bargain. It seemed foolish to be satisfied with verbal assurances or vague written promises from Britain, when he had

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1. As there was no British representation in Ibn Saud's dominions, he had to make his contacts with the British through the British Agents in Bahrain and in Kuwait.
  2. F.O. Memo.; see also: Arab Bureau Memo.; Winstone, op.cit., pp.200-201.
  3. On meeting Ibn Saud, Shakespear found Sayyed Taleb of Iraq trying to persuade him to remain loyal to the Porte. See: Busch, Britain, India and the Arabs, p.232; Wilson, Loyalties: Mesopotamia 1914-1917 (Oxford 1930) pp.18-19. See Art. 12 of the 15 May 1914 Treaty.

little to loose from maintaining his present nominal allegiance to Turkey. Clear and definite recognition of his independence must at least be demanded of Britain. To this end he was prepared to negotiate with Shakespear after only six months of signing an accord with Turkey, and at a time when Turkey by every possible means was anxious to gain his active support in the war.

Fully understanding the Amir's attitude, Shakespear asked him to formulate his desires in a draft proposal. Ibn Saud complied and on 4 January 1915 the draft proposal was submitted to Cox. Having considered it, Cox wrote to London asking for authority to negotiate on that basis with Ibn Saud.<sup>1</sup>

Shakespear's own comment on Ibn Saud's proposals was that the Amir had asked for little more than he had been promised by the 3 November letter. Nevertheless if these proposals were meant to apply to the future as well as to the present, there would be positive consequences for Britain. He listed the advantages that Britain would gain if she agreed to Ibn Saud's terms as follows: Britain would be the only Great Power controlling the Arab littoral of the Gulf; she would also be able to control the arms traffic; Britain could make use of Ibn Saud's influence over Muslim opinion in Arabia; finally, there was no doubt that the security of the trade route would be guaranteed and commercial benefits gained.<sup>2</sup>

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1. F.O. Memo.

2. Ibid.



While waiting for a British reply and with Shakespear in attendance, Ibn Saud tried to demonstrate his strength by launching a military attack on the pro-Turk Amir of Hail. Unexpectedly, Ibn Saud was defeated and Shakespear was killed in the battle of Jarab on 24 January 1915. Jarab was a very costly operation at which Ibn Saud lost not only a friend, but also the chance of leading an Arab revolt against Turkey. For such a role Ibn Saud had been preparing himself<sup>1</sup> with the help and encouragement of Shakespear. The battle certainly left Ibn Saud in a worse position than before; his prestige was weakened; his role in Arabian affairs was reduced; and the 'Ujman<sup>2</sup> rebellion engaged him for the following twelve months.<sup>3</sup> The progress of the Mesopotamian campaign and the occupation of Basra helped to diminish any serious need for his support, since he was no longer in direct contact with Turkish troops. Moreover, and this came later, Ibn Saud's two main rivals (Sharif Husain and Ibn al-Rashid) took opposite sides; the one pro-British and the other pro-Turk. This made his own position of neutrality easier to maintain.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibn Saud took the initiative at the beginning of the war and sent messages to the Shaikhs of Arabia to unify their attitudes for the sake of Arab interests. See: Qasem, op.cit., p.19.
  2. For the 'Ujman see: Busch, op.cit., p.246, note 53; American Consul (Baghdad) to Secretary of State (Washington) 14 Feb. 1929, cited in: Ibrahim al-Rashid, Documents on the History of Saudi Arabia, (Salisbury 1976) iii, pp.16-20. (Thereafter: D.H.S.A.)
  3. Arab Bureau Memo.; Wilson, Loyalties, p.31; Freeth, Kuwait was my Home, (London 1956) p.32.
  4. Toynbee, 'The Rise of the Wahhabi Power', Survey of International Affairs 1925, i (1927) p.283, (Thereafter: Survey 1925); Wilson, op.cit., chapter I; Busch, op.cit., Chapter 1; Attar, op.cit., 482-84.

What part he might have played, during the early war years, if his friend Shakespear had not been killed and if he had not been defeated at Jarab remains a fascinating question for speculation to students of modern Arab history. Ibn Saud, however, played a role of his own choice and, as the following decade would have shown, Jarab was an exception in his war game.

In the event, although defeated at Jarab, his operation more or less succeeded in putting a pro-Turk force out of action. Ibn al-Rashid would surely have joined the main Turkish forces in opposing Britain's Mesopotamian campaign. This was not the only benefit to Britain. Four months later in June 1915 Ibn Saud concluded an agreement with Ibn al-Rashid, defining, in vague terms their territorial boundaries and establishing what was hoped to be "uninterrupted brotherhood and friendship" between themselves. The agreement might have been expected to neutralise Ibn al-Rashid and so gain for Britain by peaceful means what Ibn Saud had failed to obtain by war. According to the text:

"... I, Bin Rashid, will not interfere with Bin Saud at all. Nor shall I act treacherously with him vis a vis the Turkish Government. It is incumbent upon me to incline with him to whichever Government is allied with him, and I have no intention to oppose his views."<sup>1</sup>

These terms hardly seem to be those acceptable to a war victor. And it is, therefore, probable that, although suffering heavy losses and in particular that of his friend Shakespear, Ibn

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1. For text see: Arab Bureau Memo. To my knowledge this is the first indication to this agreement.

Saud never really suffered a defeat at Jarab as serious as was surmised by the British and as has since been believed.

The validity of the agreement itself, however, was open to question since it was doubtful, in a tribal society, that Ibn al-Rashid, even if he had wished to do so, could keep such promises. In fact there is evidence to show that he secretly supported the 'Ujman rebellion which Ibn Saud almost immediately was required to face. It was this rebellion, on top of the Jarab defeat, which effectively prevented Ibn Saud from playing any direct part in the Anglo-Turkish war.

The death of Shakespear temporarily suspended the conclusion of the proposed agreement between Britain and Ibn Saud. But at Ibn Saud's request, Captain Gerald Leachman was appointed to replace Shakespear.<sup>1</sup> Leachman failed to move Ibn Saud any further from his neutral attitude and accordingly the notion that he might have an active supporting part to play in the war was, for the time being, shelved.

The idea of making a treaty with Ibn Saud remained under discussion and "in the interest of peace and order it would be essential for the Power that controls the Gulf to have a working arrangement with him [Ibn Saud]".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly Cox was authorised on 6 February to start negotiations with Ibn Saud, and he drew up a seven article treaty and despatched it to the Amir on 24 April. Ibn Saud replied with a modified

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1. Bray, A Paladin of Arabia, the Biography of G.E. Leachman (London 1936) p.259; Winstone, op.cit., pp.215-216.

2. F.O. Memo.

draft. By the end of June Cox was optimistic that agreement could be reached and, after delays mainly due to communication difficulties, the treaty was signed on 26 December at Darain.<sup>1</sup>

In the first article of the Treaty, the British Government "acknowledge and admit that Nejd, El-Hasa, Qatif and Jubail and their dependencies ... are the countries of Ibn Saud ... as the independent ruler ... and after him his sons". In the event of aggression by any foreign Power against his territories, Britain, was to aid Ibn Saud (article 2). The Amir pledged himself not to enter into relations with any foreign Power, except Britain (article 3). He also undertook (in the fourth article) not to cede territory nor to grant concessions to any foreign Power without the consent of the British Government. He undertook to keep open, within his territories, the roads leading to the Holy Places (article 5). He furthermore undertook to refrain from all aggression against the territories of Kuwait and the other Gulf states (article 6). Finally, the two parties agreed to convert this temporary treaty into a more comprehensive one at a later date.

From the British point of view the treaty with Ibn Saud completed arrangements, guaranteeing British control, already made with the Arab rulers on the littoral of the Gulf.<sup>2</sup> In

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1. Ibid. The treaty was ratified on 18 July 1916. For text see Appendix A.

2. Qatar was the only gap yet to be filled in the Gulf treaty system. On 3 Nov. 1916 a treaty was signed between Britain and Qatar. See: Azzam, 'The International Status of the Persian Gulf States', Revue Egyptienne de Droit International, XV (1959) 20-70; Busch, op.cit., pp.230-231.



making the treaty, however, Britain also became involved, and now for the first time, in the affairs of Central Arabia.

At the time, and in the midst of war exigencies, this departure from previous practice did not seem to be a matter of much significance. In fact it was eventually to prove a major turning point in the development of British policy.

The treaty has been seen as humiliating to Ibn Saud and a great mistake on his part. His advisers, it is argued, were not fully aware of the real value and of the importance of their country and hence yielded to Britain's pressure.<sup>1</sup> These views take little account of the realities of the situation. However worded, the treaty provided a base for Anglo-Saudi relations. Ibn Saud gained more status than he had achieved by his agreement of 15 May 1914 with the Turks, in that he was recognised as an independent ruler and this was mainly what he had been seeking from Britain. In return he had accepted limited ties which affected his relations with his Eastern neighbours. Elsewhere he was free to exercise his diplomatic and military skills in pursuit of whatever objectives he might wish to choose.

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1. Wahba, jazirat al-arab fi al-qarn al-ishreen (Cairo 1956) p.257; Qasem, op.cit., p.29; Williams, Ibn Saud, the Puritan King of Arabia (London 1933), p.96.

## Arabia during the First World War and after, 1915-20

The idea of an Arab rebellion against Turkey was first suggested when Shakespear reported on his meeting of 1911 with Ibn Saud. Traditional British attitudes towards Turkey were still strong enough for this notion to fall on deaf ears. But with the outbreak of the war with Turkey it gained enthusiastic approval in London.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately for him, Ibn Saud missed the chance of leading such a revolt by his defeat at Jarab. Thus lowered in Britain's estimation Ibn Saud almost remained in abeyance while Cairo was already in secret correspondence with Sharif Husain. Husain, it was believed, as a keeper of the Muslim Holy Places and a member of the Hashemite family of the Prophet Mohammad "could exert throughout the Muslim world a moral influence which would, and did, make a very great influence ...".<sup>2</sup> If his friendship could be secured, the British assumed that Husain would oppose the most serious danger to the Allies - the jehad which had been announced by the Sultan and Caliph of Turkey to provoke Muslims under British Control mainly in Egypt and India.<sup>3</sup> Husain was also a possible candidate

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1. Winstone, Captain Shakespear, p.216. Winstone emphasized this point of view to The Sunday Times of 10 May 1981.
  2. Hogarth, 'Wahabism and British Interests', Journal of British Institute of International Affairs, IV (1925) pp.70-81; see also: Attar, op.cit., pp.485-86.
  3. For India's attitude towards the revolt, see: Busch, op.cit., pp.164- 71; Troeller, 'Ibn Saud and Sharif Husain, a Comparison in their Importance in the early years of the First World War', Historical Journal, XIV (1971) pp.627- 33; Sachar, The Emergence of the Middle East, 1914-1924 (London 1970) p.123.

as an Arab Caliph of Islam, Cox had earlier conceived of Ibn Saud in this role but, as Ibn Saud had then pointed out to him, the Wahhabis did not recognise any Caliph after the <sup>first</sup> / four.<sup>1</sup>

The Hejaz was strategically important for Britain. With Husain's cooperation Britain could guard against the possible use by Germany of the eastern coast of the Red Sea as a submarine base, and could also prevent the Turks from making use of the Hejaz Railway which was a branch of the Baghdad Railway. In hostile hands, the Hejaz Railway could cause problems for Britain's position in Aden and in East Africa. Thus Husain was now the best choice.

Accordingly, the focal point of British policy in Arabia quickly moved from Eastern Arabia, which was within India's sphere of authority, to the Hejaz, which fell within Cairo's orbit. Any approaches to Husain would, therefore, depend not on Cox, who had just concluded a treaty with Ibn Saud, but on the Arab Bureau's staff.<sup>2</sup>

In the context of this study it would be superfluous to include any detailed account of the revolt. Some points, however, do need to be explored to clarify the objectives of Britain's policy in Arabia and to explain the subsequent course of Britain's relations with Ibn Saud.

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1. Quoted in: Kedourie, In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth, the McMahon-Husayn Correspondence and its Interpretations 1914-1939 (Cambridge 1976) pp.50-51.

2. Collins, An Arabian Diary, Sir Gilbert Falkingham Clayton (Berkeley 1969) p.23.

By the outbreak of the War, the Arab revolt against Turkey was simmering. Secret societies had been created to secure "the liberation and independence" of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, and "to resist foreign penetration of whatever kind or form".<sup>1</sup> The War stirred Arab hopes and various contacts between Arab leaders and Britain were established. The Imam of the Yemen and Ibn al-Rashid of Hail soon decided to remain loyal to the Porte. Britain's negotiations with Husain proved difficult and protracted. The Sharif first hesitated between the conflicting views of his own sons. Faisal favoured standing by Turkey, while Abd-Allah favoured supporting the British. The nationalists in Syria were prepared to negotiate with either side on the basis of their own plan. They had stated their conditions in the form of a protocol and deputed the Sharif to negotiate on its terms with the British. They wanted Britain to recognise the independence of the Arab countries lying in the whole of Arabia and Syria except Aden. They also wanted the abolition of Capitulations already granted to foreigners, and "the conclusion of a defensive alliance between Britain and the future independent state". In return, they were prepared to grant Britain "economic preference"<sup>2</sup>. Husain

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1. See text of al-Fatah resolution in: Antonius, The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement (London 1938) p.153. Arabia had witnessed an earlier attempt during the 19th century when the Wahhabi movement had originally emerged. Although the movement had been crushed by Mohammad Ali of Egypt, Mohammad Ali himself raised the flag of rebellion against the Sultan soon afterwards until driven back into allegiance by the European Powers.
  2. Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp.157-158



accordingly resumed negotiations with Cairo. Between July 1915 and January 1916, Sir Henry McMahon, the then High Commissioner, exchanged with him eight letters known as: 'McMahon-Husain Correspondence'. In these letters the two parties were trying to define their positions towards each other in order to decide the conditions upon which the Sharif would join the Allies.

In his first letter of 14 July 1915 Husain sought to gain the endorsement of Britain for the proposed Arab state as defined by the protocol of Damascus.<sup>1</sup> McMahon replied on 30 August with vague and indecisive terms. Negotiations about frontiers, he argued, "would appear to be premature and a waste of time ..." in the heat of war. Negotiations then entered into labyrinths of drafting refinements. When Husain insisted on definite frontiers to the Arab state, McMahon excluded "portions of Syria lying to the west of the districts of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo..." Although Husain refused McMahon's argument on 5 November and warned, at the beginning of 1916, that he would not abandon his claim to the whole of Syria, he soon afterwards made his fatal mistake when he agreed to postpone the question of frontiers until after the war.<sup>2</sup>

Having appeared to have burned his fingers with Turkey and

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1. Ibid., pp.164-165, 414-415.

2. Ibid., 413-427.

needing to look to his own security, Husain had no other alternative but to raise the flag of the Arab Revolt on 10 June 1916. According to Aziz Ali al-Misri (the leader of the nationalist society, al-'Ahd) nobody among the nationalists who had deputed Husain to negotiate knew

"whether Sharif Husain had raised the revolt to prevent the occupation of the Hejaz by a foreign Power or to defy the Sultan's authority in order to achieve independence."<sup>1</sup>

Although Aziz al-Misri was appointed by British advisers in Cairo for the job of Husain's Chief of Staff, he was reluctant to serve the Sharif and mistrusted him. When persuaded by Britain to agree, his doubts were not resolved even when he met Husain personally. He resigned his post to be succeeded by Jafar al-Askari. In October, Ronald Storrs, oriental secretary in Cairo, accompanied by T.E. Lawrence, arrived in Jeddah to co-ordinate Britain's part in the revolt. Lawrence remained behind to fulfil his legendary role as liaison officer.<sup>2</sup> Thus, as Philby later commented, "it was left to Lawrence and the army of the Hejaz to accomplish what in other circumstances ... might have been accomplished by Ibn Saud and Shakespear".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Khadduri, 'Aziz Ali Misri and the Arab Nationalist Movement', St. Antony's Papers, xvii (1965) pp.140- 63; See also Antonius, The Arab Awakening, pp.118- 25, 159- 61, 212; Hourani, The Emergence of the Modern Middle East (Oxford 1981) pp.70-72.
  2. For evaluation and criticism of Lawrence and his writings see: Trover, 'In Wisdom's House, T.E. Lawrence in the Near East', Journal of Contemporary History, xiii (1978) pp.585-606; See also, The Sunday Times, 10 May 1981.
  3. Philby, The Heart of Arabia (London 1922) i, 386.

At the end of the year Sir Gilbert Clayton, Director of Military Intelligence at the Arab Bureau (Cairo) which masterminded the plan, could boast that "the Sharif's revolt has shattered the solidarity of Islam ... [and] has emphasised the failure of Jihad". From the political point of view, Clayton claimed that the revolt

"carries on and completes our policy in Arabia, as exemplified in the agreements with the Hadramout, Oman, Muscut, Kuwait, [Asir] and with Ibn Saud. With the last named it gives Great Britain a hand of influence running across Arabia from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf as a bar to the progress of hostile activity and penetration."<sup>1</sup>

On the other side of the Arabian Peninsula Ibn Saud's role in the general war remained less significant than had been expected. His energies were absorbed in local tribal conflicts, first with the 'Ujman and then with the Murrah tribes. India's attitude, too, helped to isolate him from taking any active part. The shortage of money and guns were a real handicap. The memory of his defeat at Jarab had not yet been erased, and any future adventure needed to be well calculated.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, and this was important, Ibn Saud mistrusted Britain for giving leadership of the Arab Revolt to his ancestral enemy (Sharif Husain) who "might proceed to claim authority over parts of Nejd" or assume superiority over other Arab rulers. When the Sharif

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1. Quoted in: Kedourie, In the Anglo-Arab Labyrinth, p.136.

2. See: F.O. Memo.; Arslanian, 'British Wartime Pledges 1917-1918: The Armenian Case', Journal of Contemporary History, xiii (1978) 517-30.



first sought Ibn Saud's help, the later insisted on obtaining from the Sharif a written undertaking that "the Sharif would abstain from trespassing in his [Ibn Saud's] territory or interfering with his subjects". Husain's reply in September was "unconciliatory and aroused his lively indignation". The British Government, aware of the old feuds and jealousies between the two leaders, felt that it was necessary both for the Arab cause and for British interests that they "should work together and in co-operation with us".<sup>1</sup> Britain's hopes and those of Ibn Saud were dismayed when Husain proclaimed himself 'King of the Arab Countries'. Britain felt constrained to protest against the title out of deference to French susceptibilities and to those of other Arab leaders. Eventually Britain compromised with Husain and recognised him as 'King of the Hejaz'. Husain's ambitions "deeply wounded" Ibn Saud's Arab pride. His growing suspicions of Husain were reciprocated. Husain saw in him a leader of the Wahhabis whose ambitions constituted a permanent threat to the Hejaz.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Arab Bureau Memo.

2. See: Sharif Abdullah to Minister of Foreign Affairs (Washington), ( no date ), al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., I. 35-36; American Vice-Consul (Cairo) to Sec. of State (Washington), 7 Nov. 1917, Ibid., pp.31-33; Admiralty, Western Arabia and the Red Sea (Oxford 1946) p.295; Collins, An Arabian Diary, p.24; Dawn, 'The Amir of Mecca al-Husayn Ibn-Ali and the Origin of the Arab Revolt', Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society, civ (1960) pp.11-34; Baker, King Husain and the Kingdom of Hejaz (Cambridge 1979) Chapt. 10, pp.97-120; Kedourie, op.cit., pp.192- 93.



Cox decided to talk directly to Ibn Saud to take him out of this futile situation and to revive his active role in the war. This decision stemmed from a correspondance between himself and the Wahhabi leader. Cox in his endeavours to protect an Arab Amir in India's sphere of influence against possible aggression from another Arab King in Cairo's orbit, argued on 8 September 1916 that Ibn Saud

"should be informed definitely that no present or future understandings between us and the Sharif should prejudice our adherence to the terms of article 1 and 2 of our treaty with him of 26 December 1915."<sup>1</sup>

The terms of that treaty, he suggested, should be made known to the Sharif in order to inform him of British responsibilities towards other Arab leaders. The India and Foreign Offices telegraphed the Viceroy on 19 September that the idea of an Arab state or confederation of states "was not dead", and agreed to the reference of article one only "as we could not admit that article two was binding on us as against other Arabs".<sup>2</sup> The Foreign and India Offices' interpretation of article two meant that Britain neither would nor should aid Ibn Saud against the Sharif. They pressed their understanding that the word "foreign" applies only to non-Arabs. They also insisted, for the time being, to withhold knowledge of the text of the treaty from Husain.<sup>3</sup> It was then agreed that the feud between the two Arab rivals was damaging to

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1. F.O. Memo. For text of Arts. 1 & 2 of 1915 Treaty see Appendix A.

2. F.O. Memo.

3. Busch, op.cit., p.244. The treaty was later made known to Husain, see: F.O. Memo.

British war-time interests and ought to be settled. This had in fact been the objective of Cox's proposals.

In the meanwhile, communications between Cox and Ibn Saud continued. The latter sought, in September, to meet Cox to discuss with him the proposed co-operation with Britain. Accordingly, they met on 11 November at 'Uqair where Ibn Saud explained his position in detail. Cox was able to give the Amir "the fullest reassurance". This was followed by a visit to Kuwait on 20 November. Cox again scored a success when "the three chiefs, Kuwait, Muhammerah and Ibn Saud, swore together that they would work with us [Britain] for the achievement of a common end". These verbal assurances were met by similar verbal assurances to Ibn Saud that "his rights had been carefully reserved in all dealings which the British Government had held with the Sharif".<sup>1</sup> With the help of Miss G. Bell, Cox prepared a Durbar for the three chiefs at which Ibn Saud was made a Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Indian Empire (K.C.I.E.). Furthermore, he was taken to Basra on 26 November, where he visited a British base and was presented with a sword of honour and a message of welcome from the Army Commander. There he was urged to send one of his sons and some followers on a conciliatory mission to the Sharif.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Arab Bureau Memo.

2. F.O. Memo.; Arab Bureau Memo.; Busch, op.cit., pp.246- 47; Winstone, Gertrude Bell (London 1978) p.188. Winstone quoted Bell's admiration of Ibn Saud as follows: "We had an extraordinarily interesting day with Ibn Saud, who is one of the most striking personalities I have encountered".



"The Kuwait Durbar", it was argued, "and Ibn Saud's visit to Basra have placed us in a singularly strong position". Cox, and India in general, were becoming increasingly enthusiastic about the value of Ibn Saud, who undertook to maintain 4,000 men under arms to fight Ibn al-Rashid. In return he was given 3,000 rifles with ammunition, and granted a monthly subsidy of £5,000 to cover the expenses he will incur in maintaining his men in the field. According to A.T. Wilson (Cox's deputy) Ibn Saud's visit was "an event of far-reaching importance which, had our activities in Arabia been directed from Basra instead of from Egypt, might have been the occasion for a fresh orientation of policy".<sup>1</sup> This was the first open demonstration of India's backing for Ibn Saud.

The Cairo-India policy of preventing Ibn Saud and the Sharif from quarrelling with each other by keeping them busy in the Great War was successful. But good relations with the Sharif and with the Arabs were soon to be threatened by two major British policy decisions: the Sykes-Picot agreement of May 1916, which was made despite pledges already given to the Arabs; and the Balfour Declaration of 2 November 1917, which reinforced the Sharif's fears of Britain's policy in the Middle East.<sup>2</sup> The two decisions, when made known in 1917,

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1. Arab Bureau Memo.; See also Wilson, Loyalties, pp.160, 285; Busch, op.cit., p.246; Toynbee, Survey 1925; Monroe, Philby of Arabia (London 1974) p.70.

2. See: Antonius, op.cit., chapter 8; Sachar, op.cit., pp.158-175; Busch, op.cit., pp.181- 88, 191; Klieman, Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World; The Cairo Conference of 1921 (London 1970) Chapt. I, pp.1-17; Chory, 'An Arab view on the situation in Palestine', International Affairs, xv (1936) pp.684- 99.

caused a shock to the Arabs. For themselves it was too late to change their position. Mark Sykes himself was sent to meet the Sharif and to allay his fears. Later, on 4 January 1918 Dr. Hogarth was sent to Jeddah to reassure Husain.<sup>1</sup> Husain, however, could not be reconciled. His dreams of an Arab state had vanished.

The development of Britain's policy during the war in the Middle East provoked doubts that the emergence of independent Arab countries, or a united Arab state, would materialise and a realisation that a united Arab state to the east of Egypt was no longer contemplated at all by Britain. As early as 12 November 1915, Clayton wrote to Wingate that;

"India seems obsessed with the fear of a powerful and united Arab state, which can never exist unless we are fools enough to create it." He added, "It will have to be our business to see that it does not ever become a possibility, owing to backing one horse to exclusion of the others."<sup>2</sup>

Echoing the same tone, Sir Arthur Hirtzel wrote in February 1916,

"A strong Arab state might be more dangerous to Christendom than a strong Ottoman state, & Lord Kitchener's policy of destroying one Islamic state merely for the purpose of creating another, has always seemed to me disastrous ..."<sup>3</sup>

Among the various British authorities, individual critics of Britain's "unrealistic policy" were beginning to emerge.

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1. Klieman, op.cit., pp.141- 45; Monroe, op.cit., pp.78-81.

2. Quoted in: Kedourie, op.cit., p.120.

3. Quoted in: Busch, op.cit., p.92



The Director of Military Intelligence, for instance, had observed in connection with the Sykes-Picot agreement: "I must confess that it seems to me that we are in the position of the hunters who divided up the skin of the bear before they had killed it".<sup>1</sup> Troubles seemed to be growing between Cairo and the Sharif. Britain's policy had become wide open to criticism among the Arabs, who felt that they had been deceived. Britain was negotiating with different parties for the same Arab territories. As Britain's policy never had been clearly thought out in the Middle East, and as the Foreign Office was by its nature "empirical" Britain paid more serious attention to questions of Anglo-French rivalry and alliance than to the vague terms given to Arabs and to Jews.<sup>2</sup>

As relations with the Sharif deteriorated, the search for a more reliable leader began. The way had already been paved by the 'Uqair, Kuwait and Basra meetings. Now, in June 1917, Cairo planned for a mission by Storrs to Ibn Saud in order to discuss with him various matters concerning the Amir's relations with Britain's allies in Arabia, as well as his attitude towards her enemies. From Baghdad, Cox sent an aide memoire for Storrs guidance. "Nothing but good", it was hoped, could come out of Storrs visit to Ibn Saud. Unfortunately for Storrs, he returned back after only two days with heatstroke.<sup>3</sup>

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1. F.O. Memo.

2. See: Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East-2' International Affairs, xxix (1953) pp.156- 83.

3. Aide Memoire for Storrs regarding the affairs of Ibn Saud (Philly Papers) 15/4; See also: Wilson, op.cit., p.305; Busch, op.cit., pp.248- 50; Kedourie, op.cit., pp.186- 87.

Baghdad maintained its belief that Ibn Saud should assume a more active role and advised Cairo that attempts for conciliation should not be abandoned. This belief was strengthened by reports that "Ibn Saud had become the religious and secular leader of all Central Arabian tribes except those dependent on Ibn Rashid . of Hail ...., and the 'Ajman of Mesopotamian borderlands".<sup>1</sup> In the autumn of 1917 Cox sent Philby, a political officer of the Indian Civil Service, on a mission<sup>2</sup> to see both Ibn Saud and the Sharif. At the same time an Egyptian official was to come to Jeddah for a similar conciliatory purpose. Philby's main purpose was to arrange with Ibn Saud a more active role against Ibn al-Rashid since the arrangements made earlier by Cox provided less help than Ibn Saud really needed. The mission's objective, however, related to the same points for which both Shakespear and Cox met Ibn Saud.

The task of the mission was not easy. Communications were difficult and sometimes impossible. Both Husain and Ibn Saud were in different frames of mind. Again, Cairo and Baghdad differed over whether or not the mission should be pursued to the very end. Facing with these difficulties and with incoherent policies, Philby shouldered the whole responsibility and went beyond the instructions he had been given.

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1. Monroe, op.cit., pp.58-59.

2. Philby has recorded an account of his twelve months mission in three vols. The first two are entitled The Heart of Arabia (London 1922) the third is called Arabia of the Wahhabis (London 1928). The mission has also been discussed in: Busch, op.cit., pp.243- 63; Monroe, op.cit., pp.58-94; Troeller, op.cit., pp.91-138; Silverfarb, 'The Philby Mission to Ibn Saud, 1917-18', Journal of Contemporary History, xiv (1979) pp.269-86.



At the end of November he found Ibn Saud's situation critical for the following reasons; (i) shortage of arms and money; (ii) increasing opposition among his people to dealing with Christians; (iii) the fact that he was surrounded by rivals and enemies (the Shaikh of Kuwait, the 'Ujman, Ibn al-Rashid, and King Husain). In order to secure his own position and to initiate an offensive against Ibn al-Rashid, Ibn Saud would need, as Philby estimated, £50,000 per month (1000% of his current subsidy) in addition to an initial sum of £20,000 and modern rifles. He sent this estimate to Cox stating that an expedition against Hail was worth undertaking and that "something big can be achieved".<sup>1</sup>

On 9 December, he left for Taif in the Hejaz. There he found no sign of Storrs; and so he went on to Jeddah where he arrived on 31 December. At the British Agency headquarters in Jeddah, after two months of continuous desert travel, he enjoyed a spell of relief, comfort and luxury. He caught up on news of world events and of the progress of the war. In particular, he learned that Storrs had been appointed the first Governor of Jerusalem, and that Hogarth was on the way to Jeddah. The purpose of Hogarth's visit was not simply to see Philby but also to try to mollify King Husain after the shock of the revelation of the Sykes-Picot agreement and the Balfour declaration. Hogarth and Philby saw the King together. The meeting proved fruitless, partly because the King was in an angry mood and partly because Philby's attitude increased that irritation.

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1. Silverfarb, 'The Philby Mission'.

Philby became more distressed when he learned that Cairo had reversed its policy and no longer supported an offensive by Ibn Saud, partly because of the changed military situation in the Middle East, and partly because of their anxiety about the possibility of changing the balance of power in Arabia in favour of Ibn Saud if he was supported on such a large scale. Eventually, Philby was obliged to leave for Egypt as Husain refused to allow him to cross the Hejaz borders and return to Ibn Saud.<sup>1</sup>

After his Cairo trip, Philby returned to Ibn Saud with less to offer than he had promised. Sympathising with Ibn Saud, Philby tried to reassure him. He explained that the trip to Cairo had enabled him to discuss the Amir's case with the authorities there. This afforded little consolation to Ibn Saud. Nevertheless, by April Philby did manage to persuade him to attack Hail. Realising that he would not be allowed to prolong his mission much further and anxious, for reasons of personal ambition, to conclude with some concrete achievement he offered Ibn Saud a loan of £20,000 on condition that he immediately began operations against Ibn al-Rashid. Furthermore, he promised the Amir that his future status would be recognised by the British Government. Unfortunately for both Philby and Ibn Saud, the whole idea behind the original mission was/<sup>now</sup> finding little support either in Cairo or in India.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid; Monroe, op.cit., pp.66-81

2. Busch, op.cit., pp.248-50; Monroe, op.cit., pp.83-6.



For his part, Ibn Saud, like the Sharif, had grown suspicious of the British. He spoke out in a letter to Philby dated 25 July, remarking that:

"The British Government has become two governments; that of Egypt, which goes by the words of the Sharif ... right or wrong, and that of Iraq which receives my enemies [with open hands] and prevents me from punishing them [the 'Ujman and Ibn al-Rashid]".<sup>1</sup>

In order to clarify his position over any obligation to the British Government, Ibn Saud, in the same letter, asked Philby to let him know the British attitude on certain points;

- 1 - Whether Cairo could prevent the Sharif from taking any aggressive action against him.
- 2 - Whether the British Government could prevent the wandering 'Ujman and Shammar tribes from crossing into his territories.
- 3 - Whether Baghdad could help solve his differences with the Shaikh of Kuwait over the blockade.
- 4 - Whether the British Government would be prepared to pay him the whole cost of the military operations he would undertake to take Hail.

In August 1918, Philby returned to Baghdad reiterating arguments in favour of getting Ibn Saud to take Hail, and the Sharif to take al-Madinah. Then Central Arabia could be divided between the two rulers, who would be kept dependent on Britain. Regarding the proposed frontiers in Central Arabia

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1. Ibn Saud to Philby, 16 Shawwal 1336 (Philby Papers) 15/2; See also Monroe, op.cit., pp.90-1. See text of an agreement between Britain and the Shaikhs of the 'Ujman, 4 March 1918 (Philby Papers) 15/4. This agreement made allies of the 'Ujman during the war only.

he suggested that Khurmah be awarded to Ibn Saud, and the 'Utaibah plain behind Mecca to King Husain. Unlike the Cairo view, he pointed out that the existence of Ibn al-Rashid would only complicate any post-war settlement. At Baghdad he found himself the only supporter of his own plan.<sup>1</sup>

Relying only on Philby's promises of arms supply, and cautious about the consequences, Ibn Saud began minor operations against Hail in September. Soon afterwards, his army trickled back without taking the town because he had received news that his western borders had been attacked by the Sharif's army. Consequently, Ibn Saud's own theatre of war was transferred from Central Arabia to his western borders with the Hejaz. The Philby mission proved a failure; neither was Hail taken nor the Sharif reconciled. The general war ended, the local war started and as Philby remarked "a year's work collapsed before my eyes".<sup>2</sup>

Now, not Hail, but the two little villages of Khurmah and Turabah became in the focus of Ibn Saud's interest. The Nejdīs never abandoned their claim over these places, since they lay to the east of the mountain Hadhn and since Hadhn had always been the boundary between Nejd and the Hejaz.<sup>3</sup> In the absence of Saudi sovereignty over Nejd, the Hejaz ruled the villages. The Ikhwan, Ibn Saud's followers, were now able to attract the support of the Khurmah dwellers. Khaled Ibn

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1. Busch, op.cit., p.253; Monroe, op.cit., p.91.

2. Quoted in: Monroe, op.cit., p.92.

3. Al-Rihani, ṭarīekh Nejd al-hadieth wa mulhaqateh, (Beirut 1954) II, p.249; Attar, op.cit., pp.417-47.

Luayy, appointed by Husain to govern the village of Khurmah, turned to Ibn Saud. Worried about his eastern frontier, Husain sought Britain's support.<sup>1</sup> Because this territorial dispute had religious as well as political implications, Britain preferred non-intervention. Her whole attitude towards these rival allies was also at stake; Remembering, too, the alarms caused in the 19th century<sup>2</sup> throughout Islam by the Wahhabi seizure of the Holy Places, Britain hastened to send messages urging conciliation to both rulers.<sup>3</sup>

Husain, however, "insisted on fighting" and Ibn Saud reproachfully warned Britain that he could not maintain good relations with him.<sup>4</sup> Ibn Saud asked for Britain's understanding of his difficult position among many rivals.<sup>5</sup> He must, he argued, either be allowed to defend himself or to be guaranteed by Britain against aggression. Having stated his position Ibn Saud, nevertheless, declared willingness to accept Britain's arbitration. He even concurred to a British proposal

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1. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.287; Busch, op.cit., p.257.
  2. Abdul-Bari, 'The Early Wahhabis and Sharifs of Makkah', Journal of Pakestan Historical Society, iii (1955) pp. 91-104
  3. See: Troeller, op.cit., chapter 4.
  4. Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis', Journal of the Central Asian Society xiii (1926) pp.293-319 (Thereafter; The Triumph of the Wahhabis)
  5. See: Busch, op.cit., p.262.



to write a friendly letter to Husain who was, however, in no mood for conciliation.<sup>1</sup>

The British diplomatic efforts ended in March 1919 with a decision that "our policy is Husain policy". Britain, still needed Husain's support for an eventual peace settlement as he was a figure of far greater consequence where British interests were concerned than Ibn Saud. Consequently it was proposed that Ibn Saud should be required to abandon Khurmah under threat of forfeiting his subsidy.<sup>2</sup> Philby, opposing this policy, was given the opportunity to state his opinion, "Ibn Saud", he said, "would not only ignore the order to relinquish Khurmah, but would defend it to the last if Husain attempted to occupy it." He insisted that "Ibn Saud would win".<sup>3</sup> Apparently Philby's view carried weight and no move was made until the end of May. Husain now threatened to abdicate if Britain did not give him full support. So an interdepartmental meeting was held and alternative proposals were drawn up. Finally recognising that the matter was more than a conflict over boundaries it was decided that Britain should stick to her former policy of non-intervention in Central Arabia, and that Ibn Saud should be pressurised by reducing his subsidy by 50%.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis'.

2. Ibid; See also: Busch, op.cit., p.259; Troeller, op.cit., Chapter 4.

3. Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis'.

4. Ibid; Busch, op.cit., p.260.



The feud was then intensified and a direct conflict had now become inevitable. Amir Abd-Allah Ibn al-Husain, while trying in May 1919 to regain Turabah, suffered heavy loss and barely escaped being killed himself. This result alarmed both the British and the French representatives at the peace conference in Paris. The Wahhabis could, if they wished, advance towards the Holy Places, or even towards Syria. In the meanwhile, fear of a possible Wahhabi advance spread all over the Hejaz. Ibn Saud was warned to withdraw otherwise the rest of his subsidy would be discontinued and he would lose advantages which he had enjoyed under the treaty of 1915. He halted his advance, as the time was not ripe for further action.<sup>1</sup> But the battle of Turabah had revealed the weakness of King Husain, just as four years earlier, the battle of Jarab, had proved the weakness of Ibn Saud. As for Britain, the stronger party was the one which was the more desirable as an ally and the more dangerous as an enemy.

The wisdom of Philby's advice seemed evident and he was appointed Curzon's messenger to Ibn Saud in June, 1919. Consequently, Ibn Saud agreed to act according to Britain's wishes and postponed his pilgrimage, which might have proved provocative in the existing state of tension, for the following year. Most significantly an invitation for his son Faisal to

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1. American Consul (Aden) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 20 Sept. 1919, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., I, pp.37-40; Philby, The Triumph of the Wahhabis; Toynbee's Survey 1925, p.288; Klieman, op.cit., pp.23-24; also: Attar, op.cit., 417-47.

London was issued. The visit took place in September with Philby as the Amir's guide. The Amir, on his arrival, was officially welcomed at the request of the Cabinet by the Secretary of State for the Colonies and by others interested in Middle Eastern affairs.<sup>1</sup>

A number of Ibn Saud's requests, carried to London by Amir Faisal, were discussed at an interdepartmental meeting on 24 November. These were (i) protection of his independence; (ii) his boundaries should contain Khurmah and Turabah (iii) the embargo on the pilgrimage should be removed (iv) a subsidy to repair the damage to his territories should be paid; (v) Philby should be appointed British Political Agent in his territories. In an endeavour to maintain the policy of non-intervention, Curzon's suggestion that the two rivals should meet was accepted, and consequently Ibn Saud was invited to meet Husain in the Hejaz. He felt that it would insult his dignity to attend his rival's court and therefore refused the invitation. Privately, he complained to Colonel Dickson, on 5 February 1920, that lack of British support for his cause made his people and himself angry at British policy which deprived him of the fruits of his victory over Husain, and of any hope of extending his boundaries to Syria,

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1. CAB 23,12/622 (2), 18 Sept. 1919; Doughty to Lawrance, 1 Dec. 1919, Lawrance, Letters to Lawrance (London 1962) pp.39-40; Philby, 'The Triumph'; Williams, Ibn Saud, the Puritan King of Arabia (London 1933) pp.120-22.

which had always been considered by him "the northern landing stage of Nejd." In another endeavour, the India Office suggested an H.M. Battleship as a neutral place for the meeting. Husain now began to show more flexibility by allowing the Wahhabis to enter Mecca for the pilgrimage. There, a meeting between his own representatives and those of Ibn Saud, was to be arranged. When that meeting took place no final settlement was achieved, but at least an armistice was signed.<sup>1</sup>

Britain's diplomacy still aimed to maintain the status quo in Arabia. Husain's adherence to the general peace settlement in the Middle East, and in particular to Britain's proposed Palestine and Iraq Mandate, was needed. But this policy was not without its British critics. Gertrude Bell, for instance, wrote to Lawrence in June 1920: "you can't guard the Hejaz by backing Husain and dropping I[bn] S[aud]. Alternatively she suggested "You can do it by keeping on the best of terms with I[bn] S[aud] and he certainly, now & always shows himself ready to meet our advice". She rested her case on the fact that Ibn Saud was "the stronger of the two".<sup>2</sup> Although Ibn Saud had generally acted in accordance with British wishes in the past this could not be regarded as a guarantee of his future conduct. That would depend on British policy. And policy currently pursued, as Gertrude Bell argued, was unlikely to preserve his allegiance.

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1. See: Troeller, op.cit., chapter 4.

2. Bell to Lawrence, 10 July 1920, cited in: Letters to Lawrence, pp.12-13.



While Ibn Saud's star began to shine after the end of the great war, Husain started to face the bitter reality of his situation. Although the armistice of 1918 had been followed by an Anglo-French Declaration defining the object of the two governments as "the establishment of national governments and administrations, deriving their authority from the initiative and free choice of the indigenous populations".<sup>1</sup> Practical the Anglo-French policy caused harm to /Arab cause of independence. At Versailles the Allies met to decide the future of the Arab lands. No agreement was reached. Faisal Ibn al-Husain returned to Syria, and on 20 March 1920 he was elected King of Syria and Palestine. The French and British Governments repudiated his election. One month later on 24 April, the San Remo Conference decided the fate of the former Ottoman territories. Accordingly, Northern Syria was allotted to France and Southern Syria (Palestine and Transjordan) and Iraq were allotted to Britain. Faisal as well as the Arab nationalists rejected the decision. A national military uprising was soon crushed in July ; Faisal found it difficult to remain in Damascus and left for exile.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Quoted in: Edmonds, 'Gertrude Bell in the Near and Middle East', Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society, vli (1969) pp.229-44. The text of the Declaration is also cited in: Antonious, op.cit., Appendix E, pp.435-36, with little difference in translation; see also: Hourani, Syria and Lebanon (London 1954) p.48.
  2. There is much written about Anglo-French diplomacy in the Middle East. It is our concern here to find about the effect of Faisal's tragedy on Anglo-Hejazi relations. Indeed the Faisal affair led among other things to a rift in Anglo-Hejazi relations. For this and for the Hejazi attitude towards the Mandate system see: Note from the Hejaz Delegation concerning Mandates in Arab Nations, Despatch of U.S. Embassy, Paris, 19 May 1920, cited in al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., i, pp.50-53. See also: Memorandum to the Allied Powers on behalf of H.M. King Husain, 10 March 1921, Cited in: ibid., pp.67-70; Jawdat, Zekrayat Ali Jawdat (Beirut 1967), pp.73-76; Hourani, op.cit., pp.51-55.



In Iraq a similar armed uprising against the British Mandate was very costly for Britain. Her losses exceeded those suffered during the Arab revolt. Immediate changes needed to be made . Cox was called back from Persia to replace Wilson as Civil Commissioner in October.

"The new line of policy", he wrote, "which I had come to inaugurate involved a complete and necessary rapid transformation of the facade of the existing administration from the British to [the] Arab."

The question of nominating a King for Iraq remained to be settled. It had been agreed that 'Abd-Allah should fill this role. But, after Faisal's dismissal from Syria, Britain felt under an obligation to gratify his ambitions elsewhere and the possibility of setting him on the Iraqi throne came under consideration. This meant that some compensation would be needed for Abd-Allah. Husain, angrily watching these developments and opposing the principles of the Mandate system, felt that the Arab goal of independence and unity was becoming increasingly remote.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, he resented the fact that he had been treated as less than an ally at the Peace Conference and that his self-appointed title of King of Arabia found no support by any European Power. Furthermore, Britain had kept silent while France crushed his son's regime in Syria but had supported Zionist development in Palestine. In addition to his grievances against both Britain and France, Husain's prestige in the Muslim world as protector of the Holy Cities was becoming more difficult to maintain.

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1. Lady Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell (London 1927) ii, pp.526-30; Doughty to Lawrence, 29 Aug 1920, Letters to Lawrence, p.41; Jawdat, op.cit., p.8; Klieman, op.cit., pp.19-76.

His inability to crush the Saudi menace was humiliating.<sup>1</sup>

Britain's problems in the Middle East were also great. In addition to the uprisings against the Mandates, there was the national movement in Egypt for the end of the Protectorate. Problems in Arabia itself remained unsolved although Britain was the only Great Power there, and enjoyed unchallenged influence; France's sphere of influence was restricted to Syria. Italy had been warned off in the Red Sea, and Turkey had been forced to evacuate the remaining pockets in al-Madinah and the Yemen. But the local conflicts remained unsolved. Husain, Ibn Saud, Ibn al-Rashid, al-Idrisi and the Imam

"all had yet to work out their final destinies in Arabia, and it remained to be seen whether Britain could actually influence, or indeed, would desire to influence their respective future."<sup>2</sup>

Thus an effective system for co-ordinating and administering British policy needed to be sought.

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1. Arsalanian 'British War-Time Pledges'; Klieman, op.cit., p.79.
  2. Busch, op.cit.; pp.263-64; See also: Kliman, op.cit., p.79; Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.272; Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis.'

Reorganization of the Middle East policy-making system,  
1920-21

Middle Eastern affairs remained until 1921 in the hands of various government departments. Egypt, the Yemen, Asir, Persia, Syria and the Hejaz were the responsibility of the Foreign Office. Palestine and Mesopotamia were controlled by the War Office. The Gulf Emirates, Aden, Nejd and Hail fell under the jurisdiction of the India Office. This division of responsibilities despite consultations between the departments hampered both the formulation of a comprehensive Middle East policy and any good understanding of the nature of local disputes. During the war, the Foreign Office via Cairo supported the Sharif while India via Baghdad supported Ibn Saud. In the implications of policy Cairo seemed to be favouring Pan-Arabism. This conflicted with the Pan-Islamism which India had always favoured. The Sharif, because of Cairo's strong support was encouraged to play an active role, while Ibn Saud although approached several times by India's officials, was given too little support even to play a minor role. This in addition to their old feuds inspired hatred and jealousy between the rulers of Eastern and Western Arabia. India had always considered the whole of the Arabian Peninsula as their own particular concern. Cairo's activities in the Hejaz had, therefore, been regarded in India as an encroachment on her sphere of influence. Although seeking to serve the same British interests the Foreign Office and the India Office varied greatly in their methods and approach. This engendered



differences which sometimes seemed as bitter as those between the local rivals themselves.<sup>1</sup>

By mid 1920 it was recognized that this state of affairs must be remedied. The Mesopotamian uprising and the failure to maintain Husain's loyalty were among reasons urged<sup>for</sup> the change in Britain's policy. A single Office to hold responsibility for Middle Eastern affairs was needed. The process of change was instituted at three levels simultaneously, in the Cabinet, in the Foreign Office, and in Parliament. In the Cabinet it was agreed that Mesopotamia under the Mandate should be transferred to the Colonial Office and that the transference of the military responsibility for maintaining order there should be given to the Air Ministry as soon as possible.<sup>2</sup> This, however, would clearly affect the future course of Anglo-Saudi relations. It was proposed that the Colonial Office should set up and supervise a Middle Eastern department, but doubts were raised about this since none of the areas controlled by Britain during the war in the Middle East had ever been a colony. The proposal it was argued,

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1. See: Lady Bell, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, ii, p.526; Mejcher, 'British Middle East Policy, 1917-21, the Interdepartmental Level', Journal of Contemporary History, viii (1973) pp.81-101; Rothwell, 'Mesopotamia in the British War Aims, 1914-18', Historical Journal, xiii (1970) pp.273-94; Klieman, Foundations of British Policy in the Arab World, chapter 5, pp.77-103; Busch, op.cit., pp.265-66; Knightly, The Secret Lives of Lawrence of Arabia (London 1969) Chapter 10, pp.132-52; Winstone, Gertrude Bell (London 1978) p.185.
  2. Klieman, op.cit., p.87.



"would look like the annexation to the British Empire of mandated territory". The case was then put that the Foreign Office should be responsible for this new department because Palestine, Egypt, the Hejaz and Persia were already the responsibility of the Foreign Office. After six months of argument with Churchill, then still war Minister, playing a commanding role in the debate on Middle Eastern affairs and in hoping to cut government expenditure in Iraq, the Cabinet met on 31 December, and agreed:

"that responsibility for the whole of the administration of the mandatory territories ... should be concentrated in a single department .... The new department should be set up as a branch of the Colonial Office, which should be given some new title ... 'Department for Colonies and Mandated Territories'."<sup>1</sup>

On 9 January 1921, the Cabinet was informed of Milner's resignation. Churchill was now the obvious replacement as Colonial Secretary. If he were to take over he was anxious to debate to co-ordinate Middle East policy and yet he was aware that this would be difficult since territories under the rule of Ibn Saud, and King Husain, as well as the Gulf Emirates were neither mandates nor colonies, and would not fall within the sphere of Colonial Office responsibility. On 11 January the India Office warned, "unless the whole of Arabia is placed under the office which administers the mandate for Mesopotamia, we must ask that India be left in the position which it has held for over a century".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Mejcher, 'British Middle East Policy 1917-21'; See also: Klieman, op.cit., pp.90-93.
  2. Melcher, op.cit. See also: Busch, op.cit., p.456, Klieman, op.cit., pp.90-91.

The India Office proposal was welcomed. Accordingly, it was decided that the new department should be redesigned. "The Middle East Department"<sup>was</sup>/formally set up on 1 March. Sir J. Shackburgh was appointed undersecretary in charge of the new department. Its sphere of control covered the whole of the Arabian Peninsula with Persia to the east and Egypt to the west. The Political Resident in the Gulf was to be appointed by India as before, "but [he] should be authorised to communicate direct with the Colonial Office on matters concerning the Arabian littoral". For the sake of traditional relations between India and the Gulf, administrative and purely local matters were to be of the functions of India. Relations with Ibn Saud were to be conducted by the new department through the Political Resident at Bushire.<sup>1</sup>

Churchill's first step was to summon a conference to consider British policy in the Middle East in general and to solve the Hashemite problem. Baghdad was first suggested as a venue but Cairo was preferred. To Cairo, Churchill invited everybody who might have a contribution to make to the proceedings. The Cairo conference opened formally on 12 March 1921, in Samiramis Hotel on the Nile. It was attended by forty experts in Middle Eastern affairs.<sup>2</sup> Gertrude Bell was there. She wrote: "it has been wonderful, we covered

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1. Mejcher, op.cit., note 41.

2. Klieman, op.cit., pp.96-105; Busch, op.cit., pp.464-74; Winstone, Gertrude Bell, pp.232-34; Philby, 'Transjordan', Journal of the Central Asian Society, xi (1924), pp.297-312.



more work in a fortnight than has ever been got through in a year".<sup>1</sup> As Dr. Busch remarked in the concluding words of his most valuable study:

"It was the end of years of debate and controversy and confusion, as it was the beginning of years of debate and controversy and confusion. It was also the start of an Arab State system, disunited, subordinate to different mandatory powers, and faced with serious problems of economies, frontiers, minorities, and political groups. Still it was a state system, and for better or worse, that system still survives ... after the meeting of the 'Forty Thieves' at Cairo in March 1921."<sup>2</sup>

A key issue of the conference was to decide whether Faisal Ibn al-Husain should become ruler of Iraq on the understanding that he would accept the Mandate System. The issue had been considered in London, and Faisal had been given a hint. In Cairo every minute detail relating to Faisal, Iraq and the Mandate was discussed. The choice of Faisal was confirmed. Both Cox and G. Bell were asked to return to Baghdad to prepare the ground for Faisal's arrival as the first King of Iraq. This they successfully did.

Cox found it necessary to inform Ibn Saud in April that the British Government "were disposed to admit and support the candidature of Faisal to the throne of Iraq". Ibn Saud, although privately opposed to a Hashemite regime in Iraq felt compelled to declare his acceptance of the British decision. On 12 June 1921 Faisal left Jeddah for Iraq accompanied by K. Cornwallis as his private adviser and, while in the Gulf

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1. Quoted in: Winstone, Gertrude Bell, p.235.

2. Busch, op.cit., p.474. See also: Sachar, op.cit., pp.379-80; Klieman, op.cit., p.107; CAB 23/24, Cabinet 14(21), 22 March 1921.

he exchanged friendly letters with Ibn Saud. Faisal, meeting with a cool reception on his arrival in Iraq from Philby, adviser for the interior, was later enthroned on 23 August as king.<sup>1</sup>

While the Cairo Conference was in session 'Abd-Allah, originally promised the rulership of Iraq, was hurrying northward to Syria in order to attack the French whose hostility had proved fatal to his brother Faisal. He entered Amman while the conference was still in progress. Churchill left Cairo for Jerusalem and summoned 'Abd-Allah to meet him there. The step aimed at avoiding a possible Anglo-French clash. The meeting that took place on 28 March was a complete success for Churchill. 'Abd-Allah was promised a monthly salary of £5,000 to rule the newly envisaged state of Transjordan as a Hashemite Amir but within the mandated territory of Palestine. This policy was later approved, and in April 1923 Sir H. Samuel announced at Amman the recognition and the existence of an independent government in Transjordan under the rule of 'Abd-Allah.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Dobbs to Amery, 'A Short History of Iraq-Nejd Relations from about the time of the fall of Hail to Ibn Saud's Protest against the Establishment of the Iraq Police Post at Busaiyah', 14 April, 1928, E6316/1/91, F.O. 371/12993 (Thereafter: Dobbs, A Short History of Iraq-Nejd Relations); See also: Jawdat, op.cit., pp.143-47.
  2. See: CAB 23/25(3), 11 April 1921; Klieman, op.cit., 205-35; Philby, 'Transjordan'; Glubb, Britain and the Arabs (London 1959), pp.163-65; Busch, op.cit., pp.471-75; Knightley, op.cit., pp.143-45; Attar, op.cit., pp.627-31



Unlike Iraq, Transjordan had no historical identity as a nation. The area, inhabited by penniless tribes, was now also a place of refuge for a mass of Syrians. Its undetermined and boundaries were threatened to the north by the French/to the south by King Husain, who claimed the whole territory as a province of the Hejaz, and to the East, soon afterwards, by the hostile ruler of Nejd. Not surprisingly 'Abd-Allah found his promised dominion difficult to manage. Even at that stage and as Philby recorded, "the British in Palestine and London discussed the possibility of ousting him ['Abd-Allah] and joining Transjordan to Palestine".<sup>1</sup> The idea, however, was not pursued and Churchill's plan remained in operation. Accordingly, 'Abd-Allah's rule in Transjordan was confirmed, and Faisal was installed in Iraq.

Ibn Saud and King Husain were not neglected. Churchill proposed to the Cabinet of 22 March 1921, "to increase Bin Saud's subsidy to £100,000 a year ... conditional on his maintaining peace with Mesopotamia, Kuwait, and Hejaz." The proposal aimed at keeping the momentum of the new British policy going without disturbances. A similar sum would be paid to King Husain "conditional on improved arrangements for the pilgrimage, recognition of the peace treaties, and exercise of his influence in bringing about peace in the Arab countries."<sup>2</sup> The question of subsidy was urgently reconsidered by the Cabinet on 11 April. Ibn Saud was known to be preparing

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1. Philby, 'Transjordan'; Monroe, op.cit., p.155.

2. CAB 23/24, Cabinet 14 (21), 22 March 1921

to invade Hail. This he had been encouraged to do in wartime but now Hail was regarded as a useful buffer state between Ibn Saud and his Hashemite neighbours. If he conquered Hail, he might be tempted, by his followers, to intrude upon Mesopotamia and the Hejaz.<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Ibn Saud found himself in 1921 surrounded by unfriendly rulers. Against Britain's wishes, he decided to exploit this situation for his own benefit. He had established himself after Khurmah as the most powerful Arab ruler.<sup>2</sup> He had prepared the ground for more victorious operations by occupying the Asir highlands and the oasis nearby in the summer of 1920.<sup>3</sup> In the spring of 1921 he assumed the title of "Sultan of Nejd and its dependencies". The significance of this step was to give Nejd an international status comparable with that of her neighbours.<sup>4</sup> In April he sought Britain's recognition of his new title but Britain remained silent until 22 August, when his campaign against Hail was proceeding successfully.<sup>5</sup> The strength of his position

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1. CAB 23/25(2) 11 April 1921; Philby, Saudi Arabia (London 1955) p.280.

2. Monroe, op.cit., p.127.

3. Philby, Saudi Arabia, p.279.

4. Ibid., p.282.

5. Dobbs, 'A Short History of Iraq-Nejd Relations', E2316/1/91, F.O. 371/12993

was confirmed with the capitulation of the City of Hail on 2 November 1921.<sup>1</sup>

The Sharifian-Rashidi alliance, established early in 1920, had proved a total failure. Husain was powerless to help Ibn al-Rashid to avoid the collapse of his state. Any British aid for which he might have hoped could hardly be forthcoming while he was engaged in protest against the mandatory system which Britain was now busily establishing. In these circumstances all the Ikhwan leaders rallied to Ibn Saud, including Faisal al Dowaish, who had assisted in the capture of Hail. Ibn Saud was also supported by Nuri al-Sha'lan, the leader of the Rwalah tribe of the Syrian desert, who hoped with the help of the French to annex al-Jauf to his own territories in Transjordan.<sup>2</sup>

While in Beirut in 1908, the American Consul-General wrote:

"... However, the relative position of the two centres (Hail and Riyadh) may at any time undergo a radical change ... and the House of Ibn Saud may yet outshine any other in Arabia."<sup>3</sup>

The Consul's foresight proved correct in due course, and he again wrote from Constantinople on 17 December, just after the fall of Hail, reminding his government of what he had said and adding : "recent events, however, seem to indicate

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1. Collins, op.cit., p.29; for the conquest of Hail See: Attar, op.cit., 449- 66.
  2. Williams, op.cit., p.176.
  3. American Consul (Beirut) to Sec. of State (Washington) 23 July 1908, cited in; al-Rashid D.H.S.A., I, pp.1-29.



that the new Sultan cherishes plans of further expansion of his dominions.<sup>1</sup>

The British policy of preventing Ibn Saud from getting into proximity to the mandatory territories now proved a failure. The existence of Hail as a buffer state had come to an end, and opened the way to fulfilment for Ibn Saud of "one of his great ambitions of his life".<sup>2</sup> The immediate consequence of the fall of Hail and of the controlling, by the Ikhwan, of the two main desert roads from Central Arabia to both Iraq and Syria, was the spread of chaos and disorder among the tribes in a large area connecting Hail with Iraq and Transjordan. This emphasized Britain's urgent need to secure a settlement with Ibn Saud.

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1. American Consul (Constantinople) to Sec. of State (Washington) 17 Dec. 1921, cited in al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., I, pp.71-72.

2. Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis'.

The Nejd Northern Frontier Delimitation and the Frontier Disputes, 1921-25

Cox congratulated Ibn Saud on his victory. Meanwhile, he sought an arrangement for an early meeting between the Sultan of Nejd and the King of Iraq under British auspices. It was hoped that a clear understanding might be established regarding the frontier between their two countries. This initiative stemmed from King Faisal's proposal of December 1921, but was hurried by Ibn Saud's territorial expansion and by Britain's desire to define the territories under her mandate. Gertrude Bell had been busy in December 1921 "making out the southern desert frontier of Iraq with the help of a gentleman from Hail and [the] chief of Anizah".<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud, whose ambitions were vast, was reluctant to commit himself to a definite frontier, at least for the time being. Playing for time, he insisted that the establishment of the principles for an agreement should be made first. He conceived a frontier as being determined by tribal rather than geographical lines. Accordingly, Cox proposed that certain tribes (Montafiq, 'Anizah and Dhafir) should be recognized as belonging to Iraq, and that the line of the frontier should be determined in accordance with <sup>those tribes'</sup> prescriptive rights to watering places. Ibn Saud concurred with the general idea behind this proposal.<sup>2</sup>

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1. G. Bell to her father, 4 Dec. 1921, The letters of Gertrude Bell, ii, pp. 628-29.

2. Dobbs, 'A Short History of Iraq-Nejd Relations', E2316/1/91, F.O. 371/12993.

The frontier question was, however, still far from easy to solve. It was enormously complicated by conflicting claims and by tribal feuds. Ibn Saud missed no chance to persuade the tribal chiefs to come into his fold. He received Ibn al-Suwait of the Dhafir and gave him presents as token of good relations. As evidence of their loyalty the Dhafir would pay tribute to Ibn Saud's representative. He was aware of tribes' fashion of sport-raiding. The Ikhwan tribes, still full of enthusiasm and victory, continued their raids against the non-Ikhwan. This religious factor among Ibn Saud's warriors was being well used to further of his political ambitions. Fearing the ruthless Ikhwan, the Iraqi tribes left their grazing areas for the benefit of their raiders. Of course Ibn Saud was pleased by the actions of his victorious tribes. But their success became more limited when a Camel Corps to protect the Iraqi frontier tribes was established.<sup>1</sup>

The border situation was worsened by Ikhwan raids during the spring of 1922, and by their firing at a Royal Air Force plane. Cox made a show of force in reply and ordered the bombing of Ikhwan camps, and warned Ibn Saud of the serious consequences of any further Ikhwan raids. In reply, Ibn Saud gave assurances that the Ikhwan had acted without his authority, and promised to punish those who were proved guilty.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.; see also: G. Bell to her father, 14 March 1922, The Letters of Gertrude Bell, ii, 635-36; 'Nejd proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3; see Attar, op.cit., pp.637-40 for text of exchanged letters over the dispute.



In the difficult task of restoring stability to Iraq, Cox found the consequences of Ikhwan attacks particularly embarrassing. They provided political fodder for the Shi'ah of Iraq, who were traditionally hostile to the Wahhabis, in their opposition to Britain's mandate. The danger of a violent anti-British demonstration was obvious. In fact no disturbances occurred, but a legacy of resentment remained among the inhabitants of southern Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

In this unpromising atmosphere communication between Cox and Ibn Saud on the frontier question was, nevertheless, continued. Now, Ibn Saud "was disinclined" to accept settling the frontier on the basis of Cox's proposals. His reluctance could, however, according to Cox, probably be overcome at a conference. In that hope Cox laid down a provisional frontier line to be observed pending the conclusion of further negotiations. He notified Ibn Saud of this and asked him accordingly, to recall his tribesmen north to the line which "included in Iraq the wells and pasturages belonging to the Dhafir, Anizah and Muntafiq tribes".<sup>2</sup>

So, the ground was prepared for a meeting, at Muhammarah, on the first of May 1922. Ibn Thanayan, a highly educated Nejdi, represented Ibn Saud. He was given "precise instructions"

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1. 'The Iraq Nejd Frontier', Journal of the Central Asian Society, xvii (1930) pp.77-92; Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.333.
  2. Dobbs, 'A Short History of Iraq-Nejd Relations'; also Attar, op.cit., pp.640-42.

Source:  
Raswan, C.R., Tribal Areas and  
Migration Lines of the North  
Arabian Bedouins, Geographical Review,  
XX (1930)

# NORTHERN ARABIA BEDOUIN TRIBAL AREAS AND RELATED LANDMARKS

BY CARL R. RASWAN

SCALE 1:8000 000

0 50 100 MILES  
0 50 100 KILOMETERS

## BOUNDARIES OF TRIBAL AREAS

ANZE TRIBES

Bedouin  
Sudani  
Amara, Wadi Sijman  
Bishr

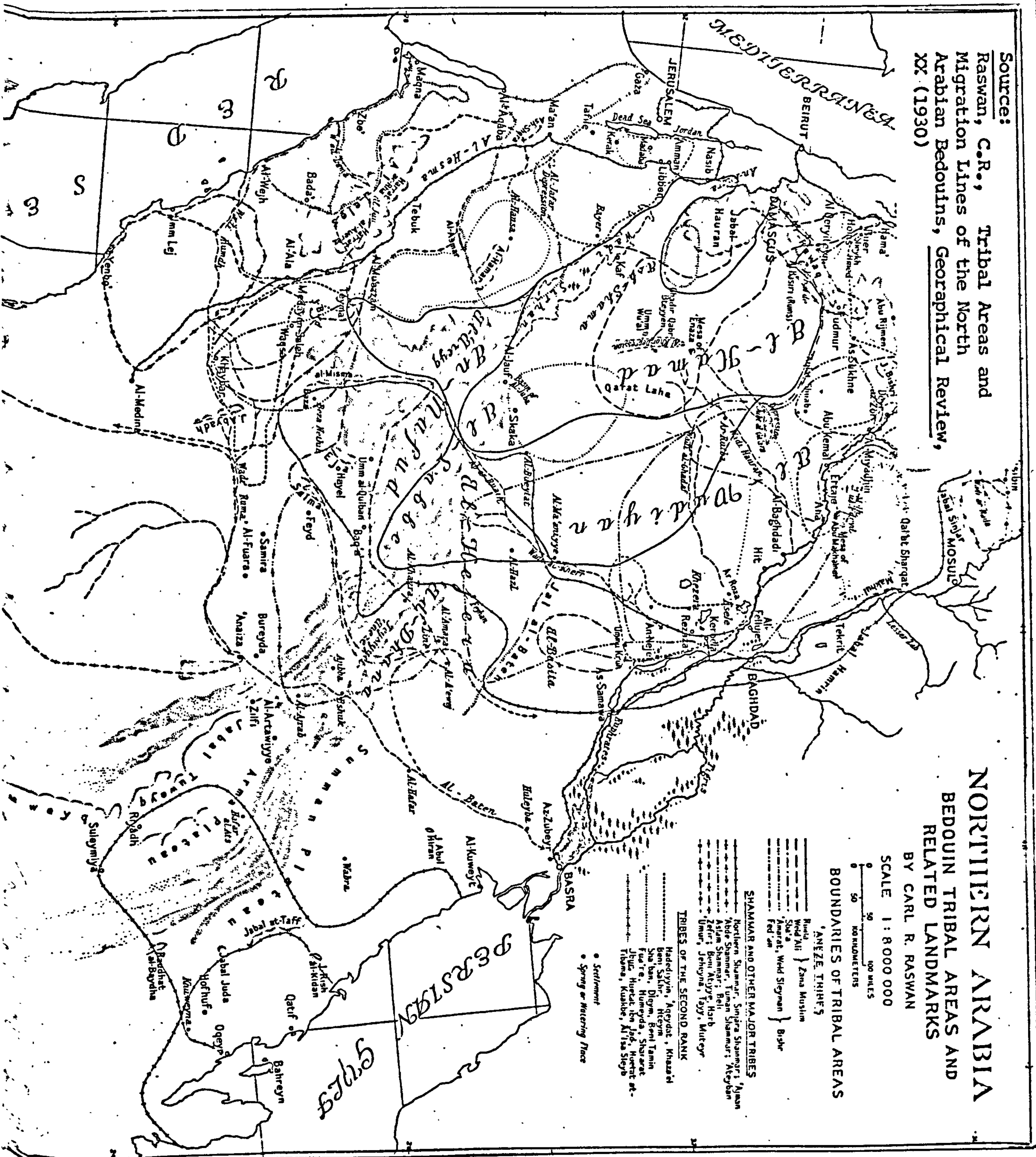
## SHAMMAR AND OTHER MAJOR TRIBES

Northern Shammar, Singara Shammar, Yaman  
Nabde Shammar, Tuman Shammar, Ateyban  
Aslam Shammar, Bili  
Zefir, Beni Ateyye, Harb  
Umur, Jehayna, Tayi, Mutayr

## TRIBES OF THE SECOND RANK

Hadeidiya, Aqayda, Khazal  
Beni Sakhr, Niteym  
Shaban, Dileym, Beni Tamim  
Fut'e, Humayda, Shuaybat  
Jibla, Huwat, Ith Jib, Huwat at-  
Ribana, Kuahar, Alisa Steya

Settlement  
Spring or Watering Place





and limited authority. Sabih Nashat represented King Faisal with wide authority to discuss, in addition to the frontier, various matters concerning normal relationships between two neighbouring countries.<sup>1</sup> After five days of discussions under the auspice of B.H. Bourdillon, a High Commissioner representative, the treaty of Mohammarah was signed. The first article has a special importance as it would cause many problems between Iraq and Nejd. It gave the Dhafir, Anizah and Montafiq to Iraq and left to Nejd only a section of Shammar. But "the wells and ranges customarily used by the several tribes should be recognised as falling respectively within the territory of the state to which the particular tribe had been assigned."<sup>2</sup> This judgment facilitated a quick agreement. The final frontier line was left to a joint Iraqi-Nejdi commission presided over by a British official. Certain wells and pasture grounds were identified as being common to the tribes of the two countries. This decision was the origin of the concept which was to become accepted of neutral zones between Arabian frontiers.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.; 'Nejd proposed Green Book' (Philby papers) 16/3; American Vice Consul (Jerusalem) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 5 Sept. 1922, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., i, pp.90-95.
  2. See Arabic text of the treaty in Attar, op.cit., pp.643-46; see also, Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.334; Statement by B.H. Bourdillon, 6 Nov. 1929, Documents on International Affairs (1929) pp.260-63.
  3. See map p. 70A which illustrates the difficulties of drawing a frontier line in Northern Arabia.



The treaty at the time appeared to be a British diplomatic victory. For Cox, it was a wise attempt to solve a complicated tribal problem and a daring attempt to lay down a practical frontier line in a region inhabited by seasonally migrating pastoral tribes. It was also the first real post-war effort to create a frontier.<sup>1</sup> But this satisfaction was to be short-lived. Ibn Saud refusing to ratify the treaty, informed the High Commissioner that Ibn Thanayan had exceeded his authority in signing it.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly Ibn Saud continued to act as if nothing had changed. Consequently the situation deteriorated with continuous raiding from the two sides. In June Ibn Saud urged a meeting with Cox "as difficulties with the Hejaz, Transjordan and Iraq were hampering the development of Nejd". The High Commissioner, busy negotiating the Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 1922, agreed in principle.

Later in September Cox instructed Dickson to prepare the ground with Ibn Saud for a meeting at 'Uqair. The meeting took place in November, and, since its purpose was to settle the Nejd-Iraq and Nejd-Kuwait frontiers, Cox brought with him an Iraqi and a Kuwaiti representative. Discussion did not proceed smoothly. The Sultan fought hard for tribal boundaries, as a definite line on the map was unrealistic in an area inhabited by seasonally migrating

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1. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.333; Williams, op.cit., p.147.

2. Dobbs, 'A Short History of Iraq-Nejd Relations'; 'Nejd Proposed Green Book', (Philby Papers) 16/3.

tribes. Ibn Saud's rejection was based on a feeling that he would thereby be recognising the establishment of a ring of new states ruled by his enemies. Eventually at a private meeting, Cox succeeded in putting pressure on Ibn Saud and on 2 December an agreement was reached and two protocols were signed. They became known as the 'Uqair protocols. By these protocols the Iraq-Nejd and the Nejd-Kuwait frontiers were finally defined.<sup>1</sup> These boundaries have remained until today with only one change, that is the dividing of the Kuwait-Nejd Neutral Zone between the two countries.<sup>2</sup>

The 'Uqair meeting was a major diplomatic success for Cox. Ibn Saud ratified the Mohammarah Treaty and finally accepted the frontier lines that he had so strongly opposed. Both the treaty and the two protocols were to be taken together as a single agreement. The idea of a meeting between Ibn Saud and King Faisal was also revived. According to Gertrude Bell, Sir Percy Cox returned to Iraq on 11 December 1922

"with treaties all signed and finished in his hands ... Ibn Saud is coming to Iraq in the spring to visit the King [Faisal] under Sir Percy's auspices. ... Sir Percy was magnificent ... Ibn Saud is convinced that the future of himself and his country depends on our [British] goodwill and that he will never break with us."<sup>3</sup>

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1. For the 'Uqair Protocols, see; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours (London 1956) pp.267- 78; Rihani, Ibn Saud his People and his Land (London 1928) Chapters 8 & 9; Rihani, tarikh Nejd al-hadith wa mulhaqateh (Beirut 1928) pp.278-84; Rihani, 'A report on Arabia', cited in, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., 1, pp.113- 37; Attar, op.cit., 646-50.
  2. El-Ghoneimy, 'The Legal Status of the Saudi Kuwaiti Neutral Zone', International and Comparative Law Quarterly, xv (1966), pp.690-717.
  3. G. Bell to her father, 16 Dec. 1922, Letters of Gertrude Bell ii, p.659; see also: Cox to Shuckburgh, 25 July 1928, C.O. 732/33.



Two days later she wrote "It's really amazing that anyone should exercise influence such as his [Cox] ... I don't think that any European in history has made such a deeper [sic] impression on the Oriental mind".<sup>1</sup> Commenting on his work at 'Uqair, Cox wrote, "I had left no stone unturned in the difficult endeavour to promote cordial relations between the two potentates [Faisal and Ibn Saud], both allies of HM's Government ...".<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud never abandoned his ambitions. He grudgingly accepted the frontiers as defined by the Treaty of Mohammarah and the protocols of 'Uqair, but succeeded in securing for his tribes watering and grazing rights on the other side of the frontier according to articles 2 and 3 of the protocol.<sup>3</sup>

Unfortunately for all the parties concerned, the latest agreements were not by themselves enough to guarantee peace or fixed frontiers in the desert, and neither side in the event proved able to fulfil its obligations. Large numbers of Shammar-Nejd refugees started to raid their former home from Iraq during the spring of 1923. Ibn Saud protested to Cox. Cox was too busy to take action. He was arranging the Iraqi internal affairs and preparing for his final departure which took place on 3 May. Pending retirement

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1. G. Bell to her father, 18 Dec. 1922, Letters of Gertrude Bell, pp.260-61.

2. Cox, A Historical Summary to the Background of Bell's Letters, Letters of Gertrude Bell ii, pp.504- 41. Quote on p.535.

3. 'Nejd proposed Green Book', (Philby Papers) 16/3; Bourdillion statement, 6 Nov. 1929, D.I.A., pp.260-63.



from the service "I was content to leave the direction of current affairs in the experienced hands of my counsellor and successor, Sir Henry Dobbs."<sup>1</sup>

Cox retired leaving the main political issue unresolved. In fact, he had not tried to solve the larger quarrel between the Sultan of Nejd and the King of the Hejaz, nor to consider the Nejd claims over al-Jauf and Wadi Sirhan which was indeed Ibn Saud's gateway to Syria.

Al-Jauf had always been a contested area in the heart of the Syrian desert. It had witnessed many trials of strength during the previous two decades.<sup>2</sup> Now, the conflict was between Nejd and Transjordan. Britain was in favour of Transjordan's claim. The area was of strategic importance for British Imperial interests, since the Government of India had never abandoned the notion of a railway through the British controlled territory from the Gulf to the Mediterranean. Major A.L. Holt, a British engineer, was sent in 1922 to the northern Arabian desert on a special mission in order to explore the possibility of constructing a railway line between Baghdad and Haifa or Aqaba. Finishing his mission, he

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1. Cox, 'A Historical Summary to the Background of Bell's Letters', The Letters of Gertrude Bell, ii, p.541; Dobbs, 'A Short History of Iraq-Nejd Relations', E2316/1/91; F.O. 371/12993; 'The Iraq-Nejd Frontier', Journal of the Central Asian Society, xvii (1930) pp.77-92.
  2. For more about al-Jauf see: Philby, 'Jauf and the North Arabian Desert', Geographical Journal, lxi (1923) pp.241-59; Philby, 'Transjordan', Journal of the Central Asian Society, xi (1924) pp.296-312; Holt, 'The future of the Northern Arabian Desert', Geographical Journal, lxi (1923) pp.259-71; Monroe, op.cit., pp.114-36.

reported that, the future of the Northern Arabian desert "lies in its value as a potential line of communication". According to his calculations the proposed line would save two weeks , or four thousand miles compared with navigating around the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> The French in Syria and Ibn Saud disliked the British idea,<sup>2</sup> because both had ambitions to annex this desert.

Thinking of extending their influence to the desert oases, the French had supported Nuri al-Sha'lan of the Rwalah in his seizure of al-Jauf from Ibn al-Rashid during the conflict with Ibn Saud in the autumn of 1921. But since Nuri had become Ibn Saud's neighbour, fearing Wahhabi attacks, he now sought British support. In principle, the British were prepared to respond in order to keep the Wahhabi influence and that of the French out of the valley. Accordingly, Philby, then chief British representative in Transjordan, was asked to establish close contact with Nuri al-Sha'lan , and to pay a visit to al-Jauf. Philby did so in the spring of 1922 accompanied by Major Holt of the Iraqi railways. Nuri then agreed to accept Transjordanian suzerainty in return<sup>for</sup> Transjordan defending his territory against any Wahhabi attack.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Holt, op.cit; McCallum, 'The Discovery and Development of the New Land Route to the East', Journal of the Central Asian Society, xii (1925) pp.44-67. An enormous amount of documents, traced in the C.O. files in the P.R.O. London, covers much of the story of the Land Road and Railway projects between Baghdad and Haifa, see for example, C.O. 732 vols: 27, 39, 47, 48, 50, 51, 55, 56.
  2. Monroe, op.cit., pp.120-21.
  3. See full account on Philby's visit in his: 'Jauf and the North Arabian Desert'.



Ibn Saud's anxiety to establish close contact with Syria and to control the desert road through al-Jauf was evident. For economic and strategic reasons he watched British moves with suspicion. He felt that Britain's plans ran counter to his own interests. British expectations on the other hand, even before the fall of Hail, were that Ibn Saud would "have influence ... over the whole of the western half of the Syrian desert ... the whole desert between Syria and Mesopotamia will be his and he will be the one person with whom Mesopotamia must be in quarrel ..."<sup>1</sup> From Britain's point of view it seemed urgently necessary to resist any Wahhabi aggression against Transjordan.

Philby, whose function was to consolidate 'Abd-Allah's rule in Transjordan, did his best to reorganise military defence against Ikhwan attacks from the southern end of the Wadi, the whole of which both he and Lawrence had agreed should be Abd-Allah's "from end to end". In summer 1922, it was reported that the situation was well in hand. But in the autumn, Wahhabi attacks reached the vicinity of Amman.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, the Wadi tribes submitted to the Ikhwan and renounced their allegiance to Nuri al-Sha'lan . By the end of 1922, Ibn Saud's forces occupied all the desert oases.<sup>3</sup> Nuri appealed to 'Abd-Allah. The latter turned to the British who responded with military support

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1. Quoted in Troeller, op.cit., p.228.

2. Philby, 'Transjordan'; American vice Consul (Jerusalem) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 22 Aug. 1922, cited in al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., i, pp.88-89.

3. Philby, Saudi Arabia, p.283. see map p.77A.



Source: Admiralty, Western Arabia and the Red Sea





against recurring Ikhwan raids.<sup>1</sup>

In October 'Abd-Allah was in london "to receive the prize of independence promised him in return for good work".<sup>2</sup> Philby was supposed to deal with 'Abd-Allah's requests but in fact the whole matter was left to Clayton. During the course of discussion it emerged that 'Abd-Allah was not adamant in his demand for the annexation of al-Jauf to Transjordan. Clayton recorded "it appeared that the Amir would be willing to relinquish Jauf, provided that he were assured that the districts Kaf - Azrak - Burka were retained within the limits of Transjordan .."<sup>3</sup> Both Britain and 'Abd-Allah, however, shared the opinion that Ibn Saud must not extend his influence from al-Jauf towards the Hejaz Railway between Maan and al-Madinah.

The question of al-Jauf was carefully considered during the ensuing negotiations for an Anglo-Transjordanian treaty. It was affected by two independent factors:

- (i) "Imperial interests in regard to the projected trans-desert railway".
- (ii) "The gradual spread of the Wahhabi faith" and its dangerous consequences. On the first count it was agreed that Britain's influence in Transjordan should be peacefully extended to Wadi Sirhan. Philby favoured the notion,<sup>4</sup> simply

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1. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.339; Collins, op.cit., pp.33-34.

2. Philby, 'Transjordan'.

3. Clayton to the M.E. Dept. (C.O.) 22 Oct. 1922, (Clayton Papers) 471/3, School of Oriental Studies, Dharm Univ.

4. Points for discussions with Amir 'Abd-Allah and Philby (Clayton Papers) 471/3.

because he had always believed that Transjordan was too small a territory to constitute an independent state and that it ought either to be joined to Palestine or to the Hejaz. He concluded his observations:

"... everybody seems to agree that these two countries [ Palestine and Transjordan] are essentially one ... what we have done is to separate a naturally single territory into three parts namely Palestine, Syria and Transjordan .."<sup>1</sup>

Philby had himself previously put forward the idea of joining Transjordan to the Hejaz under some form of 'Abd-Allah regency. This idea, however, had been opposed by both Dobbs and Samuel. But Clayton still regarded it as worthy of some further discussion with Philby and 'Abd-Allah. The latter seemed to have been interested but in no hurry to proceed any further in the matter.<sup>2</sup>

On the second count al-Jauf, in Ibn Saud's hands, would be a "grave danger" as it would become a centre of Wahhabi activities. The Transjordan delegate at the negotiations suggested that Ibn Saud "should be pressed to evacuate Jauf and that it [should] be left under the Shalans". Clayton, in no position to give promises, argued that the maintenance of al-Jauf by Transjordan would be a "source of weakness". However he had no authority to reach any other conclusion until he had received the decision of the Middle East Department on the matter.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See: Philby, 'Transjordan'.

2. Points for discussions with Amir 'Abd-Allah and Philby (Clayton Papers) 471/3.

3. Clayton to M.E. Dept. (C.O.) 28 Nov. 1922, (Clayton Papers) 471/3.



In November 1923, the British Government decided that: Transjordan should have access to the Gulf of 'Aqaba; Nejd should be prevented from reaching the Hejaz Railway; the Hejaz should recover the Khurmah and Turabah territories; and Wadi Sirhan then could be excluded from Transjordan. Accordingly, the Colonial Office telegraphed the following to the British Resident at Bushire:

"... the Kaf [the nearest point of Wadi Sirhan to Transjordan] would be given up for Akaba by 'Abdullah, Khurma and Taraba would be given up by Ibn Saud for Kaf, and any claim to territory north of Mudawara would be given up by Husain for Khurma and Taraba."<sup>1</sup>

This policy of give and take appeared to the British policy-makers to be a means of gratifying all the parties. But the success of this policy still depended on their agreement which was not forthcoming.

Tension continued during 1923, and the treaty of Mohammarah and the 'Uqair protocols proved a failure. As far as the Bedouin were concerned the treaty and the protocols were matters personal to the rulers and in no way binding on themselves. The Ikhwan continued their raids not only northwards but also to the west.

Considering these developments in the internal Arabian situation as <sup>a</sup> real threat to her interests, Britain abandoned her non-interference policy and decided to invite the Hejaz, Transjordan, Iraq and Nejd to Kuwait in December 1923 for a round table conference under British auspices.

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1. C.O. to the Resident (Bushire) 8 Nov. 1923 (Clayton Papers) 471/2.

This intervention took place at a time when neither Ibn Saud nor King Husain felt under obligation to work harmoniously with Britain. By cutting off Ibn Saud's subsidy, Britain had taken <sup>an</sup> untimely decision. In March 1923 the Cabinet had decided that, "a single payment of £50,000 will be made to him [Ibn Saud] for the year 1923/24, but after 31 March 1923 his subsidy will be discontinued".<sup>1</sup> Philby condemned the decision as it could have been of dangerous consequences for British policy. Now Ibn Saud had nothing to gain by cooperation, and

"if a spontaneous understanding was not achieved among the parties themselves [at Kuwait], but was forced upon them, it would not be accepted by Ibn Saud ... and if the conference failed to arrive at an agreed settlement, Ibn Saud would march on the Hejaz".<sup>2</sup>

Husain's subsidy had already been terminated since he had refused to comply with British policy aims in the Middle East. The Cabinet decided to offer only a lump sum of £50,000 if and when he signed a satisfactory treaty with Britain.<sup>3</sup> But his attitude remained unchanged. However excellent the idea of the Kuwait conference was, since it would allow the Arabs to settle their own matters themselves, there was indeed little prospect of this in the absence of co-operation by Ibn Saud and by King Husain. The conference,

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1. CAB 23/45, 17 (23), 28 March 1923. See also: The Times 13 March 1928, for the subsidies paid to Ibn Saud.

2. Philby, 'Arabia Today', International Affairs, xiv (1935) pp. 619-34

3. CAB 23/45, 17 (23), 28 March 1923.



therefore, was foredoomed to failure.

It opened on 17 December without Hejazi representation. The delegates of Nejd, Iraq and Transjordan found themselves immediately at loggerheads on the main points at issue. Ten days later the conference broke up temporarily to enable the delegates to consult their governments. Again it was resumed on 16 January 1924 for another fruitless ten days. At the final attempt which was due to begin in March, it was hoped that King Husain would send his representative and all parties would then reach an agreement. Instead, the Nejd delegation returned with notes that the Shammar refugees were raiding into Nejd, and Faisal al-Dowaish threatened reprisals against Iraq. In fact hope was lost when al-Dowaish attacked Iraqi tribes on 14 March and when Iraq refused to continue the negotiations. There was already no Hejazi representative to the conference, and no Nejd-Transjordan agreement had been reached over Wadi-Sirhan.<sup>1</sup> The conference had failed, but "more serious than failure ... was the evidence of growing intransigence and aggressiveness on the Wahhabi side".<sup>2</sup> Philby's expectations proved correct. As he later remarked

"The failure of the past few years has been directly traceable to grave mistakes of policy based on misunderstanding of the psychology of Central Arabia, and that a continuance of that policy must result in chaos and disaster."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Dobbs, 'A Short History'; al-Rihani, Tarikh Nejd, pp. 287-91; Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.340; Attar, op.cit., pp.608-10.

2. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.341.

3. Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis'. For more about the Kuwait Conference see a complete file in Air 5/332.



As attempts at conciliation between Ibn Saud and all his Hashimite neighbours now proved a failure, Britain began to retreat from her role in trying to make a desert policy; the treaty of Mohammarah and the protocols of 'Uqair had not been respected at any time in the past; no definite frontier between Nejd and Transjordan had been agreed upon; King Husain was not able to recover his lost territories, nor was he able to defend himself; the treaty of Darain 1915, neither mentioned the Nejd-Hejaz frontier nor prevented Ibn Saud from attacking the Hejaz; Anglo-Hejazi relations were at a turning point; Ibn Saud had nothing to gain from Britain after the termination of his subsidy. No longer under any obligation he felt free to follow his own desires. He chose to take the Hejaz.<sup>1</sup>

The story of the Hejaz war does not need to be pursued in detail. It will suffice to introduce a summary of the developments which may be useful when considering British policy. When Ibn Saud launched his campaign on the Hejaz in August 1924, Britain felt that she was, this time, not committed to support Husain and declared neutrality. The roots of this decision go back to the early post-war period when differences emerged between Husain and Britain and was confirmed by the Kuwait Conference when the British line was "to allow the Arabs to settle the matter for themselves or to fight it out for themselves."<sup>2</sup> Lacking British support

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1. For the motive behind the Hejaz war see; Attar, op.cit., pp.681-706.

2. Philby, 'Arabia Today'. European representative at Jeddah declared neutrality in a letter dated 4 Nov. 1924, Umm al-Qura No. 2, 19 Dec. also No. 3, 26 Dec. 1924; Attar, op.cit., pp.737, 810-11.

Husain ceased to inspire any confidence among his own followers. Pressed to abdicate he did so on 3 October<sup>1</sup> in favour of his son Ali who inherited a hopeless position and soon showed himself <sup>unable</sup> to defend even those territories still nominally under his control. The war continued throughout 1925. Peace missions failed to reconcile the two rivals.<sup>2</sup> When rumours reached London about the fall of the Hejaz, the Cabinet of 29 September 1924 confirmed a former warning to Ibn Saud that "he must not interfere with British subjects in Mecca or elsewhere". He was also informed that a ship had been sent to Jeddah with a view to the withdrawal, in an emergency, of British subjects, whether pilgrims or residents.<sup>3</sup>

Unlike her aloofness in the Hejaz war, Britain took a positive interest in the dispute over the Iraq-Nejd and Trans-jordan-Nejd frontiers. In Iraq the High Commissioner himself supervised the situation by arrangements with the Iraqi Government. The Royal Air Force assumed responsibility to defend the country.<sup>4</sup> When ex-King Husain had fled to Aqaba

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1. On 3 Oct. a Hejazi assembly met in Jeddah, requested Husain's abdication, see Arabic text to the communique in: al-Rihani, Tarikh Nejd, pp.304- 05. See Husain's acceptance pp.306- 07; see also; al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., i, pp.174-77, Attar, op.cit., pp.721-32, 739-55.
  2. Rihani conducted a peace mission between Ibn Saud and Ali, see: American Consul (Beirut) to the Sec. of State (Washington) cited in al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., ii, pp.22-43. King Fuad of Egypt made another endeavour see: Acting High Commissioner (Alex.) to Acting British Agent (Jeddah) 14 Oct. 1925 (Clayton Papers) 471/6; also sayed Taleb and Philby as well as the Imam of the Yemen made their own, see: Attar, op.cit., pp.810-19, 851-54. The Russians too kept <sup>up</sup> their endeavours for reconciliation see: Umm al-Qura No. 20, 8 May 1925, No. 24, 5 June 1925.
  3. CAB 23/48, 51 (24), 29 Sept. 1924.
  4. Bourdillon, B.H., (for the High Commissioner, Iraq) to Amery (C.O.), 12 March 1925, (Clayton Papers) 471/5; see also, Dobbs, 'A Short History'.

and had continued to give support to the Hejazi army, the British position was threatened especially when Ibn Saud justified his acts as follows:

"... We have become firmly convinced that the sole course of the prolongation of the present war ... is the Sharif Husain who has taken up his residence in Aqaba and is furnishing the army of the Government of Jeddah with men and arms and supplies and money ... We have therefore decided to take a new step which will be most influential in its effect, wide in its scope and powerful in its result... We have decided to despatch a division of our army in the direction of Aqaba because Husain is living and fighting there..."<sup>1</sup>

Britain acted quickly in order to prevent Ibn Saud from taking 'Aqaba, it was proposed that: Husain should be removed from Aqaba to Cyprus, that Aqaba should be annexed to Transjordan for strategic reasons and that negotiations should be opened as soon as possible with Ibn Saud. Britain accordingly decided to send to Ibn Saud and to ex-King Husain notifications of the British intentions regarding Husain and Aqaba. In the meantime Ibn Saud was reminded that Aqaba "lies within a boundary within which he had been informed in October last that an unprovoked aggression on his part would be regarded as an attack upon territory for which His Majesty's Government are responsible ..." <sup>2</sup>

In addition, the British Government would take the necessary steps to prevent or eject his forces if they attempted to enter the port. Britain, however, was

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1. Ibn Saud to the British Agent (Jeddah) 14 May 1925 (Clayton Papers) 471/5.
  2. CAB 23/50, 27 (25), 27 May 1925; See also Young to Clayton, 31 July 1925, (Clayton Papers) 471/6; Philby, 'Great Britain and its Arabian Problems', (Philby Papers) 18/9, Umm al-Qura, No. 31, 11 Aug. 1925.



"ready and anxious to consult with him [over] the actual delimitation of the frontier between Nejd and Transjordan, as well as the settlement of all outstanding questions between himself and Transjordan and Iraq, and that they were willing to initiate immediate negotiations with him ... either in London, or elsewhere."<sup>1</sup>

On the first of July the Cabinet approved the following recommendations of the Committee of Imperial Defence:

1. Aqaba "will no longer be available for pro-Hejaz intrigues and will be incorporated in Transjordan Administration".
2. Ex-King Husain should be induced to leave Aqaba by 17 July 1925.
3. The British Authorities in Transjordan "should take steps to extend the administration to include Maan" as well as Aqaba and the administration "should be conducted from Maan with no officials stationed at Akaba".
4. A British ship should visit Aqaba after the departure of Husain.<sup>2</sup>

By the end of July 1925, in accordance with these decisions, Husain had been removed, and Aqaba had been annexed. Ibn Saud strongly objected to the annexation but in vain. On 31 July, Herbert Young wrote to Clayton:

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1. CAB 23/50, 27 (25) 27 May 1925.

2. CAB 23 /50, 32 (25), 1 July 1925; see: Umm al-Qura, No. 29, 17 July, 1925; Attar, op.cit., pp.858.

"Negotiations should be opened as soon as possible with Ibn Saud with a view to delimitating the exact frontier between Nejd and Transjordan and also clearing up certain outstanding points between Nejd and Iraq ... the conversations should be conducted by someone whose name is well known to the Arab world and upon whose judgment he can himself rely ..."<sup>1</sup>

He finally asked Clayton if he "would consider undertaking this duty".

In fact, the British never thought that the fall of Husain could happen so quickly. As they were taken by surprise, they avoided taking any action to save the Hejaz nor were they under an obligation to do so.

"... It became an urgent matter" Toynbee wrote, "for Great Britain to reach an agreement with Ibn Saud in regard not only to the Nejd-Transjordan frontier but to the tribal regime along the border between Ibn Saud's dominions and both the areas under British mandate. If Jiddah and Medina were to fall before these issues between Ibn Saud and Great Britain were settled, the Wahhabi ruler might be tempted ... to settle the problems of his northern frontiers by the sword - a development which would place Great Britain in an exceedingly difficult position ..."<sup>2</sup>

Only then, did Britain discover that she must rapidly readjust her policy towards Ibn Saud. The result was a totally new departure. Ibn Saud was no longer a petty ruler, but the future King of Arabia. His relations with Great Britain on this new basis are the object of this study.

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1. Young to Clayton, 31 July 1925 (Clayton Papers) 471/6. This invitation was repeated to Clayton several times.
  2. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.343.

## CHAPTER TWO

### Britain, British Muslims and the Saudi Conquest of the Hejaz, 1925-6

- Clayton's first Mission to Ibn Saud and the end of the Hashemites in the Hejaz, October - December, 1925
- Britain's Recognition of Ibn Saud in the Hejaz, January - April, 1926
- Muslim Attitudes towards the New Situation in the Hejaz, 1926



Clayton's first Mission to Ibn Saud and the end of  
the Hashemites in the Hejaz, October - December 1925

Although Britain had decided to pursue a policy of official neutrality towards Arabian affairs and, accordingly, Husain had been left to his inevitable fate, she could not, if her interests as a Mandatory Power were to be protected, afford to remain entirely aloof. Two main issues, involving the Mandates, remained unresolved after the Kuwait Conference and both concerned Ibn Saud whose cooperation became essential. Therefore it was decided to send a highranking envoy to Ibn Saud to secure peace on the Nejd boundaries with both Iraq and Transjordan, and to delimit a frontier line between Transjordan and Nejd. To this task Sir Gilbert Clayton devoted his life.

Clayton started his mission in October 1925, when Ibn Saud's warriors were victoriously advancing into the Hejaz. On his way to meet Ibn Saud at Bahrah, which he had already occupied, Clayton explained to the Hejazi officials that his mission was not concerned with the current war and that Britain insisted on remaining strictly neutral since the dispute was of a religious nature. As Sir Austin Chamberlain twelve months later stated before the Imperial Conference:

"The policy of His Majesty's Government has all along been to refrain from taking sides in the religious disputes which centre round the Holy Places. All that we desire is that British subjects going on pilgrimage shall do so under the best possible conditions."<sup>1</sup>

1. A statement by Sir A. Chamberlain to the Imperial Conference, 20 Oct. 1926, Documents on British Foreign Policy, 1919-1939, ed. W.N. Medlicott and others (Ser. 1A, ii, 1968) p.937. (Thereafter: D.B.F.P.) The Saudis were delighted by Britain's neutrality see: Umm al-Qura Nos. 2, 19 Dec. and 3, 26 Dec. 1925.

But, he added, from the political point of view, Britain could not entirely disinterest herself from the current development between Nejd and the Hejaz for a simple reason that "Nejd borders upon the British mandated territories of Iraq and Transjordan, and the Hejaz has a common frontier with Transjordan." Chamberlain's statement implies that Britain would have been prepared to play a mediatory role. But

responsibility for that would have been undertaken by the British Agent in the Hejaz and not in any circumstances by Clayton. The account which he gave of his brief to the Hejazis was, therefore, correct. The British attitude now differed from that adopted by Cairo during the Arab Revolt. Britain was no longer concerned about whether the Hejaz was under the control of the Hashemites or of Ibn Saud. But, as the future ruler of the Hejaz, Ibn Saud, whose cooperation Britain required, achieved a new importance. Clayton, who while in the Arab Bureau, had viewed Ibn Saud<sup>as</sup> a minor figure, was now crossing the Hejaz to negotiate with a powerful leader. On 10 October, Clayton reached Ibn Saud's camp at Bahrah. Formal negotiations started the following day and lasted for over three weeks.<sup>1</sup> The question of the Nejd-Transjordan frontier was at the top of the agenda for strategic reasons. The Hejaz was expected to fall at any time and then Ibn Saud might turn his victorious warriors towards the north soon

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1. Report by Sir Gilbert Clayton on his mission to negotiate certain agreements with the Sultan of Nejd, and instructions issued to him in regard to his mission, P.R.O., F.O. 371/11473, (A copy of which is traced in the Sudan Archive, Clayton Papers, 471/7, School of Oriental Studies, Durham University), (Thereafter: 'Clayton Report').

afterwards. For the same reasons, Britain wanted to include Kaf in Transjordan and to stop Ibn Saud's advance to the south of the village in order to prevent him from having corridor territories between Iraq and Transjordan.<sup>1</sup>

(This was a slight change in the British position towards the matter; Kaf had been offered to Ibn Saud by a Colonial Office proposal in November 1923<sup>2</sup> within a general desert settlement which included the Hejaz.)

Britain's new attitude was adopted after two visits made by G. Antonius to the area just before Clayton began his mission. Antonius returned to suggest that not only should Kaf be given to Transjordan "but also the northern half of the Wadi Sirhan". He justified his proposal by several reasons, (i) strategically it would be easy to defend Transjordan against raids coming up the Wadi towards Amman. This was also emphasised by the R.A.F. authorities. (ii) Economically the area was "the natural and customary roaming ground of two of the main tribes concerned namely, the Rwala and the Bani Sakhr", which were supposed to be Transjordanian. (iii) Politically both the Rwalah and Bani Sakhr had "remained untouched by Wahhabi propaganda" and it was desirable to keep them so.<sup>3</sup>

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1. C.O. to Clayton, 10 Sept. 1925, Appendix 'Clayton Report'.
  2. C.O. to the Resident (Bushire) 8 Nov. 1923 (Clayton Papers) 471/2.
  3. Memo. by Antonius on the eastern frontier of Transjordan, Annex. 3 'Clayton Report'.



(iv) Historically, it may be added that Kaf had been "in possession of Nuri Sha'lan and his family for a considerable time, and Jauf itself was captured from Ibn Rashid by Nuri Sha'lan during the war [of 1921] and was only quite recently taken from him by Ibn Saud." The exclusion of Ibn Saud from Wadi Sirhan had been suggested earlier by a British Official in Transjordan for the same reasons mentioned by Antonius.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Saud's attitude was different. "Iraq and Transjordan", he argued, "should be separated from each other, partly because of the presence of the two brothers [Faisal and Abd-Allah], and partly because of the inherited rights of Nejd". He stressed the point that Britain had promised him the whole of the Wadi up to Kaf.<sup>2</sup> He, too, based his claim on geographical, economic and administrative grounds. Free access across the Wadi, he argued, must be guaranteed and his historical rights must be preserved in any settlement. He stated that:

"Kaf and its surrounding villages are intimately connected with the rest of the Wadi Sirhan, and are an indispensable economic factor in the life of the Wadi. We do not think it right that these considerations should be neglected merely for the sake of ensuring communication and other interests."<sup>3</sup>

1. C.H.F. Cox to Antonius, 9 Sept. 1925, Annex 3 'Clayton Report'.
2. Memo. 1, presented by the Sultan of Nejd on 11 Oct. 1925, Annex. 4, 'Clayton Report'.
3. Memo. 2, presented by the Sultan of Nejd on 12 Oct. 1925, Annex, 4, see also: Record of proceedings, 1st and 2nd meetings, 'Clayton Report', Ibn Saud was still insisting on tribal bases for the delimitation of the frontier. See above chapt. 1, pp.68 ff.

There was no doubt that Britain realised the importance of Kaf to Ibn Saud. She had been ready to cede it to him, but now preferred to hold the matter in reserve as a bargaining card.<sup>1</sup> Clayton maintained this position at the negotiations in order to make sure that Ibn Saud's security measures in the area would not lead to offensive action. Unaware of the game Britain was playing, Ibn Saud fought the battle hard for Kaf, but in reasonable and measured terms. He wanted either that Britain "should prevent any danger arising to him or should allow him to repel that danger himself".<sup>2</sup>

Clayton recognised the justice of Ibn Saud's argument. A personal friendship between the two men began to develop. In his report of the proceedings Clayton stated that the Sultan of Nejd

"had performed a wonderful task in restoring and expanding the fortunes of his family and of his country but that very expansion must inevitably bring him into closer contact with the outside world, and he would then feel increasingly the need of a powerful friend to assist him in dealing with forces to which he had not hitherto been exposed. His Highness had already signified his strong desire for a complete friendship and co-operation with Great Britain."<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Saud had expressed his desire for Britain's friendship for pragmatic reasons, Britain similarly needed his co-operation for the sake of her own imperial interests. His dominions were entirely encircled by British

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1. Clayton to C.O. 25 Nov. 1925, 'Clayton Report'.
  2. Record of proceedings, 2nd meeting, 'Clayton Report',
  3. Record of proceedings, 3rd meeting, 'Clayton Report'.



possessions or spheres of influence in India, the Gulf, Aden, the Red Sea, Egypt, the Sudan, Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq. The mutual advantage of friendly relations seemed obvious. Having reached this conclusion, prospects for agreement seemed much fairer, although the Kaf question remained to be determined.<sup>1</sup>

At their fourth meeting Clayton began to shift from his original position. He had tested "the genuineness of Ibn Saud's professions and gauge[d] the length to which he was prepared to carry resistance". This was confirmed at the meeting when Ibn Saud introduced another document to support his claims to Kaf. Clayton aimed at gaining some further bargaining advantage before proceeding with direct discussion of the Kaf issue. As he later explained his object was to induce in Ibn Saud and his advisers "such a frame of mind as to consider it a concession which placed them under obligation of furnishing adequate guarantees in return". This delayed the direct discussion until 25 October, when Clayton drafted an agreement covering the whole of Transjordan - Nejd relations.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud, although not in complete agreement with the draft, considered it a "great step forward". He proposed only a few amendments, and, on 27 October, he presented his

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1. Ibid.

2. Clayton to C.O. 25 Nov. 1925; see also, Memo. 3, presented by the Sultan of Nejd on 14 Oct. 1925, Annex 4; Draft agreement concerning Transjordan presented to the Sultan of Nejd on 25 Oct. 1925, Annex 5, 'Clayton Report'.



counter draft agreement.<sup>1</sup> The gap was narrowed and Clayton decided to cede Kaf in return for particular British objectives, namely "the immunity of Transjordan from aggression, the preservation of established rights, and the protection of tribes against disruptive propaganda". As regards Ibn Saud's urgent demands for contiguity with Syria, Clayton had offered his trading caravans "certain restricted facilities of transit into and from Syrian territory".<sup>2</sup> On 2 November the Haddah agreement was signed. It was only concerned with Nejd-Transjordan frontier issues, although most of the Hejaz was by now under Ibn Saud's de facto control.

The agreement may be summed up as follows: Kaf formally became a part of Ibn Saud's territories (art. 1). But Ibn Saud was prevented from establishing any fortified posts in the area (art. 2). The Governor of Wadi Sirhan should remain in contact with the British representative in Transjordan in order to avoid future misunderstandings (art. 3). The established rights, in the territory of either party, of tribes which were under the jurisdiction of the other party, were to be maintained (art. 4). Raiding from one side of the frontier to the other was to be considered an act of aggression (art. 5). A special tribunal was to be set up for punishing the guilty tribes, who violated the accord (art. 6). Tribes must not cross the frontier without

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1. Draft agreement concerning Transjordan presented by the Sultan of Nejd on 27 Oct. 1925, Annex. 6, 'Clayton Report'.

2. Clayton to C.O. 25 Nov. 1925, 'Clayton Report'.

permission (art. 7). The two governments of Nejd and Transjordan undertook to discourage emigration across the borders (art. 8), and they were not to communicate with the Shaikhs of tribes subject to the authority of the other government (art. 9). The forces of either government were not to cross the frontier without consultation with the other government (art. 10). Shaikhs of tribes who have their own flags were not to display them in the territory of the other state (art. 11). Freedom of passage was to be accorded by the two governments to travellers and to pilgrims (art. 12). Freedom of passage, across the corridor connecting Transjordan with Iraq, was to be secured at all times by the British Government for the merchants of Nejd between Nejd and Syria in both directions (art. 13). The agreement was to remain in force as long as Britain was the Mandatory power in Transjordan (art. 14).<sup>1</sup>

Clayton summarised the substance of the agreement when he wrote:

"... this agreement provides ... for the cession of Kaf and that portion of Wadi Sirhan to the south of Kaf to Ibn Saud, but maintains the northern frontier and the southern portion of the western frontier of Nejd as fixed by His Majesty's Government. In addition, it excludes practically the whole of the four Wadis from Nejd, which represents a gain to Transjordan in comparison with the frontier previously offered to Ibn Saud. The immunity of Transjordan from aggression, the preservation of established rights and the protection of tribes against disruptive propaganda are secured, as far as possible ..."<sup>2</sup>

1. -- For an English text of the agreement see: Appendix B,  
For an Arabic text see: Umm al-Oura, No. 60, 19 Feb. 1926.
2. Clayton to C.O. 25 Nov. 1925, 'Clayton Report'.



During the time when discussions over Kaf were suspended, the negotiators had turned to the other main issue: that of the Iraq-Nejd frontier. Clayton hoped that he could succeed where the Kuwait Conference had failed, even though his terms of reference were the same. Where the actual frontiers were concerned he had no room for manoeuvre. He, therefore, took both the treaty of M<sub>o</sub>hammarah 1922, and the 'Uqair protocols 1923, as bases for discussion. Meanwhile, the Iraq Government authorised an Iraqi official to furnish Clayton with "full details regarding claims and counter claims advanced in respect of past raids, as [sic] also with the views of the Iraq Government regarding a final settlement of such claims".<sup>1</sup> Britain preferred, however, that Iraq, like Transjordan, should not entertain direct negotiations with Nejd. The whole matter therefore remained in Clayton's hands.

At this juncture Britain and Ibn Saud's interests in securing peace and tranquility on the border appeared identical. Their difference arose over methods of achieving that end. The objective, Ibn Saud insisted, "would not be attained unless one principle was laid down and acted upon by both parties, the principle he advocated was to make the tribes in both countries responsible to their governments". Clayton pointed out that this very principle had blocked agreement at the Kuwait conference. Ibn Saud, with memories of the

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1. C.O. to Clayton, 10 Sept. 1925, Appendix, 'Clayton Report'.



Shammar experience in mind and perhaps motivated by a wish to let tribal allegiances determine borders, defended his position by complicated reference to past incidents and episodes concerning the tribes. Clayton, only beginning to discern what lay behind Ibn Saud's attitude, tried to explain the Iraqi point of view and stressed their willingness "to undertake to discourage tribes from coming into their country". The good will of both governments, he argued, would prove more important for maintaining peace in the future rather than the establishment of a rigid and contentious principle for determining government attitudes. Failing to convince Ibn Saud, he finally proposed to draw up a draft agreement, "It would", he said "embody what the Iraq government was prepared to do and, while it would not go so far as his Highness wished, it would go a long way in the direction of his wishes".<sup>1</sup>

At their next meeting, with Clayton's draft now available,<sup>2</sup> the discussion continued with Ibn Saud still raising practical difficulties in relation to the possible movement and behaviour of the tribes and indicating his doubts as to whether Iraq would be able to control the situation on her side of the frontier. Clayton argued that "it was beyond the wit of men to devise any instrument which could work successfully unless both parties were prepared to do their best to co-operate".

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1. Record of proceedings, 5th meeting, 'Clayton Report'.

2. For text see: Annex. 10, 'Clayton Report'.

He did not elaborate on means of securing such co-operation. By clinging to generalities, Clayton hoped to avoid getting involved in what he described to Ibn Saud as "the intricacies of tribal raids and customs" where obviously he felt that he was bound to be out-manoeuvred. Warning Ibn Saud that he "had gone as far as he could in regard to the principle to which he [Ibn Saud] attached so much importance", he left the way open for Ibn Saud to provide counter-proposals on the basis of the draft. At this stage Clayton was beginning to lose confidence of achieving success and so was pleasantly surprized when Ibn Saud concluded the proceedings with the assurance that "When I left I should take with me a promise that could be honoured and fulfilled".<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud was as good as his word and at their next meeting, on 21 October, yielding eventually to Clayton's pressure, he accepted the substance of the original draft.<sup>2</sup>

Accordingly on 1 November the Bahrah agreement was signed.<sup>3</sup> The first seven articles of the Bahrah were similar to articles 5 - 11 of Haddah. They constituted a kind of regulating principle for the tribal system on either side of the frontiers. The principles of articles 1, 5, 6 and 7 had already been agreed upon in Kuwait; on the two points which had caused

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1. Record of proceedings, 6th meeting, 'Clayton Report'.
  2. Record of proceedings, 7th meeting, 'Clayton Report'.
  3. For an English text of the agreement see Appendix C.  
For an Arabic text see Umm al-Qura, No. 60, 19 Feb. 1926.

a deadlock at Kuwait, namely the extradition of refugee tribes and the conditions on which armed contingents might be called up, Clayton "was able to persuade Ibn Saud to recede from his former position and accept the point of view of the Iraq Government" (art. 8). A clause whereby the two governments undertook to negotiate an agreement for the extradition of common criminals was inserted (art. 10). A proposal for the imposition of guarantees, rejected by Ibn Saud's delegation at Kuwait, was accepted by him in this agreement. (art. 9).<sup>1</sup>

The conclusion of the two agreements of Bahrah and Haddah was a diplomatic victory for Clayton personally and for the British as the Mandatory Power in Iraq and Trans-jordan. From the Imperial point of view, they were the first moves in the right direction. Transjordan and Iraq retained a common frontier. Thus the Cairo-Baghdad air route was safeguarded, as also were the proposed Baghdad-Haifa or Aqaba railway and car route. It was also hoped that the two agreements would lead to the establishment of better relations between Ibn Saud and the Hashemites.<sup>2</sup>

The two agreements were "a mixture of the traditional law of the desert with international law",<sup>3</sup> but they were

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1. Clayton to C.O., 25 Nov. 1925, 'Clayton Report'.

2. See: Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.345; Memo. on the foreign policy of H.M.G. (undated) D.B.F.P. 1919-39 (ser. IA, i, 1966) pp.861- 64; American Vice Consul (Aden) to Sec. of State (Washington) 25 Oct. 1927, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., ii, pp.111- 29.

3. Williams, op.cit., p.184.



agreements between governments and not between tribes to whom the notion of national frontiers was unknown. Their reactions would decide the future of the agreements. Ibn Saud had been pressurised to yield on certain matters, but how much confidence did he have, when he signed these agreements, in his ability to fulfil his obligations or in his Ikhwan to accept them? Moreover, did Britain really succeed in securing her Imperial interests, and if so, what was the price? These were open questions.<sup>1</sup> There will be answers in chapters 4, 5 and 6. For the moment all that could be concluded was that the agreements gave Britain a working base from which she could pursue her hitherto "mismanaged policy", and that they would "not fail to leave their impress upon the development of Great Britain's future policy in the Middle East", although they represented "nothing unusual" in the diplomatic relations between Britain and Arabia.

"They [Haddah and Bahrah] have long been under consideration by the Arab experts of Downing Street, and Sir Gilbert Clayton ..., was only responsible for putting into technical shape and wording what had been achieved through a protracted negotiations. But having been concluded ... these agreements are a landmark of great consequence in a complex diplomatic chapter."<sup>2</sup>

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1. See chapters 4 and 5 below.

2. L., 'Downing Street and Arab Potentates', Foreign Affairs, V (1927) pp.233-40. Arabic translation of this article is cited in Al-Manar, xxviii (1927-28) pp.54-62. After his success with Ibn Saud, Clayton, who had inspired the Foreign Office with confidence in his ability as a negotiator with the Arabs, turned south to conclude similar agreement with the Imam of the Yemen regarding his frontier with Aden. See Memo. of the foreign policy of H.M.G. (undated) D.B.F.P. 1919-39 (ser. 1A,i, 1966) pp. 861-64; American Vice Consul (Aden) to Sec. of State (Washington) 25 Oct. 1927, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., ii, pp. 111- 29; Collins, op.cit. pp. 191-261.

Between the end of Clayton's mission on 3 November and the fall of Jeddah into Ibn Saud's hands on 21 December,<sup>1</sup> events in the Hejaz "succeeded each other with Kaleidoscopic rapidity".<sup>2</sup> The submission of Jeddah as the last Hashemite garrison and the abdication of King Ali were the closing episodes of Hashemite rule in the Hejaz. This end was reached peacefully through the good offices of Jordan, the British Agent at Jeddah, whose action had ended British Official neutrality in the Hejaz war.

British neutrality had, more or less, been maintained till 9 December 1925, when King Ali, under the pressure of the Saudi siege, requested Jordan's advice. In view of his Government's official attitude, Jordan was reluctant even to offer advice. Facing a continuously critical situation, Ali verbally<sup>3</sup> and later officially requested Jordan to act as intermediary for the surrender of Jeddah.

"I have decided to withdraw and leave the country ... to reside in Transjordan or Baghdad or Palestine. I should like that His Britanic Majesty's Government would mediate in the matter of surrendering the country in such calm and peaceful manner that will guarantee the comfort and safety of all [the Hejazis]."<sup>4</sup>

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1. See: American Vice Consul (Aden) to Sec. of State (Washington) 23 Dec. 1925, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., ii, p.50.
  2. Jordan (Jeddah) to F.O., Jeddah Report for Dec. 1925, E367/367/91, F.O. 371/11442. The British Agent and Consul at Jeddah had been required to prepare a monthly report about internal and external affairs of the Hejaz and to despatch this to the Foreign Office. These reports are highly important for they provide the Agent's general view of Arabian affairs. For reasons of simplicity each report will be contracted thereafter as: 'Jeddah Report' in addition to the date and number of the volume in the F.O. papers .
  3. Jordan to Chamberlain, 28 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432
  4. King Ali to Jordan, 14 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432



On the following day, 15 December, the King made his intention known at a council held at Jeddah.<sup>1</sup> The King's wish was immediately communicated to the Foreign Office, and on 16 December Jordan was instructed to mediate. At once, he wrote to Ibn Saud asking for an urgent audience at Ragama,<sup>2</sup> eight miles from Jeddah. Ibn Saud, though busy directing the attack against Jeddah and almost on the point of having attained his war-aims, agreed to the meeting.<sup>3</sup> At the meeting Ibn Saud was informed of Ali's intention. After a lengthy conversation of a most amicable nature, they reached an agreement based on Ali's conditions which had been submitted to Jordan on 14 December.<sup>4</sup> This agreement can be summed up as follows: In consideration of the abdication of King Ali and of his leaving the Hejaz, the Sultan of Nejd on the one hand undertook to guarantee the personal safety of the Hejazis and to grant them an amnesty; to allow all officers and soldiers who wished to leave the country to do so; to distribute amongst all the soldiers in Jeddah a sum of £5,000; to retain in their posts capable civil government employees; finally, to allow King Ali and the family of al-Husain to take with them their personal belongings and property. On the other

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1. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.309.

2. Jordan to Ibn Saud, 16 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91; F.O. 371/11432; see also Umm al-Qura, No. 52, 27 Dec. 1925, for text of the invitation; Attar, op.cit., p.879.

3. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 16 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432; also: Umm al-Qura, No. 52, 27 Dec. 1927; Attar, op.cit., p.880.

4. King Ali to Jordan, 14 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432; Attar, op.cit., pp.880-83.



hand, King Ali undertook to hand over all the prisoners of war he might have. All soldiers of the Hejaz had to surrender to the Sultan of Nejd with their arms without damaging or disposing of war materials which they already had. Finally, all steamers in possession of the Hejaz were to pass into the possession of Ibn Saud.<sup>1</sup>

It was left to Jordan to translate this agreement from the realm of theory to that of fact. At his own request he was given letters from both Ibn Saud and Ali to the Hejaz defence garrison commanders and to Ibn Saud's commanders instructing them to cease hostilities and to ensure the safety of all soldiers and residents. Consequently, Jeddah surrendered on 21 December and Yanbo on 22. With the surrender of the last garrison, Ali left Jeddah on 22 December on H.M.S. "Cornflower" to exile in Iraq.<sup>2</sup>

As an indication of his own new status in the Hejaz, Ibn Saud, to whom foreign representatives had never been accredited while he ruled in Nejd, addressed a note on Christmas Day, to all foreign representatives in Jeddah informing them of the end of the war and of the abdication and departure of King Ali.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Agreement forwarded by Ibn Saud to Jordan, 17 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432.
  2. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 18 Dec. 1925; King Ali's notice of withdrawal from the Hejaz, 19 Dec. 1925 E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432; American Vice Consul (Aden) to Sec. of State (Washington) 29 Dec. 1925, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., ii, p.55.
  3. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 25 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432.

With Ali's departure and with the surrender of his forces virtually complete , Jordan's duties had now come to an end. When he visited Ibn Saud on the day of Ali's departure, the Sultan of Nejd on behalf of himself, of his people, and of the Muslim world, warmly thanked Jordan and the British Government for their successful attempts to achieve peace in the Holy Land. Anxious to establish a close relationship with Great Britain, Ibn Saud was reported as saying that

"... his sincere friends were the British only, and that he had and would have no relations with any other European Power ... [and that he was] in full accord with his friends and allies the British people, whose politics were his politics ... and that as long as the British respected two things which he held dearer than life ... [they were] his religion and his honour, there would always be the closest ties of friendship between himself and his people and Great Britain".<sup>1</sup>

Britain's new policy, which had contributed to the peacemaking, was commended by King George, when he expressed his pleasure at learning that "the war has reached its conclusion and that his representative was enabled to contribute towards the prevention of bloodshed".<sup>2</sup> The roots of this new policy lay in growing differences between Britain and Husain. It was on account of these that Britain declined to help him or to protect his regime and did not even maintain the strict neutrality that she had declared. Many British officials felt that they had made a mistake in originally supporting Husain. In retrospect for instance, D.G. Hogarth,

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1. Jordan to Chamberlain, 28 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432

2. Jordan to Ibn Saud, 20 Jan. 1926, E1398/11/91, F.O. 371/11432.



regarded as one of the main Arab experts in 1925, expressed his regret for backing the wrong horse as "we [British] were not looking beyond the war".<sup>1</sup> Philby also concluded: "we mistook our men".<sup>2</sup> Sir Gilbert Clayton, who had served with Hogarth in the Arab Bureau, remained among the defenders of Britain's war-time policy. "I have" he declared in a lecture given in December 1928, "heard the opinion expressed that we backed the wrong horse, Husain instead of Ibn Saud". But countering that view, he replied that,

"although the two horses ran at the same meeting, they did not run the same race. We put our money on both, and in neither case did we lose it. Ibn Saud could not have influenced the course of operations in Palestine any more<sup>3</sup> than Husain could have helped us in Mesopotamia".

In closing his lecture, Clayton, confidently left the matter to the verdict of history.

Archives are now open, and the history of Anglo-Arab relations during the first world war has been extensively reappraised. Clayton has been accused of "advancing and promoting particular politics". In his "Anglo-Arab labyrinth", Kedourie comments that "Clayton acted in concert with Storrs to try and move Kitchener to approach the Sharif as the future

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1. Hogarth, 'Wahhabism and British Interests', Journal of British Institute of International Affairs, iv (1925) pp.70-81.
  2. Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis'.
  3. Clayton, 'Arabia and the Arabs', Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, viii (1929) pp.8-20.



Arab chief".<sup>1</sup> They wished to open up before the Sharif the prospect of religious as well as secular leadership and indeed Kitchener wrote on 31 October 1914 to the Sharif commenting suggestively that: "It may be that an Arab of truth will assume the Khalifate at Mecca and Medina ..."<sup>2</sup> The revelations now available about Clayton's decisive role may help to explain why he was so anxious to spring to the defence of Britain's war-time policy against its early critics.

In the war situation, although there seemed to be a choice between backing Ibn Saud or Husain, the arguments in favour of Husain clearly proved the stronger. After the end of the war circumstances, obviously, were completely changed. Decisions arising from wartime necessity provided a poor base for any coherent long term policy. But, in the absence of any such policy, Britain's responses fluctuated with the changing local scene. For this reason, as Hourani has remarked, Britain's post war policy in the Middle East seemed "incompatible with the needs and with the real basis of Britain's position, and that incompatibility showed itself in a number of great contradictions which ran all through her actions".<sup>3</sup> Hourani correctly concludes that "a policy of waiting until the last moment before reaching a decision, and then deciding in the light of tactical considerations

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1. Kedourie, op.cit., p.41; see also: Sachar, op.cit., p.120.

2. Quoted in: Sachar, op.cit., p.125.

3. Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East - II', International Affairs, xxix (1953) pp.156- 83.

was not appropriate to the situation ...". Husain was abandoned because Ibn Saud was the stronger. This was typical British policy and Hourani argued that "the tendency to support both parties to a dispute until the moment of inescapable choice, and then to incline towards the stronger, was fatal .."<sup>1</sup> Whatever view may be held of the long-term consequences of Britain's decision to back Ibn Saud in 1925 there is no doubt that immediate local considerations rather than any coherent plan prompted the change.

Regarding Ibn Saud as the stronger contender Britain shifted even from the position of strict neutrality which she had at first claimed to be adopting. Evidence of this emerged gradually.

Firstly, there was the British attitude towards Aqaba and Maan which were originally districts of northern Hejaz. Britain decided on 1 July 1925, that Aqaba and Maan were to be incorporated in the Transjordan Administration<sup>2</sup> for strategic reasons relating to the security of British interests in Palestine and in Sinai, as well as to safeguard Imperial interests.<sup>3</sup> King Ali's refusal to cede Aqaba was brushed aside. British military forces and the local forces of Transjordan were sent to annex the district to the Palestine Mandate, "notwithstanding the fact that they had declared their neutrality in the [Hejaz] war .."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. CAB 23/50, 32(25), 1 July 1925, See Chapter I above p.85.

3. Plumer (Jerusalem) to Amery (C.O.) 27 Jan. 1927, 929/27; Lord Lloyd (Cairo) to Chamberlain (F.O.) 31 Dec. 1926, No. 821, F.O. 371/12247; also; Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis'.

4. Philby, 'Arabia Today'.



This British pressure compounded Ali's difficulties as he lost southern territories to his enemies and northern territories to his friends.

Secondly, the official meetings held at Bahrah, a de jure Hejazi territory, meant indirect support for Ibn Saud and was in fact a breach of British neutrality. This can also be seen from Clayton's comments on his meetings with Ibn Saud. For example, Clayton wrote "it was obvious that he [Ibn Saud] had performed a wonderful task in restoring and expanding the fortunes of his family and of his country".<sup>1</sup> The same impression is given by Clayton's emphasis upon Ibn Saud's importance to British interests in the Red Sea despite the fact that Ibn Saud's territorial expansion had not yet reached the Red Sea coast.

Thirdly, this kind of British neutrality was seen by Amin al-Rihani, a friend of Ibn Saud, as a policy of indirect help to him. This help was given because Ibn Saud proved himself the stronger. "Britain is still", Rihani wrote, "pursuing the same old policy of helping one Ameer against the other". Rihani, who had himself tried to operate as a peacemaker between Ibn Saud and Ali, concluded in a report about his efforts:

"I think it a shame that the allies, particularly England and France, who needed the Arabs during the [Great] War and were ready to take [sic] any treaty with them, should now abandon them and stand arms folded watching them slaughter each other".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Record of proceedings, 3rd meeting, 'Clayton Report'; The Times 23 Oct. 1925 defended Britain's attitude; see comment in Umm al-Oura, No. 43, 25 Oct. 1925.
  2. 'Efforts of Rihani to bring about peace between Ibn Saud and Ali', American Consul in Charge (Beirut) to Sec. of State (Washington) 23 Sept. 1925, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., ii, pp.22-43; see: Attar, op.cit., pp.810-19; see also: Hourani, 'The Decline of the West in the Middle East', II.



Finally, while Britain had refused a request for mediation, made separately by both King Ali and Ibn Saud during Clayton's mission,<sup>1</sup> she agreed to act as a mediator once King Ali had decided to abdicate and to leave the Hejaz. In other words Britain acted when the end she had desired appeared on the horizon.

The power which Britain had exercised in Arabia during the war left her with responsibilities which she was either unwilling or unable to undertake. She had contributed little to stability in Arabia after the war. The diplomacy of gold which had been used to keep the peace in Arabia during the war was now stopped and British policy was geared to immediate British interests rather than to general peace. Britain had drawn frontiers wherever she wanted them in Arabia and whenever it suited her. The balance of power there had been made and altered in order to harmonise with British policy in the Middle East. As the Foreign Office explained

"At first sight it would seem that British policy is altruistic, but in truth ... [H.M.G.] cannot lay this unction to their souls. The fact is that war and rumours of war, quarrels and friction, in any corner of the world spell loss and harm to British commercial and financial interests. It is for the sake of these interests that we endeavour to pour oil on troubled waters ... war in the Near East or the Baltic concerns us as much as it would concern Romania or Norway. This is the explanation and the reason of our intervention in almost every dispute that arises ... without our trade and our finance we sink to the level of a third-class Power ..."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Collins, op.cit., pp.92-101.

2. Memo. on the Foreign Policy of H.M.G. (undated)  
D.B.F.P. 1919-1939, (ser. 1A, i, 1966) pp.846-81.

Britain, at the beginning of 1926, was left with only one strong ruler in the area (Ibn Saud) and her relations with him had become closer since he had extended his authority from the Arab Gulf to the Red Sea, and from the hinterland of the Aden protectorate to the territories under British mandate in Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine.

Britain's Recognition of Ibn Saud in the Hejaz,  
January - April 1926.

In his hour of victory, Ibn Saud entered Jeddah on 23 December 1925, accompanied by his troops. A reception was held in the presence of the notables of the city as well as the foreign representatives, while the population flocked to see the spectacle.<sup>1</sup> A new era, not only for the Hejaz, but for the whole of Arabia had begun.

Immediately order in the military, economic and civil affairs had to be restored after a long period of war and of chaos. Aware of antagonism throughout the Muslim world, Ibn Saud declared as his first slogan: "The Hejaz is for the Hejazis". He then called representatives from all over the Hejaz to form a national assembly which met at the Great Mosque in Mecca in order to decide the future of their country.<sup>2</sup>

At the meeting, they passed a resolution, which was directly based on Ibn Saud's declaration to the effect that: the Hejaz should belong to the Hejazis, who should have the right of self-determination; Mecca should be their capital, and the title of "King of the Hejaz" should be conferred upon the Sultan of Nejd [Ibn Saud] on condition

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1. Jordan to Chamberlain, 28 Dec. 1925, E363/11/91, F.O. 371/11432; Umm al-Oura, No. 52, 27 Dec. 1925.

2. Jeddah Rep. Jan. 1926, F.O. 371/11442; Attar, op.cit., pp. 888-9.



that he governed in accordance with the Quran, the Sunnah and the code of conduct of the early Muslims. The resolution was then presented to Ibn Saud with its terms embodied in an act of bay'a (allegiance) to which he agreed and signed. The public ceremony of the bay'a took place on 8 January.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, on the following day, Ibn Saud assumed the title of "King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its dependencies".<sup>2</sup>

Thus, it was decided that the Hejaz administration should be kept separate from that of Nejd. Public security and communications, however, were to be safeguarded by Ibn Saud's army. The King then appointed a constituent body of 51 members. Amir Faisal was nominated, on 13 January, head of the Provisional Government and Viceroy.<sup>3</sup>

In the process of settling Hejazi affairs, Ibn Saud found himself, for the first time, in diplomatic contact with a number of foreign Powers. Accordingly, he invited their representatives and the European residents in Jeddah in addition to the notables of the city to a banquet on 22 January, when he addressed the company on the subject of his desires and hopes for the Holy Land. He promised his best efforts to secure peace and prosperity. He expounded the view that "the Western World owes much to the Arabs", adding that

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1. See; Umm al-Oura, No. 55, 15 January 1925; Al-Manar, xxvi, (1925-6) p.710; Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.309-10; Attar, op.cit., pp.889-91.
  2. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 9 Jan. 1926, E734/7/91, F.O. 371/11431.
  3. Jordan to Chamberlain, 11 Jan., 1926, E245/7/91, F.O. 371/11431; Umm al-Oura, No. 56, 22 Jan. 1926; Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.310; Oriente Moderno, vi (1926) p.103.

"we have our obligations to the honourable foreign governments, by which we will stand, and they have their obligations towards us". He turned to the Muslim representatives and called for brotherhood among the Muslim people. He also urged foreign governments to facilitate the passage of pilgrims to the Holy Land. Finally, he showed his readiness to establish good relations with all foreign Powers when he dramatically concluded: "the heart of an Arab and Muslim is good soil, and if it is watered with kindly consideration, it will produce good crops",<sup>1</sup> and so in his speech the new King outlined his concept of future relations with the outside world.

A new situation existed in Arabia which found itself united under the leadership of the Sultan of Nejd. He had succeeded where ex-king Husain had failed. Immediate reactions outside Arabia were generally less favourable in the Muslim countries<sup>2</sup> than in the non-Muslim.<sup>3</sup> Taking the lead, the Russians hastened to accord de-jure recognition to the new regime in the Hejaz on 16 February 1926. At the Russian Consul's request, the recognition was kept confidential until the British Government had notified Ibn Saud of their recognition. Only then was it published

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1. Jeddah Report, January 1926; also Umm al-Oura, No. 57, 29 Jan. 1926.

2. See below, pp.124 ff .

3. Philby, 'The Triumph of the Wahhabis'.

in the Hejazi semi-official newspaper, "Umm al-Qura".<sup>1</sup>

The question of British recognition was first considered on 20 January. Both the Foreign and Colonial Offices were in agreement about de-jure recognition of the new situation in the Hejaz and of Ibn Saud's new title.<sup>2</sup> The government of India, highly concerned about the Holy Land, was more hesitant. The Viceroy advised caution and delay over the de-jure recognition. He suggested that it would be preferable for the British Government "to follow lead of representative[s] of [the] Muslims rather than to take lead themselves".<sup>3</sup> Jordan, in Jeddah, was in favour of the new developments. He urged "full recognition", because "nothing can be gained by delay". The proposed visit of Ibn Saud to the British ship "Emerald" would, as Jordan suggested, be a suitable occasion to inform the King of Britain's formal recognition. He emphasised the close relations between Britain and the new King, who would surely regard British recognition as an "accomplished fact".<sup>4</sup> The doubts of the government of

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1. See: The Soviet Consul (Jeddah) to Ibn Saud, 16 Feb. 1926; Jordan to Chamberlain, 9 March 1926, E2069/7/91, F.O. 371/11431; Umm al-Qura, No. 62, 5 March 1926.
  2. F.O. to the Viceroy, 20 Jan. 1926, E471/7/91; F.O. 371/11431.
  3. Govt. of India to I.O., 27 Jan. 1926, E801/7/91; I.O. to F.O. 28 Jan. 1926, E652/7/91, F.O. 371/11431.
  4. Jordan to F.O., 11 Feb. 1926, E1052/7/91, F.O. 371/11431.



India were, save for a reservation concerning mention of the Holy Places, gradually resolved.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, on 25 February, the Foreign Secretary telegraphed Jordan authorising him to "address a note to Ibn Saud, using [the] style of 'His Majesty' and informing him that H.M.G. recognise him as King of the Hejaz". In consideration of the government of India's wishes, Chamberlain added that since Britain regards "the regime of the Holy Places and all religious questions connected therewith as matters solely concerning Muslims ... H.M.G. neither ought nor desire to express an opinion".<sup>2</sup> Immediately, Jordan informed Ibn Saud of the British recognition. When H.M.S. "Emerald" arrived off Jeddah on 1 March, Ibn Saud was officially invited by its captain, on the same day, to a visit during which the King <sup>was</sup> presented with a handsome clock as a souvenir of his visit. On the evening of the following day the King gave a banquet to the officers of the ship and the British residents at Jeddah.<sup>3</sup>

It is pertinent to inquire: why Great Britain now so favourably inclined towards Ibn Saud? The answer can be derived from a study of Anglo-Saudi relations during the Saudi-Hashemite conflict, and the realisation that the changes brought about by Ibn Saud's victories would

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1. I.O. to F.O., 23 Feb. 1926, E1252/7/91, F.O. 371/11431.

2. Chamberlain to Jordan, 25 Feb. 1926, E1252/7/91, F.O. 371/11431.

3. Jordan to Ibn Saud (no date) E2066/7/91, F.O. 371/11431; Jeddah Report, March 1926 ...; Umm al-Qura, No. 62, 5 March 1926.

make Arabia more stable and would improve the prospects of peace in the area. Before 1925 Britain regarded Ibn Saud as a petty ruler with whom they could deal on an ad hoc basis. By the end of 1925, his status had changed and a more formal relationship was required with the man, "who had fashioned an Arabian Kingdom from the sands and stones of the desert".<sup>1</sup> In so far as he had unified Arabia this could be regarded as a positive advantage for British interests. Britain hoped that endemic tribal warfare would cease, and that she would no longer be plagued by its consequences in an area still regarded as vital for communications with India.

On the other hand, the reverse side of this coin was obvious. The emergence of Ibn Saud's power in Arabia, with its shores washed by the water of the two main ways to the east (the Red Sea and the Gulf), could threaten Britain's strategic interests on land as well as on sea should Ibn Saud make an alliance with a hostile Power. The natural conclusion was that Britain should recognise him and make an ally of him, especially as at that time some other great Powers like Italy and Russia were active in seeking influence in Arabia. All these considerations were strengthened by British estimates of the man himself. It was felt that Ibn Saud had been frank in his dealings with Britain, and that on the basis of his frankness "friendly co-operation" would

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1. Collins, op.cit., p.15.

prove easy to establish. The King had consistently expressed his hope for permanent and close relations with Britain, referring for his part to Britain's "open and frank" attitude which "hid no ulterior motives".<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud's anxiety to maintain good relations with Britain had been illustrated, for example, when he relayed to Jordan an approach made to him by the Russians. According to Ibn Saud's account to Jordan, a Russian envoy came to him, during the course of hostilities with the Hashemites in the Hejaz, and asked him about his greatest desire on earth. Ibn Saud was taken by surprise at the directness of the question, but answered "... money ... arms..." and the envoy added "aeroplanes and guns also if you wish". Ibn Saud, becoming more surprised, turned to his visitor and said: "yes, but what do you want from me?" The Soviet envoy directly answered "to make trouble with the British".<sup>2</sup> If the story was true, Ibn Saud certainly showed how much he valued close relations with Britain by repeating it. There is, of course, also the possibility that Ibn Saud invented or embroidered the story in order, indirectly, to indicate his own need for military supplies to the British.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See: Jordan to Ibn Saud, 13 Feb. 1926; Ibn Saud to Jordan, 19 Feb. 1926, E180/180/91, F.O. 371/11437; J.R., Aug. 1926, F.O. 371/11442.
  2. Jordan to Chamberlain, 29 Dec. 1925, E364/180/91, F.O. 371/11437.
  3. At the time Britain did not respond see: Memo. on the foreign policy of H.M.G. (undated) D.B.F.P. 1919-39 (Ser. 1A, i, 1966) pp.863-64.



British recognition, once accorded, implied a regular channel of communication. Ibn Saud had never had a permanent British representative in Nejd. In the past he had to make contacts through the British Agents in Kuwait or in Bahrain, and sometimes through the British Resident at Bushire. Only on urgent questions had the British Government sent him special envoys, such as Shakespear, Leach-man, Philby and Clayton. These arrangements had not proved altogether satisfactory. The lack of a representative in personal touch with Ibn Saud had given rise to various misunderstandings and disputes. The real wishes and intentions of Ibn Saud had often been obscure to the British Government.

During the Bahrah negotiations of 1925, London suggested that "the time has now come to station a permanent representative at Ibn Saud's capital". Accordingly Clayton was instructed to convey Britain's wish to Ibn Saud and to discuss with him the practical means for establishing a British representation in his territories.

"His Majesty's Government are desirous of making arrangements which would enable them to be kept permanently in touch with him..., [and] are anxious to be on cordial terms with His Highness and to co-operate with him wherever possible".<sup>1</sup>

London preferred to reserve a final decision until conditions in Arabia became stable and until objection against the step was overcome. It was claimed that al-Riyadh was an uncomfortable place for whoever might be appointed. This

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1. C.O. to Clayton, 10 Sept. 1925, Appendix, 'Clayton Report'.

objection hardly seems valid since British travellers were already accustomed to adventuring into the Arabian desert, and since a number of British officials had visited the Amir's capital. For the time being it was suggested that arrangements should be made for periodical visits to be paid by a British Officer to Ibn Saud. This suggestion seemed, at the time of the war in Arabia, the most likely to be followed, and it was approved in principle. By the conquest of the Hejaz, however, Ibn Saud had become more easily accessible.

For his part Ibn Saud explained at Bahrah his wish that his contact with the British Government be carried out through the medium of the Foreign Office and not through Colonial Office channel.<sup>1</sup> When Clayton reported Ibn Saud's wish to London, the Hejaz had fallen into Saudi hands and it seemed logical that Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz should deal with the Foreign Office through the British Agent at Jeddah but, as a Sultan of Nejd, he was still expected to deal with the Colonial Office through the British Resident in the Gulf. This system seemed unsatisfactory to Ibn Saud, who made no secret of his objections to the Colonial Office involvement in his affairs as an independent ruler.

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1. Record of proceedings, 'Clayton Report'.

The matter was of sufficient importance to be discussed at an interdepartmental conference on 12 March. In a memorandum on the Agenda of the conference V. Mallet, a Foreign Office representative, acknowledged that Ibn Saud's wish to communicate only with the Foreign Office would be for the benefit of both Ibn Saud and the British Government. In practice, he continued, both the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office were in close liaison and "the one department does not act before receiving the concurrence of the other". He outlined three methods of dealing with the situation. Firstly the Foreign Office might assume entire control of relations with Ibn Saud and this was in accordance with his own known wishes. Secondly the Colonial Office might do so. But, in that case, the Colonial Office could not avoid involvement in Pilgrimage matters and it would become necessary for the British Consul at Jeddah to be responsible to the Colonial Office. This arrangement would be most unwelcome to Ibn Saud. If neither of these methods proved acceptable the only solution would be to establish Foreign Office contact via the Consul in Jeddah and to retain existing Colonial Office communication channels. While favouring his first proposal Mallet accepted that there might be Colonial Office objections since Nejd bordered on British Mandates and Gulf States which came within its sphere of responsibility. In that case he indicated a preference for his last proposal. This final proposal seemed desirable since Ibn Saud had to spend



the pilgrimage season in the Hejaz and the rest of the year at al-Riyadh, but still had no British representative there.<sup>1</sup>

At the conference of 12 March, in the presence of representatives from the Colonial Office, the Foreign Office, the India Office and the Air Ministry, Sir John Shuckburgh (the Chairman) recommended acceptance of Mallet's first proposal that the channel of communications between the British Government and Ibn Saud should be through the Foreign Office. But he nevertheless stipulated that "in all questions affecting purely Arab politics, the Colonial Office should be regarded as the responsible British authority". In making this reservation Shuckburgh was reflecting the views of his own chief, Amery, the Colonial Secretary. Shuckburgh also suggested that the Foreign Office should be primarily responsible for Ibn Saud's foreign relations. In effect Shuckburgh's proposals meant the continuance of the status quo "except that the channel of communication via Bushire would be eliminated".<sup>2</sup> British policy regarding the Hejaz and Nejd affairs was still to be concerted between the Foreign Office and the Colonial Office.

Further discussion of the question of channels of communication was postponed until the conclusion of a revised treaty which was already under discussion.<sup>3</sup> But Clayton's

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1. Memo. by V. Mallet, 8 March 1926, E1738/180/91, F.O. 371/11437.

2. Minutes of a conference held at the C.O., 12 March 1926, E2026/180/91, F.O. 371/11437.

3. See chapter 3 below.

views on the interim decision reached were then sought. On the other hand, aware of the distaste that the independent Arab rulers had expressed to him at the idea of having the Colonial Office for their channel of communication he approved the notion of establishing a Foreign Office facade. He stressed the importance of controlling Arab Affairs from London and argued against any continuing direct role for the Government of India, as still applied in the case of Aden. India's only concern, he maintained, should be with access for Muslims to the Holy Places.<sup>1</sup>

While future Anglo-Saudi relations, as a result of Britain's recognition of Ibn Saud were under consideration in London he had already won recognition also from Russia, France and the Netherlands. Although these four Great Powers ruled over the vast majority of Muslims, Ibn Saud still felt the need to be recognized by the Muslims themselves. And to this he now turned his own attention.

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1. Clayton to Shuckburgh, 21 April 1926, E2580/180/91 F.O. 371/11437.

Muslim Attitudes towards the New Situation in the  
Hejaz, 1926.

Since the Empire contained the largest single group of Muslims, Britain had a considerable say in the affairs of the Holy Places of Islam, either directly on behalf of her Muslim subjects or indirectly through the subjects themselves. The safety of her pilgrims, for example, had to be assured by direct contact with the Hejaz Government. Once Ibn Saud had conquered the Hejaz, immediately Britain informally recognised his authority there for obvious political reasons. Both Britain and Ibn Saud were aware that the presence of the Wahhabi Ikhwan in the Holy Land of Islam would have serious religious implications. Wahhabism was not popular with the majority of Muslims who regarded Wahhabis as a fanatical sect. There was anxiety with Wahhabis in control about traditional rights of free access to Mecca. As a gesture of protest, some Islamic countries prevented their nationals from visiting the Hejaz after it had fallen into Ibn Saud's hands. Others called for the Hejaz to be ruled by an international Islamic government. Concerned about the future of the Hejaz and agitated by the events which had taken place there, Muslim countries remained reluctant to recognise Ibn Saud. Britain hesitated preferring to let Ibn Saud be formally recognised by a Muslim country first. But no such recognition was forthcoming and the lead was taken by the Russians. This prompted a quick British recognition. Britain's backing widened the gap between Ibn



Saud and the other Muslim countries. As opponents of British imperialism they could hardly look with favour on Ibn Saud as a future guardian of the Holy Places when he seemed so eager to cultivate friendly relations with Britain. For Ibn Saud, who was effectively in control of the Hejaz, Muslim attitudes were a matter of major concern. He therefore decided that it would be politic to make no personal claims but to consult other Muslims about the future of the Holy Places.

Among those other Muslims there were, of course, some one hundred million in British India and large numbers in other parts of the world under British rule or influence. Muslim attitudes, therefore, were also a matter of concern to Britain. The religious aspect of the Hejaz question was bound in the circumstances to influence Anglo-Saudi relations.

During the Hejazi war, Ibn Saud had declared to the Muslim world that he had no personal ambitions in the Holy places, but only sought to liberate them from the corruption of the Hashemites. Having occupied Mecca on 13 October 1924, Ibn Saud published a proclamation to the whole Islamic world requesting Muslims to send their representatives to Mecca to discuss with him the future of the Hejaz. This open invitation met with little response. The Egyptians, for example, were busy preparing for the Khilafat Conference which was due to meet in Cairo in the spring of 1925.<sup>1</sup> The Arabian peninsula Shaikhs, for different reasons, "prayed him

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1. Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.81-90, Umm al-Qura, No. 18, 7 April, No.30, 24 July, No. 45, 6 Nov. No. 47, 25 Nov. 1925; Al-Manar, xxix (1928-29) pp.167, 273-4; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) pp.29-122.

to have them excused". The Turks officially declined the invitation. Only the Indian Khilafat Society responded positively and in December 1924 sent a delegation in order to secure certain political and religious ambitions in the Hejaz. They hoped if Ibn Saud as well as the Hashemites could be driven out that the Ali brothers<sup>1</sup> might find a golden chance to establish an Islamic Republic there. These ultimate ambitions of course conflicted with Ibn Saud's and with the Hejazi's interests. At this juncture they seemed very remote.<sup>2</sup>

It was the approach of the pilgrimage season of 1925, which focused Muslim attention on the situation in the Holy Land. The war was suspended during the season to allow access to pilgrims and a proclamation was published, on 25 February 1925,<sup>3</sup> informing all Muslims that Ibn Saud would not only welcome pilgrims but also guarantee their safety. In spite of this guarantee many individual Muslims seem to have been deterred by the dangers of the situation. Furthermore many governments prohibited their Muslims from participating in the pilgrimage. But the Government of India twice declined as had been suggested in April and May either to prohibit the pilgrimage or to assume

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1. Mohammad and Shawkat Ali were prominent Islamic leaders in India. See Appendix H.
  2. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.304; Umm al-Qura, No. 54, 8 Jan., No. 56, 22 Jan. 1926; Attar, op.cit., pp.896-907.
  3. Umm al-Qura, No. 12, 27 Feb. 1925.

responsibility for any Indian who might venture upon it.<sup>1</sup> The India Government's attitude was based on anxiety to avoid imputation of having put any ban on a religious practice and necessity of appearing to antagonize Ibn Saud. Between those who were positively prevented and those who were discouraged by the danger, only a few remained to undertake the pilgrimage.

When the suspended Hejazi war was resumed, the Islamic world became even more concerned about the future of the Holy Shrines. On 20 August 1925, during the Wahhabi attack on al-Madinah, the Hejazi Government (Hashemite) announced that the tomb of the prophet had been struck by Wahhabi projectiles. According to Toynbee, "the report sent a wave of indignation through the Islamic world".<sup>2</sup> Immediate reaction came from Egypt. King Fuad sent a personal telegram to Ibn Saud requesting an assurance that religious monuments in al-Madinah would be safeguarded from injury. Ibn Saud, fearful of repercussions telegraphed the required assurance on 4 September, and allowed two missions one from Egypt and one from Persia<sup>3</sup> on a visit of inspection. Ibn Saud's military success was now virtually complete and so he was able, with confidence, to guarantee the safety of the Holy Shrines.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.305-6.

2. Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.306-7; Williams, op.cit., pp. 75-77; Umm al-Qura, No. 86, 6 Aug. 1926.

3. Al-Manar, xxvii (1926-27) p.15; Philby, Saudi Arabia, p.300.

4. Jordan to Chamberlain, 11 Aug. 1926, E5064/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.



In January 1926, two unofficial Indian deputations arrived in the Hejaz, not only to investigate the tomb incident but also for their own political and religious objectives. The Khilafat Society delegation had formerly been among Ibn Saud's partizans, but they had been disturbed by the incident of the tomb and were even more angered by the proclamation of Ibn Saud as "King of the Hejaz". While condemning the behaviour of the Wahhabis they suggested that the Hejaz should be administrated by a democratic commission representing all Muslims.<sup>1</sup> The other deputation, the Khuddam al-Haramain Society, always antagonistic to Ibn Saud, declined to recognise him in the Hejaz and referred to his presence there as "a blow to many Indian Muslims who consider the Holy Land of Islam their own peculiar property"; they refused even to attend his reception upon their arrival in Jeddah. During their stay in Mecca they appear to have lost no opportunity of intriguing against him and his followers, calling on him to leave the Hejaz with his army.<sup>2</sup> They also spread rumours questioning his ability to guarantee security in the Hejaz. Losing his patience, Ibn Saud ordered them to leave the Hejaz. Before doing so, they distributed pamphlets deliberately calculated to cause division among the Hejazis.<sup>3</sup> On their return to India, it was reported in

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1926, F.O. 371/11442.

2. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1926, F.O. 371/11442.

3. Jeddah Report, March 1926, F.O. 371/11442.

mid June<sup>1</sup> that the Khuddam al-Haramain had called for public demonstrations to express Muslim anger against Ibn Saud and Wahhabi vandalism.

Demonstrations, anyway, were already spreading. The Maharaja of Mahmoud Abad made his first public appearance in eight years at a mass meeting to condemn the Wahhabis. The meeting expressed great concern about the Hejaz and made various resolutions:

In the first place it was agreed that

"this Muslim mass meeting representing Muslims of different position and schools of thought expresses its deep resentment and anger ... and strongly condemns all these who have hurt the sacred sentiments of the majority of the Muslims by their acts of vandalism and those who have encouraged<sup>2</sup> or abetted these sacrilegious acts".<sup>2</sup>

In the second place, the Maharaja issued the following warning to the British Government:

"Recognizing the fact that the British Government which is the custodian of the interests of ten crores<sup>3</sup> of Muslims of India has already entered into such treaties with Ibn Saud as have obviously brought him and his territories under British control ... this mass meeting of Musalmans of Lucknow warns the [British] Government that the recent activities of the Sultan of Nejd and his subordinates ... have most seriously wounded the religious feelings of the Muslim public. They hasten to declare that this Najdi vandalism is all the more deplorable in so far as it has followed the conclusion of the above mentioned agreement and as such has gone a long way to create misgivings in the public mind regarding the British attitude and policy in the Hejaz".<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Central Kadimul-Haramain Committee of India to the Political Sec., Govt. of India, extract from the Indian Daily Telegraph, 15 June 1926, No. p.23364, F.O. 371/11433.
  2. Ibid.
  3. A 'Crore' equals ten millions.
  4. The Central Kadimul-Haramain Committee of India to the Political Sec., Govt. of India, No. p.2364, F.O. 371/11433.

The Maharaja in his speech declared that "no Muslim ... can watch in silence" and hinted that while there was a "suspicion in the public mind about Britain's complicity in the Wahhabi scheme .... the whole Muslim world resented non-Muslim interference in the affairs of the Hejaz".<sup>1</sup>

A third resolution proposed to ban pilgrimage to the Hejaz "unless and until all [demolished] sacred buildings ... are permanently restored to their former position and shape". The meeting also decided to send a message to the Islamic Conference at Mecca to the effect that "Indian Muslims can have no confidence under any circumstances in Ibn Saud or other Nejdīs..." This was followed by an appeal to all Muslim Governments to employ every possible measure to free the Holy Land of Islam. Probably unaware of the fact Britain had already recognised Ibn Saud's position in the Hejaz, the meeting passed a resolution requesting the British Government

"not to recognise under any circumstances Ibn Saud as the ruler of the Hejaz nor to give him any help to keep the control of the Holy places in his hands nor to put any obstacles in the way of the Nejdīs being ejected from the Hejaz".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.



Finally, Britain and the civilised world were urged "to cut off their political connections from the ruler responsible for ... vandalism and to recall all their consuls".

A similar meeting took place in Rampur where Muslim leaders approached the Nawab about the "monstrous deeds of vandalism committed in the Hejaz by Ibn Saud", who had "wounded their feelings" by demolishing the tomb of the prophet's family. For his part, and on behalf of the Muslims of British India, the Nawab telegraphed to the Viceroy on 21 June asking Britain to take action against Ibn Saud and promising readiness to "collect funds for the restoration of the demolished tombs".<sup>1</sup>

In reply, the Viceroy expressed, by telegraph, his sympathy with the Muslims of British India and indicated that the British Government would not depart from its established policy by intervening politically in a matter purely religious. But he promised to pass their view on to the British Government for "information and consideration".<sup>2</sup>

This hostile campaign spread over most of India. Indian Muslims carried their bitterness into the Hejaz itself during the pilgrimage season. According to Jordan,

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1. The Nawab of Rampur to the Viceroy, 21 June, 1926, No. P2533, F.O. 371/11433.

2. The Viceroy to the Nawab of Rampur, 24 June 1926, No. 552, F.O. 371/11433

"the whole of the Indian pilgrims" were against Ibn Saud.<sup>1</sup> The majority of Muslims all over the world expressed similar feelings against the Wahhabis and concern about the future of the Hejaz. These hostile feelings were carried to the Holy Land by the ordinary pilgrims and by the Muslim representatives to the Islamic Conference.

Confronted by increasing opposition from different parts of the Islamic World, Ibn Saud repeatedly announced that the Hejaz was for the Hejazis and that the Islamic World was to be invited to make its own decisions over religious matters. In his mind only Hejazis were to be involved in the choice of a ruler to the Hejaz and that ruler would govern according to the Shari'a, refraining from making relationships with non-Muslim Governments. In order to confirm this position, he addressed a circular note to certain Islamic Governments on 26 October 1925 expressing no desire to make himself "master of the Hejaz or to take dominion over it", but explaining that the Hejaz was "a trust" placed in his hands "until the moment when the Hejazis shall elect a ruler from among themselves". Most significant in his note, Ibn Saud said that the new elected ruler should "work under the control of Muslim people".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Jordan to F.O., 8 June 1926, E3556/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.

2. Quoted in Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.308-9.

Ibn Saud again received no answer, but, according to Jordan, "a confused babble of sound".<sup>1</sup>

Having been chosen King on 8 January 1926 by the Hejazis, and soon afterwards recognised by four Great Powers, Ibn Saud decided to devote his energies to the protection and care of the Holy Cities. In this he was pressurised by his fanatic followers and prompted on by his own ambitions, which now clearly included guardianship of the Holy Places.<sup>2</sup> Although the bay'a had freed Ibn Saud from his former commitments to the Muslim World, his position even in the Hejaz remained uncertain. A conciliatory gesture towards the Hejazis by establishing local consultative councils was not enough. Some conciliatory gesture towards the Islamic World was necessary. This could be made by reviving his former plan. Accordingly, on 28 April 1926 he telegraphed fresh invitations to an Islamic Conference at Mecca, for the beginning of June, "to consider the service of the Holy Places, to secure their future and to increase the means of comfort for pilgrims".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Jeddah Report, April 1926, F.O. 371/11442; see also: Attar, op.cit., pp.896-903.
  2. Jeddah Report, April 1926, F.O. 371/11442. Jordan said that Hafez Wahba had revealed Ibn Saud's intention towards the Hejaz to the British Agency Staff. This attitude was stressed by: Iqbal, Emergence of Saudi Arabia, (Srinagar, 1977), p.196, and by: Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) p.12. But Attar in his Sagr al-jazirah, pp.896-903, says that it was the Hejazis themselves who insisted that Ibn Saud be their King in order to prevent the Hejaz being ruled by non-Arabs (Indians).
  3. Jeddah Report, April 1926, F.O. 371/11442; also: Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.311-12; Oriente Moderno, vi (1926) pp. 103, 285; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) p.12; Al-Manar, xxvi (1925-26) p.1954, and xxix, pp.167-73.



Obviously the original objective of the conference had been modified. This time the political position of the Hejaz was not mentioned directly. In fact, the main reason behind the invitation was economic. As a result of the Hejaz war, Ibn Saud was running short of financial resources and could not fulfill his obligations regarding the Holy Places without Muslim financial help.<sup>1</sup>

The response to this invitation revealed the amount of anger in the Muslim world at the annexation of the Hejaz. Representatives from all over the Muslim world, except Persia, decided to attend the proposed conference. By June 1926 they were arriving at Mecca. Aware of their views about the Hejaz, Ibn Saud used all his influence to prevent discussion among the delegates on political or religious matters and warned them not to interfere in the Hejaz's internal affairs.<sup>2</sup> From the political point of view Ibn Saud, still worried about his own sovereign status and political position, wanted to avoid any reopening of these issues. Meanwhile he was aware that delegates would not miss the opportunity to turn both the pilgrimage season and the conference into an anti-British demonstration. The Indians and the Javanese, in particular, were the most vocal and were expected to put

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1. A statement by Sir A. Chamberlain to the Imperial Conference, 20 Oct. 1926, D.B.F.P. 1919-39 (Ser. 1A, ii, 1968) pp.919- 58.
  2. Jordan to Chamberlain, 23 June 1926, E4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433; Umm al-Qura, No. 71, 14 May; No. 72, 21 May; No. 73, 28 May 1926.

their grievances against Britain and Europe before the representatives of the Islamic world. This of course would put Ibn Saud in a critical situation because of his friendly relationship with Britain.<sup>1</sup> From the religious point of view, Ibn Saud feared that the differences between the Wahhabi faith and other Muslim sects might lead to open discussion. The opponents of the Wahhabis could use Wahhabi vandalism in the Holy Places as an argument against Ibn Saud's claims that the Hejaz was safe in his hands. This attempt to prohibit discussion did not save him from all criticism since it was not possible to impose a total ban on these topics among such a large gathering of pilgrims. The Indian Khilafat Society, for instance, expressed quite openly that co-operation between India and the Wahhabis was impossible "as no Indian could accept either their doctrines or what amounted to their ignorance".<sup>2</sup> Other Muslims shared the same opinion.<sup>3</sup>

The reason for trying to inhibit discussion of Hejazi internal affairs was that the Muslim world remained reluctant to recognise Ibn Saud's authority. His previous declarations that the Hejaz was for the Hejazis took on a sinister light and he was suspected of having manipulated the whole enterprise

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1. Jeddah Report, May, 1926, F.O. 371/11442; The Times, 21 July 1926.
  2. Jordan to Chamberlain, 23 June 1926, E 4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.
  3. Umm al-Qura, No. 69, 30 April, No. 73, 28 May 1926.

to secure his own election as King. Although he had formally been given a bay'a by the Hejazis themselves, many Muslims insisted that the fate of the Holy Places was a matter of concern to them also and that they should have been consulted. Aware of this argument and expecting an open discussion on the matter both among the pilgrims and at the conference, Ibn Saud also tried to ban this topic. But his attempt met with criticism and opposition. The Ali brothers, for instance, challenged Ibn Saud personally on various occasions. Mohammad Ali reminded him that he would never have conquered the Hejaz without help received from India. When the King pointed out that he "won the Hejaz by sword", Mohammad Ali dramatically replied "yes, but with money we shall take it from you". The chief objection to Ibn Saud was the Wahhabi connection. And on a later occasion, Mohammad Ali went so far to say that if only the Wahhabis were less fanatical, "Ibn Saud could be the most useful man to the Indians, as he had great ambitions".<sup>1</sup> Although the general mood was antagonistic, Ibn Saud had some supporters among the Javanese, the Egyptian Khilafat delegation, the Palestinians, the Syrians, the Indian Hadith Society,<sup>2</sup> and Rashid Rida as an Islamic reformer, as a writer and as a close friend to Ibn Saud.

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1. Umm al-Qura, No.74, June 1926;  
Jordan to Chamberlain, 23 June 1926, E4186/20/91, F.O.  
371/11433. The Ali Brothers never ceased their campaign against Ibn Saud for making of himself King of the Hejaz, as they believed that kingship was a novelty in Islam. See: Al-Manar, xxix (1928-9) p.163. Rashid Rida defended Ibn Saud against Ali's allegations in Al-Manar, xxix (1928-29) pp.162-80.
  2. The Times, 21 July 1926.



Prior to the conference anti-British and anti-Saudi feelings gained ground among the pilgrims. "The unity of the East", a slogan put forward by Russian elements in Mecca, found great support among all Muslims and was not objected to by Ibn Saud's side. Although vague and undefined, the British Agent at Jeddah counted it as a victory for Bolshevik propaganda against Britain and the West. Ibn Saud's failure to open the conference on the original day (1 June) provided more time for his opponents to consolidate their position. But he tried to benefit from the postponement of the conference by attempting to secure the adherence of more delegates including Indian Khilafat Society leaders. After initial failure and thanks to the influence of the Egyptian Khilafat Society, the Ali brothers agreed to the views put forward by the Hejazi party to preserve the unity of Islam.<sup>1</sup>

With this important backing secured for Ibn Saud the conference opened on 7 June. It was attended by 59 delegates most of whom represented societies rather than governments.<sup>2</sup> In his inaugural address,<sup>3</sup> read out by Hafez Wahba, Ibn Saud modestly said, "God gave us victory and helped us to purge

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1. Jordan to Chamberlain, 23 June 1926, E4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.
  2. Toynbee, Survey 1925, pp.312-13; The Times, 9 June, 23 July 1926; Revue du Monde Musulman lxiv (1926) pp.125-27; Umm al-Qura, No. 75, 11 July 1926; Jordan's report on the Conference, 15 July 1926, E4677/20/91, F.O. 371/11433. Delegations from India, Egypt, Java, Palestine, Beirut, Syria, the Sudan, Nejd, the Hejaz, Russia, Turkey, the Yemen, and Asir attended the Conference.
  3. For text of the speech see: Umm al-Qura, No. 75, 11 June 1926; Attar, op.cit., pp.913-17; The Times, 23 July 1926; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) pp.128-31; Oriente Moderno, vi (1926) pp.310-12.

this sacred land ... and enabled us to fulfil our promise towards the people of Islam". Proud of his success in gathering representatives of the Muslim world and in providing an Islamic forum for the first time, he urged Muslims to assemble yearly at Mecca to discuss Muslim affairs. He then reminded the conference of the limitations on discussion of political matters which he had already, however unsuccessfully, proposed and which he now wished to impose. Notwithstanding Ibn Saud's attempt so drastically to limit the scope of the conference, the delegates, as it will be seen, could not be restrained from discussing matters about which they obviously felt concerned.

Following the speech the conference procedures were formalised: Sharif Sharaf 'Adnan a Hejazi<sup>1</sup> was elected President and an Indian and a Russian were elected Vice-Presidents. Although assurances were given that the Russian delegation was a purely religious party and in no way concerned with the dissemination of the Bolshevik propaganda, the British acting consul expressed great concern about possible Soviet influence. The administrative staff were completed by Tawfiq al-Sharif from Asir being elected Secretary General. A subject committee was also appointed to draw up the agenda, which concentrated upon the improvement of local conditions

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1. Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah) to Chamberlain, 13 July 1928, E3496/677/91, F.O. 371/13012.



and facilities in the Hejaz<sup>1</sup>.

In fact the conference discussed numerous subjects and tackled a number of problems concerned with the Islamic world. This chapter is only concerned with those aspects of the conference which affected British Imperial interests in the East and Anglo-Saudi relations.

Implications for Britain developed when the conference constituted itself into a permanent organization called mutamar al-'alam al-islami,<sup>2</sup> which was to assemble yearly at Mecca<sup>3</sup> during the pilgrimage season in order to pursue the following objectives:

- "a) De permettre aux Musulmans de se connaitre mutuellement;
- b) D'examiner et d'ameliorer la situation des Musulmans aux divers points de vue religieux, social, moral et economique;
- c) D'examiner et d'etablir la securite au Hedjaz, d'y assurer le confort et l'hygiene, d'y developper les moyens de communication, de faciliter le pelerinage, de faire disparaitre toutes entraves a l'accomplissement de ce devoir religieux, de garantir l'integrite du Hedjaz et de sauvegarder ses droits".<sup>4</sup>

In case of war, it was suggested, delegations might be prevented from reaching Mecca by the British who would fear the establishment of a common Islamic front against them.

Mohammad Ali, who since 1910 had been under the impression that Britain was an enemy of Islam,<sup>5</sup> turned the attention of the

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1. See: Jordan to F.O., 9 June 1926, E3578/20/91; Jordan's Report on the Conference, 23 June 1926, E4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433; Umm al-Qura, No. 75, 11 June 1926, No. 76, 15 June 1926; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) p.132; The Times, 23 July 1926.
  2. See: Art. 1 of the Status of the Conference, Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) p.213.
  3. Ibid., Art. 3.
  4. Ibid., Art. 2.
  5. Niemeijer, The Khilafat Movement in India 1919-1924, (The Hague 1972) p.110.



conference to this potential obstacle and repeated that the British Government was the Muslim's "greatest enemy, who has down-trodden India and Egypt and many other Moslems all over the world". Accordingly, it was agreed that in case of war the conference could meet in any independent Islamic state. Nevertheless the annual conference was regarded as a success for Ibn Saud.<sup>1</sup> Sirdar Iqbal Ali Shah, who attended the conference as a private member, argued that Ibn Saud's foresight had enabled him to realise the importance of calling such a meeting annually. Ibn Saud, he claimed, believed that these gatherings could exercise a tremendous influence upon 100 million Muslims under the British flag, in addition to 150 millions in other countries. The spirit of fraternity and unity amongst all Muslim sects could thus be fostered and create a force with which Europe and particularly Britain would have to reckon.<sup>2</sup> If this interpretation of Ibn Saud's position was correct, the matter obviously was one of major concern for Britain; particularly since there was a suspicion that Russia was encouraging the anti-British aspects of Islamic unity.

Great endeavours were made by Ibn Saud's agents at the conference in order to secure a resolution to restore to the Hejaz the Awqaf al-Haramain (religious trust foundations

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1. Quote from: Jordan's Report on the Conference, 23 June 1926, E4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433. See Arts. 3 & 4 of the Status of the Conference; The Times, 23 July 1926.
  2. Philby supported this point of view in a letter to the editor of The Times, 11 Aug. 1926.

belonging to the Holy Places) which were sited in other Islamic countries.<sup>1</sup> The Government of the Hejaz assumed that the Awqaf funds from all over the Muslim world, estimated at about £10 millions per annum, should be made available for improving conditions in the Holy Places.<sup>2</sup> The most important waqf in question was the Hejaz Railway. This subject had been opened during the Haddah negotiations of 1925. Ibn Saud then stated his attitude towards the question as follows: "We should be as jealous of its [the Hejaz Railway] safety as anyone else, even though it may not be under our administration, for it is a Moslem Waqf leading to the Holy Places and entitled to every protection".<sup>3</sup> The British felt that they were obliged to maintain direct control over those portions of the Hejaz Railway which lay within their mandated territories.<sup>4</sup> In December of the same year, Ibn Saud requested from Britain to help having the railway repaired and reopened. This was not without its complexities; it implied consultation within the government<sup>5</sup> and also with

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1. See: Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) pp.149- 55.
  2. Jordan's Report on the Conference, 23 June 1926, E4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.
  3. Memo. No. 2, by Ibn Saud, 13 Oct. 1925, Annex. 4, 'Clayton Report'.
  4. Mayers (Beirut) to Chamberlain, 5 Feb. 1926, E1113/306/91, F.O. 371/11440.
  5. See: I.O. to F.O. 14 January 1926, p2/26; C.O. to F.O. 20 January 1926, C1266/26, F.O. 371/11439.

the French, who had transferred the administration of the Syrian section of the railway to a French company, nevertheless, the Permanent Mandates Commission of the League had recognized that the railway was a public trust and not the property of the governments through whose territory it ran.<sup>1</sup>

At the Mecca Conference, Amin al-Husaini of Palestine, who in 1924 had opposed the French annexation of the Syrian portion<sup>2</sup> of the railway, led the debate on the restoration and re-opening of the whole of the Hejaz Railway. Accordingly a resolution was passed calling upon the Executive Committee of the conference and the Government of the Hejaz to demand from both the French and British Governments, the surrender of those sections of the railway which lay in territories under their mandate. If they refused, the Hejaz should appeal to the League of Nations and to the Hague Tribunal if necessary.<sup>3</sup>

For humanitarian reasons and perhaps in deference to British susceptibility, the conference adopted an anti-slavery resolution. A commission was to be appointed to inquire into slavery and the slave trade. The following resolution was accepted:

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1. Toynbee, Survey 1925, Note 3, p.317.

2. Umm al-Qura, No. 190, 10 Aug. 1928.

3. Jordan's Report on the Conference, 23 June 1926, 4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433; Umm al-Qura, No. 77, 18 June 1926, No. 190, 10 Aug. 1928; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) pp.155-62, 176, 192-94, 202-04; Oriente Moderno, vi (1926) pp.353-64.



"La Commission, ayant discuté la proposition ci-dessus, a décidé sa présentation au Congrès avec avis tendant à ce que le gouvernement du Hedjaz soit prié d'interdire tout esclavage ayant lieu au Hedjaz contrairement aux règles de la Charia."<sup>1</sup>

One of the most important conference issues which concerned Britain was the Aqaba-Maan question. The two districts had always been considered part of North Hejaz. The region had been claimed by Britain for Transjordan in 1925. Ibn Saud's preliminary efforts had failed to recover the area for the Hejaz. At the Mecca conference, although political issues were banned, Ibn Saud, through one of his main supporters, Rashid Rida of Egypt, suggested a resolution to the effect that the Aqaba and Maan areas were Hejazi territories. The two brothers ex-King Ali and Amir Abd-Allah had arranged between themselves an agreement by which the former relinquished them to the latter. Because Ali was not the legal King of the Hejaz, and because the territory of Transjordan was under a non-Muslim country (Britain) Rashid Rida argued that every Muslim ought to do all in his capacity to secure the areas in question for the Hejaz. This proposal met with opposition from the Egyptian delegation who protested that this was a political matter and not within the scope of the conference terms of reference; in this they were supported by the Afghan and

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1. Revue du Monde Musulman, lxxiv (1926), p.201; Oriente Moderno, vi (1926) pp.353-64; Toynbée, Survey 1925, p.317; Simon, Slavery (London 1930) pp.49-60. See also Chapter 3 below.

Turkish delegations. In spite of these protests, the conference continued its discussion of the matter and resolved in favour of the Hejazi claim, instructing the Hejazi Government to recover the areas "by all means", and to appeal for help from all the Muslims.<sup>1</sup> Indeed, Rashid Rida played an important role at the Conference in favour of Ibn Saud. Not surprisingly, Rida's early sympathy with Hanbalism <sup>led him</sup> enthusiastically to support the revival of Wahhabism and the policy of its leader (Ibn Saud) and <sup>to</sup> defend them against charges of heresy. Rida's support of Ibn Saud both in Al-Manar and at the Conference led to hints that he had been bought. He strenuously denied this.<sup>2</sup>

As part of his anti-British campaign, Mohammad Ali proposed a discussion on the liberation of the Arabian Peninsula, and in his mind this included all the Asian Arab states, from foreign influence. Personally he vowed to secure the evacuation of Aden by the British. In spite

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1. Umm al-Qura, No. 84, 23 July 1926; Jordan to Chamberlain, 28 July 1926, E2921/20/91, F.O. 371/11433; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) pp.207-09; Al-Manar, xxvii (1926-27) pp.471-3, Oriente Moderno, vi (1926) p.360.
  2. Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age (Oxford 1962) p.231; Al-Manar xxviii (1927-28) pp.1ff, 465 ff. Jordan reported to London in July that Ibn Saud distributed large sums of money to all and sundry of the delegates with few exceptions to gain their goodwill, and in order to secure them for propaganda purposes in their respective countries. Rashid Rid received £2000, Amin al-Husaini received £1000, others received £200-£600. Jeddah Report, July 1926, F.O. 371/11442.



of his eloquence Mohammad Ali found no solid support for his views among the delegates. This was partly because of differences of opinion in defining the boundaries of the Arabian Peninsula and partly because of reluctance to commit themselves to an objective which seemed so far beyond their resources. But, although refusing to deliver an opinion, the conference did agree to leave the matter open for further consideration by a commission which had already been formed.<sup>1</sup> Mohammad Ali was so angered by this weak response that he resigned his membership of the commission.<sup>2</sup>

The conference also discussed the question of foreign representation in the Hejaz. The idea was put forward that no non-Muslim representatives could be admitted but that foreign countries could be allowed representation if Muslim representatives were chosen. Mohammad Ali was reported as sarcastically commenting that:

"Great Britain can find Moslem Indians to be Governors of provinces, and leaders of the Assemblies, can she not find one to represent her in the Hejaz instead of polluting this holy land with the presence of a Christian".<sup>3</sup>

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1. Jordan to Chamberlain, 28 July 1926, E2921/20/91, Jordan's Report on the Conference E4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) pp.163-6; For definition of the Arabian Peninsula and differences about this see: Toynbee, 'A problem of Arabian Statesmanship', Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, viii (1929) pp.367- 75; also: Clayton, 'Arabia and the Arabs', Journal of the R.I.I.A., viii (1929) pp.8-20.
  2. Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) p.166.
  3. Jordan to Chamberlain, 23 June 1926, E4186/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.



However, after much discussion this topic like the previous one, was eventually dropped without any definite resolution.

Economic concessions to non-Muslims in the Hejaz were prohibited by the conference in order to avoid any foreign interference in the Holy Land. If the presence of non-Muslims proved necessary for the development of the country they must be subject to Islamic law.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Saud deliberately raised the question of foreign capitulatory rights proposing their abolition. Because of his own previous attempts to ban political discussions he now found little support among the delegates and no vote was taken on his proposal.<sup>2</sup>

Such, in brief, were the matters raised at the Conference which directly or indirectly concerned Britain. The degree of that concern was in some cases magnified beyond any previous anticipation by the way in which discussions developed. Apart from matters of specific interest to Britain the holding of such a conference, the first of its kind, was in itself significant, if only because of the establishment of an Islamic League.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Jordan's Report on the Conference, 15 July 1926, E4677/20/91, F.O. 371/11433; Umm al-Qura, No. 79, 2 July 1926; Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) pp.173-4.
  2. See next chapter for Ibn Saud's struggle for the abolition of the Capitulations in the Hejaz.
  3. It was decided at the Conference that the future allocation should be as follows: India 4, The Hejaz, Turkey, Java and China 3 each, other Muslim countries 2 each. See: Jeddah Report, June 1926, F.O. 371/11442.

The Conference passed off with little condemnation of Britain's eastern policy, thanks to Ibn Saud's limitation of the agenda to the welfare of the pilgrims. In order to achieve this end he interfered directly in the work of the Conference as when he sent the following message to the delegates:

"Nous désirons seulement attirer votre attention sur certaines questions en notre qualité de l'un des chefs musulmans responsable des affaires de ce pays".<sup>1</sup>

While interfering to block certain topics of discussion on the principle of the limitations which he had laid down, Ibn Saud did not himself abide by those limitations. On the contrary, he contrived to introduce some political discussions and, in so doing, achieved his own ends. For instance, he succeeded in preventing all foreigners, whether Muslim or non-Muslim, from establishing any rights to interfere in the internal affairs of the Hejaz. He had stressed this point prior to the conference, he again repeated it in his inaugural address and later, on 2 July, he emphasised that "Nous n'admettons aucune intervention étrangère en ce pays sacré, de quelque nature qu'elle soit".<sup>2</sup> As Iqbal concluded:

"The delegates left the Hejaz to the newly crowned King to rule it in consonance with the dictates of the Quran and the Sumah and to establish the limits imposed by Allah, in every corner of the vast state, wherein would reign justice, tranquility and peace".<sup>3</sup>

1. Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) p.189; see also: Umm al-Qura No. 80, 6 July 1926; Al-Manar, xxix (1928-29) pp.157-8.
2. Revue du Monde Musulman, lxiv (1926) p.191. Full text of Ibn Saud's letter, pp.189- 92.
3. Iqbal, Emergence of Saudi Arabia, p.204.



Thus, by his firm resistance, Ibn Saud defeated the hopes which had been engendered by the Indian delegates to use the conference in order to create an international Islamic Hejaz or at least a democratic Hejaz. By failing to make any formal pronouncement about the political future of the Hejaz, the conference had implicitly recognized Ibn Saud's absolute authority. Indeed some delegates went so far as to address him as "the King".<sup>1</sup>

In his search for economic support Ibn Saud did secure a promise that Awqaf funds would be sent annually to the Hejaz. In theory this would considerably "augment the revenues of the country and enrich the rulers and administrators".<sup>2</sup> In fact little could be expected from many of the delegates who remained angry that they had been prevented from having a say in the future of the Hejaz. Aware of this fact, Ibn Saud was resigned to reliance on his own resources. Indeed if this was the price for personal ascendancy in the Hejaz, he would welcome it.<sup>3</sup> In Toynbee's words:

"Though the Mecca Congress had proved unexpectedly successful, the Wahhabi domination over the Islamic Holy Land continued to produce discord in the Islamic World and to embarrass the efforts of those Muslims who were working for Islamic solidarity".<sup>4</sup>

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1. When the word 'King' was first mentioned by Mohammad Ali it caused an uproar. See Jordan's Report on the Conference, 23 June 1926, E6168/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.
  2. Jordan's Report on the Conference, 23 June 1926, op.cit.
  3. See: Iqbal, op.cit., p.205; The Times, 23 July 1926.
  4. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.319.



His conclusion was correct and the Indian delegations went back home to demonstrate their anger for the failure to prevent Ibn Saud ruling in the Holy Land.<sup>1</sup>

In the meanwhile, Ibn Saud decided to go ahead with plans to consolidate his position internally and externally. His intention of sending his son, Faisal, and a small goodwill mission to convey gratitude to Britain, France and Holland for their formal recognition remained firm despite Muslim opposition to his dealings with non-Muslim Powers. Faisal was also to visit the Soviet Union. On this point Ibn Saud sought Jordan's opinion and Jordan advised him to drop the idea for the ostensible reason that Moscow was too cold. Confidentially, on London's instructions, Jordan told the King "that the visit might not be regarded favourably by nations who have not recognised the Soviet Government".<sup>2</sup> The motives of the proposed visits were to seek political, economic and moral support by which Ibn Saud could counter propaganda made by his Muslim opponents and consolidate his temporal and religious powers in the Holy Places.<sup>3</sup> A

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1. For division of attitudes in India towards Ibn Saud's role in the Hejaz see: Al-Manar, xxvii(1926-27) pp.548-55, 634-40, 713-14; Umm al-Qura, No. 93, 24 Sept., No. 98, 30 Oct., No. 99, 5 Nov., No. 101, 19 Nov. 1926, No. 109, 14 Jan. 1927; Oriente Moderno, vii (1927) p.136; See above pp.128 - 32 .For Philby's attitude towards India's hostile campaign see: American Vice Consul (Aden) to Sec. of State (Washington) 31 Oct. 1927, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., ii, pp.140-5.
  2. Jordan to F.O. 11 Aug. 1926, E4735/11/91, F.O. 371/11431.
  3. Jeddah Report, Sept. 1926, F.O. 371/11442; Umm al-Qura, No. 90, 3 Sept. 1926.

favourable opportunity arose when he received an invitation to inaugurate the first Mosque built in London by the Ahmadiya community. Ibn Saud, proud that his representative should open a Mosque in the capital of the British Empire,<sup>1</sup> now favoured a public state visit.

This was not at first welcomed by the Foreign Office, as new bases for relations with Ibn Saud had not yet been worked out. In addition, the King and the government would be away from London in the summer.<sup>2</sup> So Faisal's visit remained an unofficial one. Ibn Saud's request<sup>3</sup> that Jordan should accompany the Amir throughout the tour in Europe was rejected, but the Foreign Office agreed that Jordan might accompany Faisal during his London visit. The Amir was to arrange for himself the rest of his European trip.<sup>4</sup> On this basis, accompanied by Jordan and Abd-Allah al-Damluji (the Hejaz-Nejd Minister for Foreign Affairs), Faisal left Jeddah on 8 September. On his arrival in England fifteen days later he was given a good reception; and on 11 October he discussed current Arabian Affairs and Anglo-Saudi relations with Sir Austin Chamberlain.<sup>5</sup>

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1. See: The Times, 2, 4 Oct. 1926.

2. F.O. to C.O. & I.O. 16 Aug. 1926, E4735/7/91, F.O. 371/11432.

3. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 15 Aug. 1926, E5285/7/91, F.O. 371/11433.

4. F.O. to Jordan, E4836/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

5. See: Record of Conversation on 11 Oct. 1926 between Amir Faisal and the Sec. of State for Foreign Affairs, D.B.F.P. 1919-39, (Ser 1A, ii, 1968) pp.824-26



While the political and diplomatic aspects of the visit went as hoped, the rest of the visit went wrong. The press in London published articles to the effect that the new Mosque would be used for Christian, Jewish and Muslim worship. When news of this reached Ibn Saud through the Cairo press, he was taken by surprise and wanted to instruct the Amir to decline the invitation to open the Mosque.<sup>1</sup> However, pressure from Muslims in London and India was placed upon Ibn Saud not to opt out of the ceremony. Still anxious about being involved, the King telegraphed his son that if the Mosque was to be "for all religions" the Amir would have to decline, but if it was ascertained that the Mosque was "for different Muslim sects only", then the Amir could use his discretion and perform the ceremony of opening.<sup>2</sup> These instructions however, did not reach the Amir in time. Accordingly he lost the opportunity, when it was left to a former president of the Punjab legislative council to take the lead at the ceremony.<sup>3</sup> At the end of his three week visit, Faisal was made an honorary Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Ahmadiya Imam was making arrangements for addresses to be given by non-Muslim religious-teachers on the tents of their respective faiths, and invitations of the kind were being addressed both to Anglican and to Jewish dignitaries. That was why Ibn Saud suspected their faith. See: The Times, 2, 4 Oct. 1926; Umm al-Qura, No. 97, 22 Oct. 1926.
  2. Jeddah Report, Oct. 1926, F.O. 371/11442.
  3. Umm al-Qura, No. 98, 30 Oct. 1926.
  4. Williams, op.cit., pp.190-200.



While the Amir was touring Europe, Jordan remained in London to discuss the proposed Anglo-Saudi treaty. He then accompanied the Amir on his return trip to open proposed discussions with Ibn Saud for the new treaty as soon as he got back to Jeddah.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1926, F.O. 371/11442.

### CHAPTER THREE

#### The Making of the Treaty of Jeddah, May 1927,

#### March 1926 - May 1927

- The First Phase, March 1926 - January 1927
- The Second Phase, January - May 1927

The Making of the Treaty of Jeddah, the First Phase,  
March 1926 - January 1927.

The rapid changes in Ibn Saud's position required parallel changes in his status. In 1915 Britain recognised him "Ruler of Nejd El-Hasa, Qatif and Jubail".<sup>1</sup> In his capacity as King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd in 1926, Ibn Saud sought Britain's recognition for his new status in the form of a treaty. This desire was conveyed to Clayton during the Bahrah negotiations in 1925.<sup>2</sup> Although Clayton reported Ibn Saud's wish soon afterwards, discussions were not started until March 1926 when London had become fully convinced that, under the new circumstances, urgent revisions to the treaty of 1915 had now to be made. Accordingly, a polite message to that effect was sent to Ibn Saud early in April.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile a number of inter-departmental meetings took place in the Colonial Office in order to prepare the ground. At the first meeting (12 March 1926) the following points were considered suitable for inclusion in the treaty:-

- a - declaration of perpetual peace and friendship;
- b - recognition by Ibn Saud of H.M.G. special position in the neighbouring Mandated Territories;
- c - agreement by Ibn Saud not to interfere with Arab Rulers with whom H.M.G. were in treaty relations;
- d - settlement of the Trans-Jordan-Hejaz Frontier;
- e - something on the lines of Article 5 of 1916 Treaty (pilgrimage);
- f - promise by Ibn Saud to co-operate in the suppression of the slave trade and to recognise the practice of consular manumission at Jeddah.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Preamble of the 1915 Treaty, See Appendix A.
  2. See: Clayton to C.O., 24 Nov. & 16 Dec. 1925, E332/180/91, F.O. 371/11437.
  3. F.O. to Jordan, 6 April 1926, E2026/180/91; Jordan to Ibn Saud, 8 April 1926 E2918/180/91, F.O. 371/11437.
  4. Minutes of the 12 March Conference, E2026/180/91; F.O. 371/11437



The inclusion of all these points at this stage in the proceedings reflected some divergence of opinion between the departments concerned and between them on the one hand and Ibn Saud on the other. Consequently, further discussions and consultations with the authorities on the spot were required. Clayton, for example, advised on 21 April,<sup>1</sup> that an outline of the conference recommendations should be communicated to Ibn Saud for consultation about the bases. Clayton's own appreciation of the situation in Arabia, which was always liable to change, caused him to be wary about delays in decisions which could prove prejudicial to British policy. "Other Powers", he argued, "may enter the field".<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, a message was sent to Ibn Saud on 24 April, assuring him of a favourable outcome in the matter. With his eye on Arabia as a whole, Clayton indicated a major British interest when he drew attention to the Yemen. He observed that the prospective treaty with Ibn Saud was likely to have a very salutary effect on the Imam and might make him more amenable. Clayton, still affected by his failure to win over the Imam, urged the British policy-makers to aim at friendly relations, not only with Ibn Saud but also with his rival, the Imam.

Commenting on the second point, Clayton warned that any attempt "to induce Ibn Saud to recognise the Zionist obligation ...

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1. Clayton to Shuckburgh, 21 April 1926, F.O. 371/11437; also (Clayton Papers) 472/1.

2. This was an indication to the Italian intervention in the Yemen.

would be disastrous and ... would destroy his position by bringing down upon him universal Moslem criticism". He also warned against forcing a clause into the treaty by which Ibn Saud was to commit himself to a policy of non-interference in the affairs of the Gulf States.<sup>1</sup> He thought that such an undertaking should be limited to a general recognition by Ibn Saud of any treaty Britain had or might have with other Arab rulers. In addition he thought that Ibn Saud's possible aggressive actions against those rulers could best be dealt with by certain measures to be designed when required.

Clayton cautiously considered the suggestion of protecting Ibn Saud and his territories against foreign aggression. This matter had been rejected by the Air Ministry at the Inter-departmental meeting without explanation. Clayton agreed with the Air Ministry, and stressed that protection extended to one ruler in Arabia could not easily be denied to another. In this Clayton was correct. He had learned a lesson from the Saudi-Hashemite hostilities and was anxious to avoid any future embarrassment to Britain if similar hostility arose again between these two strong rulers of Arabia (Ibn Saud and the Imam of the Yemen). He finally recommended a non-personal treaty with Ibn Saud.

For his part, Ibn Saud was anxious to obtain a meeting with a British negotiator to discuss the basis of the new treaty before the following June, when the Mecca Conference was

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1. Any hostility between Ibn Saud and other Arab ruler with whom Britain had treaty relations would illustrate the difficulty of Britain's position. Clayton reached the conclusion that a non-interference commitment by Ibn Saud would be a possible source of future embarrassment to Britain.

to meet.<sup>1</sup> Since the Hejaz question was the main issue of the conference, Ibn Saud's eagerness to gain prior recognition of his position in a new treaty is understandable. Once this desire had been conveyed to London, immediate efforts were made to speed the proceedings. The British wanted to aid Ibn Saud to consolidate his position in the Hejaz, as they believed that he could then balance anti-British feeling in many parts of the Islamic world. At the same time the danger of any hostile elements coming to power in the Hejaz would be eliminated. The British were, of course, aware of the Ali brothers' ambitions in the Holy Land.

On 20 May another interdepartmental meeting reconsidered the situation in the light of Clayton's advice about Ibn Saud's desire for a quick resolution of the matter. Clayton, who by now had returned to London, was invited to convey his views in person. At the meeting discussions went smoothly except on two points. The first, controversial when previously discussed, was the protection of the Gulf Shaikhs from the growing power of Ibn Saud: in other words, how to prevent him from aggressive encroachment as had been laid down in article 6 of 1915 Treaty. It was argued that any such provision would now be unwelcome to Ibn Saud and, even if included, could constitute no effective deterrent should Ibn Saud become determined to absorb the neighbouring Arab Emirates. These arguments proved decisive and the clause was dropped. Instead it was agreed, on Clayton's suggestion, that copies

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1. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 4 May 1926, No. 57, F.O. 371/11437. See Chapter 2 above.



of all the existing treaties between Britain and the Arab Shaikhs should be communicated to Ibn Saud. The significance of this proposal was that Ibn Saud would have to think twice about notions of extending his power over these Emirates as he could not feign ignorance of Britain's commitments towards them, or object to any steps which she might take to oppose him.<sup>1</sup>

The second point in contention related to Britain's political and economic representation in the Hejaz and whether to allude to this in the proposed treaty, Ibn Saud, no doubt, would produce a counter proposal if the British negotiator insisted on gaining a concession on this point. Therefore the Foreign Office resisted the idea as it might lead to similar requests from the other Arab rulers who had no representation in Britain.<sup>2</sup>

The progress and results of these discussions were reported both to Chamberlain (Foreign Secretary) and to Amery (Colonial Secretary) soon after the meeting so that they could issue instructions to Jordan (the Political Agent at Jeddah), who was believed to be persona grata with Ibn Saud, to commence negotiations.<sup>3</sup> Although the debate had come to these decisions in London, India's attitude delayed the actual start of negotiations. The Viceroy argued that the proposed treaty was premature and that the Islamic world was not prepared to

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1. Minutes of the 20 May Conference, C9757/26, F.O. 371/11438.

2. Ibid.

3. See: F.O. to C.O., 30 June 1926, E3843/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

receive news of more British support to Ibn Saud after the latter's act of vandalism in their Holy Land. He urged London not to take any positive steps until it was possible to make a comprehensive estimation of Muslim opinion.<sup>1</sup> Presumably, the Viceroy preferred to wait for reactions to the outcome of the Islamic conference at Jeddah which had just finished its meetings. Thus Ibn Saud's desire to gain British support prior to the conference proved impossible. On the other hand, if the British Government then decided to go ahead with plans already made, the Viceroy advised that the Hejaz should not be included in the new treaty since the old one was only concerned with Nejd; otherwise the treaty should be made personal to Ibn Saud for a limited period. He justified this suggestion by stressing the growing opposition of Muslim India to Ibn Saud's rule in the Hejaz, and upon Muslim scepticism about Ibn Saud's long-term ability to restrain Wahhabi fanaticism. The Viceroy explained that Britain lacked experience in dealing with the Wahhabis and, therefore, a short-term treaty with Ibn Saud was preferable. Britain could then be able to reconsider her position in the light of general Muslim opinion.

On the same basis, the Viceroy viewed the question of protecting British-Muslim subjects in the Hejaz, a matter for which the British authorities were anxious to obtain from Ibn Saud guarantees in the form of an article in the new treaty.

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1. Viceroy to I.O., 12 July 1926, No. C1213s, F.O. 371/11438, also (Clayton Papers) 472/2. Obviously Islamic reaction in India influenced the British decision makers towards Ibn Saud. For reaction to Wahhabi vandalism see: Jordan to F.O. 9 June 1926, E3578/20/91, F.O. 371/11433.

Traditionally Britain and other European Powers relied on Capitulatory rights to secure their own interests and subjects. The Capitulations in question had been granted to Britain by the Porte in the sixteenth Century. Accordingly, British subjects had enjoyed "a wide range of extra-territorial privileges, including immunity from taxation and sequestration and rights of consular jurisdiction".<sup>1</sup> Efforts to secure the Capitulatory rights with King Husain as successor to the Porte in the Hejaz during the peace settlement had failed. As part of the bargain with him in 1923, "the Ottoman Capitulations were to be abolished in name and reintroduced in substance in King Husayn's dominions".<sup>2</sup> The failure of British diplomacy to reconcile Husain did not affect the existing Capitulations. When Ibn Saud came to power in the Hejaz he missed no opportunity to point out that there was no law in the Hejaz but the Shari'a. As he wrote to the British Agent on 14 May 1926:

"I wish to assure you certainly that absolute justice will be enjoyed by everybody, and you know that this country is a holy one which has certain religious conditions ought to be regarded and it is not possible to have in it any rub contrary to the Islamic Shari'a Laws".<sup>3</sup>

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1. "The Capitulations were a complicated system of bilateral arrangements governing the relations of the Porte with the outside world. They restricted Turkish trading rights; her right to impose customs and harbour dues, and her right to export Turkish goods. They gave to foreign nationals a wide range of extra-territorial privilege ...". See: Montgomery, 'The Making of the Treaty of Sevres of 10 August 1920', The Historical Journal xv (1972), pp.775-87; see also: Niksel, 'The Turko-British Pact', Asiatic Review, xxxv (1939), pp.561-71.
  2. Toynbee, Survey 1925, p.294.
  3. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 14 May 1926, E3472/3472/91, F.O. 371/11450.



Thus, the British authorities were aware of Ibn Saud's intentions concerning this particular matter, but they still insisted on maintaining "inherited" rights. For his part, the Viceroy warned against pursuing this policy, for the exercise of these privileges in the Holy Land of Islam would agitate the Muslim world against Britain. He thought it would be wiser to aim at securing limited powers of consular intervention at least while Muslim India continued to take such a close interest in the situation in the Hejaz.<sup>1</sup>

Separate discussion on the preliminary draft treaty revealed departmental division on the issue of the security of the Holy Land and the protection of British Muslims there. India wanted no intervention in the application of Muslim Law, or in the sovereignty of the Hejaz. The Foreign Office led the opposition to India's views and its reluctance to give any appearance of intervention. It argued the necessity for maintaining the Capitulatory rights in the Hejaz and accused the Government of India of adopting contradictory attitudes. It also pointed out that India's present stance differed substantially from that indicated by their earlier comment on article 3 in the draft treaty.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office resisted any attempt to whittle down Capitulatory rights as defined in article 6,<sup>3</sup> which

1. Viceroy to I.O., 12 July 1926, C1213s, F.O. 371/11438. See examples of practicing Capitulations by European Powers in E3472/3575/3472/91, F.O. 371/11450.
2. F.O. comments on preliminary draft treaty with Ibn Saud, (undated) E4266/180/91, F.O. 371/11438; Viceroy to I.O. 12 July 1926, F.O. 371/11438.
3. This article reads as follows: Ibn Saud was to agree that in any case when a British subject was 'plaintiff or defendant, a British Consular representative shall be entitled to attend the Nejdi or Hejazi courts during the hearing of the case, and where the British agent wishes to make diplomatic representations ... judgement shall be adjourned and shall not be executed while such representations are being made, and in no case shall the execution of judgement proceed except after permission of His Majesty'. E5347/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

was regarded as the "absolute minimum" needed to secure British subjects and rights. The point was frequently made that the British Government had never admitted the abolition of Capitulations in the Hejaz, although they were no longer enjoyed in Turkey itself. With the passage of time those rights had become a matter of "custom and usage". On that basis the Foreign Office, had already put forward the idea that a British consular representative should be entitled to attend the local courts and to make diplomatic representations to the King of the Hejaz.<sup>1</sup> This proposition was now reaffirmed. Still reluctant to agree, but by way of compromise, the Government of India suggested a substitute clause providing for "most favoured nation" treatment for British subjects.<sup>2</sup>

Apart from these differences between India and the Foreign Office, the India Office, though favouring India's views in general, expressed considerable doubt about two points raised by the Colonial Office on 15 July. The first was whether a redraft of article 5 of the 1915 treaty would in practice either secure for British Muslims "any greater freedom for religious observance in the Hejaz or secure for the British Government any appreciable measure of gratitude", while it appeared highly probable that it would involve the British Government in Hejazi domestic affairs. Furthermore, Ibn Saud

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1. F.O. to C.O., 26 Oct. 1926, E5918/180/91; F.O. to Jordan 3 Nov. 1926, E6118/180/91; F.O. Comment on the draft treaty (undated) E4266/180/91; Memo. by Mallet (F.O.) 13 Oct. 1926, E5794/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

2. Viceroy to I.O., 12 July 1926, F.O. 371/11438.

was not thought likely to agree to such an inclusion. The second point at issue related to the facilities given to the British Navy in the Gulf by the Anglo-Turkish convention of July 1913. The Colonial Office believed that a provision in the prospective treaty should be inserted to ensure the "prescriptive rights of the British Government in regard to the policing, lighting and buoying of the Persian Gulf".<sup>1</sup> This provision seemed to the India Office "unnecessary and inadvisable". They argued that the British rights in this question rested on "usage and acquiescence" and not on treaties.<sup>2</sup>

Since agreement between the departments of state concerned about a suitable text for the proposed treaty was obviously still far off, yet another Interdepartmental Conference was deemed necessary. At the Conference (which met on 11 August) it was agreed that the Foreign Office attitude towards the forms of the treaty should be adopted and, accordingly, the treaty should neither be personal to Ibn Saud nor even refer to him by name. Taking the advice of the India Office, it was agreed not to send copies of the existing treaties between Britain and the Gulf States to Ibn Saud, because

"the obligations of the British Government to the various Rulers of the Arab coast of the Persian Gulf were so vague that the proposed communication of the texts of the treaties with these Rulers to Ibn Saud would not appear likely to have the effect of impressing on him the danger that aggression on [sic] those Chiefs would bring him into conflict with the British Government".<sup>3</sup>

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1. C.O. to I.O., 15 July 1926, C13138/26, F.O. 371/11438.
  2. I.O. to C.O. 28 July 1926, P2343/26, F.O. 371/11438.
  3. Minutes of the 11 Aug. Conference, E4920/180/91, F.O. 371/11438



The alternative resolution suggested by the India Office simply was that Ibn Saud should be required to preserve the status quo. This allowed for the possibility of reproducing article 6 of the 1915 treaty.<sup>1</sup> Clayton sounded a note of caution considering it "inevitable that Ibn Saud would attempt to spread his influence in the territories in question, and that it would be dangerous to commit H.M.G. to any course of action as a situation similar to that in Aden Protectorate might then very well arise in the Persian Gulf". This warning obviously carried weight and the conference came to the general conclusion that:

"It would be unwise to commit H.M.G. to recognise the extent of Ibn Saud's domains or to commit H.M.G. to protecting territories outside those domains since it was questionable whether, in fact, military protection would be given to the Chiefs of the Persian Gulf should Ibn Saud attempt to overrun them; and that H.M.G. should be left free to take what action they considered necessary in particular cases. In negotiating the revised treaty with Ibn Saud, who was probably fully aware of H.M.G.'s obligations in Eastern Arabia, it could be pointed out that it was not necessary to define the authority of either party save in regard to Palestine, TransJordan and Iraq where a special position was created by the relations of H.M.G. and the League of Nations."<sup>2</sup>

After the Conference had completed its deliberations a number of reports which helped to reopen discussion, were received. The Political Resident in the Gulf reported a number of Ibn Saud's infringements of article 6. His object in so doing was to demonstrate that the existence

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1. Accordingly Ibn Saud was to 'refrain from all aggression on or interfere with' the Gulf States.
  2. Minutes of the 11 Aug. Conference.

of the article in question was not proving effective in the prevention of aggression by Ibn Saud against the Gulf States. Since 1915, he continued, neither Ibn Saud nor his men in the eastern province of al-Hasa had respected the undertaking not to intervene in the affairs of the Gulf Emirates. In 1922, Ibn Saud had included the Qatar Peninsula within a tract of Nejd territory for which he was prepared to negotiate an oil concession with the Eastern and General Syndicate. Sir Percy Cox had immediately intervened and had reminded Ibn Saud of his undertaking in the treaty which Cox had personally negotiated with him. Since then the Amir of al-Hasa, acting upon Ibn Saud's instructions, had sought to include in Nejd both Trucial Oman and Independent Oman, exploiting internal unrest throughout the Sultanate. The Resident, therefore, now recommended retaining article 6 of the 1915 treaty, but also suggested that a stronger political influence than that of the "Arab Residency Agent", should be introduced into the Trucial States. He believed that the presence of a British Officer would encourage the chiefs to resist Wahhabi propaganda.<sup>1</sup> This comment influenced the departments concerned to recommend the maintenance of article 6.

The High Commissioner for Palestine took advantage of his right to comment, indicating that questions of access to the Islamic Holy Places and the protection of Pilgrims were only of concern to Muslims and that Britain's interest

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1. Political Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 9 June 1926; High Commissioner (Iraq) to the Govt. of India, 19 Jan. 1923; Amir of al-Hasa to the Ruler of Debai, 27 Nov. 1925, E6118/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

should be restricted to the safety of her own subjects. He argued that it would therefore be better to rely upon ordinary international sanctions rather than to include a specific article in the treaty.<sup>1</sup>

The High Commissioner for Iraq, too, sought to clarify whether Iraq needed to be concerned about the new treaty with Ibn Saud. He was anxious in particular to know whether or not British undertakings to Iraq were binding on its government while acting on his advice. The High Commissioner's wariness was aroused by Ibn Saud's claims that certain sections of Southern Iraq's tribes had come under his authority and by his continuing attempts to establish his authority over them.<sup>2</sup> This seemed a potential source of future conflict.

Since the revision of the treaty had been under consideration questions, comments, analyses and criticisms had multiplied in all directions - and thus although some progress had been made, there was relatively little to show for all the paperwork generated. It seemed to the Colonial Office that they were still working in the dark since they had little indication of Ibn Saud's own ideas or of what he was likely to accept. Why, it was felt, waste further time on deliberations when any agreed solution might yet be rejected by Ibn Saud. Expert intelligence was urgently required.

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1. High Commissioner (Palestine) to C.O., 16 Aug. 1926, E4865/180/91, F.O.371/11438.
  2. Dobbs (Baghdad) to Amery, 17 Aug. 1926, E8492/180/91, F.O. 371/11438; Roswan, 'Tribal Areas and Migration Lines of the North Arabian Bedouins', Geographical Review, xx (1930), pp.494-502.



In the meanwhile, the Colonial Office seized the opportunity of Jordan's presence in London during Amir Faisal's visit to Britain<sup>1</sup> to call for an Interdepartmental meeting on 6 October. Two alternatives were considered at the meeting regarding the most suitable way in which Jordan could pursue discussions with Ibn Saud. The first was that he should be furnished with a draft treaty, leaving it to him to work out the best means of securing Ibn Saud's signature; the difficulty about this approach was that there was still no agreement on the "cut and dried" terms which might constitute a final text. Furthermore Jordan's own liberty of action<sup>2</sup> would thus be severely circumscribed and, in fact, he refused to proceed on these lines. The second alternative was to provide him with a "comprehensive letter of instructions, telling him in general terms what ends H.M.G. desired to secure", and leaving to him the way in which to achieve them. Jordan and Clayton both favoured this second alternative, the former suggesting, at the same time, that it would be useful for him to have at least some draft articles for his own guidance. This method had proved successful in the negotiations with Turkey and was recommended for use again here.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See Chapter 2 above. Jordan was nominated at the conference of 20 May as persona grata to Ibn Saud and best able to negotiate the treaty with him.
  2. Clayton pointed out that among the reasons which caused his failure to win over the Imam of the Yemen in 1925/26 was that he was more or less tied down to the terms of a draft treaty.
  3. Minutes of the 6 Oct. Conference, E5915/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

On examining the existing draft treaty, Jordan pointed out that the Capitulatory rights clause seemed to him likely to create an obstacle to any negotiations, since Ibn Saud had never admitted their existence in the Hejaz.<sup>1</sup> He advised total deletion of the clause. In fact, as he explained, he had always been able to act as if the Capitulatory rights had existed and he saw no reason why this should not continue to be the case in the absence of any specific provision. Early in May Jordan had written: "the question of Capitulations in the Hejaz under the new regime has been left in abeyance by myself and my colleagues so as not to further embarrass the local authorities". But when a certain Indian Muslim (Ahmad Suleiman) was accused of writing antagonistic articles in Indian newspapers, and arrested on arrival in the Hejaz, Jordan, at Suleiman's request had intervened. In a message to Ibn Saud he reminded the King of the Capitulatory rights and requested the handing over of Suleiman to the British Agency. Although Ibn Saud argued against the continuance of Capitulations, he was prepared to free Suleiman at Jordan's request, maintaining that the arrest had a necessary formality in order to safeguard his prestige and his country's security. Jordan's act was then approved by the Foreign Office. In similar cases, however, his French and Italian colleagues had been unable to get any satisfaction from Ibn Saud. They had proposed joint representation to Jordan but London had

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1. Ibid; Memo by Mallet (F.O.) 13 Oct. 1926, E5794/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

then instructed him to refrain from raising the question with Ibn Saud since the whole matter would be coming up for consideration in the proposed new treaty.<sup>1</sup>

Appreciating the motives behind Jordan's reluctance to include any formal reference to the Capitulations but still uncertain as to how to proceed, the conference deemed it wise to concentrate its attention on points where Britain and Ibn Saud were most likely to be in agreement, leaving more difficult questions to be explored later. Jordan, however, pressed his point, stressing that, in the light of the friendly relationship between Britain and Ibn Saud, the privileged position which the British had previously enjoyed in the Hejaz could still be taken for granted. In his view even the inclusion of a "most favoured nation" clause replacing Capitulations might question this state of affairs and could thus prove counter productive. Although Jordan's argument against the clause was accepted, the Foreign Office, still hesitating about dropping it altogether, turned the question over to their legal advisers for investigation of possible wider consequences.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office feared that, if the Capitulations clause was omitted or even weakened, countries like Egypt and Persia could argue that their courts of Law were

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1. Ibid. Jordan confirmed that he had managed to arrange matters that no trial of British subjects by Shari'a courts had taken place. See the following documents as examples: Jordan to F.O. 12 May, E3472; Ibn Saud to Jordan, 14 May E3472; Ahmed Suleiman to Jordan, 15 May, E3491; F.O. to Jordan, 24 June, E3638; F.O. to Jordan, 14 July, E4138; C.O. to F.O. 31 July, E4536; Memo. by Spring-Rice (F.O.) 9 July, E4165; Italian Embassy (London) to F.O., 7 June, E3575; Jordan to Chamberlain, 28 May 1926, E3638/3472/91, F.O. 371/11450.
  2. Minutes of the 6 Oct. Conference, E5915/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.



by no means inferior to those of the Hejaz, and so this could lead to the sweeping away of capitulations in those countries. Therefore, the Foreign Office again insisted that any proposed omission of that clause from the treaty should not be taken to indicate any final abandonment of the claim to Capitulations in the Hejaz, and "would not debar ...[Britain] from reviving that claim at a later date in concert with the other Capitulatory Powers". With this reservation, the conference agreed that the protection of British subjects in the Hejaz should rely upon the existing practice of direct intervention by the British Consul at Jeddah.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly the clause was dropped and an eight-article draft treaty was drawn up<sup>2</sup> and approved, but only as document for Jordan's guidance.

But still the final decision could not be taken without the approval of the Secretaries of State. Although approving the document, Chamberlain made some observations which reflected his anxiety. He recommended that the disputed clause be retained as long as possible, unless the whole negotiations were thereby being jeopardised. In that case, in the interests of concluding the treaty, Jordan was empowered to dispense with any such provision, but was to stress that its omission would not materially prejudice any

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1. Ibid; also Memo. by Mallet, 13 Oct. 1926, E5794/180/91, F.O. 371/11438; Marlowe, Spoiling the Egyptians (London 1974) pp. 68-74.

2. See: F.O. to Jordan, 3 Nov. 1926, E6118/180/91, F.O. 371/11438; E6650/180/91, F.O. 371/11439.

claim that Britain might wish to make that the Capitulations existed.<sup>1</sup>

Jordan left London en route for Marseilles, where he rejoined Amir Faisal for the return journey to Jeddah, with full powers to negotiate directly with Ibn Saud along the lines recommended by the conference and with instructions to bear in mind the later observations of the Foreign Office. In spite of the laborious process which had led to this result, the matter had remained one for discussion only at departmental level and was not apparently deemed to be of sufficient importance for any reference, at this stage, to the Cabinet. A policy of sorts had emerged, but the responsibility for its successful implementation now seemed to depend entirely on Jordan's skill in exploiting the relationship which had already been established with Ibn Saud.

On his arrival at Jeddah, Jordan received a formal letter of instructions, confirming the results of his London visit.<sup>2</sup> Also at Jeddah he was joined by George Antonius, the loan of whose services had in the meanwhile been negotiated by the Colonial Office to provide help with translation work and also to advise.<sup>3</sup> On 23 November the

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1. F.O. to C.O., 20 Oct. 1926, C19237/26;  
F.O. to C.O. 26 Oct. 1926, E5918/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.
  2. F.O. to Jordan, 3 Nov. 1926, E6118/180/91, F.O. 371/11438-
  3. F.O. to Jordan (undated) E4836/180/91; F.O. 371/11438;  
F.O. to C.O., 26 Oct. 1926, E5918/180/91, F.O. 371/11418.

delegation left for Wadi al-Aqiq (14 miles south-west of al-Madinah) where Ibn Saud was camping. There, for the next three weeks, unproductive negotiations took place.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Jordan, as he telegraphed, had been "forced to suspend negotiations owing to Ibn Saud's objections to several articles in the draft treaty and his desire to include others of contentious nature". He stressed, nevertheless, that "relations have been most friendly and resumption is provisionally fixed for next March". Meanwhile, he considered it essential to return to Britain to report in detail.<sup>2</sup>

On 13 January Jordan made a verbal report on his mission at a meeting held at the Colonial Office, and on 26 January Jordan and Antonius submitted their written report which included, as appendices, Ibn Saud's counter proposals. It is possible to follow in some detail the difficulties encountered in the negotiations. In the search for peace between Nejd and territories under British Mandate, agreement had been reached despite differences on its implementation, and on the wording of the final text of article one. Presumably, the British draft had been left deliberately vague in order to meet a potential Wahhabi

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1. See: Jordan and Antonious to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927, E477/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.
  2. Jordan to F.O., 12 Dec. 1926, E6860/180/91, F.O. 371/11439. The Foreign Office, disappointed at this news, wanted to accuse Ibn Saud, at whose request the negotiations had been initiated of precipitating their failure. But it was agreed to await Jordan's report before making a judgment. Later some doubts were expressed about the suitability of re-starting negotiations through Jordan. The Consular Department preferred to arrange a transfer should this be deemed advisable. See: F.O. minutes on Jordan's telegram of 12 Dec. 1926, E6860/91, F.O. 371/11439.



threat to the mandatory territories bordering with Nejd. The British wanted Ibn Saud "... to use all possible means to prevent his territory being used as a base for activities directed against the present or future [British] interests ..."<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud maintained that these terms were of a far reaching character, and that in practice it would be difficult for the two Governments to abide by them without resorting to exceptional measures. He sought a definition for the word "activities" and suggested the equally vague "unlawful activities" instead. Accordingly, both parties undertook

"to maintain good relations with the other, and to endeavour by all the means at his [sic] disposal to prevent his territories being used as a base for unlawful activities direct [ed] against the interests of the other".<sup>2</sup>

This text seemed sufficient to protect British interests not only in the mandated territories but also on the seas from Ikhwan raids.

On the other hand efforts to obtain Ibn Saud's formal recognition of Britain's special position in the mandated territories were frustrated. He took pains to persuade the British that his reluctance was not motivated by any wish to query the situation. On the contrary, the Haddah and Bahrah agreements were tantamount to a definite recognition

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1. Art.I of the British draft, E5118/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.
  2. Jordan and Antontius to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927, E477/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.

of the British position in those territories; and he for his part "had no intention of questioning that position". Although this was not quite correct since Palestine was not included in the agreements mentioned, he pointed out that he could not accept the insertion of such an article in the proposed treaty because any formal recognition "would inevitably be associated in the minds of people with the controversy relating to pledges given to the Sharif Husain in 1915".<sup>1</sup> It may be recalled that the area in question had been promised by Britain to Sharif Husain as a part of a great Arab state and it was understandable that Ibn Saud should not wish to be involved in a conflict to which he had never been a party. No Arab ruler had ever accepted the British Mandate in Palestine and any recognition of this would give sanction to the Balfour Declaration which was to secure the establishment of the Jewish national home in Palestine a sensitive issue over which he could not escape bitter Muslim criticism.<sup>2</sup> Furthermore, it was known that Ibn Saud had outstanding claims to territories presently under Mandate namely the Aqaba and Maan districts. He was not prepared to abandon those claims nor indeed could he have easily done so as part of bargain with Britain since he had been instructed by the Islamic Conference of 1926 to recover Aqaba and Maan for the Hejaz.<sup>3</sup> In deference to Ibn Saud's

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1. Ibid.

2. See: Minutes of a meeting held at the C.O., 13 Jan. 1927, E479/119/91, F.O. 371/12244; Art. ii of the Mandate for Palestine; Chory, 'An Arab View of the situation in Palestine', International Affairs, xv (1936), pp.684-99.

3. See chapter 2 above.

wishes, Jordan agreed to drop article 2. But this still did not satisfy Ibn Saud. The question of boundaries between Transjordan and the Hejaz remained to be settled.

During the course of negotiations at Bahrah, though the Hejaz-Transjordan frontier was not included, Clayton had been instructed to inform Ibn Saud verbally of the British designs for a future settlement. He indicated that the frontier line "should eventually be drawn from a point on the Gulf of Akaba through a point on the Hejaz Railway south of the station of Mudawwara, to a point situated approximately at the intersection of meridian  $38^{\circ}\text{E}$  with parallel  $29^{\circ}35'\text{N}$ ".<sup>1</sup> This boundary definition to be included in a separate protocol,<sup>2</sup> was now pressed by Jordan on Ibn Saud with a warning that Britain would in no circumstances accept any modifications.<sup>3</sup>

Inevitably Ibn Saud raised the question of Aqaba and Maan which he now formally claimed. Deadlock ensued. After prolonged discussions he concluded that the time was not yet ripe for any further negotiations over this matter since they could only lead to concessions on his part which he did not wish to make and would be unpopular with Islamic opinion. As a token of goodwill he declared that he was prepared to pledge his word of honour that "until a settlement had been

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1. 'Clayton Report', F.O. 371/11437.

2. For text see: F.O. to Jordan, 3 Nov. 1926, enc. 8, E6118/180/91, F.O. 371/11438

3. See map p.77A.



reached, he would not raise the subject or question the occupation and administration of the district by the officers of His Majesty's Government".<sup>1</sup> In return for the dropping of the whole of article two, he was also prepared to make the following general pledge:

"I [Ibn Saud] do not intend any harm whatsoever to British interests by not recognising the special position in mandated territories, but ... the present circumstances compel me to abstain from intervening in matters with the previous history of which I have had no personal connection..."<sup>2</sup>

Referring to the Aqaba -Maan question, Ibn Saud added "... there is no possibility of settling the matter at present; and ... it is necessary in the common interest, to postpone its settlement". Acceptance of the omission of the article and of the cancellation of the protocol was, however, left to the British Government for consideration.

Turning to the Eastern frontier, the British proposal of including article 6 of the 1915 treaty in the new one was not welcomed by Ibn Saud, who regarded it as incompatible with his dignity as an independent ruler. He declared only his readiness to agree upon the sense of the article. He was reluctant to accept the phrase: "to refrain from all aggression or interference". Instead he suggested "to maintain relations of friendship", which was finally accepted.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Jordan and Antonius to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927, E477/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.
  2. Draft letter from the King of the Hejaz relating to the Hejaz-Transjordan frontier and to Mandates (undated) Annex. 6, E477/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.
  3. Jordan and Antonius to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927; Minutes of the 13 Jan. 1927, conference at the C.O., E479/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.

While territorial disputes were the concern of articles 1, 2, 6 and the protocol (which have already been discussed), articles 3, 4 and 5 were devoted to decide the status of British subjects in Ibn Saud's dominions. According to article 3 of the British draft he was to "facilitate the performance of the pilgrimage by British subjects and British protected persons of Moslem faith" and to protect them during their visit to the Holy Land. The article which was drawn up in line with the Viceroy's recommendations, reflected his fears of possible reprisals by Ibn Saud against the anti-Wahhabi Indian elements while on the pilgrimage. By making the safety of pilgrims a matter of treaty obligation, Britain was hoping to avoid any need to become involved in any controversy over individual cases which would have conflicted with her traditional policy of non-intervention in Islamic matters.

When Ibn Saud was presented with this article at Wadi al-Aqiq, he rejected it at once, regarding it as proposing a new form of Capitulations. He had always maintained that religion and politics were one and indivisible. In conformity with the Shari'a Ibn Saud insisted (as usual) that there would be no laws in the Holy Land except the Shari'a. His point of view was partly accepted by the British negotiators, but they pointed to differences between Wahhabis and other Muslims over interpretation of the Shari'a. He was given examples from the anti-Wahhabi movements in India, in Iraq and in Egypt and warned that if Britain accepted his views entirely she might face criticism from other Muslims who would easily find excuses to believe that Britain had favoured the Wahhabi sect .

Ibn Saud insisted on the Shari'a. A resolution that British subjects would be treated in the Hejaz in the same way as other Muslims was finally accepted.<sup>1</sup>

Article 4 was in fact an extension of article 3. It confirmed the existing practices relating to the belongings of pilgrims who died in the Hejaz and who had no legal trustee there at the time of their death. There was no doubt that the Shari'a must be obeyed, and this Antonius was at pains to confirm and elucidate. With his help a clause was devised determining that the belongings in question "will not be handed over to the British authority until formalities required by the relevant Shari'a laws will have been accomplished".<sup>2</sup>

At an early stage, it had been decided to drop the article about Capitulations because Ibn Saud was unlikely to accept it. On the other hand, "His Majesty's Government are advised that the omission would not materially prejudice any claims which they may be in a position to make that the Capitulations are still in existence".<sup>3</sup> Some legal power were essential to maintain the spirit of the Capitulations, and it was suggested that the two parties should agree "to recognise the national status" of each other's subjects who might be within the other's territory.<sup>4</sup> But even this

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1. Ibid; also Ibn Saud's third and final draft treaty. See Appendix E.

2. Ibn Saud's final draft treaty, Appendix E.

3. F.O. to Jordan, 3 Nov. 1926.

4. Text of the British draft treaty, See Appendix D.



proposal was rejected by Ibn Saud, and the contents of article 5 proved one of the main obstacles to the conclusion of a treaty. Ibn Saud and his advisers strongly rejected the inclusion of a "national status" clause as it could be interpreted as a veiled reassertion of the validity of the Capitulations. Such a clause, they argued, could only be acceptable with added qualification that "the subjects would, while residing in the territories of the other state, be subject to local laws and tribunals". Otherwise the whole article must be deleted. In spite of repeated pressure from the British negotiators, Ibn Saud stuck to his guns, while they found themselves unable to agree to his amendment. By doing so, they would then "surrender the juridical privileges contained in the Capitulations".<sup>1</sup> and this clearly lay beyond their instructions. The issue was left unresolved.

A question of general interest in the civilized world - slavery<sup>2</sup> (and the slave trade) formed article 7 of the British draft. Britain hoped to obtain Ibn Saud's undertaking on two points:

1. "to cooperate with his Britanic Majesty in the suppression of the slave trade".

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1. Jordan and Antonius to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927.
  2. Slavery is 'a status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised'. See: Greenidge, 'Slavery in the Middle East, Report by the Secretary of the Anti-Slavery Society' (London), Middle Eastern Affairs, vii (1956) pp.435-41. For wider knowledge of slavery see: Patterson, 'On Slavery and Slave Formations', New Left Review, cxvii (1979), pp.31-67.

2. "to recognise the right of manumission" of British Consular officers at Jeddah and elsewhere.<sup>1</sup>

Britain's anti-slavery campaign in Arabia went back to the 19th Century. During the 1820's Arab Shaikhs in Trucial Oman undertook not to carry off slaves or to sell them. These British efforts continued and later in the last decade of the Century, other European Powers joined Britain in a combined act to prohibit slavery in all its forms. During the first half of this century the campaign reached its highest level. On Britain's initiative, the League of Nations issued an anti-slavery resolution which met with unanimous acceptance. In the following year a temporary slavery commission, formed to investigate, to gather information and to make recommendations, was able to prove that "evil is deep-seated and widespread.." in Africa, the Middle East and China. This League of Nations anti-slavery campaign came into force a hundred years after the first bill for the total abolition of slavery within the British Empire had been passed in 1833.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Text of the British draft treaty, Appendix D.
  2. For Britain's efforts to suppress slavery see: Instructions concerning the search for Dhows by H.M. ships for slaves and arms (in the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea), 1931, E4368/16/91, F.O. 371/15275; Memo. on slavery and slave trade in the Hejaz and Nejd, 6 March, 1930, E1541/1054/91, F.O. 371/14476; De Jong, 'Slavery in Arabia', The Moslem World, xxiv (1934) pp.126-44; Harris, 'Freeing the Slaves', The Contemporary Review, cxxviii (1925), pp.743-50; Newman, 'Slavery in Abyssinia', The Contemporary Review, cxlviii (1935) pp.650-57; Lord Noel-Buxton, 'Slavery in Abyssinia', International Affairs, xi (1932), pp.512-26; Harris, 'Slave Trading in China', The Contemporary Review, cxxxvii (1930), pp. 174-80.

Although other European Powers showed less interest, Britain anxiously observed the Arabian slave-traffic, where Mecca was the largest market for the trade. But because slavery was permitted in Islam, Britain's anxiety to intervene was moderated, due to the religious aspect of the matter.

Bond reported:

"The practice of slavery in the Hejaz and Nejd presents certain distinctive features peculiar to this country. The conditions in Arabia are very different from those prevailing in most, if not all, other countries where slavery exists ..."

"The Government of the country is a strong theocracy, and the Koranic Law recognises slavery as an institution, although it attempts in many ways to limit its extent and to provide for the welfare of the slaves themselves ..."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, however, there were many abuses contrary to the spirit of the shari'a. Slaves were often ill-treated and frequently took refuge at the British Agency in Jeddah. Ibn Saud took no action to remedy the conditions of the slaves, probably because the matter affected to a great degree his own comfort, prestige and influence. Slavery was deeply rooted in the social system of Arabia and any attempt to challenge this system would have only resulted in a loss of authority. Obviously, Ibn Saud could never be expected to play a leading part in any abolitionist campaign. In 1926 he recognised in principle the case for abolition, but he could not go beyond a statement of principle, "without causing much trouble and possibly a revolution" in his country. He had expressed the hope that change would come from events

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1. Memo. on Slavery and slave traffic in the Hejaz-Nejd, 6 March 1930, E1541/1054/91, F.O. 371/14476.



outside Arabia. If the supply of slaves was stemmed the whole practice would gradually die out. But even here he could not be expected to co-operate directly, because he could take no action without obtaining a fatwa from the 'ulama' and they were only entitled to adjudicate on illegal slavery. The Foreign Office appreciated Ibn Saud's difficulties and hoped that the King could eventually abolish the trade and gradually prohibit the importation of slaves. But he was informed that the British Government "could not give up the right of manumission". The King who was anxious to terminate all foreign privileges, indicated unwillingness to cooperate in any way unless the right of manumission was given up.<sup>1</sup>

Although Ibn Saud's views were thus already known to London, the Foreign Office instructed the British delegation to the Wadi al-Aqiq negotiations to accept no modifications on the British draft article which contained the two points mentioned above, without reference to the Secretary of State in person.<sup>2</sup> This attitude provided no room for Jordan to manoeuvre given Ibn Saud's insistence on maintaining his position regarding manumission. He argued that if he were to lean towards the British point of view, he could only admit the existing of manumission<sup>3</sup> as a matter of agreed custom

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1. Ibid.

2. F.O. to Jordan, 3 Nov. 1926, E6118/180/91, F.O. 371/11438.

3. The British Agents at Jeddah had already been practicing manumission in the Hejaz, and Ibn Saud was aware of this. At least 40 slaves had been repatriated during the year 1926. Jeddah Reps. Jan. to Nov. 1926, F.O. 371/11442. It also has been seen that Jordan reported some of the cases at which he practised manumission, See: E479/119/91, F.O. 371/12244; E1541/1054/9, F.O. 371/11476.

rather than acquired right. In that event the British Consular authority would be required adequately to compensate the owners of liberated slaves.<sup>1</sup> With differences unreconciled, the matter remained unresolved.

Having concluded discussion on all the British points, Ibn Saud raised the following topics which were of particular interest to him:

1. Recognition by Britain of his independence;
2. The supply of arms and ammunition by Britain;
3. Britain's co-operation to obtain for the Hejaz the revenues of the Awqaf al-Haramain from countries under British control or influence;
4. The restoration to the Hejaz of the Hejaz Railway.

Apart from the first point which was easily accepted, the other three caused long debate.

Arms supply was one of the main points upon which Ibn Saud had hoped to win Britain's support. Leaving the matter outside the treaty might cause him future trouble if and when Britain thought of reimposing her arms embargo. On the other hand its inclusion would have a salutary effect upon his rivals among the Arab rulers. At the same time, such a provision could balance the Italian undertaking given to the Imam of the Yemen under the recent treaty of "amity and commerce".<sup>2</sup> If Britain was not willing to

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1. Jordan and Antonius; to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927.

2. See: Minutes of the 13 Jan. 1927 Conference at the C.O. E479/119/91, F.O. 371/12244. Ibn Saud was jealous of his rival the Imam of the Yemen who had succeeded in concluding a treaty with Italy. See Arts, 2, 3 and 4 of the treaty, Toynbee, Survey of International Affairs, 1928, pp.307-19. (Thereafter: Survey 1928)

guarantee arms supply Ibn Saud requested "full liberty to purchase and import arms" from wherever he could. Moreover, Britain should also undertake to remove the embargo on such arms.<sup>1</sup> Although his demands met with sympathy and it was hoped that London would raise no objection, the British delegation was reluctant to include such a clause in the treaty.<sup>2</sup>

The third point raised by Ibn Saud related to the revenues derived from certain religious endowments, known as "Awqaf al-Haramain", which were founded at different times in various Muslim countries for the specific purpose of providing a lasting revenue for the upkeep and improvement of al-Haramain. These endowments usually took the form of real estate property, administered from within the country in which it lay and the revenues of which were handed over to the principal ruler of the Hejaz. Ibn Saud's grievance was against those countries which lay under British influence

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1. See: Ibn Saud's draft treaty of 4 Dec. 1926, Annex. 5, E447/119/91, F.O. 371/12244; also: Minutes of the 7 Feb. 1927 meeting at the C.O., E827/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.

2. Jordan and Antonius, to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927.



such as Egypt,<sup>1</sup> Palestine,<sup>2</sup> Iraq and India. They had been withholding the revenues in question and he wished the British Government to assist him in recovering them.<sup>3</sup> He for his part had already decided to send delegates to the shari'a courts in Islamic countries to claim these revenues. If his endeavours proved successful, the ground would then be paved for the British Government to enforce the court's decisions. The British delegates pointed out that it was generally in Britain's interest to maintain a policy of non-intervention in matters of a religious nature such as these. Nevertheless they were prepared to promise that Britain would use her good offices whenever possible and to offer a written obligation to that effect provided that Ibn Saud did not insist on the point being mentioned in the treaty. With this he was satisfied.<sup>4</sup>

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1. The revenues of the Awqaf in Egypt alone as Ibn Saud's estimations were £E60,000 a year, and the total accumulated amount of the revenues of the Awqaf were estimated as over £E1,000,000, See: Minutes of the 7 Feb. 1927 meeting at the C.O., E827/119/91, F.O. 371/12244. For Egyptian Awqaf, see: Gabriel Baer, 'Waqf Reform in Egypt', St. Antony's Papers, iv (1958) pp.61-76.
  2. Antonius explained to the meeting of 7 Feb. 1927 at the C.O. that the Awqaf which had been confiscated by the Ottoman Govt. before the war, 'had been bequeathed to subjects which had since disappeared and the Ottoman Govt. had, after consulting the religious authorities, decided to devote the revenue to educational services; and that in Palestine before the setting up of the Supreme Moslem Council, the Administration had collected the revenues of the wagfs and expended them on education, but now handed them over entirely to the Council'. E827/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.
  3. Jordan and Antonius to Chamberlain, 26 January 1927.
  4. Minutes of the 7 Feb. 1927 meeting at the C.O., E827/119/91 F.O. 371/12244.

Regarding his fourth point, Ibn Saud, acting as instructed by the 1926 Islamic Conference, had already demanded the restoration of the Hejaz Railway, including its portions in Palestine, Transjordan and Syria, to the Hejaz. The Railway, it had been argued, was the property of the Muslim World and the Hejaz Government had been authorised to assume sole responsibility for its administration. Ibn Saud had also requested that immediate repairs should be made to the line and that service throughout its length should be reestablished. These two requests had been treated separately by London. On the question of the restoration of the Railway to the Hejaz, Britain had so far refused to be drawn into any serious discussion. On the other hand, repairs to the Railway had been authorised for those portions lying in the British and French mandated areas conditional on Ibn Saud doing the same for the Hejazi portion. If he fulfilled his part of the bargain it had been affirmed that "the French and British Governments will guarantee an adequate train service as far as the frontier of the Hejaz to link up with whatever service His Majesty Ibn Saud may establish on the section under his control".<sup>1</sup> The British had also agreed that a meeting should be held between the local railway experts to work out arrangements for this.

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1. Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris)  
18 May 1926, E2946/306/91, F.O. 371/11440.

Now at Wadi al-Aqiq Ibn Saud repeated both his requests. Jordan tried to persuade him not to press the point or at least to treat it as a separate matter outside the treaty. Although he admitted the religious significance of the railway, Jordan stressed his Government's rejection of the idea that any foreign Power could administer and control a railway in territories under British Mandate, (a position also likely to be adopted by the French regarding the Syrian portion). In view of this argument and of the involvement of different parties responsible for the railway, Ibn Saud temporarily conceded, but, without implying acceptance of the 1923 Anglo - French declaration, requested a payment of £50,000, from the accumulated funds standing to the credit of the railway in Syria and Palestine in order to effect the repairs of his own section before the coming pilgrimage season. In reporting this to London Jordan stressed that any move by the British Government to facilitate the matter, "would be greatly appreciated by Ibn Saud and would also help to fix a de facto frontier between Transjordan and the Hejaz".<sup>1</sup>

With no final conclusion on this point reached the Wadi al-Aqiq negotiations were suspended on 11 December. The two parties were obviously in contention over the following issues:

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1. Memo. by Jordan, Ibn Saud's attitude vis á vis the Hejaz Railway, 25 Jan. 1927, E475/475/91, F.O. 371/12250; also Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris) 1 March 1927, E827/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.



1. The British special position in the Mandated territories (art. 2.);
2. The "national status" clause or the Capitulatory rights (art. 5);
3. Britain's right to exercise consular manumission in the Hejaz-Nejd (art. 7);
4. The definition of the Hejaz-Transjordan frontier (a separate protocol);
5. Slight differences about the wording of articles 3 and 4 (pilgrims) and 6 (the trucial states); In addition to the following points of Ibn Saud's interest.
6. Arms and ammunition supply;
7. The collection of Awqaf al-Haramain;
8. The restoration and up-keep of the Hejaz Railway.

Aware of the risk that an interruption in the negotiations might prejudice Ibn Saud's future attitude and presently friendly disposition, it was nevertheless felt better to halt the discussions "than to conclude a treaty on disadvantageous conditions". Jordan thought that if a treaty was based on Ibn Saud's draft of 4 December the latter would obtain concessions which the British Government had never intended to grant, and Britain would surrender what was believed to be "a valuable position in the strategy of negotiations". Jordan estimated that "the task of future negotiations would probably have been rendered considerably more difficult". Admitting their failure to secure Ibn Saud's agreement to the British draft treaty, both Jordan and Antonius recommended that a treaty with Ibn Saud "would be of real value if it can be concluded without the sacrifice of any vital British interest". From personal impressions of

Ibn Saud they felt able to affirm that he was "a ruler of undoubted ability and power, whose prestige in the Moslem World is visibly growing, and whose empire seems to be securely established ... from the Red Sea to the Persian Gulf".<sup>1</sup>

For his part, Ibn Saud regretted the interruption of the negotiations but he did not lose hope of reaching an agreement possibly as soon as the following spring.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Jordan and Antonius to Chamberlain, 26 Jan. 1927.
  2. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 15 Dec. 1926, Annex 8, E477/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.

The Making of the Treaty of Jeddah, the Second Phase,  
January - May 1927

Six days after Jordan's verbal report of 13 January another meeting was held at the Colonial Office to consider the objections raised by Ibn Saud to the British draft treaty. The main topic was whether there was any real advantage to Britain in concluding a treaty "in the truncated form desired by Ibn Saud". Shuckburgh, the Chairman, was mainly concerned about the Middle East Department's wish to obtain Ibn Saud's recognition of Britain's special position in her mandated territories and of the boundary between the Hejaz and Transjordan. In that context, Philby's recent activities gave cause for anxious speculation. His articles in The Near East and India were described by Shuckburgh as "clearly propaganda intended to strengthen Ibn Saud's position in the negotiations", and the suggestion was made "that Ibn Saud was probably in frequent communication with Mr. Philby and that the latter was advising him to take up a stiff attitude on all points". To yield would be to convince Ibn Saud that "Philby was right and that the British Government could always be bluffed with impunity".<sup>1</sup>

There was some justice in Shuckburgh's suspicions about Philby's role. It was true that since his departure in 1924 from the Indian Civil Service, Philby had devoted

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1. Note of a meeting held at C.O. on 13 Jan. 1927, E479/119/91, F.O. 371/12244.



many articles and lectures to defend Ibn Saud's case and most recently to support him in opposing Britain over the issues of recognising her position in the mandated territories, over the Capitulations, over the Hejaz Railway and over the Hejaz-Transjordan frontier. Philby seemed to be acting more as an adviser to Ibn Saud than as an independent critic of British Middle East policies. This was partly due to the friendly relationship between the two men and partly due to Philby's personal interests in the Hejaz. He had recently obtained a concession to start a trading company (Sharqieh Limited) in Jeddah.<sup>1</sup> And this was only a first step. His main ambition was to win a concession for the proposed Jeddah-Mecca-Arafat-Mena railway and he had frequently discussed this project with Ibn Saud during the years following the conquest of Mecca. In the meanwhile Philby's presence in Jeddah, with apparently little to keep him occupied, surely must be explained, as the Foreign and Colonial Offices suspected, by the fact that he was unofficially acting as Ibn Saud's adviser and responsible for the latter's inflexible attitude.<sup>2</sup> Miss Monroe considers the Foreign Office suspicion of Philby as "almost certainly unfounded".<sup>3</sup> But Philby himself claims that "Ibn Saud put me on his very select Cabinet Committee for the final vetting of the text of the

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1. See: Monroe, Philby of Arabia (London 1973) pp.147-8; Oriente Moderno, vii (1927), 233-4.

2. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1926, F.O. 361/11442.

3. Monroe, Philby of Arabia, p.194.

Jeddah Treaty before singing it; and I think I can claim that ... I used the opportunity in the interests in the Common weal".<sup>1</sup>

However justified Shuckburgh's suspicions may have been, Jordan, while not denying Philby's activities, advised that they should be ignored, claiming that he "... was being used by Ibn Saud as a tool".<sup>2</sup> Incidentally Jordan's poor opinion of Philby was fully reciprocated since Philby described him as "ignorant" of Arab affairs and Arabic.

In an endeavour to avoid further discussion of Philby's motives and potential role, Antonius concentrated on listing the advantages which would be secured by the conclusion of the treaty. Ibn Saud, he argued, was destined to become an increasing force and his position in the Middle East and in the Islamic World was of great importance to Britain. Therefore a settlement with him would counter balance both the Italian and Russian activities in South West Arabia. Oliphant agreed that a treaty with Ibn Saud would "be of increasing value in the future". He warned, "if we declined to conclude a treaty with him he might possibly turn to other quarters". Indeed the Foreign Office was also anxious to pave the way for the Air Ministry "to secure, in course of time, facilities

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1. Philby to Dalton, 14 April 1930 (Philby Papers) 16/1.

2. Minutes of a meeting held at C.O. on 19 Jan 1927, E479/119/91, F.O. 371/12244. As early as 1925 both Jordan and Clayton were warned against Philby's activities and criticism of Britain's policy in the M.E., an act by an ex-official "would be impossible to excuse". F.O. to Jordan, 26 Oct. 1925 (Clayton Papers) 471/6.

from Ibn Saud to enable them to develop the air route to Aden along the Arabian Coast of the Red Sea". The meeting shared the view that Ibn Saud's friendly relationship with Britain should be preserved and should also be paid for. Thus, "it was decided to recommend that the amendments proposed by Ibn Saud should be accepted as regards the preamble and Articles 1, 2 and 4." But, it was also agreed that

"an effort should be made to retain Article 5 in the treaty, particularly as the wording of this Article would involve implicit recognition by Ibn Saud of the position of H.M.G. in Iraq, Palestine and Transjordan; and that the proposed surrender of extra-territorial jurisdiction ... should, if it were to be agreed to, be embodied in a separate Article."<sup>1</sup>

As regards article 6, the India Office representative preferred to retain the wording of the draft treaty, because if it was altered as suggested "might, in Ibn Saud's eyes, imply that the British Government were no longer concerned to object to encroachment on his part, so long as it could be carried out under cover of friendly relations". Article 7 should be retained and Ibn Saud's modifications on article 8 should be referred to the legal advisers of the Foreign Office. The meeting also agreed that Ibn Saud was free to obtain arms supplies from wherever he wished and that "he should be made acquainted with the provisions of the Arms Traffic Convention". But his request to include this in the treaty was "undesirable and

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1. Ibid.



unnecessary". With regard to Ibn Saud's claim to control of the Hejaz Railway, it was agreed that Britain "could not agree to his control of those sections of the Railway which lay in Palestine and Transjordan, and it was most improbable that the French Government would agree as regards the sections in Syria".<sup>1</sup>

Having finished with these discussions it was agreed that the next meeting should be devoted to the preparation of the revised draft. In the meanwhile, reports from the Middle East helped to confirm policy on the question of the Hejaz-Transjordan frontier with particular reference to Aqaba. Lord Lloyd, the High Commissioner in Cairo, and Lord Plumer, his colleague in Jerusalem, expressed their fears that Aqaba might be given to Ibn Saud. Writing to Chamberlain on 31 December 1926,<sup>2</sup> Lloyd emphasised the importance of Aqaba from the viewpoint of British interests in Egypt. Aqaba, he argued, must remain a territorial barrier between Egypt and the Hejaz, because any direct link between these two countries would be dangerous for British interests in Egypt; Ibn Saud's ability to control his subjects was believed to be limited, and it was not certain that his tribesmen could be restrained by him from encroachments on the Egyptian frontier.

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1. Ibid.

2. Lord Lloyd (Cairo) to Chamberlain, 31 Dec. 1926, 8002/33, F.O. 371/12247.

In any case of differences with the ruler of the Hejaz whoever he were, diplomatic pressure "might be less easy to apply to a relatively inaccessible and sacred Hejaz". Therefore Aqaba must remain in British hands to prevent Egypt from being in direct contact with the potential danger from the Hejaz, especially since after 1922, the British control over Egypt itself had been weakened. Egypt's security in these circumstances "would be removed by the establishment of Hejaz authority in the place of mandatory authority". Lloyd went further in stressing his point when he referred to the good relations which now prevailed between Ibn Saud and the Wafd party contrary to King Fuad's wishes. This Wafd-Hejaz friendship was based on "motives of Islamic political solidarity", which could lead to a common anti-British policy; and "a common frontier would greatly facilitate their co-operation against us". Finally, Lloyd urged London not to cede to Ibn Saud "territories which he has never held".<sup>1</sup>

From Jerusalem four weeks later, Lord Plumer warned Amery that the exclusion of Aqaba from the British Mandatory area "would create a very dangerous situation in the rest of Transjordan and be contrary to British Imperial interests".<sup>2</sup>

With these indications of support for the Government's policy, the matter was referred to an interdepartmental meeting on 4 February 1927 for a final decision. Jordan

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1. Ibid.

2. Lord Plumer (Jerusalem) to Amery, 27 January 1927, 979/27, F.O. 371/12247.

argued that the maintenance of the status quo would safeguard Aqaba for Britain and that trust could be placed in Ibn Saud's offer, even if he could not formally abandon his claims, not to raise them again in the near future. The Air Ministry favoured this proposal and agreed to let the matter lie without reference in the draft treaty resolving that "if the negotiations with Ibn Saud were to break down, it was much better that they should break down over the question of manumission than over that of the frontier."<sup>1</sup>

Britain, as leader in the anti-slavery campaign, could hardly abandon her position by remaining blind to the fact that Mecca was the biggest slave market in the world, and that slaves were being displayed in public like merchandise.<sup>2</sup> Although both Jordan and Antonius warned against insistence on the right of manumission in the Hejaz, as this "had never been formally recognised", and it was "beyond Ibn Saud's power to recognise it", the meeting insisted that the maintenance or omission of this cause must be the responsibility of a higher authority. Accordingly, it was noted that Ibn Saud's refusal to agree to manumission if that clause was maintained, would then be the only possible reason for a breakdown in negotiations with him.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Minutes of a meeting held at C.O., 4 Feb. 1927. F.O. 371/12244.

2. Rutter, The Holy Cities of Arabia (London 1928) i, pp.133-6.

3. Minutes of a meeting held at C.O., 4 Feb. 1927.



On 13 January it had been agreed, according to Jordan's advice, to waive the Capitulations in the Hejaz. But on 4 February, the issue was raised again for further discussion. This time it was Antonius who reminded the meeting that Ibn Saud had, on his conquest of the Hejaz, issued a proclamation that he did not consider himself bound by the commitments of his predecessors and that he would tolerate no form of external interference, either by Capitulations or otherwise; Ibn Saud, consequently, did not ask the British Government to renounce the Capitulations, simply because he did not recognise their existence. It was finally agreed to drop all claim to Capitulatory rights but without stating this in the form of an article. That left the question of disputes between British subjects in the Hejaz, as contrasted with those to which only one party was a British subject, unresolved. It was, however, agreed that the British Consular Officers would have latitude to intervene, as in the past, to secure an amicable settlement of such cases.

In spite of remaining differences, the British policy makers were unanimous that a treaty with Ibn Saud was desirable. Accordingly, two preliminary drafts were drawn up and submitted to the 4 February meeting. One had been prepared by the Colonial Office and the other by Jordan. The meeting favoured Jordan's draft as the most useful basis for the next round of negotiations.

On 7 February it was decided that these should be resumed with Ibn Saud as soon as possible and with every intention of

avoiding another failure.<sup>1</sup> With this end in view, and since Jordan had been associated with the first abortive attempt, it was recommended that Clayton should now try his hand at winning over Ibn Saud. Clayton, unlike Jordan, was Ibn Saud's personal friend, and had successfully concluded two agreements with him in 1925. Accordingly, on 41 April, he was formally instructed to proceed on his second mission to Arabia.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud, who had never returned to al-Riyadh since the conquest of the Hejaz, decided to do so before resuming the next round of negotiations. The situation there was critical as opposition to his policy was growing and his absence provided the chance for a possible plot.<sup>3</sup> While pacifying his people, the King seized the opportunity and called for a meeting, with his tribal chiefs and 'ulama' under his father's presidency to convert the sultanate of Nejd into a Kingdom. The move aimed at ending the state of inferiority between the two main regions of his large country by putting them on an equal footing. The resolution was passed and accepted. Accordingly, his royal title was to be "King" of the Hejaz and Nejd.<sup>4</sup> This move also solved for him the

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1. Minutes of a meeting held at C.O., 7 Feb. 1927, F.O. 371/12244.
  2. Chamberlain to Clayton, 14 April 1927, E1744/119/91, F.O. 371/12245. Philby claimed that: "It was I who asked the British Govt. to send Clayton to the Hejaz". Oriente Moderno, vii (1927), pp.233-4.
  3. Jeddah Reps. Jan., Feb., & March 1927, F.O. 371/12250.
  4. Ibid. April 1927, F.O. 371/12250; Yasin to Mayers (Jeddah) 4 April 1927, E1884/1328/91, F.O. 371/12251; Yasin to the Soviet Consul (Jeddah) 3 April, 1927, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A. iii, p.216; For Arabic text to the resolution see: (Philby Papers) 16/4; Umm al-Qura, No. 121, 8 April 1927. Oriente Moderno, vii (1927), p.172.



problem of his status in the coming negotiations over the treaty. In the previous negotiations he had assumed the title "King of the Hejaz and Nejd" in his submissions but Jordan had refused to accept such a title as it did not exist. The King's new title approved on 2 April, was proclaimed in Jeddah two days later by Amir Faisal, and was recognised by the British Government and by other Great Powers soon after.<sup>1</sup> Now established as King in all his dominions, Ibn Saud travelled back across the desert to Jeddah to meet Sir Gilbert Clayton.

On 15 April, accompanied by Jordan, Clayton left London. Antonious joined the mission at Port-Sudan. One week after their arrival in Jeddah, negotiations started, on 10 May, in the King's house.<sup>2</sup> Assuring the King that Arabian affairs had been occupying the attention of the British Government, Clayton opened the negotiations by giving the King a short history of the events which had occurred since they first met in 1925. In his account, Clayton briefly touched on points of interest to Ibn Saud, for instance, the Clayton negotiations

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1. See: Mayers (Jeddah) to Chamberlain 4 April, E1612/1328/91, F.O. 371/12251. British authorities in the M.E. were immediately instructed to use the Saudi new title see: C.O. to the High Commissioners for Palestine and Iraq, and to the Resident (Bushire), 13 April 1927, E1796/1328/91, F.O. 371/12251.
  2. Clayton to Chamberlain (i), 6 June 1927, E2582/119/91, F.O. 371/12245. The house at Kundara, 2 miles away from Jeddah, had been placed at the disposal of the mission during the negotiations. In the meanwhile, negotiations took place in the King's house as well as in the mission's house. Jeddah Rep. May 1927, F.O. 371/12250.



at Rome on Anglo-Italian interests in the Red Sea which had ended with complete understanding between the two Powers to respect each other's interests in the area. The Rome discussions, he pointed out could in no way menace Hejaz-Nejd interests. Indeed, the two parties agreed to abstain from any interference in Arabian internal affairs.<sup>1</sup> After this assurance, Clayton turned to discussion of the main points at issue.

The Hejaz-Transjordan frontier question proved a real obstacle. The two parties maintained their former positions. Ibn Saud's opposition to the British proposal on the matter stemmed from his fears of hostile Islamic reactions rather than personal objections.<sup>2</sup> To explain this the King invited Clayton to a private meeting. There he stressed his anxiety to avoid confrontations within Arabia and with the Muslim World outside while he was still engaged in consolidating his own position. Then, to Clayton's surprise, he appealed to him for advice and also undertook to act upon it. Appreciating the King's frankness and understanding his difficulties, Clayton had no wish to force his hand. He concluded that it would be better to negotiate "in a spirit of real amity and confidence" than to take advantage of the situation in a manner

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1. Clayton to Chamberlain (ii) 6 June 1927, E2583/119/91, F.O. 371/12245. For full details on Clayton's mission to Rome see: D.B.F.P. 1919-39, (Ser. 1A, ii, 1968) pp.856-9. Italian influence in the Yemen concerned the Saudis' security and was one of the topics discussed by Amir Faisal with Chamberlain during the autumn of 1926. See: Clayton 2 above and; D.B.F.P. 1919-39 (Ser 1A, ii, 1968), pp.824-6.

2. Aqaba was the question at issue.

which would leave a bitter taste.<sup>1</sup>

Clayton therefore advised, and it was agreed, that the frontier protocol should be dropped and replaced by an exchange of letters. In fact the British letter was worded in exactly the same way as the cancelled protocol.<sup>2</sup> In his own letter,<sup>3</sup> Ibn Saud stated his desire to maintain cordial relations with the British Government and his acceptance of the status quo in the Aqaba and Maan district. As far as Ibn Saud was concerned he had not renounced the claims which he wished to preserve but had simply promised not to press them. In taking this stance he was, no doubt encouraged by Philby who continued, as he had done in the past, to proclaim while in Egypt that summer that the Aqaba and Maan district "ought to be handed over to the Hejaz".<sup>4</sup> But, nevertheless, thanks to Clayton's flexible diplomacy, Britain gained the substance of what she had been seeking to secure.<sup>5</sup>

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1. Clayton to Chamberlain (i), 6 June 1927.

2. Clayton to Ibn Saud, 19 May 1927, see Appendix F. (1)

3. Ibn Saud to Clayton, 21 May 1927, See Appendix F. (2)

4. J.R. May 1927, F.O. 371/12250. Philby's objective in Egypt that summer aimed at obtaining a contract for the lighting of Jeddah from an Anglo-Egyptian Company, 'Associated British Manufactures'. Also see: Al-Manar, xxvi (1925-26), pp.471-3.

5. When in 1936 the treaty of Jeddah was revised Ibn Saud maintained his claim on Aqaba, see: Cmd. 6380. See also letter (2) attached to the treaty of Jeddah, Appendix F.

Negotiations now shifted to Britain's insistence on maintaining the right of manumission as part of the treaty. Ibn Saud offered to cooperate in suppressing slavery gradually by cutting off the sources of supply, but explained that he could not even make a beginning without obtaining a fatwa from the 'ulama'. Any immediate measures to be taken in the anti slavery campaign would entail serious social dislocation and economic damage. Appreciating these difficulties, Clayton agreed not to include the right of manumission in the body of the treaty on condition that an exchange of letters over the matter should take place.<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, the King undertook "to co-operate by all means at his disposal ... in the suppression of the slave trade".<sup>2</sup> In his letter on the matter, Clayton informed Ibn Saud that the British Government "feel it their duty to abstain at present from renouncing the right of manumitting slaves, which has long been practised by His Majesty's Consular Officers ...".<sup>3</sup> Accepting this point Ibn Saud added the qualification that

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1. Clayton to Chamberlain (ii), 6 June 1927.
  2. Art. 7, See Appendix F. While this article states general obligation, each party made its point clear in the exchange of letters.
  3. Clayton to Ibn Saud, 19 May 1927, See Appendix F (3). Later in 1936 it was agreed that H.M.G. "renounce the right of manumission of slaves". Cmd. 6380.



"the British agent at Jeddah will always act in accordance with the spirit in which our agreement was arrived at, and that he will not permit any confusion as this might have undesirable effects on the administrative and economic aspects of this question".<sup>1</sup>

In effect this agreement simply maintained the status quo with Britain maintaining her manumission rights and Ibn Saud tolerating them without according any formal recognition. Privately he was resolved to reopen the question at a more favourable opportunity.<sup>2</sup>

With the status quo reaffirmed as a means of settling the two main problems one important question remained in suspense; mutual recognition of national status. Ibn Saud maintained that he could not agree to an article which contained any reference to the Capitulations. For religious as well as political reasons he could not admit a privileged British position in his country, nor could he sign the treaty unless the jurisdiction of his courts was fully recognized in all cases both civil and criminal and in regard to foreigners as well as natives. This issue remained unresolved until the eve of signing the treaty.

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1. Ibn Saud to Clayton, 21 May 1927, See Appendix F(4).
  2. Philby, 'Britain and Arabia, unpublished article (Philby Papers) 18/9. Philby made several attempts to have the treaty of Jeddah 1927 revised in order to satisfy Ibn Saud's previous observations. In 1936 *London eventually agreed* that Britain should give some concessions to Ibn Saud on the questions of pilgrimages, manumission of slaves, arms supply and other minor issues.

Ibn Saud described it as a matter "of life and death". Since his unwillingness to sign the treaty depended on this single point, Clayton invited him to submit a written statement to that effect. This Ibn Saud refused to do. Instead he eventually accepted a suggestion from a Sub-Committee that a supplementary sentence should be added to Article 5 declaring that foreigners in Ibn Saud's territories would not be subject to local laws and tribunals, but to international law.<sup>1</sup> This partly satisfied Britain's requirements but avoided any need for unequivocal recognition of national status and so partly met Ibn Saud's concern. It was, in fact, a compromise but on a point that Ibn Saud had declared there could be no compromise.

Although outside the scope of Britain's treaty proposals a number of other matters, previously raised by Ibn Saud, were discussed, at his request, during the negotiations. First was the question of military supplies. Here Ibn Saud wished to obtain a guarantee from Britain that no embargo would be put on military supplies to his country. Britain was not prepared to give guarantees for the future or to include any reference to arms supply in the treaty. Instead, by means of an exchange of letters, Ibn Saud was informed that the old

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1. Clayton to Chamberlain (ii), 6 June 1927; See also Appendix F.

"embargo on the export of war materials to Arabia has been removed, and that if your Majesty should see fit to place orders for arms, ammunition and war material with British manufacturers, in accordance with the conditions set forth in the Arms Traffic Convention (1925), for the use of the Government of the Hejaz and Nejd, His Britanic Majesty's Government will not prevent the export thereof or place any obstacle to their importation into your Majesty's territories".<sup>1</sup>

The other two matters discussed were the Hejaz Railway and the Awqaf al-Haramain. Ibn Saud was unable to obtain any immediate satisfaction on either question but he did receive a promise of British cooperation in trying to resolve the problems.

Once these discussions were concluded, a final draft of the treaty was approved and signed on 20 May 1927. Clayton had completed his mission.<sup>2</sup> This brought to an end almost two years of negotiation and discussion. Credit was surely due to Clayton, who had first communicated Ibn Saud's wish to make a treaty to the Colonial Office, for the successful completion of his latest mission. The new treaty was ratified on 17 September 1927. According to article 9 on the date of ratification the treaty of 1915 was abrogated and Ibn Saud could no longer be classed as one of the minor rulers of the Gulf.

For Ibn Saud the signing of the treaty was the culmination of a long struggle to establish his authority in Arabia and

1. Clayton to Ibn Saud, 19 May, See Appendix F (5). This letter was dropped from the treaty in 1936, See Cmd. 6380.
2. Clayton to C.O., 21 May 1927, E2285/119/91, F.O. 371/12245.



to get his independence and sovereignty recognised by Britain as "complete and absolute" (art. 1). Theoretically the treaty had been made between parties equal in national status (arts. 2 and 5). For the first time since their establishment in the 16th Century the Capitulations ceased formally to apply in his dominions and only the Shari'a and International Law figured in the terms of the treaty (arts. 4 and 5).. Although some issues, of importance to Ibn Saud, remained unresolved he could be satisfied that Britain's dispositions were friendly and that his friendship was valued by Britain.

For Britain the main advantage of the treaty was that it had been desired by Ibn Saud and that without it good relations could have been prejudiced. More specifically, the treaty guaranteed the safety of British pilgrims in the Hejaz (art 3.). Ibn Saud also undertook "to maintain friendly and peaceful relations" with the Gulf Emirates (art. 6 ). Of some value, too, was his promise to co-operate with Britain in the suppression of the slave trade (art. 7). As for Britain's right of manumission it was neither cancelled according to Ibn Saud's wishes nor embodied in the treaty as the British had wished, but was at least protected by an exchange of letters.

The Treaty thus was regarded as a successful achievement by both parties. Each was satisfied that the maximum, if any treaty at all was to be signed, had been gained. During the long negotiations each side had come to a better appreciation

of mutual and conflicting interests. Some compromises had been made and the way to future compromises had been left open. The fact that agreement had been reached was particularly "opportune at a time when the internal situation in Ibn Saud's dominions was on the point of producing fresh outbreak of disturbance",<sup>1</sup> along the borders of Iraq, Kuwait and Transjordan. For both parties the treaty was an insurance against future strains which already seemed inevitable.

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1. Toynbee, survey 1928, p.288.

#### CHAPTER FOUR

##### Anglo-Saudi Dilemmas: The Ikhwan and the Frontier Posts, November 1927 - December 1928.

- The aftermath of the Haddah and Bahrah Agreements,  
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The Aftermath of the Haddah and Bahrah Agreements, ..  
November 1925 - November 1927

Between the conclusion of the Haddah and Bahrah Agreements and the conclusion of the Jeddah Treaty the situation on the frontier between Nejd and the mandated territories seemed quiet. Meanwhile, Ibn Saud, most of whose personal ambitions had been gratified by the end of the Hejaz war, started serious attempts at modernization in his vast dominions. Telephone, telegraph and cars, which were intended to afford better control over the state, were hated by the Ikhwan who regarded these modern machines as sihr (diabolical magic) invented by the devil and by the infidels. Appreciating the sudden shock caused to his nomadic people, the King forgave their hostility hoping that the passage of time could help solve this problem.

Believing in the necessity for modernization, Ibn Saud also started to set up a new administrative system by recruiting well educated Arabs from Egypt, Iraq and Syria. The number of Syrians in particular gradually increased and by 1927 so did their influence.<sup>1</sup> Their attempts inspired by Pan-Arabism to revive Ibn Saud's

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1. Chief among the Syrian advisers to the King were Yousuf Yasin and Fuad Hamza. Education, Health and Army affairs were in the hands of Syrians. See: Oriente Moderno, vii (1927) pp.375-6.

former ambitions to restore direct contact with Syria by suppressing the artificial Iraq-Transjordan corridor, caused anxiety in British circles even though meeting with no response from Ibn Saud. Mayers, the Acting British Consul, feared their eventual effect on the King's policy. They could "one day try to exert their influence to induce the King to support Arab claims in Palestine".<sup>1</sup> For the time being, however, Mayers seemed confident that Ibn Saud's good sense and friendliness to Britain would prevail.

Syrian influence, which troubled the British, was also resented by the natives of the Hejaz. They complained that their country was ruled by the Syrians and the Wahhabis of Nejd, and that they were taxed for the benefit of Nejd. Expression of these feelings emerged in February 1927, when notes of protest were hung on walls in Mecca asking "Why Syrians should rule the Hejaz, and why Hejaz money should be drained by Nejd".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Jeddah Report, Oct. and Nov. 1927, F.O. 371, 12250.

2. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1927, F.O. 371/12250. The principle 'The Hejaz is for the Hejazis' which had been proclaimed after the Hejaz war was practically unconsidered before Aug. 1927, when some 'ten Syrians holding responsible positions have been invited to leave the country'. This may have intended to satisfy the Hejazis, but it also definitely would have satisfied the French and improved relations with Britain. Jeddah Report Aug. 1927, F.O. 371/12250. Umm al-Qura says it was the Syrians themselves who re-opened the question in 1927 on basis similar to the Monroe Doctrine. Umm al-Qura No. 118, 18 March 1927.

The Ikhwan, who had been deliberately directed to return from the Hejaz to Nejd and ordered to maintain peace with Iraq and Transjordan, now found themselves with no new worlds to conquer. They felt that Ibn Saud had prevented them from pursuing the jehad against the infidels. Even worse, he was himself concluding treaties with those mushrikin and sending his sons to tour their countries (Britain and Egypt). In their minds, he had allowed himself to be corrupted by western luxury and ceased to be a true Wahhabi. Moreover, he tolerated the presence of Muslim pilgrims whom they regarded as infidels and refrained from putting pressure on them to adopt the "Wahhabi faith". Since the conquest of the Hejaz the King had had to spend a considerable time away from Nejd and so had lost close contact with his Ikhwan leaders. This of course gave a chance for gossip to spread among the Nejd tribes about the King's policy. They believed that the British were dictating his policy for the benefit of the Western World and that he had sold himself and the country to them.<sup>1</sup> In order to contradict these rumours, he assured them that he was acting according to the Shari'a and, he added:

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan., Feb. and March 1927, F.O. 371/12250; see also: Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours (London 1956) pp.285-7, 295-6; Glubb, War in the Desert, An R.A.F. Frontier Campaign (London 1960) pp.200-1; Iqbal, Emergence of Saudi Arabia, p.170; 'The Iraq-Nejd Frontier', Journal of the Central Asian Society, xvii (1930) pp.77-92, The Times, 3 March, 1928.



"I have nothing in common with the English. They are strangers to us and Christians. But I need the help of a Great Power and the British are better than the other Powers."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Ibn Saud realising that Britain held the key to the balance of power in the Middle East, was anxious, ever since his first official contact with the British, to remain on good terms with them. He was also fully aware of the fact that any challenge to the mandatory Power in Iraq and Transjordan might involve a fatal risk to his own position. The need to preserve British friendship and to avoid possible causes of friction was thus essential. This willingness to cooperate was reiterated in all his contacts with British officials. At the same time he had to maintain the solidarity of his own people and their support for him. His attempts to win them over proved to be a vain hope; al-Dowaish, Ibn Hamid of 'Utaibah and Ibn Hithlin of 'Ujman "swore a defence alliance against Ibn Saud".<sup>2</sup> Openly, they organised a series of meetings in Nejd summoning Ibn Saud to reconsider his policy.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.220. See: Toynbee, 'A Problem of Arabian Statesmanship', Journal of the Royal Institute of International Affairs, viii (1929) pp.366- 75.
  2. Dobbs, 'Note on situation in Nejd reported from Kuwait', 25 Nov. 1928, F.O. 371/12990; see also: Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.286; The Times, 3 and 6 March 1928.
  3. See: Habib, Ibn Saud's Warriors of Islam, The Ikhwan of Nejd and Their Role in the Creation of the Saudi Kingdom, 1910-1930 (Leiden 1978) pp.105-55.

It is significant to note here that the Ikhwan movement now entered a new phase in its relations with Ibn Saud. Previously their views on the frontier question had been the same. But Ibn Saud's position, due to his need and desire to be on good terms with Britain, had since 1926 clearly changed. And this division appeared to be bringing Ibn Saud to the verge of confrontation with the Ikhwan.

In the meanwhile, British authorities on the spot were fully aware of the nature of the restless nomadic proclivities of the beduin and of their lack of any permanent loyalties. This implied a constant watchfulness and readiness to cope with any sudden hostilities. Immediately after the ratification of the Bahrah Agreement a former British officer (J.B. Glubb) was appointed to organise a reconnoitering patrol to provide intelligence about the movements of the Ikhwan. No warning of this was given to Ibn Saud. The first news of British action in the area reached him in March 1926, when the Amir of Hail reported to him that Ibn al-Suwait of the Dhafir tribe (Iraq) accompanied by "Abu Hunik" (J.B. Glubb) had arrived "with tents and aeroplanes" within Nejd territory in order to persuade the Shammar of Nejd to migrate to Iraq. To Ibn Saud this seemed a clear violation of the Bahrah agreement. He immediately telegraphed an account of the situation to the British Agent, who was on a visit to Port-Sudan, protesting about the incursion and warning that

the tribes were restless and might get out of hand even to the point of attacking those who had entered Nejd without authority.<sup>1</sup> Early in the month he had stressed the danger of any minor incident which might provoke the tribes to "take revenge" and affect "the security of the frontiers".<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud's point was now well taken. Urgent messages passed between Port-Sudan, Cairo, London and Baghdad, enquiring about the alleged violation of the frontier. No evidence seems to have emerged to question the accuracy of Ibn Saud's information about the incident. The Foreign Office recommended to the Colonial Office that Dobbs should be instructed to "settle the matter peacefully".<sup>3</sup> Ibn Saud, in the meanwhile, felt himself neglected by London. He was on bad terms with Dobbs and even, if had known of the instructions to Dobbs, he would not have welcomed any communication about the incident from that quarter. The only message which he does seem to have received was from Jordan who simply had been told "to allay the King's fears".<sup>4</sup> In the meanwhile, however, British operations

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1. Lord Lloyd (Cairo) to F.O. 28 March 1926, E2036/48/91, F.O. 371/11434. It is understood that Ibn Saud's account had been passed by Jordan from Port Sudan to Cairo and then through Lord Lloyd to London.
  2. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 8 March 1926, E2071/48/91, F.O. 371/11434.
  3. F.O. to C.O., 31 March 1926, E2036/48/91, F.O. 371/11434.
  4. Jordan to Ibn Saud, 6 April 1926, E2619/48/91, F.O. 371/11434.



near and across the frontier to guard against any possible further Ikhwan raids continued to be pursued.

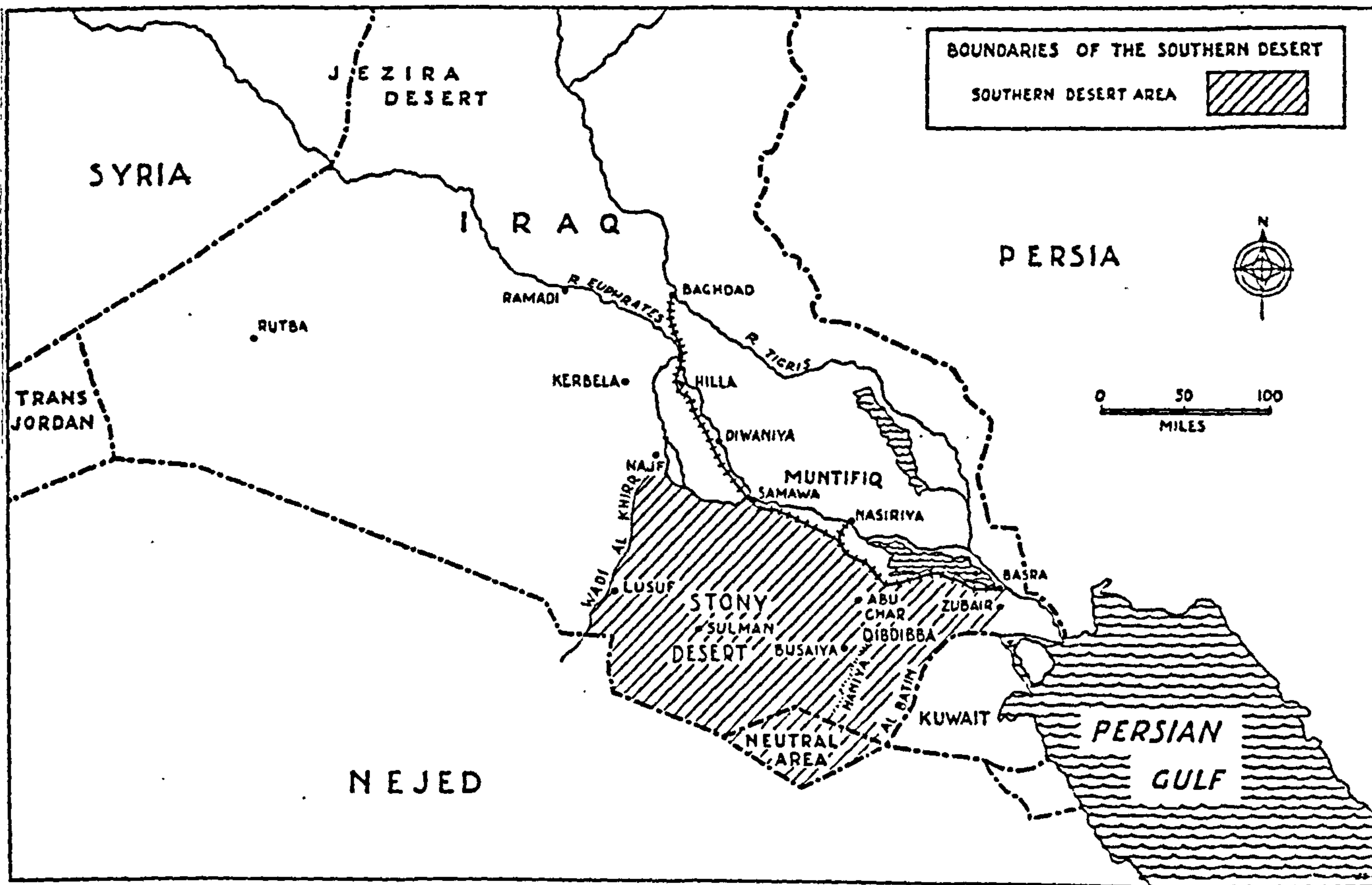
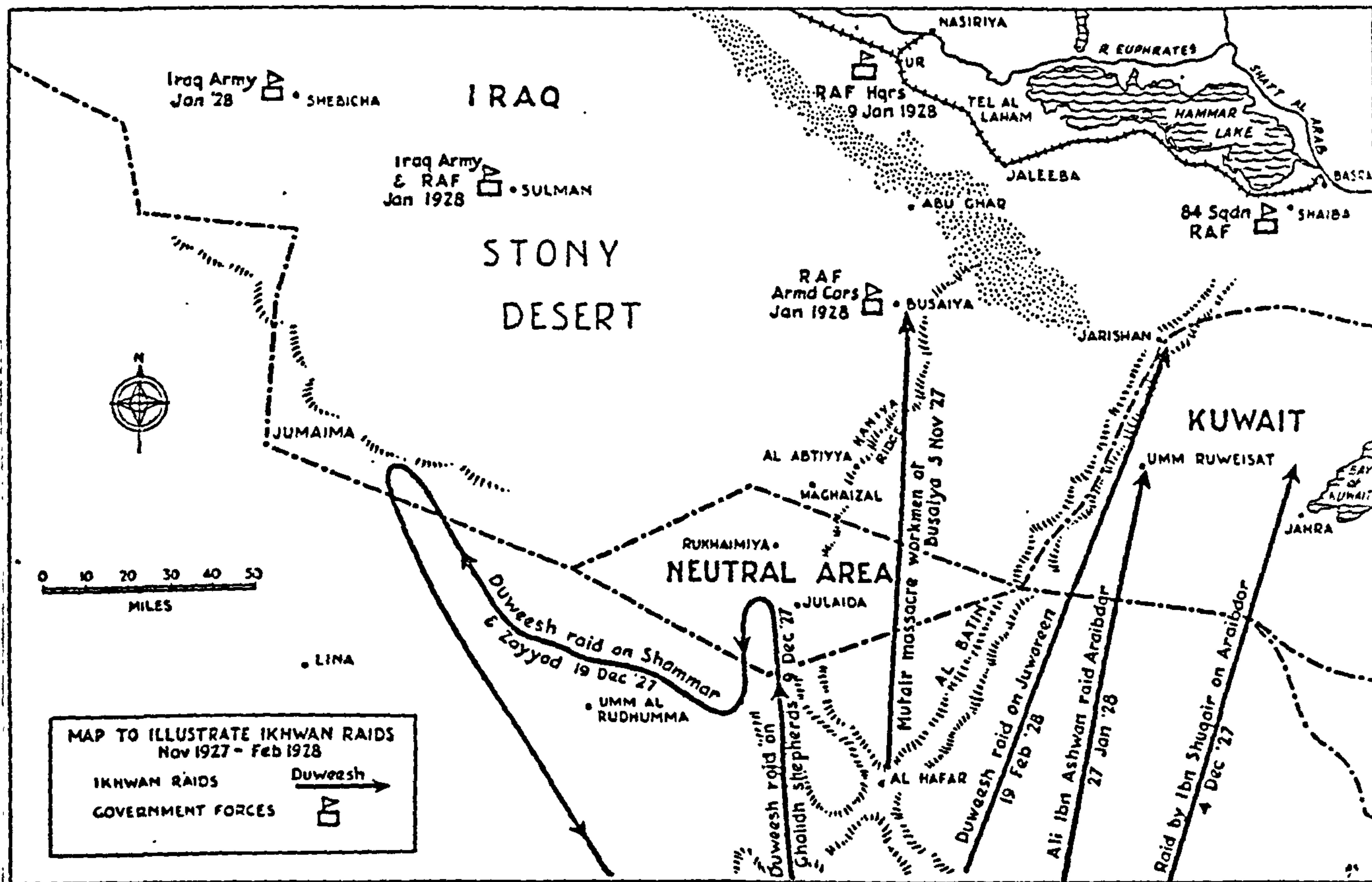
Worried by Britain's silence, Ibn Saud frequently repeated his protest against frontier violation warning that in the circumstances he could not accept responsibility for any frontier incident. He emphasised that a general recrudescence of border raids might occur<sup>1</sup>. On 3 April, he complained to Jordan about receiving no answers either to his various communications on the matter or to his protest about other violations on the Nejd-Transjordan frontier.<sup>2</sup> He warned Jordan:

"I am writing this letter to you to get rid of the responsibility of any incidents that may occur in future as the Arabs [Bedouins] do not bear oppression and cannot stand still while their properties are being plundered and their lives threatened ... They are able to take back their properties ... I was willing to write direct to ... London<sup>3</sup> owing to the serious state of affairs."

Ibn Saud was right to be anxious; he understood his people and was aware of their feelings and reactions.

The King's fears, as well as a report on the frontier situation, were communicated to London on 6 April

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1. Jordan to F.O., 6 April 1926, E2247/48/91, F.O. 371/11434; Jeddah Report, April 1926, F.O. 371/11442.
  2. See: Jordan to Ibn Saud 26 Feb. 1926; Ibn Saud to Jordan 3 March 1926; Jordan to Chamberlain, 5 March 1926, E2067/48/91, F.O. 371/11434.
  3. Ibn Saud to Jordan, 3 April 1926, No. 16, F.O. 371/11434.



The Ilhwan raids on the Busiyah Post, 1927-28  
Source: Glubb, War in the Desert.



The Foreign Office took serious note and became concerned that a matter, depending on the Colonial Office, threatened to disturb relations with Ibn Saud. Accordingly the Colonial Office was urged to issue instructions to the High Commissioners in Iraq and Palestine "to do all in their power to minimise possible causes of friction with Nejd".<sup>1</sup> In the meanwhile Jordan was again instructed to reassure the King. The Colonial Office replied one week later that not only had measures been taken by the Government of Iraq to stop raids on Nejd, but also to punish those who were responsible for the previous raids. Similar steps were also taken by the Government of Palestine.<sup>2</sup>

Among the measures which had been taken in Iraq, with the approval of London, was the strengthening of the Montafiq - Police Force. This force was intended to occupy the important water wells in the desert close to the border with Nejd "so as to exercise control over the movements of the Iraqi tribes and deny the wells to raiding parties".<sup>3</sup> These measures were insufficient to prevent the Shammar raiders from launching their attacks on both Nejd and Kuwait.

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1. F.O. to C.O., 8 April 1926, E2247/48/91, F.O. 371/11434.
  2. C.O. to F.O., 15 April 1926, C8226/26, F.O. 371/11434. Jeddah Report, April 1926, F.O. 371/11442.
  3. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.287.



On 17 July 1926, Jordan communicated an early warning to Ibn Saud that the Shammar tribes were active, and that they were planning to attack Nejd from Syria and informed him that the Iraqi Government "declined any responsibility". Ibn Saud was not satisfied with this disclaimer and complained that the Iraqi Government was shrinking from its obligations. He insisted that Iraq "was certainly responsible for the acts of the Shammar", who could only raid Nejd via Iraqi territory. In October, the Iraqi Government promised to "take active steps to prevent them crossing the frontier and raiding Nejd".<sup>1</sup> But no details of what was intended were communicated to Ibn Saud. In fact, the Iraqi Government, in co-operation with the R.A.F., decided "to teach these Shammar raiders a severe lesson during their return passage through Iraq territory". One of their measures was the occupation, on 15 October 1926, of the Busaiyah wells near the border with Nejd, by a permanent police force of 15 camelmen. By the end of the year it was decided that the post should be fortified to provide accommodation for the police detachment. The proposal was sanctioned in February 1927.<sup>2</sup>

By March 1927 according to Glubb, who had originally proposed the fortification of the Busaiyah wells,

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1. 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 15/3.
  2. 'Origin of the Busaiyah Post', Dobbs (Baghdad) to C.O., 8 May 1928, E2316/1/91, F.O. 371/12993; also: Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.191-201.

"Active operations were in full swing, The R.A.F. had established a forward headquarters at Ur, with advanced detachments of armoured cars at Busaiya and Salman, each with an R.A.F. Special Service Intelligence Officer. Many air reconnaissances were being flown all over the desert."<sup>1</sup>

A new system of Intelligence had to be established. The old method of collecting information about the Ikhwan movements ceased to be effective; merchants and travellers who used to come from Nejd with information halted their journeys for fear of being killed by the Ikhwan. Dependence on the R.A.F. intensive air patrolling proved to be a very costly way of intelligence and "had never yet succeeded". Glubb who had been appointed Administrative Inspector Iraq Southern Desert believed in the effectiveness of his plan which was "to organise the Iraq tribes to defend themselves, using the R.A.F. as a supporting arm rather than as a sole defensive weapon". But he met with the opposition of the air staff, who

"regarded the Iraq tribes as a useless crowd of civilians who were apt to obstruct operations. Their [air staff] first demand was for all the tribes to be swept out of the desert in order to give aircraft a clear field for their operations. The result had been to destroy the tribal herds for lack of grazing. Moreover, the morale of the tribes had been undermined by their being always ordered to run away".<sup>2</sup>

Retrospectively Glubb stressed that the chief difficulty about the air staff plan rested in the inability of pilots

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1. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.201.

2. Ibid., pp.202-3.

to distinguish between friendly and hostile tribes.<sup>1</sup>

It was, as Glubb stated,

"not easy to expound to air headquarters two hundred and fifty miles away over a wireless set which sometimes functioned and at other times did not. It was still less easy to explain them to thousands of suspicious Arabs of many different tribes, spread over an area nearly as large as England."<sup>2</sup>

While Glubb's plan was maturing, news leaked out in Nejd about fortifications undertaken by Britain and Iraq on its northern frontier. Ibn Saud, as has been seen, was already meeting with criticism from his Wahhabi supporters which this latest news helped to magnify. For the time being there was no other Ikhwan response and Ibn Saud himself was fully occupied in concluding his treaty with Britain. By September, however, and when Iraqi workers had started to construct permanent buildings on the Busaiyah wells, Ibn Saud became seriously alarmed at probable Ikhwan reactions. Consequently he requested Iraq to stop all building on water wells "in the vicinity of the border". He protested to the High Commissioner that the construction of the Busaiyah post was contrary to the provisions of article 3 of the 'Uqair Protocol of 2 December 1922,<sup>3</sup> which reads as follows:

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1. An interview with Glubb in the T.V. Programme 'Friday Night Saturday Morning' on 20 Feb. 1981.
  2. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.203.
  3. 'Nejd proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3; Dobbs, 'A Short History...', E2316/1/91, F.O. 371/12993; The Times, 17 Feb. 1928; Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.193-4.



"The two Governments [Iraq and Nejd] mutually agree not to use the watering places and wells situated in the vicinity of the border for any military purpose, such as building forts on them, and not to concentrate troops in their vicinity."<sup>1</sup>

As Dickson advised, Ibn Saud clearly had a good case.<sup>2</sup>

While Ibn Saud was waiting for the High Commissioner's reply, Ikhwan anger exploded and they attacked the Busaiyah post on 5 November. Dobbs' reply, dated 27 October, reached Ibn Saud only after the raid had taken place. In his letter Dobbs tried to persuade Ibn Saud that his protest was groundless. As supporting evidence he enclosed photographs and detailed descriptions of the post. By now, however, explanations, which might have been useful if earlier conveyed to Ibn Saud, were irrelevant. The short period of peace on the frontier had clearly ended.<sup>3</sup>

The appetite of the Ikhwan had been whetted and it seemed as though they would not be satisfied until they had conquered the whole of the Arabian desert and imposed their will on all infidels. In pursuit of their goals and in protest against the King's association with the infidels they launched the raid on Busaiyah as a deliberate challenge both to Britain and to Ibn Saud. The raid and its aftermath were to interrupt for several years any progress in the development of closer Anglo-Saudi relations.

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1. Text from: documents on International Affairs (1929) p.261.

2. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.287.

3. 'Nejd proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.

Anglo-Saudi Relations after the Busaiyah Incident,  
November 1927 - March 1928.

The Ikhwan raid on the Busaiyah post not only led to a state of chaos on the Nejd-Iraq frontier, but also involved Britain in military activities in the desert which broke with her previous tradition of avoiding clashes with the subject tribes of Ibn Saud. He himself was deeply distressed by the situation and by the lack of comprehension among the Ikhwan of the political significance of his own relationship with the British.

The initial raid by Faisal al-Dowaish and his tribesmen was followed, in quick succession, by a number of further and serious raids. Strongly worded protests were made by the British Government to Ibn Saud. In reply he insisted that al-Dowaish and his followers had acted in defiance of his own instructions and that he had consequently ordered "a boycott of him and his associates". Furthermore, he had "decided to meet out severe punishment to him". But such a step was to be delayed until he had received an assurance from the Iraqi Government, whom he held in part responsible for those developments, that they would not offer al-Dowaish a shelter as they had done before with other tribal leaders when Ibn Saud had sought to discipline them.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Ibid; Record of Proceedings, 1st meeting 'Clayton Report on his mission to Ibn Saud 1928' (Hereafter: 'Clayton Report 1928') F.O. 371/13014; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.295; Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.194, 197.

Dissatisfaction with Ibn Saud's reply was evident in British and Iraqi circles. But even before his reply was known, London had decided to take action. On 14 December 1927, permission was given to the R.A.F. in Iraq to attack the Ikhwan raiders across the Nejd border. Two days later the refortified post at Busaiyah was ready for operation.<sup>1</sup> The British decision to attack Nejd subjects in their own land was a result of numerous reports received from Baghdad on the disastrous situation on the frontier. It seemed likely that Iraqi tribes would either have to throw in their lot with the Ikhwan, or to evacuate the area "unless the Royal Air Force have the good fortune to get an opportunity to teach them [the Ikhwan] a severe lesson."<sup>2</sup> In recommending this course, Dobbs was in fact under pressure from the Iraqi Government and Iraqi tribesmen. The important tribe of Anizah was most seriously affected by the Ikhwan raids. Its shaikh had requested the High Commissioner to take immediate action to protect his tribe's watering and grazing rights near the frontier. He suggested that Britain should attack the Mutair headquarters, or else provide Anizah with armoured cars and aeroplanes otherwise his tribe would be compelled to join the Ikhwan or to seek

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1. F.O. to Jakins (Jeddah) 1 Nov. 1928, E5184/3261/91, F.O. 371/13018; Glubb, War in the Desert, p.194-7.
  2. Dobbs (Baghdad) to C.O., 2 Jan. 1928, E54/1/91, F.O. 371/12988. See also: Joint Memo. by the Secretaries of State for Colonies and Air (undated) CP70/28, F.O. 371/12990; C.O. to Clayton, 17 April 1928, F.O. 371/13014.



refuge in Syria with the French authorities. Confronted by these two possibilities, Dobbs confirmed that "all opinion now favours air attacks on Mutair".<sup>1</sup>

Limited British military action so far had not proved conclusive. It was impossible for the R.A.F. to catch the raiders within Iraqi territory, or even to pursue them directly into Nejd, particularly if operations were confined, as presently laid down. As Dobbs pointed out:

"our respect for frontier and treaties is not understood, our reason for not retaliating and punishing the Mutair [tribe] by dropping bombs upon them or their villages is that we cannot or dare not."<sup>2</sup>

Dobbs' proposal for retaliation, made on 2 January, crossed similar instructions of the same date from London. Dobbs was now authorised "to take steps ... at an early date to make raiders understand that frontier aggression on their part will not be tolerated".<sup>3</sup> London took the decision.

"Whatever may be Ibn Saud's personal attitude" he was simply to be notified of it, and reminded of Britain's responsibility to defend her Mandates. Accordingly, in Iraq two advanced bases along the frontier with Nejd were established immediately. By 8 January they were garrisoned with two squadrons of aeroplanes and four armoured car sections.

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1. Dobbs to C.O., 2 Jan. 1928, E54/1/91, F.O. 371/12988. Although Dobbs favoured the destruction of the Mutair tribe, the Resident in the Gulf seemed to be interested only in Ibn Saud's reaction not in the tribes. See: Dobbs to C.O. 17 Feb. 1928, The Resident to C.O. 18 Feb. 1928, Air 5/460.
  2. Dobbs to C.O., 2 Jan. 1928, E54/1/91, F.O. 371/12988. See also F.O. to Jakins (Jeddah) 1 Nov. 1928, E5184/3261/91, F.O. 371/13018.
  3. C.O. to Dobbs, 2 Jan. 1928, E66/1/91, F.O. 371/12988.

These two bases as well as the Busaiyah one were ready for operations with at least 18 aircraft. All Iraqi tribes were warned to withdraw behind the line of Busaiyah-Salman.

On the 11th January warning leaflets were dropped in Nejd territory<sup>1</sup>. The establishment of further bases in Kuwait was also proposed as they would provide close access to the heart of Nejd. Dobbs was instructed to inform Ibn Saud of the British plan and was asked to ensure that

"every care should be exercised that no action is taken against any place which has been occupied by Ibn Saud's regular forces or where His Majesty has re-established his authority."<sup>2</sup>

The British plan was discussed with the Iraqi Government and with King Faisal who offered on 12 January to place Iraqi troops in the Neutral Zone from which they could operate as a striking force. This offer was refused by Dobbs for political and technical reasons. On political grounds, "it was perhaps unwise as it would most likely bring about a situation practically amounting to a state of war with Nejd".<sup>3</sup> It was agreed to operate according to the British plan which seemed adequate to restore the confidence of the Iraqi tribes.

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1. Dobbs to C.O., 14 Jan 1928, Air 5/460; 'Short History of the Ikhwan raids into Iraq', 25 Feb. 1928, F.O. 371/12989; Joint Memo. by Colonial Office and Air Ministry, CP70/28, F.O. 371/12990; Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.197-8; The Times, 3, 6, 14 and 25 Jan. 1928. Retrospectively Glubb in the T.V. programme 'Friday Night Saturday Morning', 20 Feb. 1981, pointed out that British authorities later recognized that Bedouins neither read nor write and that the leaflets were useless. See map p.271A.
  2. C.O. to Dobbs, 2 Jan. 1928, E66/1/91, F.O. 371/12988; also: F.O. to Air Ministry 10 Jan. 1928, Air 5/460.
  3. Report on the meeting of 12 Jan. 1928, Air 5/460.

Once the R.A.F. started operations inside Nejd territory, a large number of the moderate Ikhwan joined al-Dowaish in protest against the British action and their own King's policy. Their anger was expressed by raiding Kuwait on 27 January. There they suffered severe losses due to a counter attack launched by the R.A.F. in co-operation with Kuwaiti forces. Aeroplanes were henceforth kept on the alert.<sup>1</sup>

At this juncture, Ibn Saud bitterly protested against the incursions of British forces which was in contravention of article 6 of the Bahrah Agreement. But more serious and dangerous for him than the violation of the frontier was his fear that his tribes in accordance with their habit of riding with the stronger party, might turn towards the British. Then he would lose their allegiance and in effect their territory. Glubb was fully aware of Ibn Saud's cause for concern. Ibn Saud's prestige had depended on retaining the loyalty of his own tribes and on his apparent ability to "continue to steal ours". This prestige he could only maintain if the British Government "continue to appear weak".<sup>2</sup> Now, he argued, was the moment to take more severe punitive action against the raiders. In the interest of achieving security for Iraq, Glubb seems to have relished the prospect of clipping Ibn Saud's

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1. See: Memo (ii) by Eastern Dept., 6 March 1928, E1211/1/91 F.O. 371/12990; 'Short history of the Ikhwan raids into Iraq', 25 Feb. 1928, F.O. 371/12989. For operations from Iraq see: R.A.F. to Air Ministry, 18, 19, 20, 22 and 28 Jan. 1928, Air 5/460. For operations from Kuwait see: R.A.F. to Air Ministry 30 Jan., 4 Feb. 1928; Dobbs to C.O. 31 Jan. 1928, Air 5/460.
  2. Glubb, 'Memo. on British Policy', Nov. 1928, E5302/1/91, F.O. 371/12996.



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Ibn Saud's private worries at Britain's show of strength coincided with anxiety about the angry and agitated state of opinion in Nejd. He felt constrained to abandon the measures which he had already set in motion to control the Ikhwan. It seemed that "his work of pacification had been destroyed and he could no longer control the feelings of his people".<sup>1</sup> Britain's friendship, which he valued so highly, could now apparently be preserved only at the cost of seriously antagonising his own people. Their reactions, therefore, assumed an important significance.

No direct sources are available for a study of the attitudes and opinions of a tribal society like Nejd. In trying to assess them much therefore must depend on the recorded observations and public pronouncements of Ibn Saud. Useful information is sometimes also contained in the reports of British officials. At this juncture a report from Stonehewer-Bird, the British Agent at Jeddah, probably provides the best analysis of the various groups and points of view among the Nejdīs. He suggested that public opinion could be divided into the following three groups:

1. Pro-Ibn Saud elements. These formed the majority of Nejd and believed that the raiders acted in direct opposition to the King's wishes and instructions.
2. A small anti-Ibn Saud group who believed that the raiders had operated unofficially at the King's instigation in order that he might take credit for the result or to disclaim responsibility as it suited him.

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1. C.O. to Clayton, 17 April 1928, F.O. 371/13014.

3. Another small anti-British group which believed that the frontier events were engineered by the British Government in their own interest. They argued that the British had expected that difficulties would arise in their future discussions with the Iraqi Government over a treaty by which military control of Iraq should remain in British hands. Britain, therefore, this group believed, required proof that the security of Iraq depended on the presence of British forces. Hence Britain built the Busaiyah post because she was sure that this would provoke an<sub>1</sub> attack which could only be repulsed by British arms.<sup>1</sup>

It appears from this report that the majority of the Nejdis, contrary to prevailing rumours, were still loyal to Ibn Saud. In fact the source of these rumours seems to have been the Iraqi and British press, and the Iraqi press was accused of seeking "to sow dissension between Ibn Saud and his people".<sup>2</sup>

As has been seen Stonehewer-Bird, in attempting to describe Nejdi attitudes, divided them into three groups. Their assumptions about Ibn Saud's own conduct clearly differed and it is worth considering which group came closest to a reality.

The first group, admittedly in the majority and influenced by Ibn Saud's determination to preserve good relations with Britain and also by the Umm al-Qura's leading articles, was misled into supposing that the raiders had indeed acted in total defiance of Ibn Saud's instructions. At least outwardly they continued to proclaim their loyalty to the King. What the majority of Ibn Saud's supporters failed to appreciate was that a rift between Ibn Saud and Faisal al-Dowaish and his Ikhwan followers had been gradually developing. It

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1928, F.O. 371/13010.

2. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1928, F.O. 371/13010; The Times, 17, 18, 19, 22, 24, 25 and 29 Nov., and 1, 6, 7 and 15 Dec. 1927.

was their strict religious fanaticism which divided them from their ruler. Ibn Saud was a politician rather than a religious leader, and he ceased to call himself "Wahhabi" since Wahhabism began to conflict with his political objectives.

The second group came closer to an understanding of Ibn Saud's ambivalent attitude towards the raiders. Ibn Saud was himself neither happy nor satisfied with the agreements he had concluded with the British regarding Iraqi boundaries in 1922 and in 1925. There also remained his suspicions and hatred of the Hashemites ruling in Iraq and Transjordan with whom, as he once said, there can be "no future of calm and peace". Referring to the British as an obstacle in the way of his ambitions, he added:

"... if the matter was between ourselves and them [the Hashemites] only, it would be easy, and we should ... put an end to it prudently. But between us and them there are the British Government .."<sup>1</sup>

It seems probable, therefore, that Ibn Saud during that period tacitly approved the raiding activities into Iraq and Transjordan, believing that he could nevertheless continue to avoid any direct clash with the British. As far as the particular incident of Busaiyah was concerned, it seems that the Ikhwan action took Ibn Saud by surprise. Yet, when he learned of it he neither protested against it nor tried to prevent subsequent raids; presumably hoping,

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1. Ibn Saud to Lord Lloyd (Cairo) 6 Dec. 1927, (Clayton Papers) 472/2.



if the enterprises were successful, that he could reap the benefits; if they failed, he could deny responsibility. In either case he could avoid being blamed by the British.

The third group appears the furthest away from the truth because Britain's interests and future plans depended on the preservation of peace in the area. This was important for the continued security of air communications, for the Baghdad-Haifa railway and road project, and for the building of a proposed oil pipeline in the desert corridor between Iraq and the Mediterranean. In reaching their false conclusion, that Britain deliberately wanted to stir up trouble in order to persuade the Iraqis to sign a defensive treaty, this group may have been influenced by the fact that the building of the frontier posts was mistakenly associated, for instance, in an article of 20 December in The Times, with the making of the treaty. Actually this was a simple coincidence. Thus although the first part of this group's argument proved correct, there is no such evidence for the second.

Whatever the differences in attitudes and interpretation between the above three groups, they were all opposed to the establishment of posts in the vicinity of their borders with Iraq, and were united in determination to take forcible action if the posts were not demolished.

It was against this background of angry local opinion that Ibn Saud endeavoured, without losing too much face, to moderate the temper of his own people and to avoid

envenoming relations with Britain. For instance, Shaikh Yousuf Yasin, the founder and editor of Umm al-Qura, and one of Ibn Saud's closest advisers, adopted a conciliatory tone about the posts dispute in his paper. Although he accused the Iraqi press "of making capital out of discontent of certain border tribes", he pointed out that the majority of the Ikhwan had remained peaceful throughout the troubles. He also maintained that, although the building of the posts was a definite breach of the 'Uqair protocol, Ibn Saud had consistently opposed their demolition by force. Yasin continued to follow this line in his editorials; stressing on 24 February that al-Dowaish had acted unlawfully, and noting that a proclamation to that effect had been issued by the 'Ulama of Nejd.<sup>1</sup>

This conciliatory tone also emerged at official levels. Dr. Abd-Allah al-Damluji, the then director for Foreign Affairs, had been interviewed by Stonehewer-Bird and accepted that the question of the posts was "debatable". He also defended the position of Ibn Saud insisting that he had done all in his power to counter al-Dowaish's unlawful activities. Damluji was quoted as saying: "no one could seriously suspect Ibn Saud of having tacitly permitted the raids to take place much

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1. See: Umm al-Qura, No. 157, 16 Dec., No. 138, 23 Dec. 1927 and No. 161, 13 Jan., No. 163, 27 Jan. No. 167, 24 Feb. 1928; Stonehewer-Bird (Jeddah) to F.O. 30 Dec. 1927, E256/1/91, F.O. 371/12988; Jeddah Report, Dec. 1927, Jan and Feb. 1928, F.O. 371/13010.

less of having instigated them." He added that:

"if the authorities in Iraq had thought fit to inform the King of their intention to establish the posts, he would have been able to allay the suspicions of the tribes, whereas he only received information of the fait accompli.<sup>1</sup>

This endeavour to enlighten the British about Ibn Saud's role and the problems posed for him met with some success in improving their understanding. But they remained confused about the complexities of Nejd politics.

At this juncture Ibn Saud sought Britain's assistance in patching up his relations with Iraq and conveyed his own hopes that his friendly relationship with Britain would not be impaired by these frontier incidents. A settlement could be arrived at, he argued, using Damluji's proposal. This was that Britain should appoint a delegate to examine the situation, add that a conference to include Nejd, Iraq and Kuwait should follow. This conciliatory proposal was not communicated by the British Consul at Jeddah to London until 10 January.<sup>2</sup> London, unaware of Ibn Saud's gesture, had decided to act militarily against the Ikhwan by pursuing them into the heart of Nejd, and the operations were already in progress. Nevertheless, Stonehewer-Bird's telegram, on arrival, created hopes for a peaceful settlement particularly in the Foreign Office where there was anxiety

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1. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1927, F.O. 371/13010.

2. Stonehewer-Bird to F.O., 10 Jan. 1928, E164/1/91, F.O. 371/12988; 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.



about the unfortunate consequences for relations with Ibn Saud which must result from bombing his subjects and territories. The Foreign Office therefore at once repeated an earlier invitation to Ibn Saud to meet the Resident in the Gulf (Haworth) to discuss a peace plan, while reminding Ibn Saud of Britain's "very definite responsibility in respect of [the defence of] Iraq". Because of this obligation, the Foreign Office pointed out, punitive action against the Ikhwan raiders was "justified and inevitable".<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud who had asked for the appointment of a special delegate and who mistrusted the Resident, rejected this offer "owing to various obstacles including the violation of the frontier .."<sup>2</sup>

In the meanwhile, the London authorities had become increasingly aware of Ibn Saud's "extraordinarily difficult" position. The majority of the Ikhwan seemed to be in open revolt. This, it was argued, could justify Britain's punitive actions and might even assist Ibn Saud.<sup>3</sup> In fact there was no clear picture of how far Ibn Saud should be held responsible for Ikhwan actions and about his own present relationship with their leaders. Confusion was magnified by rumours and counter rumours that the Ikhwan were in revolt against their King. Dobbs admitted that the

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1. F.O. to Stonehewer-Bird, 13 Jan. 1928, E164/1/91, F.O. 371/12988.

2. 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.

3. C.O. to F.O., 4 Feb. 1928, E573/1/91, F.O. 371/12988.

construction of posts had caused this state of chaos. Haworth doubted Ibn Saud's ability to impose control on the Ikhwan who had formed the original basis of his own power and suggested that Ibn Saud was being forced to reflect tribal opinions against his own will.<sup>1</sup> These conclusions were not shared by the Shaikh of Bahrain who believed that Ibn Saud could re-establish control over all his tribes if and when he liked. The Shaikh argued that:

"Ibn Saud was in a position to control all the Ikhwan Chiefs owing to his possession of stores and money, arms and amunition, and that his inactivity could only mean that he was behind them."<sup>2</sup>

This point of view was also, rather naturally, the prevalent one in Iraq. According to Dickson, the general opinion among those bedouin best able to judge was that:

"Ibn Saud would soon re-establish his ascendancy in the desert, but that he would do it by peaceful means, as it would be unwise to punish the Mutair .."<sup>3</sup>

This was correct. Ibn Saud was concerned to avoid a civil war and anxious to preserve both the unity of his country and the confidence of Britain. The difficulties into which this had led him coinciding with British violation

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1. Haworth (Bushire) to C.O., 2 Jan. 1928, E77/1/91, F.O. 371/12988.
  2. Memo. (ii) by Eastern Dept., 6 March 1928, E1211/1/91, F.O. 371/12990.
  3. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.289.

of the frontiers, made him angry. He was rendered even more bitter by his presumed failure to restrain or punish the rebels.<sup>1</sup>

Having consulted other departments, the Colonial Office decided to give Ibn Saud another chance to regain control of the situation. That decision was communicated by Amery to the British authorities in the Middle East in the following telegram:

"... on the political grounds, I am strongly averse from establishment of air base in Nejd territory or indeed to any extension of present punitive operations ... permission to extend operations over Nejd territory was given because it ... was necessary in order to restore confidence among wavering Iraq border tribes. It appears ... that this object has now been achieved, and I consider that time has now come to hold our hand in order to give Ibn Saud an opportunity to re-establish control himself ... Ibn Saud should not be driven into the position where he has to choose between permanently antagonising his own people or coming out into the open as enemy of Great Britain. Nor is it in our interest that he should suffer any severe diminution of his authority in Nejd."

"... We must not overlook the possibility of Faisal attempting to manoeuvre us into the position in which our aeroplanes become the instrument of his personal hostility towards Ibn Saud."<sup>2</sup>

In conclusion Amery instructed the Resident in the Gulf to inform Ibn Saud that the British Government

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1. Memo. (ii) by Eastern Dept., 6 March 1928 E1211/1/91, F.O. 371/12990; Glubb, 'Memo. on British Policy', Nov. 1928, E5302/1/91, F.O. 371/12996.
  2. Amery to High Commissioner (Iraq) and to the Resident (Bushire) 22 Feb. 1928, F.O. 371/12989. For Britain's reservation not to establish permanent bases in Kuwait, see: C.O. to the Resident (Bushire) 21 Feb. 1928, Air 5/460. For Dobbs' anxiety to take major steps against Ikhwan incursions, see: Dobbs to C.O., 22 Feb. 1922, Air 5/460.



"have no desire to take any action which would make it more difficult for him to punish the Mutair ... but ... so long as these tribesmen were admittedly out of control, His Majesty's Government clearly could not remain passive ..."

He repeated the old invitation to Ibn Saud to meet the Resident in the Gulf because with such a meeting "all difficulties might speedily be removed".

This moderate attitude was taken after careful consideration of various questions. Among these was, of course, Ibn Saud's appeal for a peaceful settlement, and the fear that too much pressure might ultimately drive him into the camp of the Ikhwan. But most important for Britain's Imperial policy was the Islamic reaction outside Arabia itself. As the Viceroy telegraphed the India Office on 21 February:

"Apart from danger of alienating Ibn Saud, we are perturbed by probable reactions on Muslim feeling of any extension of bombing into Jazirat-al-Arab."<sup>1</sup>

The Government of India, unlike the British authorities in the Middle East, recognised the grave consequences of pursuing the policy of bombing Nejd territory. This is obvious in the Resident's letter of 18 February to the Colonial Office:

"The only matter to be considered is Ibn Saud and not the local tribes. In my opinion the tribes are a side issue and even then they only affect local rather than Imperial Policy."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Viceroy to I.O., 21 Feb. 1928, Air 5/460. See also: The Times, 22, 23 and 28 Feb. 1928.
  2. The Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 18 Feb. 1928, Air 5/460.

A short period of calm, full of intense diplomatic activity, followed as a result of London's conciliatory decision. But London's policy was not without its critics. In Glubb's view, London had decided wrongly. He thought that his own task had been made harder and that, instead of ensuring peace or even preventing raids further troubles would be created. He blamed his government for this truce which the Ikhwan could exploit. Glubb's point of view, based on a purely military appraisal, was a narrow one. He took no account of the wider political implications which were involved. London, on the other hand, had come fully to appreciate the importance of Ibn Saud's role in Middle Eastern affairs. The preservation of good Anglo-Saudi relations and the protection of Ibn Saud were the main objectives. Therefore, Britain feared the possibility of pushing the tribes so hard that they would turn against Ibn Saud himself. As minuted by the Foreign Office "... it is quite definitely not in our interests that Ibn Saud should fall and Central Arabia and the Hejaz relapse into chaos".<sup>1</sup>

Pursuing the policy now agreed the Foreign Office yet again proposed that Ibn Saud should meet Haworth. This he still rejected but instead suggested that he should send Hafez Wahba to Kuwait for discussion with Dobbs.<sup>2</sup>

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1. F.O. minutes, 12 Nov. 1928. See also: Glubb, 'Memo. on British Policy', Nov. 1928, F.O. 371/12996.
  2. Stonehewer-Bird to Chamberlain, 10 Feb. 1928, E995/12989. See Hafez Wabba's comments in Cairo after his return from Kuwait, Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) p.64.

Soon afterwards that meeting took place but no agreement was reached. Wahba reported to the King that Dobbs had insisted that it was impossible to dismantle the posts and that Dobbs' understanding of the terms of the 'Uqair protocol was completely different to theirs. Leaving aside differences of interpretation about the protocol, Dobbs suggested British arbitration on the issue. A similar proposal had previously been rejected by Ibn Saud and he maintained his objection. In a letter to Stonehewer-Bird he appealed to Britain to remove the main obstacle in the way of good understanding, namely the posts, and explained that otherwise he must be faced with two equally dangerous alternatives;

"... if the situation remains the same, we shall have either to rise up and fight against all the people of Nejd to silence them ... or to fall into a great dispute with the British Government."

He then expounded at length his fears that Iraq might harbour the raiders if or when they asked for refuge. Ibn Saud's purpose in raising this issue seems to have been simply to impress Britain with the difficulties which he might encounter if he attempted any punitive measures at this stage against al-Dowaish. In reality he was determined to avoid any such action until the posts were demolished.

Somewhat unkindly Dobbs offered the following explanation for Ibn Saud's loss of authority

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1. Ibn Saud to Stonehewer-Bird (undated) E995/1/91, F.O. 371/12989.



"As soon as [he] had to pause and consolidate and forbid raids, his power waned, because it had been nourished only on fanaticism and plunder."<sup>1</sup>

Dobbs, in the circumstances, doubted Ibn Saud's capacity to fulfil promises and, obviously anxious to avoid further confrontation between the Ikhwan and the Iraqi forces, suggested a new balance of forces in the desert struggle. According to Dobbs' plan, Ibn Saud should be advised to turn to Harb, one of his loyal tribes, to join him against his opponents from Mutair, 'Ujman and 'Utaibah. The proposal simply meant a civil war. Dobbs admitted that if Ibn Saud rejected such a course or even worse, if he was forced to link with the Ikhwan in a Holy War, Britain would have to undertake further military measures to defend Iraq. An army of thirty or forty thousand would be required. Furthermore, a new base in Kuwait would be essential. This latest proposal was expected to be endorsed by the Shaikh of Kuwait who had expressed gratitude for the former punitive actions against the Ikhwan seeking to take refuge in his territories. The Shaikh had indicated that he would appreciate and welcome the R.A.F. operations from Kuwait.<sup>2</sup>

There is no sign that the Colonial Office gave any encouragement to Dobbs' notion of promoting a civil war in Nejd, but the R.A.F. was authorised on 17 February to operate from

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1. Dobbs, 'Note on the situation in Nejd reported from Kuwait', 25 Feb. 1928, F.O. 371/12990.

2. See: The Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 9 Feb.; C.O. to the Resident, 10 Feb.; Dobbs to C.O. 25 Feb. 1928, Air 5/460.

Kuwait territory, and defensive measures were taken around the town of Kuwait. H.M.S. Emerald was directed to Kuwait Bay soon afterwards. Similarly, preparations to meet all possibilities continued in Iraq.. An armoured train was stationed on the route between the hinterland and the advanced bases.<sup>1</sup> Even these steps seemed inadequate to Dobbs to meet the Ikhwan threat. He began to think in terms of destroying their power altogether and proposed blockade tactics as used by Mohammad Ali a century before against the early Wahhabis.

"... Central Arabia", he wrote, "cannot feed itself, and if the Ikhwan tribes starve within a ring fence and cannot burst out, they will in the end be forced to fight among themselves for the food remaining inside. Then comes the opportunity for Ibn Saud or some other sane person to recover control."<sup>2</sup>

Dobbs plan to starve the Ikhwan alarmed London and was totally rejected.<sup>3</sup> Clearly it would have entailed abandonment of the policy of refraining from provocation of the Ikhwan in the interest of consolidating Ibn Saud's position.

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1. See: F.O. to Air Ministry 10 Jan. C.O. to the Resident (Bushire) 10 Feb. 1928, Air 5/460. The Resident's worries about having Kuwait involved in the troubles remained. The Resident to C.O. 13 Feb. 1928, Air 5/460; C.O. to the High Commissioner (Jerusalem), 9 March 1928, E1328/1/91, F.O. 371/12990; Glubb, War in the Desert, p.198, The Times, 18, 21 and 28 Feb., and 3, 5 and 13 March 1928.
  2. Dobbs, 'Note on the situation in Nejd reported from Kuwait', 25 Feb. 1928, F.O. 371/12990.
  3. C.O. to Clayton 17 April 1928, F.O. 371/13014.

The Resident in the Gulf thought of solving the problem differently by sending to Ibn Saud an informal emissary to request a clarification of his position; then "We shall know at any rate what Ibn Saud has to say".<sup>1</sup> This plan coincided with Ibn Saud's second initiative for peace.

At the beginning of March, London received a telegram from Lord Lloyd containing a new hope for peaceful negotiations. He reported that Shaikh Hafez Wahba had contacted him in Cairo and had suggested that if Iraq agreed to destroy the posts negotiations would start between Nejd and Iraq immediately afterwards. Wahba stressed that only in these circumstances would Ibn Saud be able to control his people.<sup>2</sup> The Foreign Office welcomed Wahba's initiative and suggested to the Colonial Office, on 2 March, that the concurrence of both the High Commissioner and the Government of Iraq should be obtained. As regards the posts, however, the Foreign Office maintained Britain's traditional attitude that the posts were not fortifications, but "only an intelligence centre" established to meet Ibn Saud's complaints of raids against his country.<sup>3</sup>

While efforts continued to find a solution, rumours also continued further to complicate the situation. On 6

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1. The Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 1 March 1928, Air 5/460.
  2. Lord Lloyd (Cairo) 29 Feb 1928, E1079/1/91, F.O. 371/12989.
  3. F.O. Minutes, 29 Feb. 1928, E1079/1/91, F.O. 371/12989.



March The Times published an article describing the critical situation in Arabia. Ibn Saud, it was said:

"has been forced to abandon his efforts to run with the hare and hunt with the hounds ... [He] called [for] a meeting at [a]l-Riyadh ... of the chief leaders of his realm including ... Faisal al-Dowaish .. [At the meeting] he had come to accept their point of view, seeing that all grounds, except the sword, were useless with the Mushrekin, or infidels of Iraq, Kuwait and Transjordan ... [He] assured the chiefs that they could depend on receiving his support, and as having given the rifles, ammunition, provisions, and tents, with the 'go forth, Allah will be with you'."<sup>1</sup>

The article caused renewed confusion in British Government circles. It was followed by another rumour that Ibn Saud, powerless to prevent the jehad movement, had been forced to associate himself with it. All these were in fact no more than rumours, and The Times later recognised this fact when it described the situation as obscure and asked its readers to treat cautiously the news about Ibn Saud's relations with Britain.<sup>2</sup> In the meantime, Dobbs described Ibn Saud's joining the movement as a "fairy tale".<sup>3</sup> The fact was that Ibn Saud was genuinely seeking peace and he was trying to win over the tribes to prevent them from joining al-Dowaish.<sup>4</sup> This was confirmed when Hafez Wahba again approached Lord Lloyd in Cairo in March. Wahba tried

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1. The Times, 6 March 1928.
  2. The Times, 7 and 12 March 1928.
  3. The Times, 13 March 1928.
  4. Umm al-Qura, No. 174, 13 April 1928.

once more to gain Lloyd's support for the concessions required by Ibn Saud on the posts question. In return, Ibn Saud offered a promise of a strict control over his people. Wahba seems to have convinced Lloyd who reported:

"Any general Arab confrontation against us is going to embarrass us seriously in Egypt and elsewhere throughout the Middle East. It would therefore appear justifiable that such concession would obviate such situation, but actual implementation of these assurances could of course only be made after Ibn Saud had fulfilled his part of bargain."<sup>1</sup>

At these March meetings in Cairo Wahba proposed that a communiqué should be issued to Ibn Saud via Bahrain formally inviting negotiations. If Ibn Saud could produce this evidence of Britain's good will he would feel in a strong enough position to order the tribes to suspend their raids pending the outcome of the negotiations. Wahba then suggested that the communiqué should be drafted as follows:

"His Majesty's Government have taken into sympathetic consideration your Majesty's various complaints and suggestions about recent difficulties in connection with Iraq and Transjordan. His Majesty's Government think these questions cannot be satisfactorily discussed by letter and they, therefore, suggest that your Majesty should receive as soon as possible at Jeddah Sir G. Clayton who will be delegated by His Majesty's Government to examine with your Majesty in friendliest spirit all matters in dispute and to make every effort to arrive at<sup>2</sup> a settlement satisfactory to your Majesty."

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1. Lord Lloyd (Cairo) to F.O., 8 March 1928, Air 5/460.
  2. Lord Lloyd (Cairo) to F.O., 12 March 1928, E1320/1/91, F.O. 371/12990.

Wahba's approach met with a favourable response in London. Consequently King Faisal's proposal for launching counter-attacks by larger Iraqi tribes against Nejd was rejected. On 15 March Ibn Saud was advised that H.M.G.:

"are prepared to despatch immediately Sir Gilbert Clayton to discuss all outstanding questions with your Majesty."<sup>1</sup>

By the end of March Glubb reported that he had the situation in hand and that the frontier tribes were under control. The prospect of successful negotiations was thereby improved.<sup>2</sup>

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1. F.O. to Stonehewer-Bird, 15 March 1928, Air 5/460.

2. CAB 16(28), 23/57, 28 March 1928.



The Jeddah Negotiations, The First Round and its aftermath,  
April - July 1928

Clayton was instructed formally on 17 April 1928 to start immediately on a new mission to Ibn Saud aimed at ending the critical situation on the Nejd northern borders and at restoring peace with his neighbours. Fully authorised by London and Baghdad to negotiate with Ibn Saud, Clayton was provided with all the essential documents and assisted by a number of British Middle East officials. These included K. Cornwallis, the adviser to the Iraqi Ministry of Interior, who was chosen partly for his wide knowledge of Iraqi internal affairs but mainly to establish future liaison with Ibn Saud. There was also J.B. Glubb, the Administrative Inspector of the Iraq's Southern desert and the mastermind of the Police Posts policy in the vicinity of Iraq's border with Nejd. This choice was made because of his familiarity with every aspect of the desert and of tribal customs. George Antonius, both as an interpreter and as an expert in Arab politics, was also, as a matter of course, included. As an adviser on technical questions Flight-Lieutenant G.M. Moore, who was familiar with the local tribal situation, also joined the mission.<sup>1</sup>

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1. C.O. to Dobbs, 14 April 1928, E2046/1/91, F.O. 371/12993; Abd al-Muhsin al-Sadun (Iraqi Prime Minister) to Dobbs, 21 April 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/3, also: E2632/2068/91, F.O. 371/13013; C.O. to F.O. 3 May 1928, E2321/2068/91, C.O. to F.O. 16 May 1928, E2614/2068, F.O. 371/13013; Glubb, War in the Desert, p.209.

On the eve of Clayton's departure from London Stonehewer-Bird was authorised to inform Ibn Saud that the negotiations would be conducted by the British on behalf of Iraq and that, therefore, there would be no Iraqi representation.<sup>1</sup> Having made earnest attempts at al-Riyadh to reconcile the Ikhwan leaders pending his negotiations with the British, Ibn Saud crossed the desert to the Hejaz. He arrived at al-Madinah on 2 May. On the same day the British mission arrived at Jeddah. The mission was received by Ibn Saud's advisers, none of whom were either Nejdis or Hejazis.<sup>2</sup> According to Glubb "the atmosphere of Jidda was cosmopolitan with flavour of Egypt, and there was a considerable colony of Europeans. There was certainly nothing to suggest Nejd or bedouins".<sup>3</sup> On 7 May, Ibn Saud welcomed the mission and it was decided to start negotiations on the following day.

The attitudes of the parties concerned at the start of the negotiations may be defined as follows. Ibn Saud, for his part approached the negotiations in an inflexible frame of mind. While prepared to accept responsibility for protecting Iraq's frontiers from his own tribesmen, he had decided to lay down the following conditions:

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1. F.O. to Stonehewer-Bird, 18 April 1928, E2019/1/91, F.O. 371/12993; C.O. to Dobbs, 14 April 1928, E2046/1/91, F.O. 371/12993; C.O. to F.O., 3 May 1928, E2321/2068/91, F.O. 371/13013.
  2. Stonehewer-Bird to F.O., 2 May 1928, E2306/2068/91, F.O. 371/13013; Jeddah Report, May 1928, F.O. 371/13010.
  3. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.209.

1. The 'Uqair protocol should be honoured and the Busaiyah post should be demolished, no other being built in the vicinity of the borders.
2. A mutual undertaking by Iraq and Nejd to give no shelter to any criminals should be established.
3. No British official should interfere in border tribal affairs.
4. Those who were responsible for the latest troubles on the frontier should be punished.

Ibn Saud was mainly concerned with the first two points upon which his political career depended.

The Iraqi council of Ministers also held a fixed attitude about which Clayton was fully aware. The Busaiyah post, it was argued, was not built to control Nejd but to protect it from the Shammar raids, and could not therefore be demolished. On the other hand, the right should be reserved to Iraq to take whatever steps might be necessary within the limits of International conventions. Furthermore, any prospective settlement to the frontier dispute had to contain Ibn Saud's agreement to renounce his former claims and to punish those who took part either in the raid on Busaiyah or in its aftermath. As a possible solution, the Iraqi Government suggested that a joint post should be established by Iraq and Nejd in the

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1. These conditions had been suggested by him in March and now repeated. Thus between March and May no change had occurred in Ibn Saud's attitude. See: Ibn Saud to the Political Resident (Bushire) 8 March 1928, E2089/1/91, F.O. 371/12993; 'Nejd proposed Green Book', (Philby Papers) 16/3; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.294; Glubb, War in the Desert, p.213.



neutral zone. Finally, Iraq emphasised the importance of article 4 of the Bahrah agreement by which both Iraq and Nejd undertook "to stand in the way" of emigration of any tribe from one side to the other, and to abstain from offering asylum to any refugee.<sup>1</sup>

The British, too, had their own interests to protect. According to Colonial Office instructions to Clayton,

"His Majesty's Government are not prepared to admit that the 'Iraq Government, in constructing these posts, acted otherwise than in full accord with their treaty obligations; nor are they prepared to agree to the demolition of any of these posts. It should be realised that the interest of His Majesty's Government in the maintenance of these posts does not arise solely out of their responsibility for the defence of 'Iraq. It is of the utmost importance for His Majesty's Government to ensure the preservation of the authority of the 'Iraq Government in the corridor connecting 'Iraq and Trans-Jordan. If Akhwan influence were allowed to penetrate into this area, the projects of a pipe line and a railway from Haifa to Baghdad, to which His Majesty's Government attach considerable importance, would become impracticable. The only apparent means of securing the maintenance of 'Iraq authority in this area is by a chain of posts such as those which have been established by the 'Iraq Government, and to which King Ibn Sa'ud takes such a strong exception. You will see, therefore, that Imperial as well as local issues are involved. Consequently, a solution on the lines proposed by King Ibn Sa'ud is unacceptable, and it remains to consider what other measures can be taken in order to provide a satisfactory settlement of the matters in dispute, and one which will offer good prospects of the cessation of further raiding and the establishment of settled conditions on the 'Iraq-Nejd frontier."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ministry of Interior (Iraq) to the Iraqi Council of Ministers, 17 April 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/3; See also: Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) p.414.
  2. C.O. to Clayton, 17 April 1928, No. C.59092/28, Appendix to Clayton Report on his mission to Ibn Saud, April - June 1928, F.O. 371/13014. (Thereafter contract to: 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928').

Thus while the British and the Iraqis agreed that the posts were legal and should not be demolished, Ibn Saud thought otherwise.

When negotiations started, Ibn Saud laid all his cards on the table in a private audience with Clayton. In the first place, Britain's friendship was essential for him and he would be loth to lose it. But the security of his land, his people and his regime were of equal importance. Posts established by a hostile regime in the vicinity of the frontiers could not be agreed upon because their existence had agitated his followers who now needed calming. While taking the responsibility to maintain harmony between home and foreign affairs on his own shoulders, British authorities in Baghdad and Jerusalem, he thought, were "too prone to believe inaccurate reports spread with mischievous intent by self-interested persons",<sup>1</sup> and were supporting his enemy's views.

The question of the posts proved a stumbling block on the way to an agreement. The King, relying on his own understanding of article 3 of the 'Uqair Protocol (which prevented Nejd and Iraq from fortifying any wells in the "vicinity" of the border), rejected the establishment of posts on the Iraqi side. He maintained that the article in question was originally designed to help him accept the

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1. Record of proceedings, 1st meeting, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014; 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.

"artificial frontier" which had been drawn up by the Mohammarah convention.<sup>1</sup> By stipulating that every water-point on either side of the frontier should always be left free of access, it had been intended to meet his own objection about strict delimitation of frontiers in a desert country. Therefore, it was impossible for either him or his people "to consent to the erection of posts in the desert".<sup>2</sup> Holding thus to his position he then repeated conditions previously defined for any settlement.<sup>3</sup>

Answering the King's argument, Clayton explained that the measures taken on the Iraqi side had been approved of and in some cases initiated by London; and "consequently, the responsibility for [taking] these measures was fully shouldered by His Majesty's Government".<sup>4</sup> Clayton's reply left no room for Ibn Saud to manoeuvre. He had either to change his position or to risk breaking his friendly relationship with Britain. Faced with no acceptable

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1. With his refusal to ratify the Mohammarah Convention, Ibn Saud found himself facing the most difficult choice, either to break with Britain or to consent to a frontier which violated the established nomadic customs of his country. See Chapter 1 above pp. 70 ff; also: Clayton (Jeddah) to Plumer (Jerusalem) 18 May 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/5; Documents on International Affairs (1929) pp. 260-3.
  2. Record of Proceedings, 1st meeting, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014; Cox (Baghdad) to Chackbourn (C.O.) 25 July 1928, C.O. 372/33.
  3. See pp. 245-46 above.
  4. Record of Proceedings, 2nd meeting, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014.



alternative, Ibn Saud concentrated on the meaning of the Arabic expression "ala atraf al-hudud", (in the vicinity of the border), according to the Arabic text of article 3 of the 'Uqair Protocol. Clayton felt that Ibn Saud was reading into these words far more than had originally been intended. Although the post in question was about 75 miles from the frontier, Ibn Saud maintained that the object of article 3 was "to prevent the erection of fortified posts at any of the wells situated in the open desert on either side of the frontier and at any distance". This interpretation the British tried without success to erase from his mind by making a clear explanation of the meaning of the words in dispute. Attempting to remove any element of ambiguity Clayton suggested that a distance of 25 miles should be the basis for discussion, or otherwise certain wells on each side should be designated as ones at which no post might be established.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud rejected both these attempts to define the original wording. As he later stated: "we take the treaties in their obvious meaning namely that all the territory in which there are wells and pastures belong to the frontier and therefore forts should not be built therein either by us or by Iraq".<sup>2</sup>

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1. C.O. to Clayton, 17 April 1928, Appendix 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014; F.O. to Jakins (Jeddah) 1 Nov. 1928, E5184/3261/91, F.O. 371/13018. Philby while supporting Ibn Saud's understanding to the article in question criticized Britain's attitude when he wrote to The Near East and India, "Today the British Government proposes a zone, where buildings shall be prohibited, of 25 miles. Does this not represent a restriction of Iraq to administer its own desert in its own way?". Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) p.480.

2. 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.

Clayton, who could find no evidence in British records to counter Ibn Saud's argument that the article in question was made as a concession to obtain his sanction to the Mchammarah treaty (to which the 'Uqair protocol was appended), found himself at a disadvantage and privately confessed that it was very difficult for him to question Ibn Saud's case. As he wrote to the Colonial Office

"On one point, however, Ibn Saud appears to have some justification for his somewhat sweeping interpretation of the phrase 'in the vicinity of the frontier'. In the Arabic text the corresponding phrase is 'ala atraf al-hudud', and I am informed on reliable authority that this Arabic expression is capable of a wider application than its English counterpart. Ala atraf means literally 'on the sides of', or 'at the extremities of'; and I am creditably informed that, to the Arab reader who has no English, the phrase might and probably would convey a wider connotation than can reasonably be read into the English phrase. It should be noted, moreover, that no provision is made in the Muhammarah Convention or in either of the two protocols for priority to be given to the English text, in case of divergence between the English and the Arabic versions".<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Saud's understanding of article 3 remained unshakable.

Glubb quoted him as dramatically saying:

"At 'Uqair I understand from Cokus [Cox] that the protocol meant no forts in the desert. Now you say that the wording of the agreement does not mean that. How do I know? I am a bedouin ..."<sup>2</sup>

Cox, who had represented both Britian and Iraq in those discussions, was contacted. Replying on 25 July,

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1. Clayton to C.O. 10 July 1928, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014; Clayton to Plumer, 18 May 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/5.
  2. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.214.

he stated that he had no private record or diary regarding what passed at 'Uqair and that the words in dispute had not been intended to bear any strained or exceptional construction or to convey any meaning other than that which would ordinarily be assigned to them. The words "in the vicinity of", Cox stated, "signified to my mind, and I am sure to that of Ibn Saud at the time, 'within rifle shot of' or 'within sight of' tribes using the water-holes at a given point". He suggested a distance of 10 or 15 miles to which the expression should apply and warned against Ibn Saud's ambitions to control the area up to the Euphrates.<sup>1</sup>

Later, in 1929, B.H. Bourdillon (the High Commissioner's representative at Muhammarah) stated that "the root of the trouble lies in Ibn Saud's profound ... desire to avoid any extension of ordered administration into the desert".<sup>2</sup> This was at least partly correct since a tribal society was involved in which subjects "were accustomed to roam freely within limits defined only by the respective strength of themselves and their neighbours". Ibn Saud was bound to be influenced by the realities of local and tribal customs and behaviour as well as by considerations of International Law. Thus a wide gulf remained between Ibn Saud's point of view and the position which Clayton, whatever his personal reservations, had been instructed to

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1. Cox to Shuckburgh, 25 July 1928, C.O. 732/33.

2. Documents on International Affairs (1929) pp.260-3.



defend. In his official report Clayton summed up the King's conclusion as follows:

"If the Iraq Government persisted in establishing and maintaining those posts, then all hope of a settlement would be lost and he would be faced with a very serious situation, in which he would have to choose one of three courses; either to let his people do their worst while he declined all responsibility for the consequences, or to join forces with his people in an attack upon Iraq, or to wage war upon his people. Each of these courses was equally intolerable".<sup>1</sup>

Clayton could not let the question pass in Ibn Saud's favour. He still endeavoured to counter Ibn Saud's argument by pointing out that the posts were also important to Ibn Saud's own security. He was fully aware of the extradition question which had been conceded by Ibn Saud as a matter of importance and which had been partly solved by a suggestion included in article ten of the Bahrah agreement<sup>2</sup> which the two parties had failed to bring into effect. Clayton cleverly took advantage of this situation to support the idea of the need for the existence of the posts when he emphasised the close relationship between them and the extradition of criminals. The existence of the posts would prevent criminals from crossing the border. Annoyed at being confronted with this argument, and by Clayton's refusal of "a clause relating to the surrender of tribes or individuals who commit a crime, in the territory of the other party", and of a proposal "that crimes of whatever nature committed by tribes should not be considered political

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1. Record of Proceedings, 4th meeting, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014.

2. See Appendix C.

crimes",<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud felt that Britain and the Hashemites were intriguing against him. Exploding with anger, the King was quoted as saying

"My people may be angry and suspicious of the desert posts in Iraq. You may say that they are fanatical, but I tell you that I am sixty thousand times more fanatical than they."<sup>2</sup>

The negotiations seemed to have reached deadlock on 12 May. Ibn Saud could not and perhaps would not give way on the posts question. Faced with this, Clayton adopted a more threatening tone and emphasized to Ibn Saud the value of Britain's co-operation and friendship. The King hardly needed reminding of this, but equally he could not afford to antagonise his own people.<sup>3</sup> Worried at the possible suspension of negotiations, Clayton urged the King to reconsider his attitude. Ibn Saud, therefore, slightly modified his position when he abandoned insistence on the demolition of all the posts as a prelude to any settlement, asking instead for their permanent dismantling. Clayton unsuccessfully tried to encourage the King to show further flexibility and stressed that the British Government

"not only maintained their traditional policy of friendship with him, but had definitely instructed me to use my best endeavours to arrive at a settlement of such nature as to help to consolidate his position with his own people".<sup>4</sup>

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1. 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.
  2. Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.214-5.
  3. Record of Proceedings, 5th meeting, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014; See also: Dickson Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.294.
  4. Record of Proceedings, 5th meeting, 'Clayton Report April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014.

He also tried to bring to the King's notice that there was a difference between the current negotiations and the former ones.

"On former occasions", he said, "it had been a question of negotiating treaties or agreements between two parties who were naturally contending with each other in order to secure the best possible results for the interest which they represented. Now my mission was one primarily of co-operation ... to discover, by a frank and friendly interchange of views, some solution of the difficulties with which he was faced".<sup>1</sup>

He endeavoured to convince Ibn Saud that he would be the principal loser if no agreement was reached. This was not in fact the case; British and Iraqi interests had been threatened by the Ikhwan raids and that was in fact why it was impossible for Clayton to subscribe to any arrangement which might preclude the erection of posts or any other buildings which might be found necessary in the future.

In another manoeuvre to pressurise Ibn Saud, Clayton requested him to compensate Iraq for the loss of life and properties.<sup>2</sup> His ultimate target was to leave the King with only one option, the British one. At this juncture negotiations were diverted to less urgent questions.<sup>3</sup> Even so, it was difficult for the two parties to avoid mention of and consequent clashes over the question of the posts, since this was indeed the key point at issue.

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., 6th meeting.

3. Among these questions there were Nejd-Transjordan frontier dispute and Italian policy in South West Arabia and the Red Sea, See: Record of Proceedings meetings 7-10.



In the meantime, a sub-committee had been formed (with Cornwallis, Glubb and Moore on the one side and Damluji, Yasin, Wahba and Hamza on the other) to draft an extradition treaty. Ibn Saud set much store on the work of this committee but unfortunately for him the committee ran into trouble from the very beginning. While Britain demanded the insertion in the treaty of a clause excluding political offenders, Ibn Saud insisted that these should be included. He had a personal interest; fearing that Faisal al-Dowaish might be offered asylum in Iraq. The British were prepared to give a separate pledge, applying only to the case of al-Dowaish should he be punished. The committee held seven meetings between 12 and 20 May, during which "we", Glubb wrote, "spent endless futile days arguing in our sub-committee over political offenders". The reason behind this was that "the two Kings [Ibn Saud and Faisal] did not trust one another".<sup>1</sup> Hoping for "a permanent peace which cannot be disturbed", Ibn Saud's representatives suggested that a treaty of Bon voisinage should be concluded. This was rejected because it would involve the British negotiators in difficult questions such as recognition and diplomatic representations between the two rival rulers of Iraq and Nejd.

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1. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.213-4; see also: Memo. on the matters discussed in committee between Iraq and Nejd, 22 May 1928; Minutes of meetings of Iraq-Nejd sub-committee; 1st and 2nd drafts of the proposed extradition agreement presented by Nejd; Amendments by Iraq, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014.

The Nejd-Transjordan differences were also left unsolved. Two meetings, between Clayton and Ibn Saud on 12 and 17 May concerning these, proved fruitless, so a sub-committee with Antonius and Ibn Saud's advisers was formed to re-examine the following matters:

- 1 - The appointment of a British arbitrator to adjudicate on post raids;
- 2 - The appointment of a permanent Raids Officer to supervise future raids;
- 3 - The conclusion of Extradition and Bon Voisinage agreements.

Eight meetings between 18 and 24 May, revealed that it was impossible to arrive at any final agreement.<sup>1</sup>

In the absence of any achievement Clayton made no attempt to approach Ibn Saud over such Imperial interests as an air route along the Hasa coast. Ibn Saud, for his part and in order to avoid complications which might prejudice the frontier settlement, maintained a tactful silence on the following issues he knew to be delicate: the Bolshevik activities in the Hejaz; the Hejaz Railway; the abolition of the Capitulations in the Hejaz; and Awqaf al-Haramain. Clayton privately wrote to Lord Plumer on 18 May,

"The whole business is very unfortunate, especially at a time when our relations with Ibn Saud seemed to be getting on to a solid basis of friendship, and I am afraid that is going to mean much work and anxiety before a confidence is re-established."<sup>2</sup>

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1. See: Record of Proceedings, 7th and 8th meetings; Memo. by Antonius on the proposed arbitration between Nejd and Transjordan; Clayton to C.O. 10 July 1928, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', F.O. 371/13014.
  2. Clayton to Plumer, 18 May 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/5.

Having become more fully aware of the situation and in particular of Ibn Saud's position, Clayton, although deploying all his diplomatic skills, never pressed the King as hard as he had been instructed. In particular he refrained from threatening to blockade the Gulf ports.<sup>1</sup>

In the circumstances Clayton and Ibn Saud concurred that there was no better option than to suspend negotiations until a later date. This conclusion was facilitated by the approach of the pilgrimage season, by the personally friendly relations which had been established between the two men, and by London's desire to avoid any complete collapse of the negotiations.<sup>2</sup> To London Clayton complained on 19 May that he was "unable to hold out the hope that His Majesty's Government would find it possible to meet ... [Ibn Saud's] views to any great extent".<sup>3</sup> In order to avoid any adverse impression and also to prevent the occurrence of untoward incidents during the interval, the two parties showed similar eagerness to minimize the extent of the setback. As Clayton wrote to Lord Plumer

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1. See: C.O. to Clayton, 17 April 1928 'Clayton Report April-June 1928', C.O. 371/13014.
  2. Ibid; 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.
  3. Record of Proceedings, 10th meeting, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928'.



"I was practically anxious that the break in conversations should not take the form of a definite rupture. I therefore intend, ... to treat it merely as a postponement ... In this way I hope to secure a period of quiet expectation in which both parties will be able to give the question further consideration ..."<sup>1</sup>

To London he concluded that "it was essential to confine ourselves to a general statement ... to general assurances of a sincere endeavour to preserve the peace and avoid hampering our future conversations ...". He emphasised the "necessity of maintaining and promoting an atmosphere of confidence and tranquillity". Ibn Saud agreed and promised to take every step to ensure the maintenance of peace. No date for the resumption of negotiations was fixed, but Ibn Saud wished it to be not later than August. The King indeed urged speedy resumption "in order to avoid having to return to Nejd and to face his tribesmen without having brought matters to a favourable conclusion".<sup>2</sup>

On 23 May, The Times published the following statement issued by the Colonial Office:

"... Satisfactory progress was made in several of the questions under discussions. But owing to the approach of the pilgrimage season, it became necessary to suspend negotiations, and the British Mission is taking advantage of this opportunity to return to London to report progress to his Majesty's Government, subsequently returning to Jeddah at the earliest opportunity to resume negotiations ..."

Similar statements were also published in Umm al-Qura

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1. Clayton to Plumer, 18 May 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/5.
  2. Record of Proceedings, 12th meeting 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928'.

and in the Baghdad Times on 25 May.<sup>1</sup>

The verbal agreement for preserving peace was yet to be confirmed by an exchange of letters on 23 and 24 May. At this hopeful juncture things again went wrong. On the eve of his departure for London, Clayton received from Ibn Saud an indignant letter dated 22 May, in which the King summarised a detailed and circumstantial report which he had received from his Governor at Hail. The gist of the report was that: soon after Ibn Saud's agreeing to negotiate with Clayton and even after the departure of Clayton from London, eight cars crossed the border into Nejd to persuade the Nejdi tribes to migrate to Iraq.<sup>2</sup> A few days later aeroplanes circled over the neighbourhood of Lina and bombed the village. Ibn Saud condemned these acts of aggression and protested against the interference of British officials with his own tribes. He asked for an enquiry into these incidents which came as "fresh proof of bad faith and refusal to be bound by treaties ... it was abundantly clear that there were interested parties who desired the failure of the negotiations to reach a satisfactory solution ..."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Umm al-Qura, No. 180, 25 May 1928; Sadiq al-Sudani, al-ilagat al-iraqiyah al-saudiyah (Baghdad 1976) p.293, note 45.

2. Similar activities took place in 1926 and led to the present disturbances, see the beginning of this chapter pp. 213 ff.

3. Ibn Saud to Clayton, 22 May 1928 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', Annex 7, F.O. 371/13014. See also: 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, pp.291-93.

This was a new and unexpected blow for Clayton. He feared that unless Ibn Saud received a satisfactory reply he might refuse to sign the conditions for the suspension of negotiations and this could lead to a definite rupture. Therefore he replied on the same day agreeing that these incidents were contrary to the spirit of the negotiations, and promising to report the matter with a view to obtaining an explanation.<sup>1</sup> At the same time he telegraphed Dobbs at Baghdad, giving him an account of the matter and asking for an immediate reply to enable him to cope with this new obstacle. He admitted that he had been placed "in a most unfortunate position" on the eve of his departure.<sup>2</sup> Dobbs immediate reply confirmed that the frontier had been crossed on the occasions mentioned, but the most significant revelation was that:

"His Majesty's Government were ... aware that occasional air reconnaissances over Nejd territory were to continue until it was certain that [a] meeting with Ibn Saud would take place."<sup>3</sup>

The British Government had perhaps designed these air raids to pressurise Ibn Saud in anticipation of his negotiations with Clayton, while the latter was on his way to meet the King. But once their meeting had begun, transfrontier operations were as Dobbs explained

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1. Clayton to Ibn Saud, 22 May 1928, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928', Annex 7, F.O. 371/13014, also C.O. 732/34.
  2. Clayton to Dobbs 22 May 1928, repeated to F.O., 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928',
  3. Dobbs to Clayton, 23 May 1928, repeated to C.O., 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928'.



"cut down to a minimum".<sup>1</sup> This made it difficult for Clayton to tell the King the truth, because "the explanation given does not enable me to reply satisfactorily",<sup>2</sup> and because, had he done so, a rupture would have been inevitable. He only sent the King a letter, on 25 May, expressing his best wishes and confirming the statements contained in his letter of 22 May.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Saud felt ill-used and expressed much regret that his protest had, without explanation, gone unanswered.<sup>4</sup>

Dobbs tried to defend his attitude by stressing the necessity of the air actions to stop raids from either party. As he telegraphed to the Colonial Office,

"The incident regarding the tribesmen was in fact splendidly successful operation by the Air Force which in the nick of time prevented Iraq tribesmen from raiding Nejd. If we had not stopped them Ibn Saud would have been most indignant and would probably have broken off negotiations."

Dobbs and the Air Officer were of the opinion that, until they had ascertained that Ibn Saud "could control his tribes, it would be unsafe to tie our hands". Their reason was (as had been communicated to the Air Ministry) that "occasional reconnaissances across the frontier [should be] continued

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1. Ibid.

2. Clayton to Dobbs (undated) repeated to F.O., 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928'.

3. Clayton to Ibn Saud, 25 May 1928, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928'.

4. 'Nejd proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.

5. Dobbs to C.O., 26 May 1928, E2814/1/91, F.O. 371/12994. See also: C.O. to F.O., E2982/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

until we learnt that Ibn Saud had reached Medina".<sup>1</sup>

In fact, Ibn Saud's arrival in the Hejaz had been delayed by difficulties with his own tribes, who had rushed towards the frontier to defend their relatives and their lands against the air raids. He was anxious to settle the matter peacefully and ordered one of his leaders to contact them and convince them to wait until he had negotiated with the British. Later he sent one of his brothers to make sure that his wishes were obeyed. However, some of the Nejdīs had reached the frontier before the arrival of the King's peace messengers.<sup>2</sup> It was this latest action which delayed the King's departure for Jeddah to meet Clayton. Dobbs argued that, "we should have risked disaster had we entirely stopped reconnaissances". insisting that Britain was at liberty to continue the flights over Nejd territory and to pursue the former policy of pushing the Mutair tribes back into Nejd, he concluded: "I do not believe that it would prejudice Sir Gilbert Clayton's mission".<sup>3</sup> Dobbs was angry at Clayton's failure to deny Ibn Saud's reports about the incident before leaving Jeddah.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.; See p. 245 above .

2. Umm al-Qura, No. 174, 13 April 1928; also: Clayton to Plumer 18 May 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/5.

3. Dobbs to C.O. 25 May 1928; F.O. Minutes 14 June 1928, E2982/1/91, F.O. 371/12994; Air Ministry to F.O., 2 June 1928, E2867/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

4. C.O. to F.O., 9 June 1928, F.O. 371/12994.

The Air Ministry, too, had to defend its attitude regarding bombing Nejd after Ibn Saud had agreed to meet Clayton. In reply to the Foreign Office, the Air Ministry detailed the reasons which had necessitated the crossing of the frontier into Nejd. They emphasised the importance of continued air action to defend British interests "against any renewal of raiding by the Ikhwan while conditions were still uncertain, and in addition to prevent counter raids by Iraqis ...". They justified their action by Ibn Saud's admission that "the tribes were to some extent beyond his control". They believed that the indication of Ibn Saud's willingness to meet Clayton in no way provided the assurance required by the British Government that he had been taking effective measures to prevent further raids. The situation was wide open to doubts when the political agent at Kuwait reported the deadlock in Ibn Saud's discussion with the Ikhwan leaders; after all it was not until 7 May that news of an agreement to cease raiding was made known. Furthermore, the available forces for immediate defence of the Iraq-Nejd frontier (over 600 miles) were barely sufficient for the purpose. "If the Ikhwan had been allowed to get close to the frontier in any strength", they argued, "there would have been serious risk".<sup>1</sup> Finally, they asserted that they had only taken the minimum action and had refused to implement

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1. Air Ministry to F.O., 2 June 1928, E2867/1/91.  
F.O. 371/12994.



other suggestions by Dobbs and Glubb to destroy certain Nejdi wells neighbouring the border.

The local authorities were, in fact, partly misled by the spread of rumours about the reality of the situation in the desert. This caused anxiety in the Foreign Office which was anxious to distinguish the facts from the rumours. Oliphant (Under Secretary of State) although appreciating the local authorities' fears, warned against the spread of rumours in official circles:

"Rumours", he wrote, "might well be put about for a specific evil purpose , and I had felt ever since the beginning of the troubles with Ibn Saud six months ago that locally there was far too great an inclination to believe any rumour to the detriment of Ibn Saud."<sup>1</sup>

Oliphant stressed his disquiet at some length and referred back to the original proposals of the Foreign Office which, he claimed, would have stopped the rumours and prevented raids. The first was to get Clayton started on his mission at least one month earlier, but this met with the disapproval of the Colonial Office. The second was to arm him with "power to abandon one if not more posts in case of need". Although Clayton was a "man of experience", he had been given no free hand to negotiate within a minimum limit regarding the frontier posts. Finally and highly important for a successful negotiation was that Clayton should have been allowed to inform Ibn Saud that he (Clayton) was to replace sir H. Dobbs.

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1. Memo. by Oliphant, 30 May 1928, E2914/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

The replacement of Dobbs by Clayton was in fact Chamberlain's idea<sup>1</sup> which he had proposed on 19 May to Amery. It showed an unusual interest in the development of Arabian affairs and in particular in the negotiations with Ibn Saud, in which the risk of complete breakdown should be avoided. Chamberlain's proposal, if adopted, might have made Ibn Saud less adamant, and he would have been far less suspicious about the future. Chamberlain had not intended Dobbs' replacement by Clayton to take effect immediately but had wished the decision to be made known to Ibn Saud. It seems obvious that the inflexible stance of the Colonial Office was a handicap to Clayton during the negotiations.

Oliphant added another reason for their failure:

"When he [Clayton] started [his mission], no definite decision had been come to between the Colonial Office and Air Ministry regarding even one police post, nor had he been able to ease Ibn Saud's mind about the position at Baghdad in the autumn.<sup>2</sup>

Glubb, a member of Clayton's mission, has advanced other reasons in his War in the Desert. The gist of his analysis is that Clayton's failure was due to more than bad luck and the constraints imposed by London. Ibn Saud, like all bedouin was "frank and outspoken". Clayton ought to have appreciated this frankness.

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1. Chamberlain to Amery, 19 May 1928; CAB 30(28), 23/57, 23 May 1928.

2. Memo. by Oliphant, 30 May 1928, E2914/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

"I was familiar" Glubb argued, "with the bedouin faculty for openly putting all the cards on the table, and in the King's speeches I recognised the authentic bedouin frankness which I knew so well. Clayton could not be expected to appreciate these differences, and seemed to believe that oriental diplomacy required flowery compliments and a circuitous and courtly approach".<sup>1</sup>

Clayton had not made a good impression. As evidence of this, Glubb quoted Ibn Saud's words on 17 May:

"When the English came first to Iraq, I congratulated my people. They were surprised and asked me why. I had always abused the Turks as unbelievers, they said, yet here were people who were even worse, because they were not Muslims at all. I told them that the English were honest, and were my friends. Now I must admit that we have despaired of the English and of their hair-splitting ..."<sup>2</sup>

Glubb concluded that Clayton's best approach would have been to "tackle Ibn Saud man to man with perfect frankness in a tete à tete". Glubb was perhaps right in thinking that Clayton might have made more of his mission if he had been less determined to be diplomatic.

Whatever the causes of failure, all the parties concerned feared its consequences. In the absence of Clayton's personal contact with Ibn Saud and if the latter was pressed by his tribesmen, Britain's position was at risk. Glubb stated in his diary:

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1. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.215.

2. Ibid., p.214.



"I am afraid that, if no settlement is reached before next autumn, we shall have a state of war rather than one of spasmodic raiding. A war would give rise to considerable bloodshed and expense and would result a - either in the British Government losing its nerve when serious fighting began and giving way, would expose Iraq to unending incursions by the Ikhwan, until the nettle was finally grasped, or b - in the ultimate fall of Ibn Saud and the relapse of Nejd into chaos."<sup>1</sup>

In order to avoid this disaster, Glubb, the architect of Busaiyah, was now in favour of agreeing to Ibn Saud's demand for the destruction of the post and of suggesting other defensive means. But

"My proposal to find a compromise by abandoning Busaiya was, however rejected by both the British and the Iraq Governments, as constituting a weak surrender to the Ikhwan ..."<sup>2</sup>

Glubb's attitude had clearly changed since before his own encounter with Ibn Saud and <sup>he</sup> now became anxious to make a concession to the King to enable him to tell the Ikhwan:

"You tried to get rid of this post by raiding, even though I advised against such a course. As you saw, your raids did not produce that result. Now I have talked to the English and the Iraqis and they have agreed to demolish Busaiya".<sup>3</sup>

There is no evidence, apart from his own diary, that Glubb put forward any detailed proposal. However he may have conveyed his views, they met with no response. He himself returned to Baghdad in a despondent mood and resigned to preparing for any sudden Ikhwan attacks.

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1. Ibid., p.217.

2. Ibid., p.217.

3. Ibid., p.218.

"Nejd", he wrote, "was obviously in complete confusion and there was every indication that the 1928-9 grazing season would see an extensive outbreak of Ikhwan raiding, if not of open war with Nejd."<sup>1</sup>

In London, the Cabinet met on 23 May and approved the recommendations of the Committee of Imperial defence in which it was pointed out that:

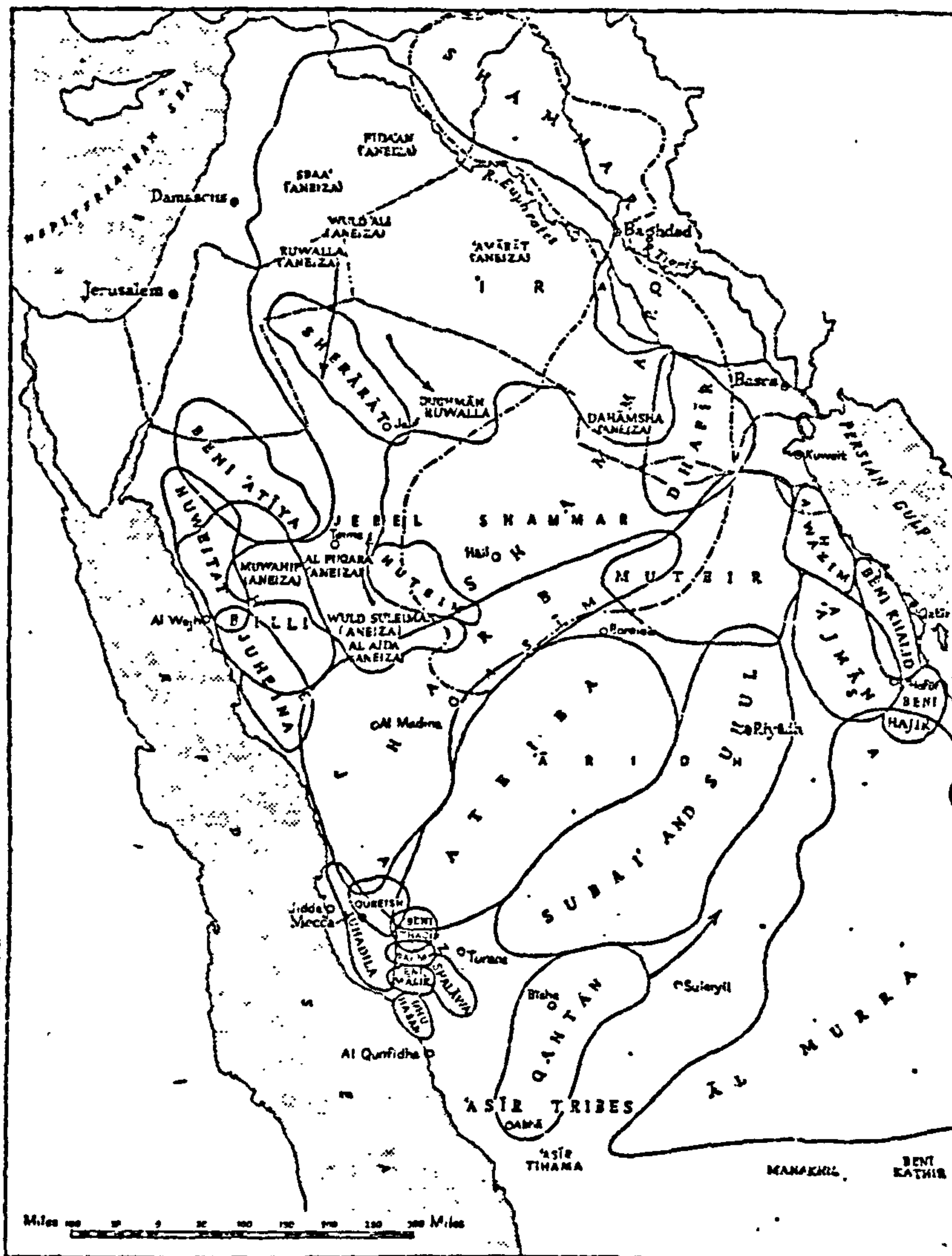
- a) Busaiyah and other posts were "essential for the effective defence of Iraq ...". Therefore it was "impossible to give way to Ibn Saud ..."
- b) It was most important that Clayton "should be put in a position to make an offer which will convince Ibn Saud that we are doing our best to meet him in this matter". This, however, required re-examining the whole question of the posts in order to determine whether any might be demolished.
- c) Ibn Saud should be informed by Clayton that Clayton himself was to succeed Dobbs as High Commissioner for Iraq.
- d) Notwithstanding the risk involved, the embargo on military supplies to Ibn Saud was to be lifted. This was regarded as a political concession for which the Cabinet unanimously accepted responsibility despite possible military consequences. These decisions were to be communicated through the Foreign Office to Clayton, Lord Lloyd (in Cairo) and the Air Ministry in order that arrangements for necessary action could be made.<sup>2</sup>

It was recognised by now that some concessions were essential to avoid troubles on the frontier, but what might be conceded had not yet been clarified. As far as the posts were concerned, the British authorities in Iraq now succeeded in winning London's approval of their plans. Having been informed of the Cabinet's decisions the High

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1. Ibid., p.225.

2. CAB 30(28), 23/57, 23 May 1928; Report of the Committee of Imperial Defence, 22 May 1928, C.O. 732/34; see also Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) p.414.



Tribes in Saudi Arabia

Source : Admiralty, Western Arabia and the Red Sea.



Commissioner pointed out that the administration and defence of Iraq could be served by a number of frontier posts namely: Rutbah, Shabichah, Salman and Busaiyah.<sup>1</sup> The Shabichah post, yet to be established, was only 33 miles from the frontier and its construction was in itself enough to increase tension. Although the Government was nervous about taking further irritating steps, the Air Officer in command insisted on the establishment of the new post because it would provide a water supply and landing area and it would enable Iraq to defend its own tribes living by the border, particularly, the Dahamishah.<sup>2</sup>

Air

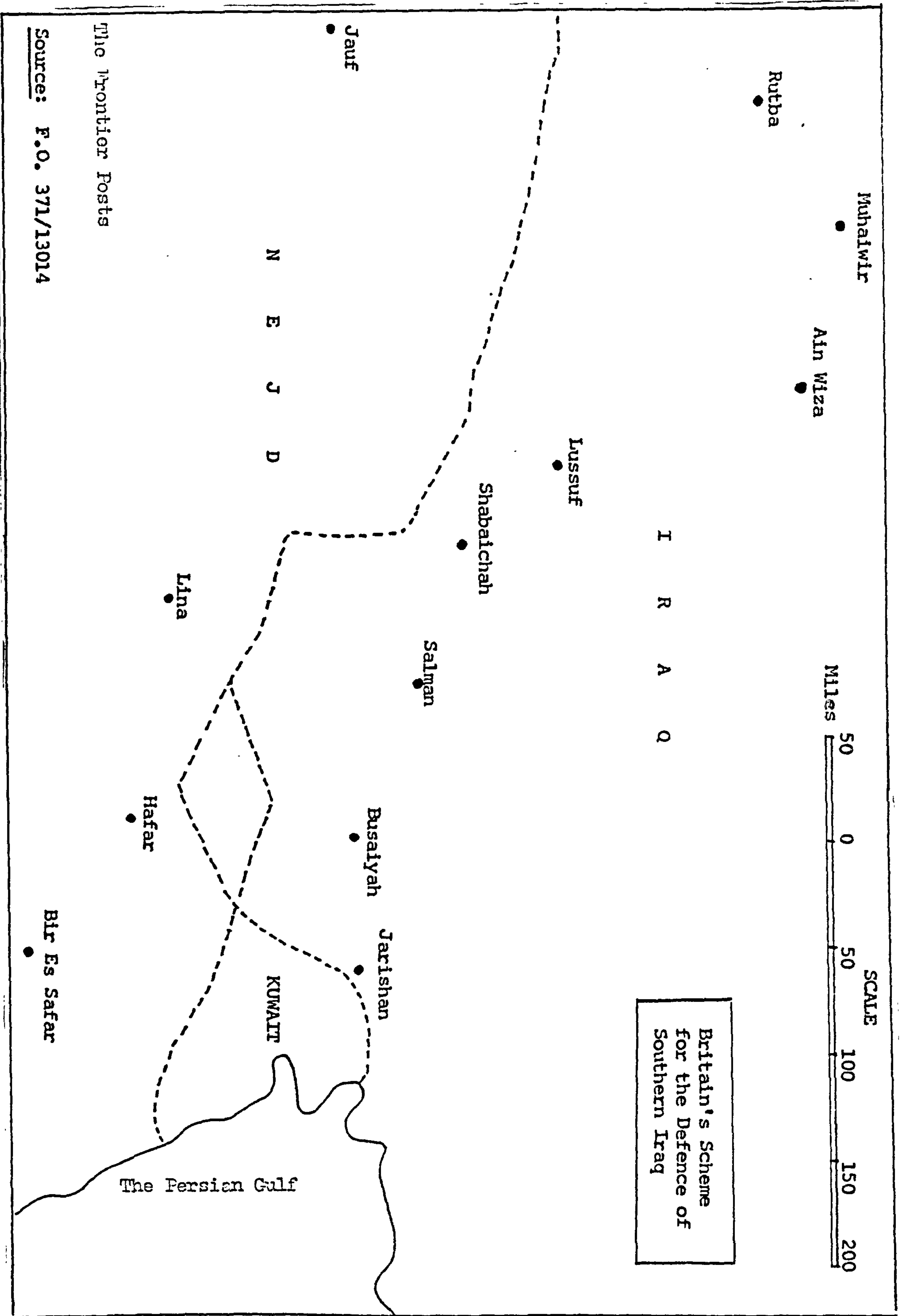
The /Vice-Marshal in Baghdad reported in detail about his plans for the future defence of Iraq against Ikhwan raids. Indicating the difficulties of his task, he stressed that unless the Iraqi tribes were protected from raids, they would gradually "make their own terms with Nejd and throw in their lot with Ibn Saud. The practical result of this would be to push back the Iraq frontier to the Euphrates Valley". He suggested an early warning system which depends on daily armed air patrols over the whole desert. He was aware that his suggestion was beyond the capacity of the R.A.F. in Iraq. Alternatively he favoured that the establishment of

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1. C.O. to Dobbs, 25 May 1928, E2815/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.
  2. Dobbs to C.O. 28 May 1928, E2815/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.  
see map p.269A.

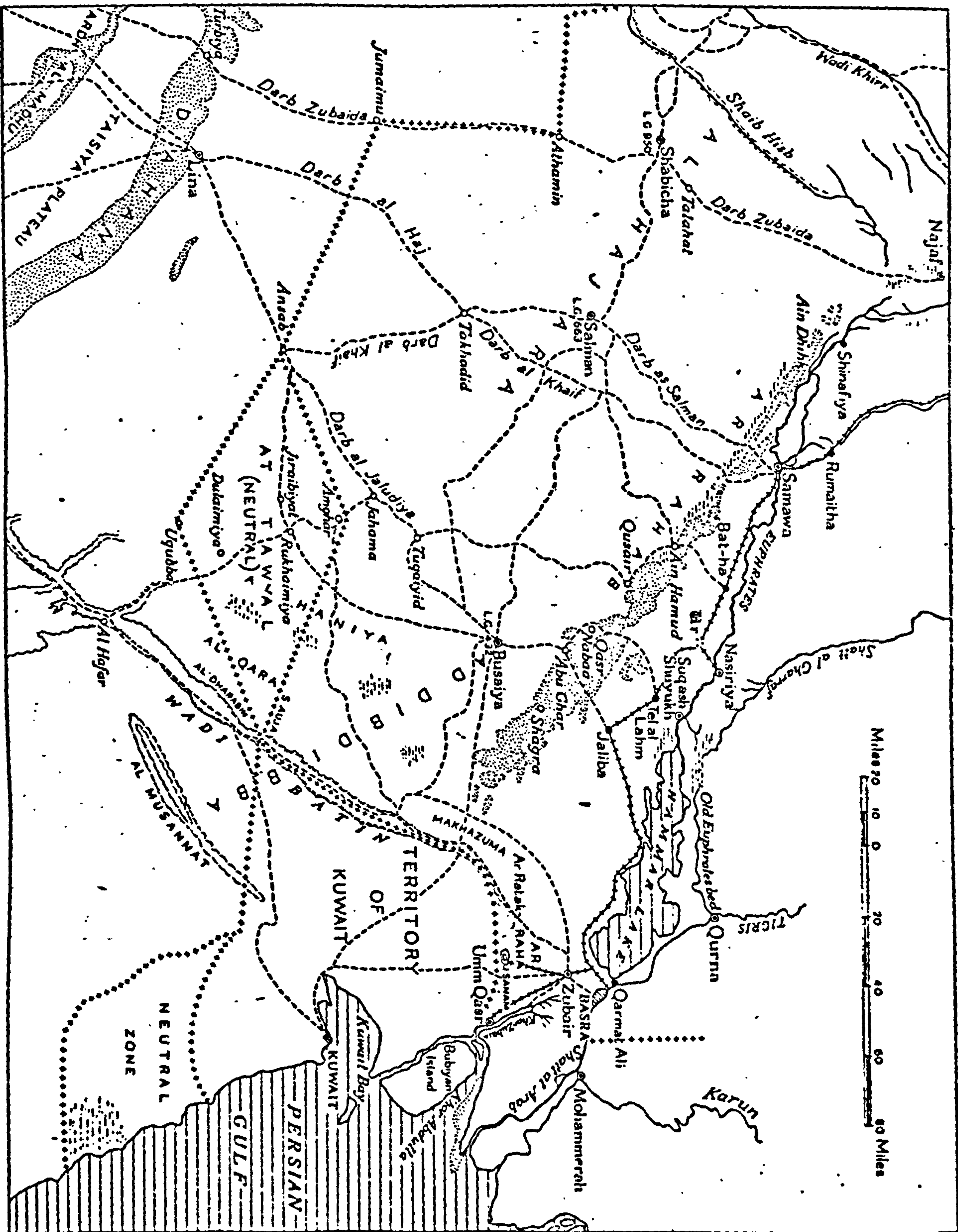
"a line of posts 75 to 150 miles from the nearest telegraph office in the settled area enables information to be received 48 hours to 4 days earlier than it would otherwise have been received and the chances of catching the raiders are increased accordingly".<sup>1</sup>

Agents could report quickly to these posts on the situation in the interior of Nejd. In this case "the greater the number of posts ... the shorter time it will take for an agent to reach a place from which he can report ...". Therefore certain water wells must be fortified, and these could be on the line Jarishan-Busaiyah-Salman-Shabichah-Lussuf-Muhaiwir-Rutbah. In front of this line a number of secret service agents could be placed among the tribes. He again emphasised that if this plan were not adopted "all the desert tribes will become potentially hostile ...". He went further to suggest that all stations along the railway between Samawah and Basra would have to be fortified. According to his estimation this plan was "the most economical way" of defence.<sup>2</sup> Acceptance of his proposals obviously would have destroyed all Ibn Saud's hopes of reconciliation. Ibn Saud was quite unaware of the Air Vice-Marshal's plans, but he was alarmed by the Iraqi Defence Minister's declaration to the assembly of deputies that "negotiations will have no result and that the situation would become serious".<sup>3</sup>

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1. <sup>Air</sup> Vice-Marshal, Air Headquarters (Baghdad) to Air Ministry (London) 2 June 1928, E3159/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.
  2. Ibid.; see maps pp. 271A & 271B.
  3. 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3. See: comments on Nuri al-Said's declaration in Umm al-Qura No. 184, 29 June 1928, and in The Near East and India 16 Aug. 1928, quoted in Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) p.414.







The Southern Deserts of Iraq  
Source: Admiralty, Iraq and the Persian Gulf

On 8 June, the Air Ministry circulated to the Cabinet a proposal to reduce the number of frontier posts from 8 to 6 on the assumption that Ibn Saud would in future take more effective steps to restrain his tribes. It was also suggested that he should be informed that if there was a recurrence of raids the British might erect more posts.<sup>1</sup> The latest defence plan had already been presented in May by Dobbs and the Air Officer commanding<sup>2</sup>, and this was in fact a revival of a scheme put forward in March with the omission of the posts at Jarishan and Lussuf. The remaining six can be divided into two groups. The first three posts (Rutbah, Muhaiwir, and Ain Wiza) might have been tolerated by Ibn Saud. But the other three (Shabichah, Salman, and Busaiyah) seemed bound to antagonise. A Foreign Office minute of 13 June deplored the necessity of establishing a post at Shabichah which was likely to prove an even more sensitive issue than Busaiyah.<sup>3</sup>

The Cabinet considered the plan on 20 June and discussed two memoranda, one from the Air Ministry<sup>4</sup> and the other from the Colonial Office. The Colonial Office opposed any further concession to Ibn Saud. The Cabinet took no decision

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1. Air Ministry to F.O., 8 June 1928, E2983/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

2. Dobbs to C.O., 28 May 1928, E2815/1/91, E2815/1/91, F.O. 371/12994. See above pp. 269-71.

3. F.O. Minutes, 13 June 1928, E2983/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

4. Air Ministry to F.O., 8 June 1928, E2983/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.



but referred the matter to the Committee of Imperial Defence for examination and report.<sup>1</sup>

On 27 June, the Cabinet met again to discuss a memorandum presented by the Secretary of State for Air concerning both the memorandum by the Air Vice-Marshal in Baghdad on the use of the R.A.F. in Arabia and the conclusions and recommendations in the Air staff paper signed by the Marshal of the R.A.F., Sir Hugh Trenchard. These were as follows:

a - ... it is essential that the local political authority and the Air Officer Commanding should act together in the closest co-operation ...

b - ... Reorganisation of the intelligence services in Transjordan, Iraq and Aden appears necessary, and additional European personnel capable of speaking the local languages are required in those countries both in the Air Force and in the political Departments.

c - Local political authorities should be given wider discretionary powers, so that they can make decisions without constant reference to the Departments of the state at home.

d - The responsibilities of the Colonial Office should be extended to include Kuwait, the Trucial Chiefs, and all political questions concerning the countries contiguous with Arabia.

e - [It was recommended to create] one department of the Government ... responsible for political and administrative action in Arabia ... [and it was advisable if I.O. as well as the Govt. of India] will consider relieving themselves of their direct political and administrative responsibilities connected with Arabia ..<sup>2</sup>

The Air Secretary strongly supported the proposals, but the Foreign Secretary insisted that the Foreign Office continue

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1. CAB 33(28), 23/58, 20 June 1928.

2. CAB 35(28), 23/58, 27 June 1928



to be fully consulted. The Cabinet agreed that these matters should be transferred to the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence, which had been appointed to consider British Policy in the Gulf area.<sup>1</sup>

At this juncture, Clayton's advice was essential. He had not formally reported about his mission, but had sent some views in various telegrams. The real difficulty, he maintained, lay over the Iraq frontier posts. He admitted that this matter needed to be discussed with the Foreign Office and Air Ministry.<sup>2</sup> He was convinced that the British Government should make concessions and that the posts question should be settled within a "comprehensive adjustment of the whole situation between Nejd and Iraq". As he had intimated to Lord Plumer, he would try to persuade the British Government "to consider the future very carefully and adopt a definite policy".<sup>3</sup> Clayton believed that the bombing of the Ikhwan would hinder rather than help finding a solution. With this the Foreign Office agreed, noting that

"from the technical point of view, it may be true that an aeroplane reconnaissance over someone else's territory is not 'offensive action', but from the ordinary international point of view such measures can hardly be regarded as other than offensive ..."<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Clayton to C.O., 12 June 1928, E3040/2068/91, F.O. 371/13014

3. Clayton to Plumer, 18 May 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/5.

4. F.O. Minutes, 14 June 1928, E2982/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

In support of this contention, the Foreign Office reminded the Colonial Office of Lord Plumer's opposition to the Air Ministry's suggestion of 9 March that they make reconnaissance flights into Nejd from Transjordan.<sup>1</sup>

Plumer then considered the procedure "most ill-advised".

The Foreign Office concluded in mid June that "it is going rather far to express complete approval of a policy which ... has turned out to be a complete failure from every point of view".<sup>2</sup>

Clayton went further when he wrote, on 22 June 1928, a long secret and personal letter to the Air Chief Marshal to the effect that the actions of the R.A.F. on the Nejd-Iraq frontiers had disturbed his mission and the Air Staff policy was wrong.

"I believe that Ibn Saud might have come to an agreement, and in any event he would have had a poor case ... if aeroplane action had not been pushed across the frontier, or even if it had been confined to the pursuit of actual raiders across the borders."<sup>3</sup>

These actions provided Ibn Saud with good cause to hold to his own position in the negotiations. He said that the mere crossing of the frontier had been a breach of sovereignty as recognised in the treaty of Jeddah and a violation of Article 6 of Bahrah agreement.<sup>4</sup> Consequently this pushed him

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1. C.O. to Plumer (Jerusalem) 9 March 1928, E1328/1/91, F.O. 371/12990.

2. F.O. Minutes, 14 June 1928, E2982/1/91, F.O. 371/12994.

3. Clayton to Air Chief Marshal, 22 June 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/6.

4. See Appendix C and F.



to demand a written assurance from the British Government that article 6 of Bahrah agreement should apply to the British as well as the Iraqi forces.<sup>1</sup> Clayton thought that the punishment of raiders inside Iraq was enough, and reminded the Chief Marshal of the 1923 big raid on Transjordan which had been forcibly countered without any protest from Ibn Saud. "Quite apart from Ibn Saud's likes or dislikes", he added, "I do not much care for the idea of fortified posts throughout ... the desert".<sup>2</sup> He suggested instead, that forces should be stationed at some distance from the frontier ready, not only to mount a counter-attack against any raiders, but also to pursue them only as far as the border. This was of course far more economical and had the advantage of being open to no criticism from Ibn Saud. Clayton urged a clear definition between a state of peace and one of war. The present state of uncertainty only impeded a settlement. Sympathising with Ibn Saud's predicament, he argued that it was necessary to distinguish between the Nejd tribesmen and the Nejd Government "which we have definitely and openly recognised by treaty as independent, and which is fully conversant with latest principles of Geneva and of international usage".<sup>3</sup>

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1. See: Clayton to C.O., 10 July 1928 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928' F.O. 371/13014.
  2. Clayton to Air Chief Marshal , 22 June 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/6. This view, he later expressed to the Colonial Office: "I am not convinced that the permanent security of ... Iraq can best be ensured by a chain of far-flung posts in the open desert ..." Clayton to C.O., 10 July 1928, 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928'.
  3. Clayton to Air Chief Marshal , 22 June 1928 (Clayton Papers) 472/6.



Despite his rejection of the idea that constructing posts was the only way to defend Iraq, Clayton recognised the Sovereign right of Iraq to decide for itself the best means of defence. He argued:

"It would be neither fair nor expedient to ignore altogether the arguments put forward by Ibn Saud or to underrate the difficulties of his position. His account of Article 3 of the protocol of 'Uqair .... seems to me to bear the mark of genuineness ... Just as we have a duty towards Iraq in maintaining the prestige and the interests of the Ruler and Government of that country, so we owe to Ibn Saud, who has hitherto displayed a scrupulous respect for treaties and a remarkable determination to keep his pledged word, to go as far towards easing the difficult situation he is in as is compatible with the maintenance of a fixed principle ... we should offer him some concession, not on the principle of the right to construct posts, but on the actual programme of their location and construction ..."<sup>1</sup>

Such an attitude would help Ibn Saud to continue his efforts for peace. He recommended making concessions to Ibn Saud on the question of sovereignty, extradition, and the definition of article 6, of the Bahrah agreement.

In return, Ibn Saud was to give assurances similar to those he had demanded from Iraq.

Meanwhile British policy came under attack in a number of press articles from Philby. He complained against the ill-treatment of Ibn Saud and assumed that Ibn Saud could not be wrong and Iraq could not be right. Anxious to "correct any impression which Mr. Philby's communique will produce ...",<sup>2</sup> Amery was reluctant to answer questions in Parliament about the fate of negotiations with

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1. Clayton to C.O., 10 July 1928 'Clayton Report, April-June 1928'.

2. Stonehewer-Bird to F.O., 16 May 1928, E2588/2068/91, F.O. 371/13013. see Philby's point in: Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) pp.479-80

Ibn Saud until the situation was clarified.<sup>1</sup>

On 10 July Clayton's full and complete report was made available. For the first time all the departments concerned were in possession of the latest information on which policy could be properly co-ordinated. On 11 July the Cabinet discussed the report of the sub-committee of the Committee of Imperial Defence on the Ikhwan. The report, prepared after consultation with Clayton and the Air Vice Marshal, reached the following conclusions:

- a - "... the maintenance of a certain number of desert posts is essential, not only for purposes of defence, but also in order to restrain the tribes on the Iraq side of the border. Accordingly, we should make no concession of principle on this question.
- b - "... we regard the right of Iraq to administer its own territory and to construct posts within it as essentially a British interest.
- c - "[With regard to] ...the number of posts, their distance from the frontier etc., we should take as conciliatory a line as possible ... with insistence on the general principle [mentioned above]. As regards the number of posts, these should be limited in the first instance to the following: Rutbah, Muhaiwir, Ain Wiza, Shabicha, Salman, Busaiyah. [the first three are required in connection with the Air Route and pipeline and are beyond the range of controversy] ?
- d - "we should give Ibn Saud an assurance that we intend to observe Article 6 of the Bahrah Agreement, and that our forces will not cross the common frontier in pursuit of offenders .... [but in case Ibn Saud proved] himself unable or unwilling to deal [with serious Ikhwan raids] ... we must reserve to ourselves the right to make such action as we think fit.

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1. Parliamentary question, 13 June 1928, E3041/2068/91, F.O. 371/13014.

2. See map p. 271A.



- e - "The Secretary of State for colonies should make every effort to effect an Extradition Agreement between the Governments of Iraq and Nejd.
- f - ....
- g - ....
- h - "Sir Gilbert Clayton should himself return to resume conversations with Ibn Saud, both as an act of courtesy and on account of ... Clayton's friendly relations with him.
- i - "It might simplify ... Clayton's task if Ibn Saud were to be given a present preferably a personal gift from the King, [George V] ... Clayton should be asked to submit his suggestion in regard to this recommendation.<sup>1</sup>

These conclusions were presented by Stanley Baldwin (the Prime Minister) and approved, without discussion, by the Cabinet. It was also agreed that Clayton should be authorised to spend up to £500 on presents for Ibn Saud from the British Government and not from King George as had been suggested.<sup>2</sup>

At this stage the main point established was the decision that a resumption of negotiations offered the only route towards a compromise on the vexed question of posts and Ikhwan raids. Accordingly, Clayton was formally notified of the Cabinet's decision on 19 July and authorised to return quickly to Ibn Saud. The Government's attitude was defined in detail, but he was informed that there was

"... no desire on the part of ...[HMG] to interfere with your discretion in regard to the precise form of manner in which the various decisions reached should be communicated to Ibn Saud."<sup>3</sup>

Accompanied by Antonius on 20 July, Clayton left London for Jeddah.

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1. CAB 37(28), 23/58, 11 July 1928; See also; Committee of the Imperial Defence to F.O., 10 July 1928, E3472/2068/91, F.O. 371/13014, also C.O. 732/34.
  2. CAB 37(28), 23/58, 11 July 1928, The Cabinet Office to F.O. 11th July 1928, E3473/2068/91, F.O. 371/13014.
  3. C.O., to Clayton, 19 July 1928, E3710/2068/91, F.O. 371/13014; also (Clayton Papers) 472/7.



The Jeddah Negotiations, the Second Round and its aftermath, July - December 1928.

Armed with fresh instructions to carry out his mission to its desired end, Clayton arrived in Jeddah on 30 July 1928. An Iraqi delegation was also present but not empowered to negotiate directly. Ibn Saud, who had been waiting at Taif while negotiations were suspended, arrived in Jeddah on 1 August. During the following two days three meetings were held in quick succession after which Clayton was attacked by a sharp fever which incapacitated him for the next four days. A final meeting, however, was held on 8 August after which he returned to London<sup>1</sup> having accomplished nothing. From beginning to end the mission proved a dismal failure.

All the old ground was covered and there was an atmosphere of boredom and lassitude over the proceedings. Neither side was prepared to shift on main principles. Britain, however, had been prepared to offer minor concessions. At their first meeting Clayton assured Ibn Saud that a complete report on the previous round of discussions had been faithfully placed before H.M.G. and had received careful consideration in the highest quarters. While Britain's position with regard to the main points at issue (the posts and article 3 of the 'Uqair protocol) remained

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1. Jeddah Report, July 1928, F.O. 371/13010; Clayton to Amery, 3 Sept. 1928, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015. Taif was suggested as a venue for this round of discussions but again Jeddah was preferred.

unchanged, Clayton nevertheless hoped that agreement could be reached before the Iraqi delegation was allowed to enter the discussions. He admitted that the wording of article 3 of the 'Uqair protocol, both in English and in Arabic, was imprecise. Nevertheless, neither Britain nor Iraq had at any time envisaged that it could be interpreted along the lines put forward by the King and could not do so now. Thereupon Clayton tactfully turned to other minor points upon which he was prepared to offer concessions. Among these where was article 6 of the Bahrah agreement. He had been authorized to give Ibn Saud written assurances that this article would apply to British as well as Iraqi forces. But he reserved to his country the right to intervene when they thought fit. This reservation was intended to cover future crises. He also was prepared to offer a concession on the proposed Extradition and Bon Voisinage agreements between Iraq and Nejd. Moreover, he offered to facilitate recognition by both Iraq and Transjordan of the Kingdom of the Hejaz and Nejd, but reminded the King that everything "depended on a satisfactory solution of the main question of the posts". Finally, he dramatically announced that the British Government had decided to appoint him for the job of High Commissioner in Iraq as successor to Sir Henry Dobbs, hoping thus to make Ibn Saud "confident that his interests and those of his country would always be regarded

by me with sympathy and a measure of understanding".<sup>1</sup>  
At this meeting Clayton presented Ibn Saud with all the concessions he could offer, but none of them was what Ibn Saud now wanted.

At their second meeting, Clayton repeated his readiness to give assurances for the safety of Nejd insisting that the posts had never been intended for use against Nejd. As a token of good will Britain would accept a distance of 25 miles on either side of the frontier as defining the meaning of the words "in the vicinity of the border". Again Clayton turned around the main point without satisfying Ibn Saud who was prepared under no circumstances to give up his interpretation of article 3 or his principal demand: the demolition of the posts. "By a very calm and friendly, but quite unequivocal statement", he replied that he could not reconsider his attitude. With some bitterness, he remarked that "this was the first occasion on which he felt that he could legitimately say that the confidence which he had always placed in His Majesty's Government had been disappointed". Clayton saw no room for manoeuvre. Ibn Saud then commented that the Iraqis (in fact he meant the British) should have devised a less provocative intelligence system. This suggests that he might

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1. Record of Proceedings, 1st meeting, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015. See also: Amery to Clayton 19 July 1928, E3710/2068/91, F.O. 371/13014; 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.



have been prepared to accept any other system of intelligence provided that its operation had remained unknown to the Ikhwan. The two parties were in fact arguing over a vital question in different ways. Clayton, in an endeavour to avoid another fatal failure, begged the king to avoid coming to a hasty conclusion. Ibn Saud strongly replied that he had given to this matter "all his time and his thoughts for the last eight months ...

[and] was sufficiently aware of his rights and of the realities of the situation to express his conclusions without hesitation".<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Saud saw Clayton as a good bargainer, however, "the question was not one of bargaining but rather of recognition of rights and actual treaties".<sup>2</sup>

He indicated that there were only two options open to him: either to declare his failure to reach peaceful agreement with the British, leaving them to solve matters in their own way, which of course meant war, or otherwise to clear out of his country and to take refuge elsewhere. Whatever option he might choose, he emphasized that "it was absolutely impossible for himself or his people to accept the conclusions that ... [HMG] had arrived at". He complained (and this was the first time that he had been so direct) that the British Government "had placed themselves in

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1. Record of Proceedings, 2nd meeting, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015.

2. 'Nejd proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.

the position of a party to this quarrel and that they were issuing a verdict in a dispute in which they themselves were involved". At this juncture there seemed no prospect of any accord. Clayton could only note the fact and warn the King of its consequences. He was, as he later wrote, "convinced that Ibn Saud was sincere in this expression of his views".<sup>1</sup>

The focal point behind Ibn Saud's stand emerged at the third and decisive meeting, when Clayton asked the King a direct and definite question about "what exactly were the concrete objections of his people to the existence of the posts". The King's reply, reflecting his own fears as well as those of the Ikhwan, can be summed up as follows: Firstly: the posts, built in a country whose ruler was a member of a hostile family, could be used against the lawful movements of Nejd tribes. The Nejdīs feared encirclement, and this fear was stirred up in the press of both countries. While he had done his best to pacify opinion, the desert posts frustrated all his efforts. Secondly: he, of course, shared the feelings of his people, and no longer had confidence in any British assurance that the posts would not be used against him. He insisted that the Bahrah and Haddah agreements as well as the treaty of Jeddah had been violated. New agreements and treaties might meet a similar fate. What now was required was practical

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1. Record of Proceedings, 2nd meeting, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015.



evidence of good faith and this could only be supplied by the destruction of the posts. The King continued:

"I find it impossible to go to my people at the present critical juncture and say to them that as a result of my negotiations<sup>1</sup>... I had obtained yet another written assurance."

His simple-minded people would surely regard this as another trick. According to Clayton's final report which accurately conveyed Ibn Saud's attitude, the King was

"now pledged to his people, who would never be content with mere assurances in a matter which they held to be one of life and death to them and in which he shared their views to the full. He was still inspired by unalterable feelings of friendship towards Great Britain and a determination to respect existing agreements; and he was convinced that a policy of co-operation with ... [HMG] was in the best of interests; but in this particular question he was powerless to subscribe<sup>2</sup> to the decision which ... [HMG] had seen fit to take."

After only two meetings Clayton was convinced that nothing could shift the King from his attitude except the destruction of the posts. At the third meeting this opinion was simply confirmed. Clayton appreciated that, in the circumstances, retention of the posts could only magnify Ikhwan suspicions and mistrust. Since his own hands were tied he decided that there was no option but to leave matters as they were in the hope that time would

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1. Record of Proceedings, 3rd meeting, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015. In fact Ibn Saud noted, early in March, that all the agreements and treaties he had concluded with Britain, had been violated. As Umm al-Qura stated art. 1 of the Mohammarah Convention, art. 3 of the 'Uqair protocol, art. 1, 4, 5 and 6 of the Bahrah agreement had not been respected, See Umm al-Qura, No. 169, 9 March 1928; also, Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) p.178; 'Nejd Proposed Green Book' (Philby Papers) 16/3.
  2. Clayton to Amery, 3 Sept. 1928, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015.



prove to the Ikhwan that their suspicions had been unfounded. Angry at his failure and tired of futile discussions, Clayton withdrew without even arranging any further meetings. For the next four days he was ill with a fever.

During Clayton's indisposition, Tawfiq al-Suwaidi met the King and discussed with his advisers the main obstacles, but without changing the King's attitude.<sup>1</sup> A similar attempt was made by Antonius on 7 August but that also ended in failure. At that meeting the King described his difficulties to Antonius, who was well qualified to appreciate and understand them. Meanwhile he admitted that even if his people were "ignorant and obstinate", they "have confidence in me for one thing, if for no other, they know that I am a man of my word, they know that Abdul-Aziz has never made a promise in vain". Ibn Saud's anxiety was caused by the knowledge that feeling against the posts was confined not only to the tribesmen but had also spread among all the population of Nejd. Faisal al-Dowaish, was for him "nothing", sooner or later he would be muzzled, but what could he do with people "who are of us and were always with us". Ibn Saud was really under the threat of a general revolt by his supporters as well as by his opponents. If he agreed to the British retention of the posts, he stated, "there will not be a single man, woman or child on my side". At this awkward point in their

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1. Ibid.

talk, Antonius presented the King on Clayton's behalf with a telescope and a sporting rifle to express Britain's goodwill.<sup>1</sup>

Clayton, having recovered from his fever, held a final meeting with Ibn Saud on 8 August at which they agreed to suspend the negotiations<sup>2</sup> but still to leave the door open for future compromise. The conditions laid down in the notes exchanged between them on 23 and 24 May 1928 would, in the meanwhile, remain valid. Finally, Clayton assured the King that, from his new position in Iraq, he would cooperate with him as well as with the Iraqi Government "in the task of fostering peaceful and friendly relations between the two Arab states".<sup>2</sup>

Although authorized to discuss some other minor matters, Clayton did not raise them because their settlement was conditional on resolution of the posts questions. Thus no reference was made to the extradition and Bon Voisinage agreements. Recognition of Ibn Saud by Iraq and Transjordan and the establishment of diplomatic representation were not pursued beyond the general intimation previously given to Ibn Saud. The question of compensation for the destruction of life and property at Busaiyah was not mentioned at all.

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1. Minute by Antonius on his meeting with Ibn Saud, 7 Aug. 1928, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015.

2. Record of Proceedings, 4th meeting, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015.

The question of the Nejd-Transjordan dispute was left to a sub-committee consisting of Antonius and the King's principal advisers (Hafez Wahba, Yousuf Yasin , and Fuad Hamza). This sub-committee started its work on 31 July before the main negotiations began and ended on 8 August. During this period six meetings were held to discuss the following points:<sup>1</sup>

1. The measures taken by the Government of Transjordan with regard to the latest raids, and the raid committed by the Ruwala in February 1928.
2. The proposed appointment of an arbitrator to adjudicate on claims in respect of post raids.
3. The proposed appointment of Nejd representatives for Palestine and Transjordan.

These points, having been discussed by the sub-committee, were taken up by Ibn Saud and Clayton at their final meeting on 8th August. However, the question of arbitration remained at issue, because Clayton rejected the Saudi condition that the arbitrator was to adjudicate upon past raids.

At the end of the whole proceedings Clayton raised the question of means of communication for future official correspondence. Ibn Saud stressed his wish to receive all communications from the mandated territories via the British Agent at Jeddah. Clayton agreed and the talks ended.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Memo. by Antonius on the proceedings of the sub-committee meeting (undated), E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015.
  2. Clayton to C.O., 3 Sept . 1928, E4337/2068/91, F.O. 371/13015.



On Clayton's arrival in London The Times published an article on Britain's obligation to defend Iraq against the Wahhabi incursions, and justified the measures adopted for that purpose.<sup>1</sup> A moderate communiqué expressing Ibn Saud's goodwill and his promise to deal with his neighbours "in a spirit of concord and in accordance with text of treaties concluded", was published in Umm al-Qura.<sup>2</sup>

In a letter to the Near East and India, Philby wrote:

"One should not be disappointed or surprised by the failure of the negotiations at Jeddah since it was known from the beginning that the demolition of the forts was a sine qua non condition of the agreement from the point of view of Ibn Saud."<sup>3</sup>

Philby then accused Britain of not respecting agreements signed by her and concluded:

"Ibn Saud although he had every intention to keep up his long friendship with her [Britain] may be excused if he did not seek new negotiations ... If we have rendered his task more difficult that is not something which does us honour and our attitude will only serve to raise against us in all the peninsula a solid barrier of hostility. Is the game worth the candle?"<sup>4</sup>

Philby's criticism of British policy, from what followed, no doubt made some impact in London. There the official

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1. The Times, 15 Aug. 1928.

2. Umm al-Qura, No. 190, 10 Aug. 1928.

3. Near East and India, 27 Sept. 1928, quoted in Oriente Moderno, viii (1928) pp.479-80.

4. Ibid.

announcement of Clayton's appointment as High Commissioner for Iraq, upon which such high hopes had been grounded, was published in September. Clayton in the meanwhile, remained on in London,<sup>1</sup> and no doubt influenced the decision not to close the door on negotiations. Arbitration on the vexed question of the interpretation of article 3 of the 'Uqair protocol was again<sup>2</sup> proposed in the following note sent to Ibn Saud via Jeddah:

[H.M.G.] have given the most careful and sympathetic consideration to the views and arguments put forward by your Majesty, and they are particularly anxious to .... assist your Majesty in your manifest efforts to maintain peaceful conditions on the frontier .... in earnest of their desire to arrive at a fair and peaceful settlement of the question at issue ... [both Britain and Iraq] are prepared, should your Majesty so desire, to submit the points in dispute to an arbitrator to be settled in consultation with your Majesty and in agreement between the Governments concerned ...<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Saud agreed to the proposal stressing that the arbitrator should be an Arab, neutral and an expert in Arabian affairs. Communications on this proposal continued during December 1928 and January 1929.<sup>4</sup> Glubb strongly protested against

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1. Clayton did not leave for his new post before March 1929. See: The Times, 12 Dec. 1928, 6 March 1929.
  2. Shackburgh (C.O.) to Monteagle (F.O.) 29 Sept. 1928, C.O. 732/36.
  3. F.O. to Jakins (Jeddah), 1 Nov. 1928, E5184/3261/91, F.O. 371/13018; also (Clayton Papers) 472/9.
  4. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1928 and January 1929., F.O. 371/13728.

arbitration because, in his opinion, if the British case was lost only anarchy would ensue and the banks of the Euphrates would be within Ikhwan reach. "The British Government" he wrote, "seemed to have failed to appreciate that the nature of the struggle had changed. We were witnessing a contest for power between Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan". Glubb, from his local desert knowledge, was correct in his opinion that the situation had by January 1929 completely changed. The roots of these changes went back to the consequences of the Jeddah negotiations, when Ibn Saud's position was reported as "extremely insecure".<sup>1</sup> Al-Domaish was still leading the Ikhwan rebels, but even more threatening to Ibn Saud's political future was the attitude of those other tribal leaders who were now divided between customary loyalty to their King and growing fears for their land and faith.

The King promptly sent invitations to the leaders of all the Nejd tribes (including the rebel leaders) as well as to the 'ulama' in order to inform them, as he had promised, about his latest round of discussions with the British.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.232-33.

2. Jeddah Report, Oct. 1928, F.O. 371/13010; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.296.



His obvious fear was that if he remained silent the moderate Ikhwan might join al-Dowaish, leaving him destitute of supporters. The rebel leaders, who had agreed to the partition of Ibn Saud's dominions among themselves, ignored this invitation. By the end of October 1928 the Nejdi leaders started to arrive in al-Riyadh to attend what was later known as The al-Riyadh Conference.<sup>1</sup>

A mass meeting of 25,000 formed a general assembly in December. Only 800 were chosen to meet the King. A special issue of Umm al-Qura is the main source available about what took place.<sup>2</sup> Its account is more of a literary exercise by the editor than an accurate report. The King is depicted as dominating the whole occasion. He had not, he is quoted as saying, invited them out of fear of any of them but out of fear of Allah. He had summoned them to discuss the future of their country in the light of his negotiations with the British. In order to do this as one of them he offered his abdication. The immediate and

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1. If the Ikhwan rebel succeeded, Faisal al-Dowaish was to rule Nejd, Ibn Hithlain was to rule al-Hasa, and Ibn Hamid was to govern the Hejaz. The three leaders believed that their success in the partition of Ibn Saud's dominions depended upon the uncertain position of the other tribes whom they could win over if only jihad was proclaimed. Ibn Saud was aware of their motives and invited all the tribes to al-Riyadh in order to secure their adherence to him against the rebels. See: Glubb, War in the Desert, p.232; Al-Manar, xxx (1929-30), pp.228-29; Umm al-Qura, No. 200, 26 Oct. 1928.
  2. Umm al-Qura, No. 208, 18 Dec. 1928; also: Report on the conference of al-Riyadh, Fuad Hamza to Philby (Philby Papers) 16/4; Al-Manar, xxix (1928-29) pp.696-711.

expected answer of the 'ulama' was that they would accept "no ruler but him". He bowed to their decision, which was in fact a new bay'a. By this dramatic mode of abdication and re-election, Ibn Saud succeeded in consolidating his shaken position. Having secured this end, he began to discuss with them certain demands, including the abolition of the additional taxes that he had imposed on them and the modern inventions, but most importantly the destruction of the frontier posts. Their first two demands seemed very much easier for Ibn Saud to concede than the last one, which "worried" them and "grieved their hearts".

"Our enemies" they argued, "built it [ sic ] in territories belonging to us ... you know that all the desert is ours ... Does your religion allow you to make such frontiers for them in our country ... we cannot be satisfied to keep patient on such a matter ... we look at<sub>1</sub> them only as an enemy entering our house ..."

They concluded: "we dis-associate ourselves from the activities of Al-Dowaish" on two conditions. First, the destruction of the posts and secondly no British intervention in Nejd affairs. Ibn Saud declaring himself ready to answer for all his actions in public, nevertheless insisted that questions relating to the posts and to the British must be reserved for more private discussions. Maintaining a bold front he proposed a meeting limited to fifty.<sup>2</sup> No record of the meeting seems to have survived

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1. Jakins (Jeddah) to F.O., received 22 Jan. 1929, E387/3/91, F.O. 371/13713.

2. Ibid; Jakins to F.O., 20 Dec. 1928, E139/3/91, F.O. 371/13713.



and this silence suggests that Ibn Saud was once again able to evade discussion of the matters in question and to concentrate on ways and means of cooperating against Faisal al-Dowaish and the Ikhwan rebels.

Umm al-Qura confidently reported that the general meeting, as well as the private one, had ended in complete success for Ibn Saud's policy. It had been decided to "uphold the Nejd attitude with regard to the frontier posts and to maintain peaceful relations with Iraq and Transjordan". At the meeting the sovereign rights of the King to control policy were also "confirmed", and some tribal reorganization was completed.<sup>1</sup> As the King himself later admitted Umm al-Qura had no doubt exaggerated what had been achieved. But clearly Ibn Saud did obtain the backing of Nejd against the rebels. It was, however, left to him to find a solution to the posts question either peacefully or by force.

The conference was an occasion for lavish entertainment and the distribution of presents to the people of Nejd. According to Umm al-Qura "all the 25,000 men returned home with money and clothes". This display of calculated generosity no doubt helped Ibn Saud to win over the tribes.

Now that the crowds had dispersed, Ibn Saud was left personally responsible for finding a compromise solution, as he had promised, to the problem. For this purpose, he felt it necessary to remain at al-Riyadh. While he was

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1. Umm al-Qura, No. 208, 18 Dec. 1928; Jeddah Report, Dec. 1928, F.O. 371/13728



deliberating, doubts among his supporters re-emerged and his own future again seemed at risk. It was further threatened by renewed Ikhwan activities in December against Iraq and by R.A.F. retaliations. In reply to an official British protest he denied that the Ikhwan action could be regarded as raiding and described it simply as the exercise of customary grazing rights. These exchanges followed a familiar pattern, but more alarming from Ibn Saud's point of view was a visit from King Faisal to the Busaiyah post, coinciding with rumours of revolt in the Hejaz spread by ex-King Ali and with news of raids coming from Transjordan. All this suggested to Ibn Saud that the Hashemites were still actively endeavouring to oust him. His anxieties were even further increased when news leaked about military exercises which Glubb was conducting in the desert.<sup>1</sup>

As 1928 drew to a close, Ibn Saud found himself a very worried man. In the following year, which was to prove crucial for him, for Nejd and indeed for the whole of Arabia, he was to face even more formidable dangers than he had anticipated. Out of them was to emerge a new era of Anglo-Saudi co-operation.

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1. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1928 and Jan. 1929, F.O. 371/13728; Umm al-Qura No. 209, 28 Dec. 1928, No. 210, 4 Jan., No. 211, 11 Jan., No. 217, 22 Feb., No. 219, 8 March, No. 220, 11 March 1929. See also: Glubb: War in the Desert, Chapters 11, 12 and 13.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### Anglo-Saudi Co-operation over the Liquidation of the Ikhwan Rebellion, January 1929 - January 1930

- Ibn Saud Consolidates his Position with Britain's Help, January - June 1929
- Britain's Attitude towards Ikhwan Attempts to Seek Asylum in Kuwait and its Effect on the 'Awazim, July - December 1929
- Anglo-Saudi Co-operation over the Ikhwan Rebellion, October 1929 - January 1930

Ibn Saud Consolidates his Position with Britain's Help,  
January to June 1929

Ibn Saud's frequent promises to the Ikhwan that he would solve the dispute over the frontier posts by diplomatic means rather than by military actions carried diminishing credence. His latest attempt at al-Riyadh to calm the situation inside Nejd in order to win time for perhaps a last diplomatic attempt and for consolidating his own position, was only temporarily effective. The Ikhwan, who had rejected the idea of obtaining any more written agreements from the British or the Iraqis, were now unwilling to accept further vain promises from their Imam. Thus they rejected the decisions of al-Riyadh insisting instead on the immediate destruction of the posts. In fact this was the same attitude as Ibn Saud's with only one difference that he was prepared to negotiate while they were not. While the problem remained unsolved the grievances of the Ikhwan multiplied and separated them from their King. Unless Ibn Saud changed his mind and joined them in the struggle, he seemed to them no better than an infidel. Despairing of any such change on his part they prepared for open rebellion against him. In that mood their leaders sought external support from their traditional enemies - the Iraqis, the Kuwaitis and even the British. This radically altered the whole situation. Now apart from the British, Ibn Saud was threatened from all sides. The Hashemites and the Ikhwan were making secret contact to secure his downfall.



Aware of these developments, Ibn Saud decided temporarily to shelve his differences with Britain and to concentrate on the immediate internal threat. His first and limited attempts to put pressure on the rebels to bring them back to his fold failed and on the contrary helped to widen the gulf between him and the rebel leaders. Consequently he decided that he must liquidate the rebel movement before it destroyed him. On the other hand he lacked sufficient military resources to guarantee victory and, even if victorious, he realised that the rebels could seek asylum in neighbouring countries thus still posing a threat. He therefore concluded that Britain's help was necessary both to provide military equipment and to influence the neighbouring states not to admit the rebels. Since Britain had frequently urged him to take action against the Ikhwan he felt that, in this cause, he could rely upon their assistance.

The decision to seek aid from Britain was not an easy one for Ibn Saud and the circumstances leading to that conclusion will be examined in detail. He was faced with one obvious dilemma. If, as he desired, he was to retain the loyalty of the Ikhwan he must act as their leader in opposing Britain. This obviously he could not do without sacrificing the good relations with Britain which he valued. In that situation he first tried to temporize. But, by the beginning of 1929 the situation began seriously to deteriorate. The Ikhwan, challenging internal authority and external Powers, launched

attacks against Iraq, Kuwait and Transjordan in January. King Faisal's visit to the border area soon after was considered by Ibn Saud as a hostile act directed against him, especially when it coincided with ex-King Ali's "injudicious remark" that the Hejazis would revolt against Ibn Saud in the near future.<sup>1</sup> In the meanwhile, Transjordan tribes raided Nejdi tribes and took as hostage the son of the Shaikh of Bani Sakhr. Also in the same month, the American millionaire C. Crane and an American missionary were attacked by the Ikhwan inside Kuwait. While the former managed to escape, the latter was killed. This train of events, in addition to Glubb's military activities on the vicinity of the border, created a dangerous situation just when the King was preparing to leave for the Hejaz to spend the month of Ramadan according to custom. The situation became even more critical when in February the Ikhwan launched a big raid on Iraq. This raid caused the British to blame Ibn Saud and to shoulder him with the responsibility.<sup>2</sup>

Umm al-Qura defended the King and blamed the British Government and its representatives on the spot for originally causing the troubles by building the "forts", and also for having blocked Arab unity. The paper urged the Iraqis

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1. See: Umm al-Qura, No. 211, 11 Jan. 1929; Oriente Moderno, ix (1929) pp.90, 189. Also C.O. file no. 69040 about Ali's remarks, C.O. 732/39.
  2. Jeddah Report, Jan. and Feb. 1929, F.O. 371/13728; Umm al-Qura, No. 209, 28 Dec. 1928, No. 210, 4 Jan., No. 219, 8 March, No. 220, 11 March 1929; The Times, 4, 24, 29 Jan. 1929; American Consul (Baghdad) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 14 Feb. 1929, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., iii, p.16; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.300.



to throw off the Western yoke and to preserve the brotherhood between the peoples of the two countries.<sup>1</sup> Presumably, the paper intended to show that even moderate elements in the Hejaz and Nejd disapproved of British attitude to the frontier disputes and at the same time aimed to turn the attention of Ibn Saud's internal critics to what it believed to be the main cause of the dispute.

To the British the King indicated that he would now be prepared to give consideration to their previous arbitration proposal. At the same time, anxious to display both to the British and to the Iraqis that he was master in his own house, he began to build up a strong punitive force to tackle the rebels. This led H. Jakins to report in March that the King was going to take "the most momentous decision in recent Arabian history". "He seems" Jakins continued, "to have broken definitely with his former lieutenants".<sup>2</sup> Indeed, the King, realising the failure of the Riyadh Conference and anxious to end the state of chaos which threatened his domestic position and his external relations, wanted to make a limited show of force against the rebels which, he hoped, would be sufficient to restore their allegiance. He was encouraged by the arrival of Clayton in Baghdad as High Commissioner in March. With a friend in Baghdad for the first time, the King believed that the rebels would not be given asylum should he punish them.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Umm al-Qura, No. 217, 22 Feb. 1929; Jeddah Report, Feb. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

2. Jeddah Report, March 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

3. The Times, 6 & 9 March 1929.



Closing upon the rebel forces, the King sent one of the 'ulama' to persuade the Ikhwan leaders to submit to arbitration based on the Shari'a . This mission failed, but later al-Dowaish went to Ibn Saud's tent for discussions. A temporary agreement was reached but Ibn Saud, who did not believe that the other Ikhwan would endorse it, launched a sudden attack on the following day aimed at winning a quick victory to prove to the British that he was truly the master of the situation and capable of crushing any unlawful behaviour by his subjects. In fact Ibn Saud only won an indecisive victory at this battle which became known as the battle of al-Siblah. Reports about the actual fighting are very confusing,<sup>1</sup> but it is clear that the approach of the pilgrimage season was one of the reasons which prevented the King from following up his partial success. He was obliged to hurry to the Hejaz where his presence was by now indispensable. Before his departure he addressed the 'ulama' stressing that the Quran and the Sunnah must form the bases of any decision on religious matters that the ummah must obey him as their Imam; that meetings to discuss religious matters or otherwise were prohibited, and that the Ikhwan must respect other Muslims.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud's speech was significant. He sought to remove fanaticism from the minds of the Ikhwan by sticking to the

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1. See: Oriente Moderno, ix (1929), pp.189-90, 226-27. Dickson describes the battle of al-Siblah as 'a rather mysterious', see: Kuwait and Her Neighbours, pp.302-4.
  2. Umm al-Qura, No. 224, 12 April 1929; Jeddah Report, April 1929, F.O. 371/13728; Habib, Ibn Saud's warriors of Islam, pp.136-42; Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.284-89.

Sunnah rather than to individual interpretation of the Quran. He also wanted to make it clear that his claim to authority was according to the Shari'a.<sup>1</sup> This was in fact a final attempt on the King's part to leave the door open for reconciliation and to consolidate his position by gaining as much support from the 'ulama' as possible for any future campaign. The timing of the battle supports the idea that Ibn Saud was not prepared to break definitively with his former lieutenants. Thus Jakins report about a break between the King and the Ikhwan was premature.

Leaving Nejd in a state of uncertainty, the King arrived in the Hejaz on 7 May. While there for religious duties, Ibn Saud found himself fully occupied by internal and external political affairs. Ibn Hithlin, the leader of the 'Ujman, had been murdered after being given aman (full safe conduct) for <sup>not</sup> having joined al-Dowaish at al-Siblah. According to Dickson:

"The news of this shameful murder spread like wild fire and caused a deep stir throughout north-eastern Arabia and local sentiment veered strongly round against Ibn Saud from this date".<sup>2</sup>

Hearing the news of the murder, Ibn Saud anticipated fresh troubles. This involved him in a flurry of diplomatic activity. One immediate problem was that his regular forces in Nejd urgently required a strong force

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1. '... ati'o Allah wa rasoulaho wa oli al-amr menkom', (... obey Allah and his messenger and those in authority among you), Quran, 4/59.
  2. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.205.



from the Hejaz to meet the anticipated troubles. Transport proved a major problem. The land route from the Hejaz to al-Hasa ran through hostile land. The only alternative was the sea route. To overcome this he asked Britain not only for transport facilities, but also for arms and ammunition.<sup>1</sup> These requests were sympathetically considered.

"We are under some sort of obligation to assist him [Ibn Saud] to meet the consequences of his action [against the rebels]. Moreover, as it is the settled policy of H.M.G. so far as possible to maintain the authority of Ibn Saud in the Hejaz and Nejd any assistance, that we could properly give to prevent the collapse of his dominion, is desirable."<sup>2</sup>

London's readiness to offer a ship to the worried King posed a problem over unloading it. The coast of al-Hasa lacked any suitable port for the purpose. The only alternative was to make use of the port of Bahrain, but this would infringe Bahrain's neutrality in the struggle. Meanwhile, Ibn Saud's Government approached Gellatly, Hankey and Company with the same object. The company, who had to obtain Foreign Office endorsement, met with the same difficulty over lack of port facilities, and the Foreign Office was not prepared to approve the use of Bahrain. The Government of India was prepared to sell Ibn Saud the required ammunition if he made a formal request. This last offer was not useful because of the already mentioned shipping difficulty, which forced the King to cancel the

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1. Jakins to F.O. 7 May 1929, E2322/2322/91, F.O. 371/13716; Jakins to F.O. 15 May 1929, 69124, C.O. 732/41; Oriente Moderno, ix (1929) p.482.

2. Minute by Mr. Hall (F.O.) 9 May 1929, 69124, C.O. 732/41.



whole project.<sup>1</sup> In spite of his failure to solve the arms supply problem and of his previous inability to follow his victory at al-Siblah, the King's resolve to deal with the Ikhwan rebellion remained unshaken, particularly since he now knew that Britain was behind him.

The King's experience in the Hejaz was "the worst of his campaigning days". According to Jakins, he "had to wash his own shirt and had only dates to eat". In addition to official diplomatic contacts, he was busily occupied in trying to lighten the gloom of the depressing political atmosphere at Mecca. There he met a number of Indian agitators, all violently opposed to British Imperialism. To those and to others, he made a number of speeches clearly reflecting his political position in both internal and foreign affairs. He was reported as having said that it was hopeless for him or for his people to challenge the European powers by force, and indeed there was no need to do so since he did not fear the foreigners as much as he did the Muslims. The foreigners, he argued, could not achieve their aims in Muslim countries without the help of treacherous and mercenary Muslims. In that connection, he stressed that the unity of Islam was the only way to overcome all dangers whether from foreigners or from internal dissidents who called themselves Wahhabis and who had separated themselves from other Muslims. Wahhabism

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1. C.O. to F.O., 13 May 1929, E2426/2322/91, F.O. 371/13716; F.O. to Jakins, 15 May 1929, 69124, C.O. 732/41; F.O. Minutes 14 May 1929, E2433/2322/91; F.O. Minutes 15 May 1929, E2494/2322/91, F.O. 371/13736; Jakins to F.O., 30 May 1929, 69124, C.O. 732/41.

appeared to Ibn Saud to threaten his own position and authority in Arabia, and to jeopardise the unity of Islam. He argued that, since Mohammad Ibn 'Abd al-Wahhab did not create a new faith, it was a great mistake to call the movement Wahhabi. This was, in fact, a call for his people to moderate their fanaticism and to concentrate upon political realities. To this purpose they must avoid becoming separated from the main stream of Islam and they must learn to accept the fact of modern civilization and adapt themselves to its consequences. This, in his mind, need not clash with religious beliefs. The King went on to say that people of the present day, whether they wished it or not, were bound to accept Western civilization. He rejected the Ikhwan policy of banning any relationship with the British, but it must be remembered that on this occasion the King was speaking to non-Ikhwan elements and also to non-Arabs and attempting to find support for his own political stance.<sup>1</sup> His views had already found some support among Arabs. Amir Shakib Arslan an Arab nationalist from Lebanon, for example, had while on his way to Mecca in May, declared in an interview at Port-Said:

"Arabia is now the only region that still has true independence ... The Arabs lack only the modern arts and the material means. When they have these means together with the<sup>2</sup> faith and the national idea, they lack nothing."

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1. See: Jeddah Report, May 1929, F.O. 371/13728; Umm al-Qura, No. 229, 16 May, No. 238, 19 July, No. 240, 26 July, No. 241, 3 Aug. 1929. Hafez Wahba in his lecture at the Central Asian Society about 'Wahhabism Past and Present', stressed Ibn Saud's point of view on the Wahhabi sect of Islam.
  2. Oriente Moderno, ix (1929) pp.225-26.



When Ibn Saud had completed his religious duties for the pilgrimage, he remained in the Hejaz, notwithstanding alarming reports of a deteriorating situation in Nejd. This was perhaps because he felt that he could better serve his political future by his presence in the Hejaz than on the battlefield. By the end of May, not only the Mutair and the 'Ugman,<sup>1</sup> but also 'Utaibah were all in open rebellion. Alarmed at this he thought that it would be politic to make some placatory gesture towards the Ikhwan and hence decided to release Ibn Bujad, one of the 'Utaibah leaders whom he held in captivity.<sup>2</sup> But, with rebellion still spreading, this failed to have the desired effect. Some of the leading rebels now began to secure promises of asylum both in Iraq and Kuwait. News of this caused Ibn Saud to raise the question of extradition. He urged the British Government to prevent the rebels "from making use of neighbouring countries ... and to refuse asylum to those who flee from justice into Iraq and Kuwait territories". The king argued that he could not inflict punishment on the raiders if the British Government were unwilling to take equally strong action and if Kuwait and Iraq did not cease assisting and encouraging the rebels. He further complained of Glubb's policy in southern Iraq and asked the British Government to ensure that sanctuary would be refused to all Nejdīs without discrimination. Then he made four specific

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1. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.306.

2. Jeddah Report, May 1929, F.O. 371/13728.



requests to the British Government:

1. to undertake the necessary military measures against the rebels;
2. to expel the Ikhwan from Kuwait;
3. to establish a blockade between Kuwait and Nejd;
4. to allow Nejd forces to cross into Kuwait in pursuit of the offenders and to eject them.

These proposals were discussed, before being sent to London, at a joint meeting at Jeddah between Fuad Hamza and Jakins. Accordingly, Shaikh Ahmad of Kuwait was immediately instructed to allow no supplies to the rebels.<sup>1</sup>

In mid June, Fuad Hamza pressed for a reply to his various requests and to those of the King. He argued that "a great change has taken place in the situation, necessitating the hastening of the request that a definite decision should be made on the subject". Ibn Saud and his government were worried about the possibility of al-Dowaish joining Ibn Mashhour and the 'Ujman in operating from Kuwait. Hamza tried to explain that Ibn Saud's purpose in seeking to punish the rebels was solely because they had attacked Kuwait and Iraq. If the British Government did not take effective action, the people of Nejd, as Hamza put it, "will be filled with misgivings". In order to avoid creating such an unfortunate impression, Ibn Saud's Government

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1. Ibn Saud to Jakins, 29 May 1929, No. 31/3/183; Jakins to F.O., 9 June 1929, E3375/2322/91, F.O. 371/13736; Jeddah Report, May and June 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

"see no objection to agreeing to British aeroplanes going and beating the criminals, even in the case of their being found within the frontiers of Najd, provided that this should take place on this occasion only."<sup>1</sup>

Hamza concluded that his Government

"earnestly hope that the British Government will take the most speedy measure in reply to the request of H.M. the King, and will thus furnish a real and satisfactory proof of the cooperation expected from a friendly Government."<sup>2</sup>

Hamza's arguments clearly reflected Ibn Saud's intention to persist in his new policy of liquidating the Ikhwan rebellion.

In further pressing the case, Hamza frequently condemned Kuwait for providing help to the rebels. He presented as proof of his allegations a letter from al-Dowaish to Amir Saud (the eldest son of the king) in which al-Dowaish stated amongst other things that the Shaikh of Kuwait

"has given Ibn Mashur arms, amunition and money and has communicated with the Ajman and told them that whatever they want is obtainable from him, and has promised to grant their requests ... [also] his territories are free for them to enter, and ... he will speak to the Christians [the British] on their behalf."<sup>3</sup>

Al-Dowaish offered a conditional reconciliation in the same letter as follows:

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1. Fuad Hamza to Bond (Jeddah) 16 May 1929, No. 31/2/4, F.O. 371/13736.
  2. Ibid.
  3. Faisal al-Dowaish to Amir Saud (undated) Annex to Hamza's letter of 16 May 1929, Ibid.

"If you want us as your subjects, you should look into our case ... we wish your father to promise us [the following]: firstly: to wipe out the past, secondly, to release your prisoners and each of us for his part will guarantee to do the same, and thirdly, to be allowed to fight the infidels with one of you, sons of Abd el Aziz accompanying us ...

If we are killed it does not matter, and if we succeed it will be for your benefit, just as our brethern took the Hejaz and it became yours in your name."

Al-Dowaish dramatically concluded:

"Saud, my brother, do not give up your friend for your enemy, please send the reply quickly ... the enemy of your religion does not help."<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding this emotional appeal the king, as indicated by Hamza, remained determined to force the Ikhwan leaders to acknowledge his authority, in his conviction that Britain's friendship was worth the risk of definite break with the Ikhwan. His political reasoning was communicated to London on 19 June.<sup>2</sup>

The King's complaints had, meanwhile, been investigated by Colonel Dickson who had just taken up his new job as Political Agent in Kuwait. Dickson confirmed the smuggling of food and arms from Kuwait, but judged it impossible to mount a complete blockade of the Kuwait-Nejd frontier because of the migrating customs of the tribes in the area. Furthermore, the tribes of Mutair, 'Awazim and 'Ujman had regular contact with relatives in Kuwait through whom

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1. Ibid.

2. Bond (Jeddah) to F.O., 19 June 1929, E3146/2322/91, F.O. 371/13716.



they could easily obtain supplies, with the connivance of the Shaikh and despite his faithful promise to Britain to the contrary. In fact, the Shaikh's sympathies were entirely with the Ikhwan rebels whatever his official attitude. This was partly because of his long standing differences with Ibn Saud and of his secret hope that Ibn Saud might be toppled from his throne. On the other hand he was too weak to act openly against British policy. The people of Kuwait, according to Dickson, were "entirely with the Ajman today". The tribe had always been considered as Kuwaiti and its rights to enter Kuwait had always been recognised. Dickson obviously felt sympathy for the Kuwaitis who had suffered the consequences of economic blockade. He concluded, "today it is the case of 'go as you please', and one cannot blame the people of Kuwait from taking full advantage of the state of affairs".<sup>1</sup>

The Nejd situation was discussed at an interdepartmental conference at the Colonial Office on 21 June. With regard to the question of bombing the Ikhwan as requested by Ibn Saud, the conference found it "impossible" blindly to obey Ibn Saud's request "without first making sure that the implications involved were fully understood".<sup>2</sup> Even then an extension to the operations from Kuwait was doubtful.

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1. Political Agent (Kuwait) to the Resident (Bushire) 17 June 1929, E4058/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737. Also Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.306.

2. Memo. by Rendel (F.O.) 21 June 1929, E2322/2322/91, F.O. 371/13736; also I.O. to F.O., 26 June 1929, E2372/2322/91, F.O. 371/13716.

They defended the recent policy of bombing because of its conditional and limited nature and because it did not go far beyond the policy which had already been approved by the last Labour Government in 1924. That policy, it was decided, should remain the guide line. Two days later, Dickson warned the Colonial Office against risking the fall of Ibn Saud. Dickson predicted that if Ibn Saud disappeared from the Arabian theatre, as the Shaikh of Kuwait desired, "Arabia might be reduced to anarchist tribe [sic], but in that event", he added, "the tribes would leave their civilised neighbours unmolested".<sup>1</sup> This ambiguous conclusion suggested a need for a reconsideration of the whole matter.

In reply to the King's requests above mentioned, the British Government promised to prevent the "improper use of Kuwait territory by any refugees from Nejd".<sup>2</sup> This of course applied also to Iraq territory. It was made clear to Ibn Saud that Britain could not agree to aeroplanes crossing the frontier merely to search for rebels or to initiate operations in Nejd, nor could they allow his forces to operate from Kuwait. Ibn Saud had anticipated a warmer response, wrongly believing in Britain's full readiness to be committed as far as he might wish. In fact, Britain did not want to risk burning her fingers. Britain's reluctance

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1. Political Agent (Kuwait) to C.O., 22 June 1929, E2322/2322/91 F.O. 371/13736. The differences between Kuwait and Nejd were mainly caused by the blockade imposed by Ibn Saud on Kuwaiti trade, see Qasem, al-khalij al-arabia 1914-1945, Chapters 1-3.
  2. Jeddah Report, June 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

to go beyond the policy they had already determined, left the Ikhwan free to operate. They continued to maintain contacts in Kuwait and Iraq and persisted in aggression against the Transjordan tribes, challenging Britain's influence there and Ibn Saud's authority in Nejd. W.L. Bond reported that, according to an eye witness account, Ibn Saud's authority had been shaken and his limited achievement following the Conference of al-Riyadh, October 1928, had been destroyed. "The tribesmen" he continued, "openly declared their disapproval of Ibn Saud's title of King of the Hejaz and Nejd".<sup>1</sup> Determined to overcome these provocations by the use of modern weapons, Ibn Saud appealed to Britain for help in providing planes to create a new Air Force. The King's wishes were put directly before the British Air mission which visited the Hejaz in June 1929 in connection with an earlier request for help in repairing his old planes. Negotiations continued throughout June and into July when the British Government agreed to provide the King with new aeroplanes and personnel.<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud, having tried to build up his resources militarily and diplomatically in the Hejaz, now started a long and slow journey to Nejd in order to deal with the troubled situation there. Security measures were taken with the help of the British Agency and a strong force accompanied the King

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1. Ibid.

2. Jeddah Report, July 1929, F.O.371/13728.



during his "advance into unpacified country".<sup>1</sup> On 9 July he summoned the loyal 'Utaibah chiefs to meet him at al-Dowadami (150 miles from al-Riyadh). On meeting, he upbraided them for the disloyalty of their fellows and reminded them of his own early and glorious days in an endeavour to gain their support for his next move against the 'Ujman rebels. He also reminded them of his superior power and issued a warning against those who might fail him.<sup>2</sup> (This was an echo of a declaration which he had made before setting out.) He then talked to the assembled chiefs about plans to subdue the rebels. In supporting him they would be guided to the "right path". The King went on to say ... "if some persist in their sinning and it appears that the general interest is threatened, the one in charge will be obliged to inflict punishment and to shed blood".<sup>3</sup> In his opinion, a politician like a physician may be "obliged to amputate one of the limbs in order to save the whole body". He then swore to fight for the maintenance of his country. The al-Dowadami meeting was only a partial success for Ibn Saud.

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1. Ibid. See also: Umm al-Qura, No.239, 21 July 1929; Oriente Moderno, ix (1929) p.378.
  2. For al-Dowadami meeting see: Jeddah Report, July 1929, F.O.371/13728; Bond (Jeddah) to F.O. 30 July 1929, E4139/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737; Wahba to Bond, 24 Sept. 1929, E5416/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738; Umm al-Qura, No. 239, 21 July, No. 240, 26 July 1929; Habib, Ibn Saud's Warriors of Islam, pp.144-45.
  3. Bond to F.O. 15 July 1929, E3941/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737. See also: Communiqué issued on the meeting of al-Dowadami, Annex to Umm al-Qura, No. 248, 20 Sept. 1929.

Further meetings to gain support against the rebels from the local tribes followed and the summer witnessed extensive efforts to tighten the ring around the rebels. The story of Ibn Saud's successful campaign has been fully recorded. Its main consequence, where Anglo-Saudi relations were concerned, was the impact of Ikhwan endeavours to evade Ibn Saud's wrath by seeking asylum and support from outside.

Britain's Attitude towards Ikhwan Attempts to Seek Asylum  
in Kuwait and its Effect on the 'Awazim, July - Dec. 1929

The Ikhwan appeal for refuge in Kuwait fell on deaf ears both in Kuwait and in London.<sup>1</sup> The Ikhwan then conveyed to Dickson their desire to conclude a treaty of friendship with Britain. This was in fact a fundamental change in their attitude caused by food and other supply shortages. They preferred to deal with the mushrikein rather than to yield to Ibn Saud. In choosing to turn towards the infidels they were themselves adopting the same attitude that they had so much criticised in Ibn Saud and which indeed had precipitated their quarrel with him. In return for the proposed treaty, the Ikhwan offered the British Government guarantees not to raid or loot. In spite of the fact that the British Government was reluctant to take up the Ikhwan's proposals, Dickson wished to keep in touch with them in order to try and understand their motives. At each meeting, he was careful to stress that Britain could not deal with men in rebellion against a friendly ruler, that they could not have supplies from Kuwait and that, if they crossed the borders, they would at once be bombed. The Ikhwan for their part denied any responsibility for the past raids, claiming that they were only soldiers obeying orders from their leader, that they had "accepted no orders except from Ibn Saud's own mouth" and that he had frequently

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1. Bond to F.O., 5 July 1929, E3817/2322/91, C.O. to F.O. 13 July 1929, E3850/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.



ordered them "to continue their raiding" and took the 'khumus'.<sup>1</sup> of all the loot they got". They had been content to carry out his orders but, when he "deceived" them and broke the oath of God and when he became deeply involved with the British all this had "stirred up" the whole of the Ikhwan, even the moderates. The inevitable result was their revolt. Dickson concluded that "all had sworn to throw off his [Ibn Saud's] yoke".<sup>2</sup>

The Ikhwan explained that the revolt sought to guarantee security for their faith and lives. They believed that this could be achieved either by establishing for themselves "a small nation" should Britain agree to their proposed treaty, or by coming under Kuwaiti jurisdiction since they "looked upon themselves as Kuwait tribes and wished only to return to their own". These two options were contradictory. The small nation they hoped to create was supposed to be on Nejd land. For such an option no British help could be expected since it contravened Britain's obligations to Ibn Saud. The other option, whereby they would be recognised as Kuwaitis, raised equal problems for Britain. If the Ikhwan established a foothold in Kuwait, this might lead to a whole host of new claims, possibly on the

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1. Islamic law gives Muslim warriors one fifth of the ghana'im they got from the enemy.
  2. Dickson (Kuwait) to the Resident (Bushire), visit of the Ikhwan leaders to Kuwait in July 1929, E2322/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737; Jeddah Report, July 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

part of Ibn Saud himself. Such confusion about loyalties and nationality puzzled the British authorities and made them suspicious of Ikhwan motives and arguments. What had become obvious by now was that their religious discontent had developed a political aspect. This, Dickson tried to discourage. He pressed them "to make peace with Ibn Saud before it was too late". In reply they, calmly and peacefully, assured him of their goodwill and requested him only to communicate to his government that the British need have nothing to fear from them either in regard to Iraq or Kuwait. Aware of the reasons behind the Ikhwan initiative, Dickson reported to London that the Ikhwan "were beginning to feel the pinch of hunger". Sympathising with their cause he agreed that the British had the right to stop the smuggling of ammunition and rifles, but emphasised that "we had no right to stop food from their women and children".<sup>1</sup> Dickson wanted to distinguish between humanitarian principles and politics, or at any rate to justify a softer line than his instructions warranted. During this period doubts increased about the Ikhwan position. London, on 25 July, instructed the Resident in the Gulf to confirm that the attitude of the Shaikh of Kuwait had not changed, and to promise the Shaikh that "if he will co-operate loyally at the present juncture H.M.G. will endeavour to secure honourable settlement of his dispute with Ibn Saud".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Dickson to the Resident (Bushire), Visit of the Ikhwan leaders to Kuwait in July 1929, E2322/2322/91. Also: C.O. to F.O., 22 July 1929, E3678/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.

2. C.O. to the Resident (Bushire) 25 July 1929, E3836/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.

Soon after they had made their first appeal to Dickson, the Ikhwan, through Farhan Ibn Mashhour, again tried to talk to Dickson on 24 July. Meanwhile, Faisal al-Dowaish pushed women, children and old men across the border into Kuwait. One of the reasons for this action was the shortage of food and water inside Nejd; another may have been an attempt to force the Shaikh of Kuwait or the British Government to help to solve his problems. On 30 July, al-Dowaish himself entered Kuwait and was interviewed by Dickson.<sup>1</sup> Soon afterwards the two Ikhwan leaders were ordered to leave Kuwait territory.

Dickson's meetings with both Ibn Mashhour and al-Dowaish were highly important. Ibn Mashhour went to see him "on behalf of all the Ikhwan" in order to secure a political agreement. The Ikhwan frequently tried to reach a compromise at that time because they were unable to continue fighting, and because as Ibn Mashhour falsely boasted;

"we are victorious today and as such we consider it a suitable time to reiterate our promises of friendship with the English and to reassure H.M.G. that we Ikhwan will not again attack the Iraq or Kuwait tribes".<sup>2</sup>

The Ikhwan, unwilling to abandon the idea of a peace treaty, threatened through Ibn Mashhour that if the British did not give them asylum in Kuwait or Iraq, they would then turn to the French. For his part al-Dowaish proposed

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1. Jeddah Report, Aug. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

2. Dickson to the Resident (Bushire) 26 Aug. 1929, E4939/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.



to Shaikh Ahmad that he should be the Imam of the Ikhwan, and mediate between them and the British Government.<sup>1</sup> While their appeals fell on deaf ears, their position was becoming increasingly critical. As "Reuter" telegraphed at the end of August, "Hejaz troops have completely isolated and surrounded Faisal al-Dowaish and his supporters".<sup>2</sup> The critical position of the Ikhwan had been revealed by al-Dowaish himself during his meeting with Dickson and with Shaikh of Ahmad, who sympathised with their cause, but was anxious not to get involved in Nejd affairs. He expressed surprise to learn that large numbers of Ikhwan women and children had already entered his territories. In spite of the difficulties which this was bound to cause, the Shaikh urged that "at all costs we must save these [people] from being bombed". He turned to Dickson saying: "Both for you English, and [for] my sakes [sic]. if there should be a wholesale killing of women the results will be deplorable". Al-Dowaish, however, seemed heedless of the risk of bombing, because this "will serve to show us one more enemy ... if our women are killed, then we shall move north ... and proceed via the Euphrates to Syria in spite of the English".<sup>3</sup> He threatened, as had Ibn Mashhour, to turn against the British and ally with the French. al-Dowaish's

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1. C.O. to F.O., 29 Aug. 1929, E4330/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.

2. The Resident (Bushire) to Dickson, 30 Aug. 1929, E5009/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.

3. Dickson to the Resident (Bushire) 31 Aug. 1929, ibid.

attempts to win Dickson's support for the Ikhwan cause were vain. Dickson's negative attitude, and Shaikh Ahmad's inability to offer any help forced the Ikhwan, who were under the threat of hunger, to turn against other Nejdi tribes, who had hitherto refused to join the rebels. As al-Dowaish threatened, he would turn the whole of Nejd against Ibn Saud. Al-Dowaish, however, was anxious to conciliate the British and to convince them that they were under an obligation to him. He even drew up a list of favours performed:

"we have cleared northern Nejd of Ibn Saud's forces, and we have done the British army a good turn by sending back to Iraq some of her recalcitrant tribes like Shammar and Dhafir. We must now deal with Awazim...<sup>1</sup> we wish to detach them from Bin Saud ..."

Speaking to Shaikh Ahmad, al-Dowaish insisted that Kuwait was the

"ancestral home of the Mutair... the Mutair and Ajman are your fighting tribes and have been since the world began ... we certainly have been enticed away under the name of religion by Bin Saud, but we have no further use for him ... we now wish to return to our old homes and be under our old rulers ... our words are those of true Mussalmin [peaceful people] and we do not lie... we require nothing but water and grazing ..."<sup>2</sup>

While assuring their old enemies of their peaceful intentions the Ikhwan declared that they were going to fight their old friends. Al-Dowaish's plan was "to leave our camels and women here [in Kuwait] and issue forth into Nejd once

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

more to carry on our fight ..."<sup>1</sup> Dickson reminded him that Britain had committed itself to friendly relations with Ibn Saud and therefore could not break with him. He insisted that the Ikhwan must leave Kuwait at once. Putting all their cards on the table, the Ikhwan leaders had indeed left themselves with nothing left for bargaining. Consequently al-Dowaish promised to leave Kuwait overnight, saying that he would go to the 'Awazim's grazing area and affirming that his words were kalam sharaf (word of honour). He insisted, however, that he would not surrender to Ibn Saud.

The British made good use of the outcome of these two meetings. They had become satisfied that there could be no peaceful relationship with the Ikhwan, who insisted on fighting and who seemed completely unstable. It was decided, therefore, to continue supporting Ibn Saud and to use every effort to put down the Ikhwan revolt. For that purpose, aeroplanes and personnel were to be sent to Ibn Saud by August. Because of his financial problems, London promised to defray the cost and all other incidental expenses, "representing a free gift of about one fifth of the total cost". This was intended to provide "concrete evidence of their goodwill towards Ibn Saud and their desire to assist him".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.; see also, Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, pp. 311-13.

2. Jeddah Report, Aug. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.



Leaving Kuwait empty handed, al-Dowaish fulfilled his kalam sharaf to Dickson and the evacuation of the Ikhwan from Kuwait was completed by 5 September. The main body of the Ikhwan moved to al-Hasa in the 'Awazim grazing area, while others were busy raiding the north of Nejd. These developments took place at a time when Ibn Saud's forces were fully occupied by the 'Utaibah rebellion in southern Nejd and by other problems in the Hejaz.<sup>1</sup>

The Ikhwan raids on Nejdî tribes worsened the situation, and by September rebellion had broken out again in many parts of Nejd. Ibn Saud criticised Dickson's soft dealings with their leaders in Kuwait and condemned his decision to allow them to depart without having been arrested or sentenced for their previous crimes. Hamza also pointed out that the failure to punish them would result in rumours as to a possible change in Britain's attitude and would be considered as a breach of the undertaking already given by the British Government to Ibn Saud on 21 June.<sup>2</sup> On 22 September a note was addressed to Hamza giving full details about the alleged use of Kuwait as a base for the Ikhwan. It was stressed that Britain had only undertaken to prevent the improper use of Kuwait territory by Nejd rebels. Dickson interpreted British obligations as defined by the British authorities in London

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1. Ibid, Sept. 1929; Bond to Hamza, 5 Sept. 1929, E5409/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.

2. Fuad Hamza to Bond, 3 Sept. 1929, E 5013/2322/91, Bond to F.O. 9 Sept. 1929, E 5015/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.

but Hamza pointed out that the note contained a promise that al-Dowaish was "to be attacked at once in the event of his entering Kuwait territory".<sup>1</sup> While the British were anxious to preserve the neutrality of Kuwait and to prevent her getting involved in the Nejd troubles, Hamza suspected their motives. He believed that the British were only talking about the neutrality of Kuwait to hide their secret deal with the Ikhwan. In order to avoid any future misunderstanding London sent a formal reply to Hamza, dated 28 September, emphasising their viewpoint and assuring him that the phrase in question was drawn up only to enable the British authorities in the field "to take drastic action against him [al-Dowaish] if and when necessary without reference to higher authority".<sup>2</sup> The British were being very cautious. They tried to appear to the outside world as neutral in the struggle between Ibn Saud and his people. They feared a strong reaction by Muslims elsewhere, especially after the warnings they had received from India. Finding difficulty in co-ordinating policy at a distance and in the interest of saving time, London decided to instruct its representatives in Baghdad Kuwait and Bushire to communicate directly with one another and to take whatever decisions seemed necessary to help tighten the ring around the rebels.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Jeddah Report, Sept. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

2. Bond to Hamza, 28 Sept. 1929, No. 2042/1464/38, F.O. 371/13738.

3. The Resident (Bushire) to the High Commissioner (Iraq) 7 Sept. 1929, E 5010/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737. Ibn Saud seized this opportunity and proposed to send a delegate to Baghdad to serve as a channel of communication, but this was rejected by London, presumably because it might be understood as a premature recognition by King Faisal of Ibn Saud's regime in the Hejaz. Jeddah Report, Oct. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.



Britain's objective, however cautiously approached, was to deny to al-Dowaish any chance of overthrowing Ibn Saud. This clearly emerged in a report drawn up at the beginning of October by the American Vice Consul at Baghdad, based on information which he had received from an R.A.F. Officer. The report stated that al-Dowaish's activities were considered as:

"a cause for apprehension on the part of the British, and a source of real danger to Ibn Saud; that Dowaish is gathering his forces for a test of strength with Ibn Saud, and, that should be successful, it is feared he will attempt to champion the cause of the Arabs in Palestine."<sup>1</sup>

The ramifications of the situation were so complex that a reconsideration of British policy in general in the Middle East now seemed necessary. Rendel drew up a minute on 1 October which reflected all the difficulties that confronted both Ibn Saud and Britain. Ibn Saud appeared reluctant to take action against the Ikhwan without being assured of British support. In this context, Rendel pointed out that "our position, however, is one of considerable difficulty". He rejected Ibn Saud's proposal to pursue the rebels into Iraq or Kuwait, adding

"I do not think we can give an unconditional undertaking to attack fugitive rebels at sight should they be found in Iraqi or Kuwaiti territory ... we could hardly hand them over to Ibn Saud who would ... inflict barbarous punishments on them ... it would be extremely difficult to intern large bodies of Ikhwan in Iraq for indefinite period ... Ibn Saud's fears on this question are therefore ... well grounded; but we are already committed to giving him all possible assistance, and it is therefore desirable to do all we can to allay them."<sup>2</sup>

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1. American Vice Consul (Baghdad) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 5 Oct. 1929, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., iii, pp.39-41.
  2. Minute by Rendel, 1 Oct. 1929 E 5002/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737. For Ibn Saud's attitude see: Ibn Saud to H.M.G. 26 Sept. 1929, E 5418/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.



Rendel suggested that it was advisable to strengthen the British forces in Iraq and in Kuwait but he again admitted that the question was "full of difficulty". He proposed its discussion of an interdepartmental meeting. It was agreed that the questions raised by Ibn Saud were awkward and required careful handling.<sup>1</sup>

Preliminary discussions took place soon afterwards to consider the fears expressed by Ibn Saud that the Ikhwan would eventually launch a new attack should they succeed in gaining asylum in Kuwait, Iraq or Syria. It was agreed that air action would be inappropriate if the raiders were accompanied by their women and children. It was impossible therefore to give Ibn Saud the undertaking which he desired. The meeting, however, found it possible to meet some of Ibn Saud's desiderata by

"agreeing to his proposal to post forces near the frontier, and by suggesting arrangements for closer liason between his loyal chiefs and the local frontier authorities in Iraq and Kuwait".<sup>2</sup>

But if it happened that women and children entered either area, the British position would become "most difficult". Ibn Saud, it was suggested, should also be informed of this difficulty since this would stop the British being accused of bad faith. It was agreed later that he should designate

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1. Minute by Monteagle, 1 Oct. 1929, Minute by Oliphant 2 Oct 1929, E 5002/2322/91, F.O. 371/13737.

2. Minute by Rendel, 3 Oct. 1929, op.cit.

emissaries to the local frontier authorities to inform them of the movements of his troops, but the crossing of the frontier by his forces was now totally rejected.<sup>1</sup>

Nevertheless, London continued to feel anxious about Ibn Saud's position. They hoped he would be able to deal with the rebels without getting the British involved. His situation was also discussed locally by the moderates and by the loyal tribes, who showed the same anxiety as the British. There was, in fact, a consensus that he had been facing a critical challenge to his authority ever since the Ikhwan had thrown off the veil of their doubtful allegiance and had declared themselves openly in rebellion. According to Bond the Hejazis whether sympathetic or hostile, believed that

"the fate of the Hejaz and of Arabia in general may at any time within the next few months be staked upon the issue of a decisive battle between Ibn Saud and the rebel forces."<sup>2</sup>

Doubts also were expressed as to the King's ability to control the situation. He had not only lost his warriors but they themselves had now become his main opponents. His endeavours to replace them by regular forces<sup>3</sup> had been hampered by social and financial problems. Even when he later succeeded

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1. Jeddah Report, Oct. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

2. Bond to Henderson, 22 Sept. 1929, E 5410/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738. Hostile elements in the Hejaz believed, as the Hashemites did: Ibn Saud would survive for one month only. See: Al-Manar, xxx (1929-30) p.397.

3. For Ibn Saud's regular army see: Umm al-Qura, No. 287, 6 June, No. 289, 20 June, No. 291, 4 July, No. 292, 11 July, No. 293, 18 July 1929.

in doing so, the new army lacked the enthusiasm of the Ikhwan when they had carried him to power. This enthusiasm and their religious zeal were their main assets. Dickson likened them to Cromwell's "Ironsides" or to the German "storm troops". Even if the regular army now appeared the stronger force, it had some weaknesses due to inferior morale. The defection of the Ikhwan had to a large extent discredited Ibn Saud among the more fanatical and influential elements of his own following. Reflecting on Ibn Saud's decline in prestige and popularity in the Hejaz Bond concluded:

"it is generally believed that, except in Nejd ...., the majority of the tribes would rise at once if there were any reasonable hope of throwing off his yoke".<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Saud suffered further humiliation when he found himself powerless to protect his own supporters - 'Awazim. They were defeated in October by the combined forces of the Mutair and the 'Ujman under Faisal al-Dowaish. Finding themselves unprotected in their own homes, the 'Awazim appealed to the Shaikh of Kuwait for permanent protection, which he and the Political Agent were willing to offer, as the only alternative left to the 'Awazim was to throw in their lot with the Ikhwan and to start fighting Ibn Saud. London approved the admission of the 'Awazim into Kuwait claiming that it was in no way inconsistent with the attitude hitherto adopted by H.M.G. on the ground that there was a cause for believing

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1. Bond to Henderson, 22 Sept. 1929, E 5410/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.



that the 'Awazim originally to have been a Kuwaiti tribe.<sup>1</sup> With their inclusion in his forces, it was argued, the Shaikh of Kuwait "might be able to protect Kuwait against Akhwan raiders". But Ibn Saud, the Foreign Office believed, would not "voluntarily cede a tribe to another state",<sup>2</sup> because this would reduce the number of his fighting men, and might also reduce his territories by adding the 'Awazim grazing area to Kuwait territory. The Shaikh of Kuwait could be persuaded to grasp such an opportunity, and then to use the 'Awazim as a bargaining card in any settlement of differences with Ibn Saud. The defeat of the 'Awazim and their migration to the Kuwaiti border area was in fact of considerable benefit to al-Dowaish. The immediate advantage was that the rebels enjoyed grazing in a large area of al-Hasa. On 30 October the 'Awazim were given assurance of Kuwaiti protection and on 16 November the Shaikh addressed their leaders offering them a certain part of his country for grazing.<sup>3</sup> This produced a strong protest from

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1. See: Bond to F.O. 15 Oct. 1929, E 5308/2322/91; C.O. to F.O. 18 Oct. 1929, E 5376/2322/91; C.O. to F.O. 21 Oct. 1929, E 5434/2322/91; I.O. to F.O. 28 Oct. 1929, E 5556/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738; Oriente Moderno, ix (1929) p.481. About the 'Awazim, their origins and society see: A.A. al-'Ubaid, Quabilat al-'Awazim, derasah 'an asleha wa mojtama'ha wa diareha, (Beirut 1971).
  2. F.O. Minutes, 17 Oct. 1929, E 5127/4032/91, F.O. 371/13740.
  3. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1929, F.O. 371/13728; The Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 31 Oct. and 1 Nov. 1929, E 5651/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.

Ibn Saud, who requested both the British and Shaikh Ahmad to expel the tribe .<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud pointed out that the alleged defeat of the 'Awazim was "a trick of Dowaish in order to place friends of his inside Kuwait territory whom he can use for his own purposes".<sup>2</sup> He also condemned Shaikh Ahmad for taking advantage of Nejd troubles.

Ibn Saud received no reply to his complaints before 5 December. Britain defended her decision to endorse Shaikh Ahmad's acceptance to admit the 'Awazim into his territories. It was argued that the 'Awazim "having surrendered to Faisal al-Dowaish could no longer be regarded as part of the King's forces, but they equally could not be regarded as insurgents". Britain's attitude was therefore not "inconsistent either with their decision not to allow Ibn Saud's forces to cross the frontier of with their undertaking not to allow the rebels to find refuge in Kuwait". Indeed the 'Awazim had a very limited choice - that is "to throw in their lot with the rebels and to fight against the King",<sup>3</sup> a course which Britain had wished to avoid. In the circumstances it had been entirely in the King's interest that the 'Awazim should be definitely neutralised by entering Kuwait, and indeed Britain favoured this course.

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1. Bond to F.O., 24 Nov. 1929, E 6069/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.
  2. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.
  3. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1929, F.O. 371/14460. See also: F.O. to Bond, 4 Dec. 1929, E 5651/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.

In fact, the 'Awazim did not enter Kuwait. They remained in the neutral zone. This displeased Shaikh Ahmad who asked them on 8 December to choose between entering Kuwait within ten days or being refused access to his territories and denied supplies. The Shaikh intended to add the tribe to his own and if he was successful he then needed to remove them from the vicinity of the troubled area. The 'Awazim, whose loyalty was wavering, argued that they had been forced to stay midway because their camels were then in poor condition and that their temporary position offered them the protection they needed. Their argument was unacceptable to the Shaikh and later it was reported that they were treated "as being part of the contending forces and were denied supplies from Kuwait". Consequently the tribe raided Kuwait three times and this convinced the British that no faith could be put in <sup>their</sup> protestations.<sup>1</sup>

Britain's policy had indeed placed the 'Awazim in "an indeterminate position" which, as Rendel put it, "may well justify Ibn Saud's worst fears".<sup>2</sup> However, the expulsion of the 'Awazim was an equally difficult decision and in any case Britain's pledges to Ibn Saud did not oblige her to take such severe measures as Ibn Saud suggested.

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1. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1929, F.O. 371/14460.

2. Minute by Rendel, 6 Dec. 1929, E 6374/2322/91, F.O. 371/13739.



Anglo-Saudi Co-operation over the Ikhwan Rebellion,  
October 1929 - January 1930

Not only Kuwait but also the Hashemite King of Iraq took advantage of the Ikhwan rebellion. There is evidence that Faisal, while keeping the British in the dark, had morally and materially supported the rebels. In doing so he might benefit and had nothing to lose. Ibn Saud was fully aware of the potential danger. He had always been suspicious of Iraqi designs. Early in September 1929 he furnished Clayton with evidence for his suspicions. The letter was received by R. Sturges, Acting High Commissioner, in October immediately after Clayton's sudden death. Sturges drew the attention of the Iraqi Prime Minister to Ibn Saud's complaints that Iraqis

"have been attempting to encourage the rebel tribes with promises of assistance both from Iraq and from [H.M.G.] ... and that on more than one occasion they have conveyed money and horses to the rebels ... via Kuwait territory".

He then advised that:-

"in any case, it is obviously impossible on grounds either of political expediency or of good faith for the Iraq Government to countenance in any way surreptitious relations with the rebel Ikhwan tribes who have so recently been guilty of murderous attacks on Iraqi subjects for which the Iraq Government have demanded their punishment at the hands of King Ibn Saud. The British Government will appreciate therefore the importance of taking immediate steps to remove the misapprehension that has been caused by the activities of those persons".<sup>1</sup>

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1. R. Sturges (Baghdad) to the Iraqi Prime Minister, 6 Oct. 1929, E5574/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.

In fact this precaution had been advised by Clayton three months earlier, but "it seems unfortunate that his advice was not adopted".

By the end of October suspicions had grown about Faisal's involvement in the affair.<sup>1</sup> At the Foreign Office Stonehewer-Bird minuted:

"King Faisal has been actively intriguing with the rebels and on a much larger scale and with more far reaching objects than had been supposed."<sup>2</sup>

Butler agreed with Stonehewer-Bird's minute and added:

"... the position is a shabby one ... Ibn Saud ... has driven the guilty tribes ... into rebellion and is now fighting for his life against them. King Faisal ... has seized this opportunity to work off his family's feud against Ibn Saud by intriguing with the rebels."<sup>3</sup>

London was worried about the consequences of Faisal's intrigue which could make Ibn Saud's position "far from good". Thus Faisal's attitude was regarded as a breach of his obligations to the British Government. According to article 4 of the 1922 treaty, Faisal was to be guided by Britain's advice on all important matters affecting her international obligations and her friendly treaty relations with Ibn Saud. It was agreed that Faisal must

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1. See: Al-Manar, xxx (1929-30) pp.396-98; Helms, The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia, Evolution of Political Identity, (London 1981) pp.238-42.
  2. Minute by Stonehewer-Bird, 23 Oct. 1929, E5422/2322, F.O. 371/13738.
  3. Minute by Butler, 24 Oct. 1929, op.cit.



be pressurised to respect his obligations. Accordingly he now agreed "to maintain a scrupulously correct attitude in conformity with H.M.G. policy in regard to Ibn Saud". But London remained alarmed by the threat of the Iraqi backed Shammar. The danger which they continued to pose to Ibn Saud's regime was harmful to Britain's prestige in the area. As Butler minuted on 24 October:

"It is difficult to foresee how the fall of Ibn Saud would react on Arab feeling towards the British. But suspicion that we have treacherously connived at it would be likely to prejudice our own position, and perhaps ultimately that of King Faisal also."<sup>1</sup>

Britain's fears stemmed from intelligence reports about a "most secret" plot against Ibn Saud engineered by the rebels in co-operation with other elements from Shammar and Rwala with the help of Baghdad. The plot was leaked to Dickson by a reliable Mutair leader, whose source was al-Dowaish himself.<sup>2</sup> Faisal was once again caught in the act of disobeying British instructions. Shaikh Ahmad's attitude, it was argued, was "better" than Faisal's.<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid. The C.O. put pressure on King Faisal by refusing permission for his father to leave Cyprus. Thus Faisal was forced to work harmoniously with British policy.
  2. Dickson to the Resident (Bushire), (undated), op.cit.; American Vice Consul (Baghdad) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 31 Oct. 1929, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., iii, p.54.
  3. Minute by Butler, 1 Nov. 1929, E5127/4032/91, F.O. 371/13740. Butler repeated that "we may agree to do our best for him" (Shaikh Ahmad) in securing "an honourable settlement" in his dispute with Ibn Saud over Zakat and other commercial matters.



Britain's success in isolating the rebels, by denying them any aid or support, forced al-Dowaish to make another appeal to Shaikh Ahmad. At the end of October he travelled directly to Kuwait to confront the Shaikh. Refusing to meet him, Shaikh Ahmad sent his brother 'Abd - Allah to make contact and to obtain from him as much information as possible, without giving any promise for further meetings. 'Abd - Allah followed his instructions and accordingly al-Dowaish agreed to leave at dawn on 1 November.<sup>1</sup> At that meeting al-Dowaish made three specific requests for transmission to the British Government:

1. that the families of the Ikhwan were to be given assurances that they would not be molested while in Nejd territory,
2. that if those families were attacked by Ibn Saud, would they be given permission to enter Kuwait?
3. Knowledge of British reaction if his forces were to destroy or capture any of Ibn Saud's aeroplanes.

These requests were immediately communicated to London through Bushire on 2 November.<sup>2</sup>

London took al-Dowaish seriously. His requests were added to the agenda of an Interdepartmental meeting which was being held on 4 November. The meeting reached the

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1. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1929, F.O. 370/13728.
  2. C.O. to F.O., 3 Nov. 1929, E5655/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.316.

following conclusions:

"They [H.M.G.] do not feel called upon to indicate [the] attitude which they would adopt in circumstances referred to by him [al-Dowaish], but as regards his point 2 assurances given to Ibn Saud preclude grant of refuge to Dowaish's women in Kuwait or Iraq. As regards his point 3 they would take a very serious view of failure on his part to treat with full consideration any British personnel that might fall into his hands."<sup>1</sup>

In communicating the above statement to al-Dowaish, London expressed to Shaikh Ahmad the desire that:

"It would be made clear that they [H.M.G.] were not prepared to enter into any further discussions with him [al-Dowaish], he should be warned that if he himself or any of his emissaries crossed the Kuwait frontier again they would be liable to arrest, or any other action that might be considered necessary."<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Ibn Saud was asked to "take effective measures to prevent the crossing of the Iraq or Kuwait frontiers by the rebels or their women and children."<sup>3</sup> This gesture of good faith was appreciated by Ibn Saud, but it is not clear how Ibn Saud could prevent the rebels from crossing the frontier while maintaining his own pressure upon them. Nevertheless Britain's attitude, as Dickson concluded, "marked the collapse of the rebellion".<sup>4</sup>

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1. C.O. telegrams to the Resident (Bushire) 6 Nov. 1929, E5655/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738. See also: Minute by Rendel, 6 Nov. op.cit.

2. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1929, F.O. 371/13728

3. Ibid.

4. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.316.



Ibn Saud, having recovered from his October campaign against 'Utaibah in Southern Nejd was now, in mid November, busily preparing for a similar campaign against 'Ujman and Mutair. On 29 November this Communiqué was issued:

"After the brilliant success achieved in the punitive expeditions against the rebels ... the King has given orders to all the forces to proceed to the frontier regions where the remnant of the rebels have sought shelter, so that decisive measures may be taken against them ... within a few days the punitive operations<sub>1</sub> will have [been] brought to a successful issue ...."

In order to prepare the political ground for his campaign Ibn Saud had sent Hafez Wahba to Kuwait, without previous notification, to discuss the situation with Shaikh Ahmad and to keep a close watch on its development.<sup>2</sup> Meanwhile, Ibn Saud's plan was made known to the British Agent at Kuwait. The Baghdad Times reported that Wahba went to Kuwait to discuss a blockade of al-Dowaish and that Ibn Saud would personally lead his forces in the battle, while British aeroplanes which had already been sent to Ibn Saud would be used in the offensive and would be piloted by four British Officers.<sup>3</sup> In fact Wahba's presence in Kuwait complicated the situation.

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1. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1929, F.O. 371/13728; also: Dec. 1929, F.O. 371/14460; Umm al-Qura, No. 258, 29 Nov. 1929.

2. Bond to F.O. 8 Nov. 1929, E5783/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738. See also: Dickson Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.317.

3. See: American Consul (Baghdad) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 10 Jan. 1930, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., iii, p.58. For purchase by Ibn Saud of aeroplanes see: American Vice Consul (Aden) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 27 Feb. 1930, Ibid ., p.69.



rather than helped to solve it. The Shaikh was suspicious about his sudden appearance. Although London appreciated the Shaikh's misgivings, it was difficult to deport Wahba from Kuwait or even to protest against such a petty matter officially.<sup>1</sup>

The strong pressure put on al-Dowaish led to rumours that he

"had decided to submit to Ibn Saud, partly as a result of the collapse of the Ataibah but chiefly because of H.M.G. uncompromising reply to his questions ..."

He "had given up all hope of receiving support from Kuwait or Iraq, and had, therefore decided to open negotiations with Ibn Saud while still strong and undefeated, especially as the Mutair were pressing him to adopt this course."<sup>2</sup>

In fact, Ibn Saud, who was still favoured a peaceful solution, took the initiative and sent al-Dowaish an offer of reconciliation conditional upon his return to the fold. Taking advantage of this suitable opportunity al-Dowaish enquired about Ibn Saud's terms. But before receiving any reply al-Dowaish put his own conditions for surrender; that he could purchase necessary supplies from wherever he liked, that he would not be asked to meet Ibn Saud, and that his people would be allowed to lead a nomadic life in the future.<sup>3</sup>

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1. See: The Resident (Bushire) 15 Dec.; C.O. to F.O. 17 Dec. 1929, E 5695/2322/91; C.O. to F.O. 27 Dec. 1929; F.O. to C.O., 7 Jan. 1930, E 6762/2322/91, F.O. 371/13739.
  2. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.
  3. Ibid.

Ibn Saud, whose reply was sent to al-Dowaish through the British Agent at Jeddah on 23 November, gave a vague answer referring the matter to the Shari'a and threatening that he would attack in force not only the rebels but also Kuwait.<sup>1</sup> This threat alarmed the British, whose concern about the security of Kuwait was well known to Ibn Saud. It was based upon formal recognition by Ibn Saud of Britain's special position in Kuwait under article 6 of the Treaty of Jeddah concluded only a year ago.

Ibn Saud's threat to Kuwait was mainly caused by his anger at Shaikh Ahmad's sympathetic treatment of the Ikhwan, Equally he was, as he wrote Dickson on 17 November, angry at Dickson's failure to force the Shaikh to obey British instructions and at the leaking of the secret information with which he had furnished the Agent. Moreover he claimed that he had evidence that the rebels had been guided by high authorities in Iraq and Kuwait. He pointed out that he had made a conciliatory gesture to the Ikhwan although admittedly at the same time setting his forces in motion. He requested Britain to approve either of the following alternatives:

- "a) That Kuwait subjects should be ordered to collect in a given place, far removed from any likely zone of hostilities, and that they should be informed of the place selected. The Kuwait Government should then man the

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1. Bond to F.O. 24 Nov. 1929, E6109/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.

frontier with a sufficient force to repel the rebels and to drive them back as far as they can, even pursuing them in Nejd territory itself. If any rebel succeeds in crossing the frontier he should be siezed and handed over. If this alternative were adopted it would then be unnecessary for him to cross into Kuwait territory himself. Liaison officers should be attached to the two forces engaged in dealing with the rebels."

- "b) If this is not agreed to he proposed that the subjects of Kuwait should be ordered to concentrate in only locality as above and that he should be at liberty to pursue the rebels anywhere. He would then take upon himself to protect the subjects of neighbouring countries from aggression, and he would undertake to withdraw every single soldier as soon<sup>1</sup> as the pursuit of the rebels was at an end."

Ibn Saud warned that if neither alternative was acceptable, he would give up his punitive measures and would take no responsibility for any Ikhwan aggressive action.<sup>2</sup>

On 28 and 29 November two interdepartmental meetings were held at the Foreign Office to consider the line of action which should be recommended. The India Office, supported by the Foreign Office, recommended that the reply should be "as conciliatory as possible", but the Colonial Office preferred it to be "more stiffly" worded. The India and Foreign Offices appreciated Ibn Saud's legitimate grievance which had been expressed not only by himself but also in an Air Ministry study of the situation. The meeting agreed that

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1. Jeddah Report, Nov. 1929, F.O. 371/13728.

2. Bond to F.O. (undated) E6169/2322/91, F.O. 371/13738.



"there is no doubt that the British authorities in Kuwait have gone somewhat too far in negotiating with Ibn Saud's rebels". It was also agreed that Britain "should not allow Ibn Saud's implications that they had shown bad faith to pass unchallenged", and in order to avoid the repetition of such allegations, it was decided to send a warning to Ibn Saud "against the acceptance of reports from interested and unreliable sources".<sup>1</sup> Accordingly, a long telegram was sent to Ibn Saud in which London stressed their good faith in handling his problems, and reminded him of the military help they had provided and of their refusal, as agreed not to give any guarantees that the rebels' women and children might remain in the neighbouring states. In reply to Ibn Saud's specific requests of 17 November, he was informed that in addition to the stringent measures already pursued, further steps had been taken to meet his wishes and to express Britain's readiness "to co-operate wholeheartedly" with him in the establishment of peace and order in his dominions. He was also informed that instructions had been given to secure the removal of all Kuwaiti tribes and the 'Awasim refugees from the disturbed neighbouring areas and to secure the concurrence and co-operation of the Shaikh of

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1. Quotes from: Memo. by Rendel, 30 Nov. 1929 E6205/2322/91, F.O. 371/13739. The reference here is to Philby who became 'a definite enemy of H.M.G. in the public press'. His position as an anti-British confidential adviser to Ibn Saud was difficult to deal with. See minute by Rendel, 29 Nov. 1929; see also Daily News 2 Dec. and Daily Herald 4 Dec. 1929, for Philby's articles.

Kuwait and the Government of Iraq and Transjordan in military efforts to prevent the Ikhwan from entering their territories. It was finally emphasised that London could under no circumstances allow Ibn Saud's forces to cross the frontier into neighbouring countries. Any such attempt might result in conflict with British forces.<sup>1</sup>

Sufficiently reassured by this British reaction, Ibn Saud launched his assault against the rebels. Al-Dowaish, who had been evicted from Kuwait with his followers by British forces, had been preparing but without any success for a counter attack. His followers suffered a partial defeat. Now at the beginning of December, he and other Ikhwan leaders found themselves in a hopeless situation. Resistance seemed impossible and he could only look for peace. According to Glubb three courses appeared to be open to him. The first was to surrender to Ibn Saud unconditionally and to seek his mercy. As Ibn Saud had already declared, he would then refer the matter to the Shari'a. "A second possible course was to attempt to break through to Transjordan or Syria", where he might be able to gain sympathy. A third and preferable course was to obtain asylum in Iraq. This course, if agreed upon, would offer the Ikhwan safety either on a permanent basis or pending return to their homeland once peace was made

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1. F.O. to Bond, 30 Nov. 1929, E6205/2322/91, F.O. 371/13739. By mid Dec., the Resident in the Gulf reported: the Neutral Zone was gradually evacuated and Ibn Saud was assured. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1929, F.O. 371/14460.

with Ibn Saud. In the event al-Dowaish, followed by some of the other leaders, first turned towards the Iraqi frontiers. Then on 13 December he sent a deputation to negotiate with the British and the Iraqis seeking friendship and protection. In his letter, addressed to Glubb, al-Dowaish threatened that, if his offer was not accepted, he would find sanctuary in Transjordan. Glubb understood that al-Dowaish's deputation "had been sent as much to ascertain our strength as to negotiate for terms". Glubb gave no immediate reply, but he seemed in favour of reaching an agreement. As he later stated: "never indeed, during the previous eight years of terror, had we dreamed of so dramatic a turning of the tables".<sup>1</sup>

The British and the Iraqis were now convinced that intensive work must be done to resist any Ikhwan adventure into Iraq. Accordingly a senior police officer was appointed to organise Iraqi police in the frontier area. He was instructed by Baghdad to dismiss the Ikhwan deputation and to halt any further intercourse with the rebels. "Thus the rebels' hopes of obtaining asylum in Iraq had been destroyed at a blow and there seemed to be a possibility that they would now adopt the alternative course of breaking through to the West". Apparently, "the Ikhwan were unable to make

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1. Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.311-15; See also: F.O. to C.O., 31 Dec. 1929, E6687/2322/91, F.O. 371/13739 .



up their minds on any united course of action",<sup>1</sup> but later it was reported that al-Dowaish had tried to win a positive reply from the French to a similar appeal - but to no avail.<sup>2</sup>

The rapidly deteriorating conditions of the Ikhwan caused some fear among the Baghdad authorities that the rebels might, under stress of shortage of food and water, attack Iraqi tribes and cause chaos in the southern desert. Therefore it was decided that "the rebels must be allowed to use the wells in the Neutral Area". In the meanwhile British and Iraqi forces were redeployed to frustrate any sudden offensive.<sup>3</sup> Permission to the rebels to enter the neutral zone could be interpreted on humanitarian grounds rather than as a breach of promise to Ibn Saud.

Only Ibn Mashhour crossed the Iraqi borders and refused to move. He and his followers were disarmed and surrendered on 24 December. As an R.A.F. Officer reported, he was "our Christmas present to Iraq".<sup>4</sup> By 29 December al-Dowaish and his followers had been routed by the forces of Ibn Saud's loyal Harb tribe assisted by Iraqi tribes. In the meanwhile the R.A.F., Iraqi forces and Kuwaiti forces were rounding up

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1. Ibid., pp.317-18.

2. American Consul (Baghdad) to the Sec. of State (Washington) 10 Jan. 1930, al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., iii, p.59; The Times, 7, 10 January 1929.

3. Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.318-20.

4. See: R.A.F. (Iraq) to the Air Ministry (London) 24 Dec. 1929, E6761/2322/91, F.O. 371/13739; High Commissioner (Iraq) to C.O., 30 Dec. 1929, E1/1/91, F.O. 371/14449.

the Mutair fugitives on the borders.<sup>1</sup> By the end of the month most of the remaining rebels, by now in total disarray, escaped across Iraqi borders and refused to leave as Ibn Mashhur had done earlier. Glubb wrote:

"The British and Iraq Governments, which had pledged themselves to Ibn Saud not to give asylum to the rebels, were finding the task less simple than they thought."<sup>2</sup>

The R.A.F. Commodore, on Glubb's advice, proposed as follows to the authorities in Baghdad:

"The principal leaders were to surrender themselves and be interned. They would not subsequently be handed back to Ibn Saud, unless he agreed to spare their lives. Should he refuse to do so, they would be made to reside at a distance from the Iraq-Nejd frontier, both the British and the Iraq Governments guaranteeing that they would not be allowed to return to Nejd on the frontier area ..."<sup>3</sup>

Baghdad agreed to the former suggestion but insisted that the leaders "would not, in any event, be handed back to Ibn Saud". Indeed, Baghdad's policies were confusing. Earlier they had rejected al-Dowaish's appeal to negotiate; his deputation had been dismissed and the frontier authorities had been banned from making any future contact. But later the rebels had been permitted to enter the neutral zone. Now when frontier authorities had suggested obtaining assurances from Ibn Saud to spare their lives, Baghdad appeared unwilling to let them go. Glubb wrote:

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1. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1929, F.O. 371/14460; The Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 23 Dec. 1929; C.O. to F.O., 27 Dec. 1929, E6763/2322/91, F.O. 371/13739.

2. Glubb, War in the Desert, p.324.

3. Ibid., pp.324-5.



"It seemed as though conflicting policies were giving rise to these vacillation. King Faisal doubtless wished to make matters easy for the rebels, because they were the enemies of Ibn Saud ... The British and to a lesser extent, the Iraq ministers, were anxious only for peace and reconciliation, and desired to appease Ibn Saud. Neither King Faisal, nor the Iraqi or the British authorities seemed to me to give enough thought to the Iraq tribes, which had suffered so many losses and massacres at the hands of the Ikhwan."<sup>1</sup>

Al-Dowaish was contacted at the beginning of the new year about the British and Iraqi intentions and was given time to think about them. When he made no reply by 3 January 1930, he was notified that he was understood to have rejected the Anglo-Iraqi offer and that he and his followers "must consequently evacuate Iraq and Kuwait territory by dawn on 5 January". On that day the rebels fled into Kuwait in absolute chaos and misery not for fear of being bombed by the R.A.F. but because of the presence of Ibn Saud's army in the vicinity. Glubb later described his feelings as follows:

"As a man, I found something painful and humiliating in seeing other human beings reduced to such a state of abject fear. The ... dislike which we instinctively feel at striking a man who is already beaten made me apprehensive of the possibility that we might be ordered to fire on this panic-stricken horde, or that we should hand them over to Ibn Saud to be butchered before our eyes. Yet at the same time I could not but remember how often I had seen our own Iraq tribes in just such terror-stricken flight, intent on escaping from massacre by these same pitiless Ikhwan whom we now saw before us. This was poetic justice indeed - but far from feeling satisfaction, I felt distressed."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid., p.225.

2. Ibid., pp.229-30.



However, Glubb was ordered to round up the fleeing rebels in Kuwait with the help of the R.A.F. On the same day Yousuf Yasin presented Glubb with a letter from Ibn Saud in which he asked about the measures which the British Government would take "to fulfill their pledge not to allow the rebels to enter Kuwait". Glubb was not concerned about what had happened in Kuwait, but he privately assured Yasin that the British Government "were determined to take every step to fulfill their pledges". Pressing his point, Yasin wrote out two wireless messages to the High Commissioner in Baghdad and to the Resident in the Gulf. In both he requested "that the rebels be evicted from Kuwait or that Ibn Saud be given permission to enter Kuwait to attack them". If any of these requests was not accepted, he continued, Britain would be shouldered with responsibility for the consequences.<sup>1</sup> On 6 January, the Resident was instructed to explain to Ibn Saud that the only reason for the delay in implementing this undertaking was that the Ikhwan forces were accompanied by their women and children, but Britain would take the necessary steps to overcome the difficulties.<sup>2</sup>

In Kuwait, Dickson tried on 7 January to persuade al-Dowaish

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1. Ibid., pp.231-32.

2. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.

"to surrender to the R.A.F. and not attempt to break through, as he intended doing, and risk confrontation with Ibn Saud's forces lying in wait for him on the southern frontier of Kuwait. I left him unpersuaded."<sup>1</sup>

The following telegram describes the situation before the actual surrender of al-Dowaish:

"... Dowaish and Ibn Lami with followers located by Political Agent in Kuwait in vicinity [of] Jahra. The Chief Staff Officer is taking concerted action with Political Agent Kuwait to effect their arrest tomorrow. 7 January Ibn Saud with a force reported 8000 strong arrived Kharjah. At Ubaid Glubb is camped with police ..."<sup>2</sup>

Indeed, there was nowhere for al-Dowaish to go. The other Ikhwan leaders had already surrendered and now, powerless to take any action, he yet again appealed in final desperation to the Resident for mercy. On 9 January, the day of his surrender, he wrote a message to the effect that: "if only a ray of hope [were] given that he would not be handed over by H.M.G. to Ibn Saud and to his death, he would surrender to me at once". The Resident noted the sympathy which Shaikh Ahmad felt when he stated his readiness to "offer Ibn Saud all Kuwait camels for the life of al-Dowaish".<sup>3</sup> By the end of the day al-Dowaish surrendered to the R.A.F. unconditionally. Before being taken to a British ship, pending a final decision, he emotionally appealed to Dickson

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1. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, pp.319-20.

2. R.A.F. (Iraq) to the Air Ministry (London) 7 Jan. 1930. E135/1/91; The Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 9 Jan. 1929, E164/1/91, F.O. 371/14449. See also: Glubb, War in the Desert, pp.331-37; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.319.

3. The Resident (Bushire) to C.O. 9 January 1930, E149/1/91, F.O. 371/14449.

saying "I hand my ladies to your personal charge, O Dickson, and from my protective honour to your protective honour".<sup>1</sup> Thus, the 9th of January witnessed the extinction of the final spark of the Ikhwan revolt when the main portion of the 'Ujman and Mutair also surrendered to the R.A.F.<sup>2</sup>

The surrender of the Ikhwan while ending the rebellion, led to controversy over the interpretation of previous British undertakings to hand the rebels back to Ibn Saud. Ibn Mashhour's case was long debated. He and his followers were of the Rwalah tribe whom the British and Iraqi Governments reckoned to be Syrian subjects. Therefore, they were not deemed to be covered by the pledge given to Ibn Saud.<sup>3</sup> Ibn Saud regarded this as a deliberate attempt by Iraq based on fabricated evidence to strengthen its bargaining position vis à vis Nejd. Inevitably the British became involved. Ibn Saud insisted as he did before, that the failure to bomb the rebels while in Iraqi territory, or to hand them back soon after indicated the existence of a plot against him. By refusing to allow him to cross the borders Britain in effect had protected the rebels.<sup>4</sup> A protracted debate now began over the conditions on which the Ikhwan should be handed back to

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1. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.320.

2. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1930, F.O. 371/14460; Al-Manar, xxx (1929-30), pp.634-35.

3. See: Glubb, War in the Desert, p.321.

4. See: Bond to F.O., 12 January 1930, E221; 13 January 1930, E234/1/91, F.O. 371/14449.



Ibn Saud. The British were increasingly alarmed that Ibn Saud would kill them immediately should they be returned. The British consequently sought to retain them in Kuwait until satisfactory guarantees were obtained.<sup>1</sup> Personal contact with him seemed to be more fruitful than any other method of communication. Ibn Saud agreed to receive a British delegation, meanwhile, his Minister for Foreign Affairs, unaware of this latest step, continued to condemn the British for breach of faith until eventually his attention was drawn to Dickson's proposed mission. Clearly Britain preferred not to reply Ibn Saud's earlier allegations or to those of Hamza until after the planned meeting.<sup>2</sup>

Dickson suggested that Shaikh Ahmad should accompany him on his mission in order to "enable the Shaikh to recover prestige lost owing to recent actions of H.M.G." in Kuwait.<sup>3</sup> Since such a settlement should also include Iraq, the High Commissioner advised that negotiations over the return of the rebels to Ibn Saud should be protracted "until H.M.G. have settled [with Ibn Saud] conditions which should include reparation for losses caused to Iraq and Kuwait".<sup>4</sup>

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1. The Resident (Bushire) to C.O., 3 Jan. 1930; C.O. to F.O. 3 January 1930, E49; C.O. to F.O., 9 January 1930, E157/1/91, F.O. 371/14449.
  2. Bond to F.O., 11 Jan. 1930, E201/1/91, F.O. 371/14449; Jeddah Report, Jan. 1930, F.O. 371/14460; The Times, 11 Jan. 1930.
  3. C.O. to F.O., 10 Jan. 1930, E169/1/91, F.O. 371/14449.
  4. High Commissioner (Iraq) to C.O., 10 Jan. 1930; C.O. to F.O., 11 Jan. 1930, E197/1/91, F.O. 371/14449.

The matter was so "delicate" that immediate discussions at the highest levels followed in London. There it was decided that the mission to Ibn Saud should be led by Sir Hugh Biscoe, Political Resident at Bushire, who was instructed on 16 January to

"assume personal charge of the mission to Ibn Saud, and should take with him H.M. Political Agent at Kuwait, and, subject to the consent of the High Commissioner in Iraq, Air Commodore Burnett, to whose presence as a military advisor H.M.G. attached great importance ... Having regard to the fact that the assistance and co-operation of the British Military forces had been the determining factor in the suppression of the revolt, they could not but take exception to the tone of recent communications from Ibn Saud and from the Hejaz Government. In the circumstances they were of opinion that a dignified and stiff remonstrance was called for. They considered it to be preferable, however, that this should be conveyed by word of mouth rather than by written communication."<sup>1</sup>

Biscoe was also instructed to inform Ibn Saud that the British Government had never agreed to hand over the rebels who might surrender, and that the single reason which had prevented the British Government from expelling the rebels prior to their surrender, as he (Ibn Saud) had suggested, was the fact that they were accompanied by their women and children against whom military action could not be taken. Most importantly Biscoe was also told that London laid great stress on the necessity of obtaining from Ibn Saud "written and binding" guarantees that, if the Ikhwan leaders were handed over, their lives and those of their relatives would be spared, that any

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1. C.O. to the Resident (Bushire), 16 Jan. 1930, 79006, C.O. 732/42.

punishment inflicted would not be excessive or such as to outrage Arab sentiment or run counter to British tradition and that effective measures would be taken to eliminate the possibility of Iraq or Kuwait suffering further at their hands. The alternative was the deportation of the Ikhwan leaders and their immediate entourage, a course which was objectionable on various grounds. Britain aimed at a general compromise based on humanitarian considerations. The question of Ibn Mashhour was regarded by Britain as a separate issue, Biscoe was instructed not to mention this particular topic until Ibn Saud did. Only then was Ibn Saud to be told that Ibn Mashhour was, for the time being, "in the custody of the Iraq Government, and that the question of his ultimate disposal could better be handled at subsequent meetings with King Faisal".<sup>1</sup> This last hint was the first direct indication of the need for a meeting between the two Kings since the crisis began in 1927.

Soon after, Biscoe met Ibn Saud and discussed with him the principal British desiderata upon which the King agreed on 26 January.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly letters embodying these conclusions were exchanged. The gist of Ibn Saud's letter was summarised by Bond as follows:

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.
  2. Report by Biscoe, 21 Jan. 1930, E1081/1/91, F.O. 371/14451; Biscoe to C.O., 22 Jan. 1930, 79006, C.O. 732/42; Umm al-Qura, No. 269, 31 Jan. 1930; Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, pp.323-24



"Although the rebel leaders and their followers deserve punishment for their offences, in deference to the wishes of His Majesty's Government he undertakes to spare their lives.

While it is his prerogative to punish them, any punishment awarded will be 'saturated with the spirit of kindness and mercy', but he reserves the right to recover from them any plunder that they may have taken.

He promises categorically to prevent any raids in the future by Mutair. Ajman or any other Nejd tribes into Iraq or Koweit territory. Should any such raids occur, he agrees to effect a settlement without delay under machinery provided for in the Bahra Agreement in the case of Iraq and to restore immediately anything plundered from Koweit in accordance with customs current between Koweit and Nejd. He is ready to negotiate an agreement with Koweit similar to the Bahra Agreement should the sheikh desire it

He agrees to settle all past claims by a tribunal provided for in the Bahra Agreement in the case of Iraq, and in accordance with current practice in the case of Koweit, provided that all the Mutair and Ajman and their followers and property at present in the hands of British military authorities are returned to Nejd territory. In view of the friendship existing between him and His Majesty's Government, he agrees to pay £10,000 through Jedda on the 5th Shawal (March 3) as compensation to tribesmen in Koweit and Iraq in anticipation of the final settlement of the account. Finally, he agrees to appoint a representative to the Bahra Agreement tribunal at any time one month after the receipt of a request to do so, the month of Haj (pilgrimage) being excluded."<sup>1</sup>

The mission returned to Kuwait on 27 January, and on the following day the rebel leaders were flown back

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.

to Ibn Saud under Dickson's personal charge.<sup>1</sup> The King was pleased and immediately wrote to Biscoe conveying his gratitude. As Bond reported:

"He expressed himself as being deeply grateful to His Majesty's Government for fulfilling their pledges so faithfully, and as being confident that the future relations between ... [H.M.G.] and Nejd would be strengthened and established more firmly than ever ... the act of H.M.G. would assist him in carrying out his engagements and in preserving peace on his boundaries ..."<sup>2</sup>

Britain indeed was as eager for peace as Ibn Saud. Now, with no more Ikhwan rebels to interrupt the development of friendly Anglo-Saudi relations, the first step towards a comprehensive peace in the region had been taken.

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1. Dickson, Kuwait and Her Neighbours, p.324.

2. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.

## CHAPTER SIX

### Peace-Making between Ibn Saud and the Hashemites, 1930-1932

- The Meeting of the Kings, 22/23 February 1930
- MacDonnell's Investigations into Raids and Counter - Raids between the Hejaz-Nejd and Transjordan, March - December 1930
- Glubb - Ibn Zeid Meetings 1931
- The Peace-Making between 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud, 1932



### The Meeting of the Kings 22/23 February 1930.

The surrender of the Ikhwan rebels had resolved one of the major problems affecting Anglo-Saudi relations. The other major problem yet to be solved was accommodation between the Saudis and the Hashemites. In fact, several attempts made since 1922, had failed.. But the appointment of Clayton in 1925 as a special envoy to Ibn Saud had enabled him to appreciate the depth of the bitter feud which had grown between the then Sultan of Nejd and the Hashemites. After his early mission in 1925, over matters in which the Hashemites were directly involved, he had again negotiated with Ibn Saud in 1927 and in 1928. Unlike any other British official he managed to get to the heart of the problems facing Ibn Saud, who was surrounded by enemies, sponsored by Britain, in Iraq, in Transjordan and in Kuwait. This obviously impeded friendly relationships with British authorities there. When in 1929 Clayton took up the post of the High Commissioner in Iraq, this was intended to persuade Ibn Saud that he had a friend at Baghdad. Previously he had always regarded British officials there as enemies. Now he felt more secure and decided to punish the unlawful movements inside his territories for the benefit of the stability of his regime and indirectly for the benefit of British interests in the mandates. Consequently, bridges for better relations began to be built, not only between

between Britain and Ibn Saud but also between him and the Hashemite rulers in the mandated territories. Clayton, however, died two months before the collapse of the Ikhwan rebellion and it was left to Sir Francis Humphr-ys, the new High Commissioner, to bring Faisal and Ibn Saud together. George Antonius who had helped Clayton's diplomacy wrote in 1930, immediately after the meeting between Ibn Saud and Faisal, that,

"the era of better understanding which this Conference heralds must for ever be associated with the memory of the late Sir Gilbert Clayton ... the project of bringing about a meeting and reconciliation between the two monarchs was conceived by him as long ago as the autumn of 1925, on the conclusion of his first visit as British plenipotentiary to the ruler of Nejd."<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that Britain had always been anxious to achieve peace and understanding between Iraq and Nejd. Now, in the absence of the Ikhwan factor, the atmosphere was more favourable. Indeed, all the parties concerned desired a relief from the state of chaos and confusion which had begun with the advent of Hashemite rulers to Iraq and Transjordan, with the arrival of the Ikhwan in the vicinity of these newly established states, and with the establishment of British Mandates over them. Britain's interest in promoting pacification seemed clear. As The Times of 18 January 1930 commented:

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1. The Times, 28 Feb. 1930.

"Our special relations with Iraq, the natural interest of our Moslem fellow subjects in India and Africa in the prosperity of the Kingdom of the Hejaz, the Holy Land of Islam, explain the hopeful interest which the meeting of the Kings arouses among the many English speaking men whom War, Commerce or travel have brought into contact with the Arabs since 1914."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the initiative for such a meeting was taken by the Iraqis on 28 December 1929. Ibn Saud was then in pursuit of the Ikhwan rebels in the vicinity of the Iraqi frontier. Urgently and confidentially Naji al-Suwaidi, the Iraqi Prime Minister wrote, at Faisal's instructions, to the High Commissioner that:

"it is necessary at present to settle the outstanding questions between Iraq and Nejd ... Ibn Saud is now engaged with the rebels near the Iraq borders, this is a good opportunity to meet him."<sup>2</sup>

Humphr\_ys later reported that Faisal was:

"so impressed with the necessity for siezing this opportunity of making friendly overtures to a neighbouring King on his borders that he was ready to meet Ibn Saud ..."<sup>3</sup>

Britain was requested to convey an invitation to Ibn Saud. Al-Suwaidi explained that Faisal was "very anxious to try and dissipate the existing atmosphere of distrust between the Iraq and Nejd Governments by a personal meeting with Ibn Saud and suggested that Sir F. Humphr\_ys should also be present".

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1. The Times, 18 Feb. 1930.

2. Iraqi Prime Minister to the High Commissioner, 28 Dec. 1929, E621/111/91. F.O. 371/14462.

3. High Commissioner (Baghdad) to C.O., 7 Jan. 1930, E111/111/91, F.O. 371/14462.



The Iraqis sought to have the frontier question settled. Thus they suggested seven points for discussions. These were: the disposal of the rebel refugees, the return of the loot, the breaches of article 4 of the Bahrah agreement, the extradition treaty, the treaty of Bon Voisinage, the mutual recognition question and finally the desert posts.<sup>1</sup>

Not surprisingly, the British Government gave prompt support for the meeting. As Humphrys argued: "even if the Conference failed to solve any outstanding questions, the way might be prepared by personal contact for a better mutual understanding".<sup>2</sup> Only one point, the refugee question, seemed to be urgent.<sup>3</sup> London aimed at securing some progress here in order to encourage the old enemies to pursue the more difficult questions later and to persuade them that success was eventually possible. Accordingly the refugee question was raised at a preliminary meeting of Iraq and Nejd representatives in Kuwait. Although no decisions were reached at the meeting, it did at least clarify the issues involved.<sup>4</sup> More significantly the

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.

2. High Commissioner (Baghdad) to C.O., 29 Jan. 1930, E535/111/91, F.O. 371/14462.

3. C.O. to F.O., 8 Jan. 1930, E133/1/91, F.O. 371/14449.

4. See: Jeddah Report, Jan. and Feb. 1930, F.O. 371/14460; High Commissioner (Baghdad) to C.O. 29 Jan. 1930, E535/111/91, F.O. 371/14462.

peace initiative had clearly been welcomed by Ibn Saud,<sup>1</sup> and this opened the way for its active sponsorship on the part of the British authorities in the Middle East and in London. A flurry of communications, dealing with policy and practical arrangements followed between the Foreign Office, the Colonial Office, the India Office and the Admiralty.

The venue of the meeting was carefully considered, and it was finally suggested that a British ship would offer the most neutral ground. The Admiralty accordingly arranged to provide naval transport and a ship for the meeting. The High Commissioner for his part agreed to buy presents for the Kings from the Secret Service funds.<sup>2</sup> The preparations for the meeting were quickly and smoothly accomplished. This seemed to confirm that it was Britain who had persuaded Faisal to issue the invitation.<sup>3</sup> The scale of the preparations did not mean that Britain expected full agreement on every question at issue.

The Times optimistically commented:

"their personal distinction and charm ... make it certain that each will depart with a warm appreciation of the qualities of his rival ...<sup>4</sup> if only this is gained ... much will be gained."

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- 1, C.O. to F.O., 15 Feb. 1930, E854/111/91, F.O. 371/14462.
  2. Humphreys (Baghdad) to C.O., 6 Feb. 1930, C.O. to F.O. 7 Feb. 1930, E704/91, F.O. 371/14462; C.O. to Humphreys 12 Feb. 1930, C.O. to F.O. 14 Feb. 1930, E893/111/91, F.O. 371/14473.
  3. Al-Manar, xxx (1929-30) p.636.
  4. The Times, 18 Jan. 1930.

The Times also praised King Faisal for the gesture that he had made:

"whatever the issue of their conversations, King Faisal's decision - no easy one for an Arab ruler - to sacrifice a long-standing and romantic family feud to the wider interests of his Kingdom, will be gratefully remembered by the friends of peace."<sup>1</sup>

Humphreys had already reached similar conclusions when he reported that whatever they could agree upon "would not be prejudicial" to British interests.<sup>2</sup>

In Baghdad it had been settled that King Faisal would be accompanied by the following team of advisers: Naji al-Suwaidi, the Prime Minister; Sir F. Humphreys, the High Commissioner; Cornwallis, the advisor<sup>to</sup> the Ministry of Interior; Helt, the oriental secretary, and Glubb, the Administrative Inspector for the Southern Desert.<sup>3</sup>

The following guidelines were laid down:

1. The Iraqi Government was ready to accept arbitration on the question of posts.
2. King Faisal was to persuade Ibn Saud to accept the idea of a tribunal to adjudicate over matters in dispute between the frontier tribes.
3. He was also prepared to recognise Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Humphreys (Baghdad) to C.O., 16 Feb. 1930, E894/111/91, F.O. 371/14462.

3. The Times, 14 Feb. 1930.

4. Humphreys to C.O., 20 Feb. 1930, E966/111/91, F.O. 371/14462.



The meeting took place in the Gulf on board H.M.S. 'Lupin', 15 miles out to sea beyond the mouth of Shatt al-Arab on 22 and 23 February 1930. Arrangements had been made for the steam ship 'Patrick Stewart' to pick up King Ibn Saud at Ras-Tanura. An Iraqi ship brought King Faisal to the meeting. Ibn Saud brought with him a retinue of one hundred and eighteen, while Faisal was accompanied only by twelve. The first to come aboard H.M.S. 'Lupin' was Ibn Saud accompanied by his two principal Ministers, Hafez Wahba and Fuad Hamza and his private secretary, Yousuf Yasin, and three others. Faisal followed with a suite of the same number including his Prime Minister, Naji al-Suwaidi. When Humphreys brought the two Kings together, "they seemed to eye one another with a mixture of curiosity and suspicion, but embraced in Arab fashion with every outward appearance of cordiality".<sup>1</sup> Humphreys, on behalf of the British Government welcomed the Kings and opened the proceedings. In reply the two Kings expressed their appreciation of the endeavours of the British Government to further the cause of friendship between the two Arab countries.

Contrary to plan, Faisal made a lengthy statement on the relations between Iraq and Nejd which led to the crisis. Ibn Saud gave this speech "a patient and impassive hearing". He was reported as saying: "it was not his wish that the

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1. Humphreys to Passfield (C.O.) 15 March 1930, E2171/111/91, F.O. 371/14463.

friendliness of the meeting should be marred by the intrusion of controversial discussions". He commented that he had accepted the invitation to the meeting on the grounds that there would be no formal discussions. The meeting's purpose was to give each of them an opportunity of making the other's acquaintance. Humphrys, who was an astute diplomat, took Ibn Saud's comment to mean that the King had no intention of negotiating details in the presence of the delegates. He arranged for the delegates to withdraw leaving the two Kings alone with him and his oriental Secretary. The two Kings "opened their hearts to each other and confined themselves to questions of principle", while representatives from the two sides formed a committee to discuss the details of all the outstanding questions.<sup>1</sup>

On the following day, the Conference was resumed. The two Kings and Humphrys began by discussing the question of the posts. Ibn Saud rejected a suggestion that Britain should act as arbitrator. He correctly explained that since the British Government had already

"declared their views on the question of the interpretation of article 3 of the 'Uqair Protocol ... any arbitrator nominated by them would share their view and would be unable to approach the question with an open and unbiased mind."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid; The Times, 25 Feb. 1930.

2. Humphrys to Passfield, 15 March 1930, op.cit.

Instead, he suggested that the presiding arbitrator should be an Arab. Faisal in his turn rejected this proposal and withdrew leaving Humphreys alone with Ibn Saud. This private meeting resulted in a compromise suggested by Ibn Saud himself who agreed that the presiding arbitrator should be nominated by Britain, but on condition that "the parties should try once more during the next six months to find a solution which would be acceptable to both sides".<sup>1</sup> This was accepted and accordingly an exchange of letters between the Kings was undertaken. Bond reported that:

"... they would endeavour during the next six months to come to an agreement ... if they failed to agree, each King would appoint two representatives as arbitrators, and if an agreement were not then reached they undertook to accept as president any person designated by His Majesty's Government."<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud's rejection of the original arbitration proposal had been expected in London. Rendel had minuted, on 21 February 1930 only the day before the meeting, that Ibn Saud had always been ambitious, and that he "has never formally withdrawn his request that the arbitration should not only deal with the legality of the frontier posts, but should also consider a possible revision of the frontier ". Should the King maintain this stance, Rendel had argued, "we might find ourselves obliged to support the Iraq point

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1. Ibid.

2. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1930, F.O. 371/14460. See also: Humphreys to C.O. 23 Feb. 1930, E1076/111/91, F.O. 371/14463; Humphreys to C.O. 24 Feb. 1930, 79006, C.O. 732/42.



of view".<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud now assured Humphreys in private that "nothing should be done to interfere with the proper protection of the transdesert oil pipeline". He admitted that the posts "were quite harmless" to Nejd, but he maintained his opposition to them because he had pledged to his people that he would never accept the existence of the posts, and he "could not go back on his word".<sup>2</sup> The matter, as had been agreed, would hopefully be settled within six months.

The disposal of Ibn Mashhour, the last of the rebel leaders remaining in Iraq, was the next item on the agenda. The discussion was opened by Humphreys himself. Earlier at Baghdad, Faisal had told Humphreys that he needed no help from the High Commissioner in this matter because the question was one of Arab traditions and he felt confident of winning over Ibn Saud to his point of view. At the meeting, however, instead of arguing the case, Faisal declared that responsibility lay with the Mandatory Power. It was left to Humphreys to reiterate that the surrender of Ibn Mashhour had never been promised by a representative of His Majesty's Government, and that the question was one for settlement between Ibn Saud and King Faisal. To try and break the deadlock Humphreys brought the two kings together to discuss the question once again. Eventually, Ibn Saud agreed to pardon Ibn Mashhour

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1. Minute by Rendel 21 Feb. 1930, E966/111/91, F.O. 371/14463.

2. Humphreys to Passfield, 15 March 1930, op.cit.

while Faisal would insist that he should leave Iraq territory".<sup>1</sup>  
In the event, Ibn Mashhour was deported to Syria and subsequently pardoned by Ibn Saud; he returned to Nejd in 1931.<sup>2</sup>

The last important matter discussed by the Kings related to the claims that both had raised against each other as a result of the past raids,<sup>3</sup> starting from the Busaiyah raid of 1927. After hesitations on Ibn Saud's part it was agreed that a British representative "should preside over the tribunal which is to be set up under article 2 of the Bahrah Agreement ... the tribunal is to meet in Kuwait in June next".<sup>4</sup> Although Ibn Saud had already stated on 27 January 1930 that he was prepared to settle the claims arising out of the past raids, he now privately informed Humphr\_ys that

"he had no confidence whatever that the tribunal would be able to arrive at a settlement satisfactory to both parties; and he asked me to persuade King Faisal to name some reasonable sum which he would be prepared to pay in final settlement of all claims."<sup>5</sup>

Humphr\_ys promised to consider this proposal on his return to Baghdad, as such a step would avoid "much acrimonious and indeterminate wrangling".

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1. Quotes from: Ibid. See also; Humphr\_ys to C.O., 23 Feb. 1930 E1076/111/91, F.O. 371/14463.

2. Al-Sudani, al-ilagat al-iraqiyah al-saudiyah, 1920-31, p.340.

3. It had earlier been agreed that neither side should put claims for raids prior to the big raid on Busaiyah in Nov. 1927. The raids under discussion here are those from 1927 onwards.

4. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.

5. Humphr\_ys to Passfield, 15 March 1930, op.cit.

In the meanwhile, the committee of the Ministers had managed to prepare a draft agreement (the Bon-Voisinage) to which the Kings agreed in principle. This draft recognised Ibn Saud as King of "the Hejaz and Nejd" and Faisal as "King of Iraq". Moreover, diplomatic missions were to be exchanged. This draft was accepted only as the basis for a formal agreement which was to be concluded in three months time.<sup>1</sup> The draft caused some stormy discussions which nearly culminated in a violent explosion. Faisal, although he had agreed in principle to the recognition of Ibn Saud, was not prepared to use the title "King of the Hejaz" as an immediate mode of address.

"Faisal was furious with his Prime Minister for conceding ... the principle of recognition, which was meant to be embodied for the first time in the treaty of Bon Voisinage, and flatly refused to sign the letter".<sup>2</sup>

Humphr\ys mediation led to Faisal signing the letter in question but omitting the title. Instead he addressed Ibn Saud as "my dear brother".

The meeting of the Kings, although it only lasted for two days, in fact succeeded in tackling all the outstanding questions. Preliminary agreements were reached on many matters but no single issue was completely solved. The two Kings ended their conference with promises to achieve their

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.



various goals within the next six months.<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud regarded the conference as a victory. On his way back, he wrote to Humphreys, through the Political Agent at Bahrain, expressing his gratitude to him personally and to the British Government and asked for the fulfillment of the agreements made on board 'Lupin' especially those concerned with recognition.<sup>2</sup> In reply, Humphreys expressed the hope that the meeting would "pave the way to permanent friendly relations between the two Kings and a satisfactory settlement of all outstanding questions."<sup>3</sup>

The conference was a major triumph for Humphreys and a notable success for British policy. It ended an era of feud and hatred and opened a new era of friendship. It was a landmark in the history of Arabia. As Faisal said when he shook hands with Ibn Saud for the first time, "I am not now Faisal Ibn al-Husain talking to Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, but I am the King of Iraq and you are the King of the Hejaz and Nejd ..."<sup>4</sup> Indeed Faisal was deliberately

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibn Saud to Humphreys, 25 Feb. 1930, E2171/111/91, F.O. 371/14463.

3. Humphreys to Ibn Saud, 27 Feb. 1930, op.cit. Humphreys wrote a similar letter to King Faisal on 28 Feb. 1930, E1778/111/91, F.O. 371/14463.

4. Quoted in: al-Saudani, al-ilalat al-irakiyah al-Saudiyah, 1920-31, p.336. Later in Aug. 1932, and after the Ibn Rifada Plot against Ibn Saud, King Faisal told Humphreys that as Faisal Ibn al-Husain, Ibn Saud must always be his enemy, but as Faisal King of Iraq, he would always put his country's interests before those of his House (Humphreys to Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister, 2 Aug. 1932).

trying to oblivate memories of the past feud between the two families. Not surprisingly he was congratulated by the British Government for his foresight and flexibility. Humphreys, too, received a message of thanks for securing a successful end to the conference.<sup>1</sup> The British Government had indeed cause to be grateful for this almost unbelievable achievement.

The conference, however, did not pass without criticism. Some of those who had witnessed the long feud between the Saudis and the Hashemites belittled the results of the conference which, as they argued, would be ephemeral. And indeed, although the conference was characterised by much outward show of cordiality, Ibn Saud in private conversations with Humphreys continued to express his distrust of Faisal.<sup>2</sup> Humphreys was fully aware that the Kings still regarded each other with the deepest suspicion, but he remained confident that even if nothing spectacular had been achieved "each King will be more ready in future to move more distance towards meeting the point of view of the other".<sup>3</sup> In this diagnosis he proved correct.

Among those best qualified by knowledge and experience to comment, George Antonius expressed his appreciation in a

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1. C.O. to Humphreys, 27 Feb. 1930, 79006, C.O. 732/42.
  2. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.
  3. Humphreys to Passfield, 15 March 1930, E2171/111/91, F.O. 371/14463

letter to The Times on 26 February.

"All students and friends of Arabia", he wrote, "will be grateful for the admirable survey of the recent conference on board H.M.S. Lupin which appeared in today's issue of The Times. The importance of that conference could scarcely be over-estimated. Its significance is not only in its paper results ... but also, and perhaps still more, in its future promise - that is to say, in the establishment of direct and friendly contact between the King of Iraq and his Wahhabi neighbour ..."<sup>1</sup>

Although the British and Iraqi press prominently featured news of the conference, Umm al-Qura did not comment until more than seven months later. In October, the paper admitted that the Iraqis had shown themselves very friendly towards Nejd. This had been demonstrated by congratulations sent to Ibn Saud on his victory and by the invitation to the Kings' conference.<sup>2</sup> The long silence of Umm al-Qura had been interpreted by Bond as

"disappointing and would tend to give rise to doubts as to the sincerity of the motives which actuated Ibn Saud in attending the meeting, or it might be interpreted as a desire to forget an episode of little moment in Arabian Politics."<sup>3</sup>

Bond's pessimism was not justified. Relations, after the conference, steadily improved. The first concrete evidence came on 9 March when the Nejdi-Iraqi delegates met at Baghdad to draw up and to initial a Bon Voisinage agreement

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1. The Times, 28 Feb. 1930.

2. Umm al-Qura, No. 308, 31 Oct. 1930.

3. Jeddah Report, March, 1930, F.O. 371/14460.



between the two countries which was signed at Mecca on 7 April 1931. Further evidence later came in May when the two countries started negotiations over an extradition treaty, which was signed on 8 April 1931 at Mecca.<sup>1</sup>

This was indeed a tremendous achievement. Britain played no direct part in these proceedings but, having paved the way, was content to let events take their course on the lines designed. Britain's main concern was to settle differences between 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud.

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1. Ibid. For details on the process of making of the agreements see: F.O. 371/14477; C.O. 732/44.

MacDonnell's Investigations into Raids and Counter-Raids  
between Hejaz-Nejd and Transjordan, March - December 1930.

Britain's main attention had been concentrated since 1927, as has been seen, on the Ikhwan main bases sited in the vicinity of Kuwait and Iraq. Nevertheless the British Officials in Transjordan could hardly resign themselves to contemplating an indefinite Bedouin indulgence in the bloody sport of raiding. The raids, consequently, produced protests and counter-protests, and every little detail of controversy had to be channelled through the British authorities in the area and to be reported to London for advice and instructions. This was partly due to the lack of direct contact between Ibn Saud and his hostile neighbours. The British authorities both in London and on the spot had become weary of the thousands of telegrams and letters which the situation occasioned. To remedy this, new policies were required. The recent reconciliation between Ibn Saud and Faisal had proved useful. A similar improvement in the Ibn Saud-'Abd-Allah relationship, which was in fact moving from bad to worse, seemed indicated. 'Abd-Allah had missed no opportunity to cause trouble for Ibn Saud and appeared disposed to continue in that attitude. Britain's endeavours to resolve this feud need now to be considered.

The latest Transjordanian raid on Nejd (autumn 1929) produced a strong Nejdi protest. Fuad Hamza reminded the

British Agent of the British assurances made to the Hejaz-Nejd Government two months earlier. These concerned measures to be taken by Britain to prevent Transjordanian raids into Nejd. London replied that they were considering and would shortly put into effect "far reaching measures which they confidently believed would improve the existing situation on the Transjordan frontier".<sup>1</sup> On the same day of Hamza's note (23 November 1929) the King sent a letter to the British Government warning that if the trouble continued on his frontier with Transjordan, his people "will be compelled to take action themselves". This kind of threat was customary and its repetition irritated the British. In a more conciliatory vein Ibn Saud offered the following alternatives to Britain:

- a) Britain "should act as a sole arbitrator and be responsible for execution of the tribal decisions so far as Transjordan is concerned ..." and he himself would accept responsibility for his own tribes, or
- b) to leave the tribes to settle their differences themselves without intervention, or
- c) He himself "should be left free to arrange matters amicably with the Transjordan tribes", something which he could "accomplish without difficulty".

London replied on 21 December that they "could not contemplate

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1. Jeddah Report, Nov 1929, F.O. 371/13728.



either the second or the third alternative". As to the first, they pointed out that their newly decided measures were now about to be adopted and were identical with his first suggestion. They finally promised to watch the situation closely.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently, the British measures proved ineffective. During the preparation for the meeting of the Kings "the situation on the Transjordan frontier has taken a turn for the worse". Nejdi tribes frequently raided the Transjordan tribes and, as reported, further raids were being planned. Again the British found themselves in the midst of an explosive situation. A strong protest was made to Ibn Saud together with a demand for the restitution of looted property, for compensation and for the withdrawal of his force from the vicinity of the frontier. He was also reminded that the force in question was living on supplies obtained from Syria via Transjordan under special British protection. Britain's role in the circumstances, it was feared, would arouse "acute feeling" of resentment among Transjordan tribes. Britain therefore decided to withdraw her protection from the Saudi caravans passing through Transjordan and to use the force in question "both to protect Transjordan tribes from further raids and to check any attempt on their

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1. Jeddah Report, Dec. 1929, F.O. 371/14460.

part to make counter raids". Ibn Saud was also informed that "it would be beyond their [H.M.G.] power to continue to afford the special protection ..."<sup>1</sup> It is true that Nejd had always been heavily dependent on supplies from Syria. The regular route had been via territory now included in the Transjordan Emirate and, in order to reassure Ibn Saud who had expressed many misgivings, Britain had at the outset offered him conditional facilities through the Emirate.

Worried about the consequences of Britain's decision to withdraw those facilities, Ibn Saud and Hamza expressed their deep regret for the incident and their disapproval of the raid, which had been launched without sanction. The King then referred to the incursions previously committed against Nejd by Transjordan tribes, which had incited his people to take revenge. He finally pressed for a speedy settlement of the problem.<sup>2</sup> On 14 March he complained that "the situation has changed and the raids have now taken the form of a regular military offensive". Providing evidence for his claim, he expressed anxiety that the past raids had been engineered to cause friction between himself and the British Government and to make him appear powerless to defend his subjects. He therefore again urged Britain to take more

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1. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1930, F.O. 371/14460. (For the original idea behind the establishment of this force see: Chapter 2 above p.95, and article 13 of the Haddah agreement, appendix B.)

2. Ibid.

decisive measures to prevent hostile action and to settle the looting issue. For his part, Ibn Saud would welcome an enquiry into the last Nejdi raid on Transjordan. While he and Britain were still looking for a settlement, news of a fresh Hejazi raid on Transjordan became known. This, inevitably, complicated the situation.<sup>1</sup>

The British Government felt that the best possible action they could take was to send a special envoy to the area to investigate the claims made by the two sides and to make recommendations in the light of his findings. For this task, of a kind so often undertaken in the past by Clayton, M.S. MacDonnell was selected. He had served with Clayton in the Sudan and Egypt and also had experience of working for the League of Nations in Danzig. His qualifications favourably impressed both sides. Although the idea of sending out MacDonnell had been approved in January 1930,<sup>2</sup> it was not until the end of March that he was formally instructed to start his mission by visiting Ibn Saud in May in order to make contact and to gain his support for the enquiry. This was to be followed by a similar visit to 'Abd-Allah.<sup>3</sup>

MacDonnell's mission coincided with the appointment of Sir Andrew Ryan to the post of British Minister at Jeddah.

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1. Jeddah Report, March 1930, F.O. 371/14460.

2. F.O. Memo., 11 Jan. 1930, E223/223/91, F.O. 371/14464.

3. Jeddah Report, March, 1930, op.cit.



Ryan was due to arrive at Jeddah about the same time as MacDonnell. He had been instructed to give top priority to the question of improving relations between Ibn Saud and 'Abd-Allah, and to co-operate with MacDonnell to that end. He was to try to convince Ibn Saud that the best way to solve his problems with Transjordan would be through direct discussion with Britain's representatives rather than by further written communications.<sup>1</sup> The object was to get away from the atmosphere of protest and counter-protest which had grown round the question. It was hoped that Ibn Saud would realise that MacDonnell's appointment represented an effort "to liquidate the past". As to the present and the future, Britain's position was that article 3 of the Haddah agreement must be respected, and that Ibn Saud must fulfil his obligation to control his tribes. Britain for her part would strengthen the Transjordan Tribal Control Board and the local police. On his arrival, Ryan first met Fuad Hamza with whom the ground was prepared.<sup>2</sup>

MacDonnell was instructed on 13 May to start his mission as soon as possible. Accordingly he arrived in Jeddah on 3 June.<sup>3</sup> The King gave him a formal audience on 7 June and discussions started on the same day in the presence of

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1. Jeddah Report, April 1930, op.cit.

2. Jeddah Report, May 1930, op.cit.

3. C.O. to MacDonnell, 13 May 1930, E3228/223/91, Ryan to F.O. 4 June 1930, E2933/223/91, F.O. 371/14465.

the King's advisers with Yousuf Yasin taking the leading part. MacDonnell presented to the King a memorandum, which outlined the reasons for the mission. The object, he explained, was to "examine all claims arising out of raids committed between the conclusion of the Hadda agreement of the 2nd November, 1925 and the date of the beginning of my mission". He stressed that the co-operation of both Ibn Saud and 'Abd-Allah was obviously essential. He asked the Hejaz Government to ensure that "any persons concerned as parties or witnesses, whose attendance is required by me, should be immediately forthcoming when summoned". Ibn Saud was also "to attach an official with similar powers to ... [mine] and to inform me of the tenor of the orders given to this official". MacDonnell suggested that accommodation and communication facilities were to be offered by the Hejaz and Transjordan. He finally set out alternative formats for the investigation as follows "A Bedouin tribunal with myself as President to hear each case", or "the submission of the cases by a competent person nominated by each Government to sustain claims of its nationals falling within the scope of my instructions". Both methods of proceeding had their own disadvantages. The first method might involve considerable delay, and the second might get bogged down on minor points due to the direct involvement of the two governments. He pointed out, in conclusion, that the British Government attached importance to speedy termination

of the mission.<sup>1</sup>

MacDonnell's suggestions appeared impracticable to Ibn Saud. He dismissed as "chimerical" the notion that a Bedouin tribunal could represent the "scattered tribesmen", and suggested that MacDonnell should study the Hejaz-Nejd files before taking any steps. He did, however, accept MacDonnell's second proposal and gave a general commitment which was to be subject to detailed discussions with the King's advisers.<sup>2</sup> Accordingly, three "most wearisome" meetings were held on 8 and 9 June during which the Saudis introduced counter proposals as a reply to MacDonnell's memorandum. These analysed every minor detail connected with the methodology of the investigation and reflected Ibn Saud's strong doubts about 'Abd-Allah even though the British were acting as intermediaries. The Saudis, however, did agree "to attach to the mission a competent official authorised to summon Hejaz-Nejd nationals or witnesses whose evidence the arbitrator may find it necessary to take". But they expected little chance of success for the mission unless a number of persons were chosen from every tribe "whether raiders or raided to present the interest of the tribes concerned and to give information on their behalf".<sup>3</sup> The proposal

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1. Memo. by MacDonnell for submission to the King of the Hejaz and Nejd, 6 June 1930, E3598/223/91, F.O. 371/14465
  2. Ryan to Henderson, 12 June 1930, E9598/223/91, F.O. 371/14465.
  3. Memo. in reply to MacDonnell's Memo. of 6 June 1930, E3598/223/91, F.O. 371/14465.



seemed reasonable to MacDonnell but he could not commit himself to accept before discussing it with 'Abd-Allah.

Abd al-Aziz Ibn Zeid, "a walking encyclopaedia of information relative to raids", was nominated by Ibn Saud to be the Hejaz-Nejd Agent who would serve as a channel of communication with his government on matters not requiring the intervention of the British Minister at Jeddah. He would also act as interpreter when necessary to question Nejd-Hejaz subjects with a view to elucidating details. He would finally submit claims put forward by Hejaz-Nejd subjects. Attention was then drawn to the difficulty of obtaining evidence other than that already recorded. Recognizing the slowness and hazards of communications, MacDonnell agreed to consider the earlier suggestion that the frontier tribesmen should be represented by nominated spokesmen. It was also necessary to define a deadline for the notification of the claims. The Saudis suggested that "a reasonable time" (unspecified) should be allowed. MacDonnell pointed out that he was under instruction to finish the job "as soon as possible". Both propositions were vague and the matter was allowed to rest without any firm conclusion. Finally when attention was drawn to the question of access to and facilities in the Hejaz the King and his advisers preferred to express no views.<sup>1</sup> It was unlikely that Nejd could

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1. Record of the points agreed on discussion between the Saudis and MacDonnell on 7, 8 and 9 June 1930, Ryan to Henderson, 10 June 1930, E3598/223/91, F.O. 371/14465.

provide any facilities. Even the entry of MacDonnell into the Hejaz-Nejd would be "undesirable and unnecessary" at any stage of his investigation.<sup>1</sup> A British protest was later made against this attitude. The Saudi Government sent an immediate explanatory note which never reached the British Legation at Jeddah. When Hamza's attention was drawn to this apparent failure to respond, a duplicate of the note was sent in July. This pointed out that the insecurity caused in Nejd by the Transjordan raiders was a good and sufficient reason not to let MacDonnell pursue his investigations in Nejd territory.<sup>2</sup> It was thought that Ibn Saud's real motive was a desire to avoid paying the cost of MacDonnell's travel and accommodation. Ryan, therefore replied that "their<sup>3</sup> investigation would be free". One may add as another reason that Ibn Saud had always complained about British officials intriguing with his tribes and now could not be expected to agree to MacDonnell's request to be in direct contact with the tribesmen. This explains the motive behind the Saudi suggestion for the nomination of tribal spokesmen. Before his departure for Amman, on 10 June, for similar talks with 'Abd-Allah, MacDonnell was given a farewell audience by the King who

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1. Jeddah Report, June 1930, F.O. 371/14460; MacDonnell Report, E490/3/25, F.O. 371/15285.
  2. Jeddah Report, July and Aug. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.
  3. Jeddah Report, June, 1930, op.cit.

excused himself, as Ryan reported, "for having seemed stiff and ungracious during the negotiations".<sup>1</sup>

Now it was Ryan's turn to meet the King and to inform him of the instructions which he had received from London regarding the situation on the frontier with Transjordan and the measures which were being made on the Transjordanian side to control "the tribes" movements. Thus, two British officials were now fully engaged in the matter. Ibn Saud belittling the importance of the measures taken in Transjordan, stated that he had issued "stringent orders for the punishment of the raiders on his side and the return of the loot". But due to mistrust on the part of his own tribesmen he admitted that he had done nothing to carry out article 3 of the Haddah agreement, which bound him to place his local authorities in direct touch with those of Transjordan.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Saud of course had learned his lesson from the Ikhwan rebellion and did not want to risk any repetition. The MacDonnell mission, however, offered Ibn Saud a new chance to show his desire to co-operate. Accordingly, in response to MacDonnell's enquiry, he prepared lists of his claims against Transjordan tribes since November 1929. In the meanwhile he addressed a personal letter to Ryan on 23 July expressing "the

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1. Ryan to Henderson, 12 June 1930, E3598/223/9 1, F.O. 371/14465.

2. Ibid.



anxiety and discontent of his subjects caused by the failure of measures taken by Transjordan authorities to produce the desired results". He stressed that the raids had not ceased but had become more like organised expeditions. The King's letter was followed, on 28 July, by a long official note from Hamza covering much the same ground but also accusing the Transjordan authorities of "culpable negligence", and expressing pessimism as to the outcome of MacDonnell's mission. The note definitely disclaimed any responsibility for future developments. Both the King's letter and the Hamza's note, while stressing the Hejaz-Nejd grievances, were intended to establish the Saudi case against Transjordan. In reply Ryan gave the King a personal interpretation of the situation. He stated, on 1 August, that it was too soon to assume that the Transjordanian measures had been ineffective. He was quick to turn the King's argument against him, reminding him of his own unwillingness to commit himself to any co-operative move against raids. Indeed the echo of the King's account at their first meeting on 11 June was still fresh in Ryan's mind. He finally warned the King that "raids provoke raids".<sup>1</sup>

In London an interdepartmental meeting was held on 26 August at the Colonial Office to prepare a reply to Ibn Saud's

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1. Jeddah Report, July and Aug. 1930, op.cit.

letter of 23 July. The meeting produced a number of draft recommendations and submitted them for treasury sanction on 12 September. The main points were:

1. The Bedouin Control Board to be retained in Transjordan.
2. A Secret Service Fund of £2000 per annum to be placed at the disposal of the Officer to be appointed to the Arab Legion;
3. A British intelligence Officer to be appointed to the Arab Legion;
4. The mobile reserve to be mechanised; and
5. Three small intelligence posts to be established on the frontier at Mudawwara, Azrak and Inshash.<sup>1</sup> These measures were similar to those which had been adopted on the Iraqi frontier since 1927.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile 'Abd-Allah had accepted Ibn Saud's suggestion that spokesmen be named by the tribes involved, MacDonnell spent a fortnight at Amman preparing for the investigation. On 14 July he informed the two sides that the 1st of August had been fixed as the last date on which claims for compensation and evidence about the raids would be received. This date was to be highly significant in the forthcoming negotiations. Accordingly, Transjordan appointed their own agent at once, while Ibn Saud's agent left Jeddah for Amman as late as 13 August, with instructions to collect the tribal

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1. Jeddah Report, Sept., Oct and Nov. 1930, F.O. 371/15289.

2. See chapter 4 above.

representatives on his way.<sup>1</sup> They reached Amman on the 1st of September, one month later than MacDonnell had suggested. Between 3 and 13 September, he had been examining the Saudi claims. Obviously, Ibn Saud's desire to fulfill pledges of assistance to the mission was now open to question. His procrastination hindered MacDonnell and prevented him from sticking to his timetable. Moreover, he produced only vague accounts of his claims, and gave limited authority to his agent.

By 14 September, however, there was sufficient material for MacDonnell to start the enquiry. At the opening meeting with representatives from both sides he pointed out that he was

"there merely to investigate, that the final word was with His Majesty's Government and that functions of the government [sic] agents and tribal representatives was [sic] to assist me to arrive at the facts rather than to fight their case before a judicial tribunal".<sup>2</sup>

Although MacDonnell made it plain that he was only investigating the claims, this did not prevent acrimony. At the first meeting on 15 September the Saudi attitude soon produced trouble and discord. On 19 September, the Saudi agent pushed non-co-operation to the extent of refusing to answer enquiries. The Saudi tribunal representatives alleged in justification that they were not there to defend themselves against accusations made by Transjordanians but only to detail their own long history of grievances. Due to deep differences

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1. MacDonnell Report, E490/3/25, F.O. 371/15285.

2. MacDonnell to Passfield, Oct. 1930, E5591/223/91, F.O. 371/14467.



between the two parties, MacDonnell had to suspend the negotiations between 30 September and 5 October.<sup>1</sup>

The immediate cause was that the Saudi delegation was reluctant to accept "the use of oath" in the proceedings claiming that "such use would entail the loss of the established rights of the subjects of the Hejaz-Nejd." This claim related to an earlier refusal to testify on oath. As Hamza explained: "having successfully resisted the imposition of the oath at the abortive Maan and Jericho tribunals, the Hejaz Government could not accept the use of oath at Amman".<sup>2</sup> To the British, it seemed that Ibn Saud was trying to interfere with free conduct of the enquiry. Hope-Gill, the Charge d'Affairs at the Jeddah legation, was therefore instructed to represent to Ibn Saud the seriousness with which London viewed the situation. "Should his representations fail of [sic] decisive effect within forty-eight hours", Hope-Gill was authorized "to convey [to] Ibn Saud himself a strongly worded message". Once Hamza discovered London's attitude, he suspended his interviews with Hope-Gill and left for Taif to see the King. Their meeting was decisive with regard to the Amman investigations. The King modified his position and now sho<sup>w</sup>ed flexibility. Immediately instructions were sent to the Hejaz-Nejd agent at Amman to conform to MacDonnell's wishes in the matter

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1. MacDonnell Report, E490/3/25, F.O. 371/15285; Jeddah Report, Sept., Oct. and Nov. 1930, F.O. 371/14460.

2. Jeddah Report, Sept., Oct., and Nov., 1930, F.O. 371/15289

of the oaths and to answer all Transjordan accusations except those relating to Ibn Mashhour. These instructions allowed the investigation to proceed and accordingly a meeting was held on 6 October.<sup>1</sup>

Before that, however, and in fact on 4 October, Hamza informed the British Legation that his King had just received news of an insult directed by the Transjordanian agent against his own agent and Government. He stated that the King would be making official representations to the British Government. Hope-Gill was neither able to answer Hamza nor to satisfy the King as he had received no information about the incident. On 5 October, the Saudi Government officially demanded a written apology from the Transjordan Government and insisted that this should be read out publicly in a session at Amman. This affair led to the withdrawal of the Saudi agent from the meetings of 6 October and to the renewed suspension of the negotiations. The situation was rapidly getting out of hand, and on 13 October hope was finally abandoned of getting the two parties together again, for on that date "a coffee party quarrel ... ended in a promise by the Transjordan Howaitat to kill the Shararat and Billi of Nejd if and when the investigations reopened".<sup>2</sup>

While in Jerusalem during the suspension of the investigations, MacDonnell reported to Lord Passfield, the

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid., see maps pp. 704 and 269A

Colonial Secretary, blaming his difficulties mainly on the Saudi attitude.

"On the whole," he concluded, "the Nejd cases are badly got up and the agent himself appears not to have even gone to the pains of studying the material provided [by] his own Government... The Transjordan Government agent is equally inefficient ... Feeling is very bitter, the Najdis not concealing their view that the Transjordan Arabs are practically infidels, while the other side looks on them as emissaries of King Ibn Saud rather than as spokesmen for their tribes ... In the light of my experience so far I am far from feeling that ... very satisfactory results could ever have been expected."<sup>1</sup>

The rest of October was spent in endeavours to lower the temperature between the Hejaz-Nejd and Transjordan. Amir 'Abd-Allah would not comply with the demand for a written apology but he conveyed his regrets verbally and induced the two agents to shake hands on the grounds that guests of his country should be treated with courtesy. Meanwhile Ibn Saud agreed, at the request of the British Government, to regard the incident as separate from the investigation proper. Although he accordingly instructed his agent to continue to afford MacDonnell every assistance, Ibn Saud insisted that he could not overlook the insult as the matter had become one of prestige; therefore, his people could not possibly attend joint sittings until a written apology was received. This was a more intransigent attitude than that adopted by the Hejaz-Nejd representatives

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1. MacDonnell to Passfield, Oct. 1930, E5591/223/91, F.O. 371/14467.



on the spot. Eventually, however, the King did receive an apology from Amir 'Abd-Allah together with a message from the British Government to the effect that "this action was such as any government might accept as affording honorable satisfaction and that the time had now come to close the door upon the past". To this Ibn Saud agreed on 30 October and accordingly MacDonnell resumed his investigations on 2 November, "with joint sittings and oaths". His work was completed by 16 November. During the two months of negotiations (14 Sept. to 16 Nov.) only 23 days were occupied by oath takings and joint sittings. It was, as Ryan reported, "a wearying period for all concerned, it is well over".<sup>1</sup>

There is no doubt that Ibn Saud's eventual flexibility helped towards the conclusion of MacDonnell's mission. But the mission's success could not have been achieved without the pressure put by London on Ibn Saud. On 2 October, a "comprehensive and up to date" memorandum had been issued in reply to the King's letters of 23 July and 13 August as well as to Hamza's note of 28 July. Britain strongly urged Ibn Saud to co-operate for the making of peace, and reminded him that Ryan and MacDonnell had been engaged trying to resolve matters in dispute with Transjordan, that measures had already been taken to control the situation

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1. Jeddah Report, Sept. Oct., and Nov. 1930,  
F.O. 371/15289.

from the Transjordan side and that more measures were now under consideration. These included:

- "(1) The Bedouin Control Board;
- (2) The mechanisation of one company of the Transjordan Frontier Force;
- (3) The closing to Bedouin of an area lying between the eastern and southern frontiers of Transjordan and Bair, Jaffar and Tell Shahem;
- (4) The stationing of armoured-car detachments and aircraft at the few water-points in the southern desert of Transjordan and intensive reconnaissance work by aircraft;
- (5) A declaration by the Amir Abdullah as to the punishment of tribes who raided or instigated raiding or withheld information about raids;
- (6) Powers of arrest given to British detachments patrolling the frontier area and stationed at the water-points;
- (7) The appointment of a British intelligence officer on the establishment of the Arab Legion with powers to ensure respect for the decisions of the Bedouin Control Board, of which he would be a member; and
- (8) The establishment of two advance intelligence posts at Azrak and Imshash (Bir Nam), the stationing of an intelligence detachment in the old Turkish fort near Mudawwarah, and their provision with wireless apparatus".<sup>1</sup>

While Britain was committing herself to the task 'Abd-Allah was doing his best to display his obedience to the British instructions. On 14 July he had issued a warning to his own tribes not to raid or to instigate others to raid or withhold information about raiding.

"Whoever is found in the closed area" 'Abd-Allah warned, "shall be fired upon, and previous orders issued by the Bedwin Control Board must be respected." He also declared that he "has granted powers of arrest to British detachments patrolling the frontier area and those now stationed at the only water points in the desert of Southern Transjordan".<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Memo. by F.O., sent to Hope-Gill (Jeddah) on 2 Oct. 1930, E5256/89/91, F.O. 371/14460.

These measures illustrated that neither Britain nor 'Abd-Allah were to be blamed for the deteriorating situation. Indeed, the memorandum pointed out, it was Ibn Saud's own responsibility to help remedy the situation, and his Government should

"lend their wholehearted co-operation by making every effort to control the tribes of the Hejaz and Nejd, by giving instructions for fulfilment of their undertakings under article 3 of the Hedda Agreement."<sup>1</sup>

Before Ibn Saud was able to respond as Britain requested, his tribes raided Transjordan in October,<sup>2</sup> and it had become urgent that a solution to the endemic frontier problem must be found. In the meanwhile the latest raid coinciding with the October suspension of the investigation, caused gloom at the Foreign Office. An urgent interdepartmental meeting was held on 22 October and expressed great anxiety about the international aspect of the question and decided that urgent telegrams should be sent to the High Commissioner in Transjordan and to MacDonnell, who appeared "far from appreciating the importance of remedying the situation and the International difficulties which may result if ... [his] enquiry is allowed to breakdown". Reaching an early settlement was important to give Ibn Saud a greater measure of satisfaction. Another telegram was to urge

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1. Ibid.

2. For the October Raid, see: E5656/E5669/E5686/E5687/223/91, F.O. 371/14467



the High Commissioner that "provisional measures should be taken at once in order to reduce the risk of further raids from either side to a minimum."<sup>1</sup> London's alarm was unnecessary because by then Ibn Saud's new eagerness to reach a speedy conclusion had enabled MacDonnell successfully to conclude his mission. After that all parties agreed that immediate steps should be taken to consider the present raids and that for this purpose the local authorities should meet regularly.

MacDonnell reported his findings on return to London in December. While these were being considered Hafez Wahba, now officially appointed as Saudi Minister in London, did his best to press the Saudi case on questions at issue. He seems to have had little influence and it was not until 12 August 1931 that the British Government, refusing to enter into any debates, communicated its negative and blunt conclusions to Ibn Saud:

"His Majesty's Government in the United Kingdom have considered the report submitted to them by Mr. MacDonnell on the results of his investigation into the claims arising from raids from the Hejaz-Nejd, which took place before the 1st August, 1930. Owing to the insufficient and often contradictory nature of the information and evidence furnished to Mr. MacDonnell; to the length of time which has elapsed since the dates of many of the raids involved; and owing, moreover, to the fact that the conditions under which Mr. MacDonnell was obliged to carry out his investigation did not permit of his conducting his enquiries on the actual sites of raids, or of his having the opportunity of examining all available witnesses,

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1. Memo. by Rendel, 22 Oct. 1930, on Transjordan-Hejaz-Nejd raids, arbitration and frontier situation, E5656/223/91, F.O. 371/14467.

the information is not such as to enable His Majesty's Government to make an exact award on each claim submitted. For this reason His Majesty's Government are not in a position to make a detailed estimate as to the amount of loot taken from the nationals of either Government by nationals of the other.

"The information furnished to His Majesty's Government is, however, sufficient to enable them to judge that it would be fair and reasonable that all claims referred to them by both Governments concerned should be held to cancel each other out. His Majesty's Government conclude, therefore, that all claims arising from raids between the two countries which took place before the 1st August, 1930, should, on the basis of such cancellation, be held to be settled and conclusively disposed of."<sup>1</sup>

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1. Jeddah Report, July and Aug. 1931, F.O. 371/15289.



Glubb - Ibn Zeid Meetings, 1931.

While London was debating MacDonnell's report the local situation was changing. Glubb had been appointed the Desert Control Officer in Transjordan in autumn 1930, as his duties had no longer been necessary on the Iraqi front after the meeting of the Kings. Indeed Glubb's success in the Iraqi desert had encouraged the authorities in Transjordan to ask for his services. His main task was to reorganise and pacify the Bedouin so that they would eventually abandon the custom of raiding.<sup>1</sup>

Having moved to Transjordan, Glubb reported to London the Nejdi raid of October 1930 on the Howaitat the powerful tribe of Transjordan. This report produced a storm of indignation in Downing Street. Formerly the tribe had challenged both the British forces in Transjordan and the Ikhwan, but on this occasion they were the victims and had been left virtually starving. Glubb held Ibn Saud responsible for the raid, stating that the King had been

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1. Glubb has explained his policy in detail in The Story of the Arab Legion (London 1948). It has been well summarised in an article clearly written by an admirer of his methods:  
"Glubb's policies involved no pitched battles and succeeded at negligible cost. But they could never have been accomplished without the mutual trust and affection which developed between the Bedouin and himself ... he decided that the root of the trouble lay in the Bedouin's distrust of any form of regular government, and particularly of Transjordan, which they believed to be in league with Saudi-Arabia. Glubb was convinced that if pacification was to be permanent, the tribesmen must be shown that the Government had their welfare at heart. He also believed that the Bedouin must be taught to pacify themselves. He... explained to the sullen and hostile Arabs [Bedouin] that they must inevitably destroy themselves in they continued to raid."  
J.L., 'Abu Henaik', Blackwoods Magazine, CCLXXIX (1956) pp.419-29.



"pursuing a deliberate policy of seducing the Howaitat into his own allegiance, a plan which, if successful, would be disastrous to British prestige". Glubb's views were endorsed by the High Commissioner, who expressed

"an even more serious view of the consequences of a secession of Transjordan Beduins to Ibn Saud, in view of the difficult situation it would create in the event of trouble in Palestine."<sup>1</sup>

Before a decision had been taken by London and probably unaware of Glubb's report, Yousuf Yasin (deputising for Hamza who had been taken ill) openly manifested his Government's hostility towards the appearance of Glubb in the frontier area with Transjordan. Glubb's former activities in Iraq and its consequences were still fresh in the minds of the Saudi authorities. Yasin in particular had, through his editorials of Umm al-Qura, launched numerous criticisms and attacks on Glubb. These now continued in his official role and through the paper.<sup>2</sup> On 3 February 1931, he discussed the situation with Ryan and complained that the British Government "were really responsible for Transjordan and that their interposition between the parties served as a protection to Transjordanian raiders."<sup>3</sup> He also explained that his Government was anxious to bring

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan. and Feb. 1931, F.O. 371/15289. See also, Glubb, The story of the Arab Legion, pp.71-77.

2. See for example: Umm al-Qura, No. 293, 18 July 1930, No. 358, 23 Oct. 1931.

3. Jeddah Report, Jan. and Feb. 1931. F.O. 371/15289.

article 3 of the Haddah agreement into operation and was now taking further measures to control the frontier situation, among these was the appointment of Ibn Zeid, the Saudi agent at MacDonnell's investigation, as Inspector of the Desert.

Ryan's report on the Saudi complaints and measures that they were taking crossed Foreign Office instructions dated 6 February 1931 "to make the strongest possible representation" to Ibn Saud against the latter's underground endeavours to persuade or to force the Transjordan tribes to come under his authority.<sup>1</sup> In the meanwhile Glubb's efforts to organise the tribes and to prohibit them from raiding Nejd led them to suspect that there was a secret agreement between Britain and Ibn Saud against them.<sup>2</sup> Ryan, who had been closely in touch with the situation, thought it advisable to tone down London's protest. The Foreign Office concurred and advised on the line to be pursued recommending a definite reply within four days. Accordingly on 28 February Ryan communicated a slightly modified memorandum to the Saudi Government, accompanied by a request for an early meeting with the King. A separate but earlier note was also sent on the same day to the Hejazi Government in reply to the aspersions

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1. Ibid.

2. Glubb has given many examples to this in his The Story of the Arab Legion, chapters 4 and 5.



which had been cast on Glubb. In Britain's memorandum of 28 February, the British Government propounded the following points:

- \*(1) Noting Ibn Saud's expressed readiness to bring article 3 of the Hadda Agreement into operation and having in view the proved necessity for immediate co-operation between the authorities on both sides of the frontier, they proposed, in pursuance of Sheikh Yusuf Yasin's request for suggestions as to the method of initiating such co-operation, that Captain Glubb and Ibn Zeid should meet (a) to examine all representatives and claims regarding raids since the 1st August; (b) to arrange for immediate restoration of loot on both sides; and (c) to arrange for the intercommunication of information and mutual restoration of loot in future.
- (2) They asked that Ibn Zeid should be invested with full executive powers, and that he and Captain Glubb should have power to call upon the representative sheikhs to put forward claims, &c.
- (3) Having explained the inability of the Transjordan authorities to maintain the recent improvement of the situation unless immediate steps should be taken to return the loot captured from their tribes since the 1st August; His Majesty's Government dwelt on various flagrant features of those raids, including the proved culpability of En Neshmi and his public statement that Ibn Saud permitted raiding into Transjordan, a statement widely believed and not effectively disproved. They said they 'must insist that if this has not already been done, the strongest measures should be taken to counteract the effect of En Neshmi's action in giving countenance to raiding and to make it publicly known that His Majesty King Abdul Aziz expressly disavows and condemns it.' They expressed hope that a recent report of En Neshmi's appointment to the command of tribal forces would prove to be unfounded.



- (4) They asked the Hejazi Government to inform them as soon as possible that they agreed to the proposed meeting and that Ibn Zeid would receive full powers to deal with the matters proposed, including the immediate restitution of camels and other loot captured from Transjordan tribes since the 1st August. They added that Captain Glubb would be authorized to arrange for the restitution of any loot identified as having been taken from the Hejazi or Nejdi tribes.
- (5) Finally, His Majesty's Government, having regard to the urgent necessity for restoring the camels looted from Transjordan, offered British co-operation in the Wadi Sirhan, if the Hejazi Government should find themselves confronted with any practical difficulty in returning them immediately".<sup>1</sup>

The discussions arising out of the British memorandum overshadowed all other questions between the Saudi Government and the British Legation. Ryan at his own request met the King on 2 and 4 March. On 5 and 6 March he completed his discussion with Yousuf Yasin.<sup>2</sup> The meeting of 2 March was devoted to the affairs of the frontier with Transjordan. The King was "impressed but maintained a bold front" as Ryan came to see him personally in connection with the 28 February communications. Ryan pointed out that since his arrival in the Hejaz in May 1930, he had been devoting much of his energy to get the situation on the frontier with Transjordan placed on a satisfactory basis, but his attempts had proved a failure. The whole matter was now left to London and he was working only according to

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1. Jeddah Report, Jan. and Feb. 1931, F.O. 371/15289.

2. Ryan to Henderson, 7 March 1931, E1605/387/25, F.O. 371/15294.

their instructions. Ryan deliberately presented the case in that way. He aimed to confirm Britain's objection to the Saudi allegations against Glubb (as indicated in the second note of 28 February) and to make clear to Ibn Saud that those accusations did not impair London's confidence in Glubb. Furthermore, Ryan wanted to present the following observations on the final British position:

1. to impress on the King the extreme gravity of the situation. "I was to do this with all the force of which I was capable".
2. to obtain a definite answer as soon as possible before 4 March.
3. to let the King know that it was universally believed that the large scale raids from Nejd to Transjordan were carried out under the King's authority. The British allegations about Ibn Saud's responsibility of the October 1930 raid were built on an intelligence report that Ibn Saud had issued the orders to start the raid. The frontier authorities in Transjordan, on hearing of this, warned Amman, but it was too late because of communication delays.<sup>1</sup>

For his part, the King denied these allegations and defended his Government's attitude towards Glubb, but drew Ryan's attention to the discrimination in Britain's

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1. Record of Ryan's audience with Ibn Saud on 2 March 1931, E1605/387/25, F.O. 371/15294.

policy towards his country and Transjordan. He expected the British Government "to deal equitably with both sides" and emphasized this as a principle to help solve the frontier problem. If the British Government sought to bully or humiliate him, it was not the treatment he expected of "old friends". He stressed<sup>that</sup> his authority over his subjects was strong and he held their support "as completely as the ring on the finger". He was ready to take severe measures against the criminals on his side if offenders in Transjordan were also punished. He was prepared to reply to the memorandum of 28 February only "if he and Transjordan were treated equally". He wanted to preserve the best relations with H.M.G. but would never accept inequitable treatment of his subjects since he had full authority over them.<sup>1</sup> Ryan noted that the King's reply was "largely evasive".<sup>2</sup>

The King, although reaffirming his intention to bring article 3 of the Haddah agreement into operation, hesitated about accepting the proposed Glubb - Ibn Zeid meetings. The King's fears of Britain's involvement in tribal affairs made him reluctant to agree to any proposal which might frustrate his efforts to maintain the loyalty of his tribes. It was that very reason which made him reject MacDonnell's proposal to visit the frontier area. In order to avoid a

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1. Ibid.

2. Jeddah Report, March and April 1931, F.O. 371/15289



direct rejection of Britain's request, the King suggested that agreement should be reached first on two points. One was the method of dealing with the raids since the beginning of <sup>the</sup> MacDonnell investigations. Regarding this, he claimed the return by Transjordan of the loot he had listed earlier. The other point concerned the terms of reference for the proposed meeting between Glubb and Ibn Zeid. This was indeed the most important point. The King suggested that Glubb and Ibn Zeid should meet to exchange information in the event of large-scale raids, but any decisions they might take were to be ad referendum. The King undertook to instruct Ibn Zeid to meet Glubb soon after receiving the British reply to his previous two proposals, but he refused to return any loot to Transjordan until some loot taken was restored. It was almost the same tone that had been adopted earlier by Hamza when he said that blame could not be accepted for raids from Nejd until those from Transjordan had entirely ceased. The British offer to help Ibn Saud maintain order in Wadi Sirhan was cautiously received and finally rejected. Ibn Saud claimed that "he had power over all his subjects". If Britain was anxious to help him, he argued, she could extradite criminals fleeing into Transjordan.<sup>1</sup>

Ibn Saud's views were carefully considered in London. The policy of trying to solve local problems by local

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1. Ibid.

negotiation was still proving difficult to implement:

Ibn Saud's reply

"while in many ways evasive and unsatisfactory, did not exclude the achievement of their essential purpose, namely, that of bringing about an immediate meeting of the frontier authorities and the settlement of the questions at issue on a local and tribal basis".<sup>1</sup>

Failure to bring Glubb and Ibn Zeid together would inevitably lead to deadlock as long as the Saudis maintained the policy that they could not return loot or admit blame for raids from Nejd until the other side had taken the initiative. The immediate result would be continuation of raids and counter-raids, which would inevitably be followed by an unwelcome flurry of despatches between Jeddah, London and Amman. Comfort, however, was taken from the impression that the proposed Glubb-Ibn Zeid meeting had not been totally rejected by the Saudis. Hence Britain should continue to press for a preliminary meeting limited to the exchange of information and views. For his part Ibn Saud, who had been so dubious about the principle of British involvement in tribal affairs, now agreed that

"such a meeting should take place but only after the King had scouted the idea that there need be any discussion of measures of police and stressed his view the preliminary meeting should only be for the purpose of exchanging information."<sup>2</sup>

Ibn Saud maintained his suspicions about Glubb's actual role in the meeting and insisted that full details should be made

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

available to him at once as he was no longer prepared to turn a blind eye to the situation on the frontier.

As a token of good will, Ibn Saud replaced one of his frontier officials, regarded as undesirable by the British, by two others carefully selected from among his own relatives. In consequence Ahmad al-Sudairi and his brother Turki now administered the frontier region.<sup>1</sup> Later, in May, the King issued a warning to his own tribes to denounce the raiding. Transjordan followed suit. The ground was now prepared for the Glubb-Ibn Zeid meeting which took place on 3 June in Transjordan.<sup>2</sup> Although it was later reported that the meeting had been friendly, Ibn Zeid would not commit himself to any decision without reference to Ibn Saud. The discussion dealt with the need for close co-operation; the immediate restitution of loot and the method by which victims could substantiate their claims and obtain compensation for loss of life.<sup>3</sup>

Ibn Saud's recent flexibility was probably the result of fresh assurances from London a fortnight prior to the Glubb-Ibn Zeid preliminary meeting that

"Hejazi or Nejdi nationals, who have taken part in raids in Transjordan territory and have returned to Hejaz-Nejd, and who attempt to escape from penalties imposed on them for raiding by fleeing into Transjordan, will, if possible, be prevented, upon direct notification of their names and other available particulars by the Hejaz-Nejd frontier

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1. Ibid.

2. Jeddah Report, May and June 1931, F.O. 371/15289.

3. Jeddah Report, July and Aug. 1931, F.O. 371/15289.



authorities to the corresponding Transjordan authorities, from crossing the frontier into Transjordan. If they enter Transjordan, the Transjordan authorities will, on receiving the necessary information from the Hejaz-Nejd authorities, use their best endeavours to prevent them from remaining in Transjordan and, if possible, to expel them into Hejaz-Nejd."<sup>1</sup>

It was understood that the Saudi authorities would deal in the same manner with criminals from Transjordan and that the Governments of Hejaz-Nejd and Transjordan had the right to terminate this undertaking. Ibn Saud, who had always been anxious for an extradition treaty, found hope in this undertaking and promised to co-operate.

On 15 August Glubb and Ibn Zeid met again. This was their first major meeting. There were two points at issue: the return of the loot taken since 1 August 1930 (the beginning of MacDonnell's investigation mission), and the settlement of future procedure. Although Ibn Zeid attended the meetings, as before, with no authority to negotiate or decide on any of the questions, Glubb managed to secure his endorsement for the restitution of some of the loot. Having had experience in negotiating with the Saudis, Glubb was able to understand their motives. He concluded that if the British Government decided "to stand aside and urge Ibn Saud and Transjordan to arrange matters between them[selves], there was not the least chance of Ibn Saud returning a single animal". Whatever the obstacles might

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1. Jeddah Report, May and June 1931, loc.cit.

be, the Glubb-Ibn Zeid meetings were the first fruit of Britain's representations of 28 February 1931.<sup>1</sup>

For their part, the British began to appreciate Ibn Saud's desperate need for an extradition agreement. They offered to develop the undertaking previously mentioned into an agreement between Hejaz-Nejd and Transjordan to be drawn on the lines of the Bahrah agreement. The proposal, though welcomed by Ibn Saud, was rejected by 'Abd-Allah, who insisted that such an agreement was the concern of Britain as the Mandatory Power.<sup>2</sup> The British Government did not feel disposed at the time to put pressure on 'Abd-Allah to reconsider his attitude nor were they inclined to conclude the agreement by themselves because they realised that it would be unworkable in the present atmosphere of hostility. It was therefore decided to rely on the existing policy of frontier representatives co-operation.<sup>3</sup> This was a disappointment for Ibn Saud, who now understood that Britain had been trying to help him. Thus when he was informed in August 1931 of the British conclusions to the MacDonnell investigation,<sup>4</sup> he accepted the situation though

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1. Jeddah Report, July and Aug. 1931, loc.cit.

2. Ibid.

3. Jeddah Report, Sept. and Oct. 1931, F.O. 371/15289.

4. See above, pp. 391-92.

remaining "unable to refrain going over old ground". In fact he remained eager to achieve agreements similar to those he had recently signed with Iraq.<sup>1</sup>

After its success in "liquidating the past" between the Hejaz-Nejd and Transjordan, the British Government again urged Ibn Saud to co-operate in producing a similar agreement to settle the present differences. This, they believed, could only be achieved by the continuation of the Glubb-Ibn Zeid meetings. However Britain failed to erase the King's suspicions about Glubb's real role in the frontier region. He indicated that "liquidating the present" could be gained by the "removal of those causes of friction on the Transjordan frontier which were causes of friction on the Iraq frontier". Ibn Saud, no doubt, intended to make an oblique reference to the presence of Glubb. Britain's reaction was to confirm confidence in Glubb and to complain that Ibn Saud had sent Ibn Zeid "hopelessly unprepared". Ibn Saud then became alarmed that he might be accused and held responsible for the failure of the frontier meetings. In order to put further pressure on him, the British Government asked him to pay his share of the cost of the MacDonnell mission (£1,726).<sup>2</sup> Ibn Saud felt that payment was a question open to bargaining and on 28 November the Saudi

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1. See above, pp. 366-70 .

2. Jeddah Report, Sept. and Oct. 1931, loc.cit.



Government expressed their surprise

"that they should be requested to pay half the expenses of the arbitration, when they have experienced heavy loss as a result of the reduction of the claims of their subjects."<sup>1</sup>

When this matter was re-opened later in January 1932 Ibn Saud thought it was advisable not to risk complicating relations with Britain for such a trifling sum.<sup>2</sup>

Between 15 August 1931 and 7 January 1932, there were no meetings between Glubb and Ibn Zeid. Even when they met after five months, their meeting, though friendly, proved fruitless.<sup>3</sup> Thus the MacDonnell's investigation had succeeded in liquidating the past, but the Glubb-Ibn Zeid meetings had failed to make any progress. The situation took a different turn when Ryan decided to visit Amman and Jerusalem to try his hand at achieving a final settlement. This latest initiative coincided with the Transjordanian-backed Ibn Rifada plot against Ibn Saud.

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1. Jeddah Report, Nov. and Dec. 1931, F.O. 371/16024.

2. See: Jeddah Report, Jan. Feb. and March 1932, F.O. 371/16024; Memo. by Ryan, 25 Feb. 1932, E1241/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024. This had happened inspite of Ryan's promise to Ibn Saud that the investigation would be free. There is no evidence for why Britain did request Ibn Saud to pay his share in the investigation's cost.

3. Jeddah Report, Jan, Feb. and March 1932, op.cit.

The Peace-Making between Ibn Saud and 'Abd-Allah 1932.

The Saudi procrastination as evidenced in the Glubb Ibn Zeid meetings, and the potential danger in the situation during the autumn of 1931 demanded a change in British policy. Before the end of the year it had been decided that personal contact should be established between the British Minister in Jeddah and the authorities in Amman and Jerusalem to solve the problems blocking improvement in the Hejaz-Nejd relations with Transjordan and threatening British Imperial interests. Accordingly Ryan began a tour to Amman where he spent 12 and 13 February 1932 discussing the definition of the nationality of the boundary tribes, such as Howaitat and Bani Atiyah, the establishment of posts by Transjordan and the counter military preparations of Ibn Saud. He also discussed the need to create direct and friendly relations between 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud. This of course would require the establishment of closer and more direct collaboration between Jerusalem and Jeddah.<sup>1</sup>

In spite of many differences, the Amman discussions were useful and enabled Ryan to clear up a number of points. However, their divergencies were, as Ryan explained, due not to his unwillingness to support Trans-Jordan in dealing with its frontier troubles,

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1. Jeddah Reports, Nov and Dec. 1931, Jan. Feb. and March, 1932, F.O. 371/16024.

"but to the frequent difficulty of accommodating action as regards Transjordan questions with the broad policy of keeping Ibn Saud sweet and giving him moral support for reasons of Imperial interests."<sup>1</sup>

On his last day at Amman Ryan met 'Abd-Allah who was then "most affable" and spoke about Ibn Saud in surprizingly moderate terms as "the King of Nejd". He did not exclude the possibility of recognizing his full titles if this was Britain's desire. For the time being, however, he could not favour this course of action. In fact he was carefully observing Ibn Saud's internal troubles, and he felt that he could benefit from them. If his judgment of Ibn Saud's difficulties was correct, as indeed it was, why should he hurry to recognize the Saudi regime in the Hejaz?<sup>2</sup> Ryan reviewed the matters he had discussed in Amman with the High Commissioner at Jerusalem, By 16 February his mission was completed and he left to consult with London.

There, he reported on two main topics; the situation in the Hejaz-Nejd, and the Hejaz-Nejd frontier question with Transjordan. Ryan was convinced that the troubled situation would "envenom all our relations with Ibn Saud and might again produce a dangerous situation". He advised the pursuit of a new policy.

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1. Memo. by Ryan, 25 Feb. 1932, E1241/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.

2. Ibid.



"we must suffer the nuisance", he wrote, "unless we are prepared for drastic remedies, like driving the Amir Abdullah and Ibn Saud into direct relations and letting them settle their tribal differences between them; and/or attempting a readjustment of frontiers so as to give the Wadi Sirhan to Trans-jordan (or perhaps neutralize it) and clear up<sup>1</sup> once [and] for all the question of Akaba and Maan."

Ryan suggested that this policy could be successful if Britain was able to maintain the Aqaba-Maan question in abeyance. He was fully aware that Ibn Saud still had great ambitions and that he might be tempted to begin dangerous enterprises. He concluded that Ibn Saud had just "reached the limit of what he can achieve without embroiling himself with H.M.G." Finally, Ryan drew attention to the present position of Ibn Saud, who was under the pressure of internal and external problems, and whose regime was unstable. He proposed that one of the following policies should be adopted:

- (i) "to give positive support to Ibn Saud, on the ground that he is, in spite of everything, an element of stability";
- (ii) "to let the present situation evolve its own lines, maintaining a generally friendly attitude towards Ibn Saud without really helping him";
- (iii) "to stiffen our attitude all along the line, at the risk of definitely antagonising Ibn Saud, and perhaps, promoting his downfall<sup>2</sup> or perhaps driving him into mad adventures."

Ryan favoured the second option because

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1. Memo. by Ryan on the situation in the Hejaz-Nejd as it affects H.M.G., 23 Feb. 1932, E1010/640/25, F.O. 371/16022.

2. Ibid.

"it matters very little whether he [Ibn Saud] survives or collapses; but in this alternative we must be prepared to tolerate the Transjordanian nuisance and to go easy with every thing else including the question of Kuwait and the Arabian air route'.<sup>1</sup>

With regard to the first option Ryan explained that "we cannot help Ibn Saud in the only way that would be really useful to him ... and ... we cannot help him against other Arab rulers". Finally he pointed out that the third option would not be dangerous because Ibn Saud "is weak and our grievances against him are solid. We could make out a case for rigidity good enough to appeal even to many Moslems".

There is no doubt that Ryan's judgment had been affected by his personal differences with Ibn Saud. Good relations between them were, however, soon restored and Ryan became anxious to sponsor agreement between 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud. Apparently it was he who had intimated to London in autumn 1931 that they should pursue a policy similar to that which had successfully led to the meeting of the Kings. London hesitated over this because the 'Abd-Allah-Ibn Saud grievances were so deeply rooted. The Glubb-Ibn Zeid meetings had been suggested instead to pave the way for such an encounter. Unfortunately for the British policy-makers Glubb and Ibn Zeid had failed to meet regularly and the purpose of their meetings had not been fulfilled. But

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1. Ibid.

Ryan, still believing that he had a role to play, was confident that, if given time, he could achieve a settlement.

While Ryan remained in London waiting for a decision on the matter Ibn Saud's son, Amir Faisal, arrived there in May. The visit was designed to improve Anglo-Saudi relations and to revive the momentum towards a settlement. Among various matters presented by Fuad Hamza on 9th May for discussion was of course the present situation on the frontier with Transjordan. Hamza expressed Ibn Saud's readiness to make similar arrangements with Transjordan to those recently made with Iraq. Oliphant, who had been receiving the Saudi mission at the Foreign Office, declared that this was "a very good sign", but he cautiously added that the matter was not "quite plain sailing". He promised to have the question examined.<sup>1</sup> On 13 May he added that since Transjordan was a mandated territory some problems would arise and these might widen the gap between the two countries.<sup>2</sup> The Saudi mission gave Ryan's initiative a new impetus. It was now agreed that he should actively pursue the quest for accommodation.

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1. Record of second meeting with the Hejaz-Nejd delegation at F.O., on 9 May 1932, E2 403/1494/25, F.O. 371/16026.
  2. Record of third meeting with the Hejaz-Nejd delegation at F.O., on 13 May 1932, E2404/1494/25, F.O. 371/16026. Other issues like 'Aqaba and the Hejaz Railway were also discussed. For Faisal's visit to London and Europe, see: Umm al-Qura, No. 402, 26 Aug. 1932.



Amir Faisal completed his European tour and in July visited Baghdad where he met King Faisal. At their meeting the King expressed his readiness to mediate between 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud. This offer seems to have been directly inspired by Britain. No decision had been taken on the proposals made either by Ryan or by Hamza. Oliphant's reactions to them seemed, in Ryan's opinion, to give no hope of effective British intervention in such a complex situation. Ryan accordingly had suggested that "Faisal could play a very useful role, as he could approach the Amir Abdullah in quite a different way from H.M.G., as a brother and not as a directing authority".<sup>1</sup> Ryan's suggestion may, therefore, have prompted a British appeal to Faisal. Confirmation of Ryan's role in the matter is provided by the fact that he was informed of Faisal's offer before it became known to Ibn Saud.

Yousuf Yasin welcomed Faisal's mediation and confirmed that Ibn Saud himself "had been delighted with the idea of Arab Kings helping each other". Ibn Saud, however, refused to give an immediate reply until he had seen Amir Faisal with whom he wished to consult and had had

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1. Ryan to Simon, 2 Aug. 1932, E4189/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024. (For Faisal's visit to Baghdad, see: al-Rashid, D.H.S.A., iii. pp.125-29). London welcomed King Faisal's mediatory role, C.O. to F.O. 18 July 1932, E3601/76/25, F.O. 371/16015; E3803/78/25, F.O. 371/16016.

an opportunity to "exchange views on certain undefined preliminary points with H.M.G." Ryan did not like this attitude feeling that it would "merely complicate the matter".<sup>1</sup> He wanted to avoid attempting a comprehensive solution to the Hejaz-Nejd problems with Transjordan believing that this could be achieved later. For the present he preferred to concentrate on getting 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud to recognize each other.

These efforts were temporarily frustrated by the Transjordanian-backed Ibn Rifada plot against Ibn Saud in summer 1932. Ibn Rifada's objective was no less than the conquest of the Hejaz. With some support from Egypt and with cooperation from Transjordan he managed to cross the frontier from Sinai to Aqaba and then to engage the Saudi forces. The British, unaware of this plot, could nevertheless have been held responsible by Ibn Saud for permitting the passage of a hostile force through British mandated territory. Conscious of this Britain offered immediate assistance to Ibn Saud against Ibn Rifada.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ryan to Simon, 2 Aug. 1932, E4189/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.
  2. For Hamed Ibn Rifada al-A'war and his anti-Wahhabi campaign and the help he secured from Egypt and Transjordan, see: The Times, 22, 24 June, 14, 15 July, 29 Aug. 1932. The story is also contained in 5 vols. in the P.R.O., F.O. 371/13013-13017. See summary in Jeddah Reports, July-Oct. 1932, F.O. 371/16024. Ibn Rifada declared before leaving Egypt that he had met 'Abd-Allah at Amman and chosen him to lead the forces to conquer the Hejaz. 'Abd-Allah also promised salaries for all the fighting forces and arms and ammunition would be available at Aqaba. Ryan concluded in a report on the affair that "it appears to me a strong presumption that he ['Abd-Allah] was behind the actual organizers of the plot of which Ibn Rifada affair was only one episode". See: Memo. by Ryan on the possible connection of Amir 'Abd-Allah with recent attempts to undermine Ibn Saud, Sept. 1932, E4737/76/25, F.O. 371/16016. On 12 Oct. the F.O. agreed on Ryan's findings and held 'Abd-Allah responsible. F.O. Minutes, 12 Oct. 1932, E4747/76/25. F.O. 371/16016.

'Abd-Allah's link with Ibn Rifada undoubtedly increased tension and provided Ibn Saud with new evidence that reconciliation with him was unattainable. Ryan however, thought differently. He believed that the Ibn Rifada affair would compel London to play a more active part in the proceedings. The only disadvantage was that it would take Ryan sometime to clarify the situation and to ease the tension. Faced with the Saudi insistence on the question of responsibility, Ryan was anxious to treat the affair separately from the general settlement. He thought he could influence Yasin, who was "completely in the King's confidence" to win over the King.<sup>1</sup>

Yasin went to see the King at Taif on 1 August. Having discussed the whole matter in all its aspects in the presence of Hamza, Yasin returned to Jeddah and presented a secret and private letter<sup>2</sup> and a memorandum<sup>3</sup> to Ryan. The memorandum was in fact a historical record of the discord between Ibn Saud and 'Abd-Allah since 1925. Significantly, it did not blame 'Abd-Allah as much as it did the British, because 'Abd-Allah was

"our enemy and there is no agreement or covenant between us. The agreements and covenants are between us and the British Government for whose sake we have refrained much and overlooked more of what we feel in our heart against him ['Abd-Allah]."

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1. Ryan to Simon, 2 Aug. 1932, E4189/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.
  2. Yasin to Ryan, 5 Aug. 1932, E4394/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.
  3. Memo. by Yasin, 6 Aug. 1932, E4394/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.
  4. Ibid.



The memorandum tackled the heart of the problem when it specified Ibn Saud's wish for the removal of 'Abd-Allah from Transjordan.

"... if the British Government desire complete rest such as will ensure the maintenance of their interests in Transjordan without costing them anything and without disturbance or trouble from us ... and such as will ensure our being in agreement with Transjordan, they will not be able to find true means for this so long as the Sharif 'Abdullah is in Transjordan."<sup>1</sup>

The memorandum promised Ibn Saud's co-operation with Britain for peace if 'Abd-Allah were removed and replaced by any other Arab or British ruler. In fact Ibn Saud was asking for more than Britain was willing even to consider. Later, on 30 August, the King pressed his point to Ryan and concluded that "no gentleman, however reasonable, could feel safe with a person like the Amir 'Abd-Allah over his border". The King, however, assured Ryan of his close friendship with Britain and of his desire to receive and to be guided by her advice, "subject only to the qualifications that she must safeguard his honour and his interests". This attitude can not be interpreted in simple anti-Hashemite terms as Ibn Saud had by now established good relations with Faisal, who was, as he declared, "a most commendable monarch" and with whom he remained on the best of terms.<sup>2</sup> Ibn Saud was probably influenced by his recent settlement with Iraq and

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1. Ibid.

2. Ryan to Simon, 30 Aug. 1932, E4821/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.

by Faisal's declarations, whatever his personal attitude, that Arabia could not survive without Ibn Saud. According to Humphreys, Faisal's impression was that Arabia would lapse into "complete anarchy and his frontier would be exposed to serious raiding by the Nejdi tribes".<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding mutual professions of friendship between Ibn Saud and Faisal, Ryan doubted whether Ibn Saud, in his present angry frame of mind against 'Abd-Allah, would accept Faisal's proposed mediation unless strongly pressed by Britain in that direction. Hoping for authority from London to exercise such pressure Ryan, in the meanwhile, confided to Hamza on 6 August:

"it was a great pity to destroy all that had been done, on the lines previously agreeable to the Hejazi Government, to promote a general settlement between Hejaz-Nejd and Transjordan."<sup>2</sup>

Hamza defended his King's position on the ground that he had never personally endorsed unconditional settlement with Transjordan. Ryan admitted this but pointed out that he was really alarmed by "the King's assertion of invincible enmity and mistrust towards Amir 'Abd-Allah and his insistence that nothing would satisfy him except formal guarantees by H.M.G." From this conversation with Hamza, Ryan emerged depressed and pessimistic.

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1. Humphreys to Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister, 2 Aug. 1932, E4215/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.

2. Ryan to Simon, 6 Aug. 1932, E4394/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.

Ibn Saud's reply to Faisal's offer of mediation was included in the last paragraph of Yasin's memorandum.

He stated:

"we look upon it as gracious act ..., [but] the mediation of His Majesty [King Faisal] however, cannot ensure to us our desiderata as he cannot be a guarantee for his brother, neither do we accept such guarantee..."

Nevertheless Ibn Saud left the door open to the British Government to decide remarking

"if they see that the interest lies in any course let them take that course, and if they see that their interest requires the acceptance of the mediation of His Majesty King Faisal they know better than we [do] in this respect."

Although disappointing to Ryan, this reply strengthened his belief that initiatives must come from London.

In the meanwhile, Amir Shaker, a cousin of 'Abd-Allah and his main adviser, visited Baghdad late in July at Faisal's invitation to secure his support for the mediation proposal. In fact, Shaker's influence over 'Abd-Allah was believed to be extensive. Humphreys met Shaker during the visit and found him flexible. He quoted Shaker as saying:

"while it could not be expected that the Hashemites could ever in their hearts become the real friends of Ibn Saud, they were willing, when necessary, to set aside personal and family feelings in the common interests of the Arab peoples. The Amir 'Abdullah was, he explained, hot-headed and somewhat embittered, but he was confident that he would yield to the wishes of his brother and to the advice of the British Government."

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1. Memo. by Yasin, 6 Aug. 1932, E4394/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.
  2. Humphreys to Sir P. Cunliffe-Lister, 2 Aug. 1932, E4215/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.



This reaction was encouraging.

Another attempt conducted by A.G. Wauchope, the High Commissioner, was made at his meeting with Amir 'Abd-Allah on 1 September. Wauchope pressed 'Abd-Allah to accept reconciliation with Ibn Saud, as this was Britain's desire. He also reminded the Amir that he was obliged, according to article 5 of the 1928 agreement

"... to be guided by the advice of his Britannic Majesty, tendered through the High Commissioner for Trans-Jordan, in all matters concerning foreign relations of Transjordan, as well as in all important matters affecting the international and financial obligations and interests of His Britannic Majesty in respect of Trans-Jordan..."<sup>1</sup>

Early in July, Wauchope had pressed 'Abd-Allah not only to act loyally, but also to convince others not to give support to H.M.G. enemies. In fact this was a criticism of 'Abd-Allah's role in the Ibn Rifada affair. Wauchope argued that "as Ibn Rifada's object had been to destroy Ibn Saud, and as Ibn Saud had a treaty with H.M.G., I looked on Ibn Rifada and all who helped him as people who worked against H.M.G." 'Abd-Allah then promised to obey British instructions and to "take measures to convince every one that he was not instigating rebellion against Ibn Saud". 'Abd-Allah had not kept to this bargain and now, in September "must ... give me a clear promise to recognise Ibn Saud as soon as H.M.G. called upon him to do so". In order to avoid any delay, Wauchope

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1. Art. 5 of the 1928 Agreement between Britain and Trans-jordan, Documents on International Affairs 1928, p.215. See Toynbee's study to the treaty in his: Survey 1928, pp.321-28.

made it clear that the question of recognition and that of a treaty of friendship should be treated separately. The recognition could go ahead easily and quickly, while it should later be possible to overcome gradually the difficulties in the way of making a treaty.<sup>1</sup>

'Abd-Allah declined to give his sanction to Wauchope's requests until he had obtained a counter concession from Ibn Saud namely his own recognition as Amir of Transjordan. Wauchope refused to give any pledge about the possibility of concluding a treaty of friendship between the two rivals. Eventually 'Abd-Allah agreed unconditionally to recognise Ibn Saud since this was H.M.G.'s desire. He again made it clear that he was still hoping that the following points would be included in the proposed treaty of friendship.

1. "That Ibn Saud should recognise the de facto Southern frontier
2. That Ibn Saud should put in order the section of the Hejaz Railway lying in his territory.
3. That the pilgrimage be opened to the Amir and his family
4. That the heirs of King Husain should have the right to appoint an agent ... to look after their properties in the Hejaz.
5. That H.M.G. should guarantee the due performance of these conditions."<sup>2</sup>

Wauchope refused to comment but promised to convey 'Abd-Allah's

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1. Wauchope to C.O., 3 Sept. 1932, E4703/1241/25, F.O. 371/16024.

2. Ibid.



wishes to London. 'Abd-Allah then assured Wauchope that he should be counted "innocent of any connection with further troubles which may take place in the Hejaz". Wauchope concluded that 'Abd-Allah "was much perturbed and that it had been a great wrench for him to promise to recognize Ibn Saud, the enemy of his family".<sup>1</sup> The signs for an eventual agreement were becoming more hopeful particularly since 'Abd-Allah was expecting his brother Faisal to visit Amman in September.

Baghdad, Amman and Jeddah had reported their points of view and on 21 September at an interdepartmental meeting held at the Foreign Office to decide policy. Ryan was present. The removal of 'Abd-Allah as requested by Ibn Saud in his memorandum of 6 August

"could in no circumstances be acceded to. Whatever action H.M.G. might eventually ... be obliged to consider taking against the Amir, there could be no question of taking drastic measures against him at Ibn Saud's request or at the present stage."<sup>2</sup>

Regarding Ibn Saud's alternative request that Britain should guarantee 'Abd-Allah's non intervention in the Hejaz-Nejd affairs Ryan

"thought it very undesirable that His Majesty's Government should give to King Ibn Saud a formal guarantee of such a nature as to make them jointly responsible with the Amir for any misdemeanour of his affecting King Ibn Saud. The latter would not fail to avail himself of it at every opportunity and to hold His Majesty's Government directly responsible, even very probably to the extent of claiming financial compensation direct from His

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1. Ibid.

2. Provisional record of interdepartmental meeting held at the F.O., 21 Sept. 1932, E4873/1241/25, F.O. 371/16025.



Majesty's Government for damage resulting from any Transjordan raid on the Hejaz and Nejd."<sup>1</sup>

Ryan's argument was accepted, but a Colonial Office representative suggested that the British Government could

"satisfy King Ibn Saud's desire for a guarantee by securing from the Amir Abdullah an undertaking to His Majesty's Government to observe the obligations involved in the proposed settlement, and notifying King Ibn Saud formally that such an undertaking had been given to His Majesty's Government."<sup>2</sup>

This suggestion might be acceptable to Ibn Saud, but he was unlikely to drop his request. A more potent incentive was to secure Abd-Allah's recognition of Ibn Saud as King of the Hejaz and Nejd. This recognition would be of great advantage to Ibn Saud. He could then tell the 'ulama' and the Ikhwan that he had handled Saudi external affairs successfully, especially after the Ibn Rifada incursion. This view was stressed by Ryan, who urged at the meeting that a final decision regarding this issue should be taken by mid-October to enable Ibn Saud to pacify his agitated Ikhwan and 'ulama'. He reminded the meeting that no guarantees should be made to Ibn Saud, though he could be informed

"that the Amir Abdullah was prepared to recognise him at once and thereafter to undertake negotiations for a treaty settlement of the questions at issue between them, and that His Majesty's Government would do all they could to bring about a settlement satisfactory to both sides."<sup>3</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

3. Ibid.

With regard to 'Abd-Allah's wish that Britain should guarantee the observance by Ibn Saud of obligations to be undertaken by him in any future treaty of mutual recognition, Rendel found it difficult for Britain to escape her mandatory responsibilities. It was agreed that Britain might participate in a tripartite treaty which would place 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud under obligations to the British Government. This resolution

"would cover the Amir's request for a guarantee from His Majesty's Government as well as that of Ibn Saud, and would probably to some extent meet the objection inherent in a direct guarantee by His Majesty's Government of the Amir Abdullah's correct behaviour towards King Ibn Saud."<sup>1</sup>

The meeting then directed its attention to the question of mutual recognition. It was agreed that the simplest and safest solution was to make such recognition separate from any treaty. As Ryan argued, the treaty would inevitably raise many questions which should be avoided at such an early stage. These matters could be less controversial if discussed after the recognition. In these circumstances the meeting recommended that the British Government

"should aim at arranging for recognition by letters to be addressed to His Majesty's Government, (i) in the case of the Amir through the High Commissioner for Transjordan, and (ii) in the case of Ibn Saud through Sir A. Ryan. In this way, no question would arise as to which of the two rulers should write first to the other, and much complication would be avoided."<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

One more difficulty needed to be solved; that was the form of words which Ibn Saud be asked to accept regarding 'Abd-Allah's position as Amir under the Mandate when he had never acknowledge its existence and when he persisted in his view that 'Abd-Allah was simply a local governor. Eventually,

"it was agreed to recommend that the formula 'recognizes His Highness the Amir Abdullah as Ruler of the State of Transjordan' would be in accordance with the terms of the Agreement between the United Kingdom and Transjordan of 1928, and would at the same time sufficiently provide for recognition by Ibn Saud<sup>1</sup> of the Amir's more or less sovereign status."

Ryan drew the conference's attention to Ibn Saud's special interest in the matter of extraditing tribal offenders, which must be included in any agreement that Ibn Saud might be persuaded to sign. Rendel agreed that this was indeed an essential point. The British authorities, whether in London or in Transjordan, were puzzled by the complexity of the situation. There were wide differences in the interpretation of extraditable crimes. For his part, Ibn Saud was likely to consider raids on Government forces and insurrection as extraditable, whereas the authorities in Transjordan found it impossible to agree to this. London also found it contrary to Britain's policy to agree to the extradition of political offenders. This difficulty was to be given further examination, but for the moment,

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1. Ibid.



Ibn Saud was merely informed of Britain's readiness to make arrangements similar to those embodied in his agreements with King Faisal.<sup>1</sup>

The meeting decided to back 'Abd-Allah's request for recognition by Ibn Saud of the de facto Southern frontier of Transjordan but against his request that Ibn Saud should undertake to put the Hejazi section of the Hejaz Railway in order. This matter, it was felt, would best be left in abeyance.<sup>2</sup>

While the British policy-makers were thus busy, Ibn Saud was also now planning a major decision for the future of his country. On 22 September the Hejaz and Nejd were formally unified under the name of "The Kingdom of Saudi-Arabia".<sup>3</sup> Although this unification did not cause any fundamental change in the actual status of the Hejaz and Nejd, it was a symbolic union intended as a warning to potential enemies of either separate state. Significantly the step was taken less than two months after Ibn Rifada affair.

In October King Faisal visited his brother 'Abd-Allah and persuaded him to recognise Ibn Saud. The latter,

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1. Ibid. (See art. 3 of the extradition treaty between Iraq and the Hejaz-Nejd, F.O. 371/14477; C.O. 732/44).

2. Ibid.

3. See: Hope-Gill to G.O. 22 Septe. 1932; Wahba to Simon 22 Sept. 1932, E4845/1484/25, F.O. 371/16025; Fuad Hamza, al-belad al-arabiyah al-Saudiyah, pp.92-95; Umm al-Qura, No. 405, 16 Sept., No. 406, 23 Sept. No. 407, 30 Sept. 1932, Oriente Moderno, xii (1932), p.405.

having received London's decision regarding questions raised in the memorandum of 6 August, declared on 13 October his readiness to recognize 'Abd-Allah and to enter into treaty negotiations with him along the lines of the Saudi-Iraqi settlement.<sup>1</sup> However no immediate step was taken in that direction. On the contrary, trouble started in Asir soon afterwards and it was later known that at least 'Abd-Allah and his brother Ali were involved in backing a plot against Ibn Saud, known as the al-Dabbagh conspiracy. Hamza presented a lengthy memorandum dated 15 November to Hope-Gill, protesting against 'Abd-Allah's aid to al-Dabbagh and urged the British Government to prevent territories under their control being used as bases for anti-Saudi activity. Ibn Saud had evidence for his claim about the link between Ibn Rifada, al-Dabbagh and 'Abd-Allah. His intelligence network captured a letter from 'Abd-Allah to al-Dabbagh about the co-operation between the northern forces (Ibn Rifada) and the southern forces (al-Dabbagh) to capture the Hejaz. The case was reported to London later in November. London decided not to reply before consulting Aden and Jerusalem. Aden confirmed the uprising by al-Dabbagh. Jerusalem replied that although there were no indications of any association between the north and south, collusion was not

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1. Hamza to Hope-Gill, 13 Oct. 1932, E6080/1241/25, F.O. 371/16025; Jeddah Report, Sept. and Oct. 1932, F.O. 371/16024.



impossible. Ibn Saud then decided to concentrate his forces near the Transjordanian border in preparation for a direct attack intended to oust 'Abd-Allah from his Emirate.<sup>1</sup>

On 27 November, the Saudi Government presented another memorandum to the British Legation providing more evidence of 'Abd-Allah's anti Saudi activities. It was alleged that, earlier in the month and after winning over the leader of the Bani 'Ataiyah tribe, 'Abd-Allah had undertaken a tour to seek more support from other tribal leaders and in particular Nuri al-Sha'lan of the Rwalah. Ibn Saud claimed that these border tribes owed allegiance to him and that 'Abd-Allah's designs upon them were clear evidence of hostile intentions. In fact there is no evidence that 'Abd-Allah even saw Nouri and there is evidence that while supposed to be touring, he was engaged on a shooting party at Azraq. After that he is known to have visited his sick brother 'Ali in Baghdad.<sup>2</sup>

The presence of the Saudi forces in the vicinity of the borders raised fears that a similar situation to

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1. See: Ryan to F.O., 4 Aug. 1932, E3918/76/25; 8 Aug. 1932, E4026/76/25, F.O. 371/16016; Hope-Gill to F.O., 25 Nov. 1932, E6212/5839/25, F.O. 371/16028; Jeddah Report, Nov. and Dec. 1932, F.O. 371/16875. See art. 2 of the Treaty of Jeddah, Appendix F. The original plan for the association between the north and the south was that the south should start the uprising which would be followed by the north. Apparently things went wrong. See text of message from al-Dabbagh to Amir Shaker in, Attar, saqr al-jazirah, pp.1090-94.
  2. Jeddah Report, Nov. and Dec. 1932, F.O. 371/16875.



that which had occurred on the Iraqi border might arise. Hope-Gill advised that London should take radical action against some of 'Abd-Allah's leading advisers even if for policy reasons 'Abd-Allah himself could not be punished with dismissal. Hope-Gill concluded that in the long run Britain "must choose between the Amir Abdullah and Ibn Saud ...". London found it difficult "to deny the accusation of hostile activities made by Ibn Saud against Amir 'Abdullah.. and his associates". Jerusalem was informed on 3 December of this "embarrassing and ignominious" position, and was urged to take drastic steps as soon as possible to remedy this position - not only to safeguard Anglo-Saudi relations but also British interests throughout the Middle East.<sup>1</sup>

Wauchope carried out London's instructions. He interviewed 'Abd-Allah on 7 December and extracted a reiteration of his promise of non-aggression and peaceful intent. 'Abd-Allah said that he had already dismissed some of his advisers and had taken action to curb the activities of anti-Saudi elements operating from within Transjordan. Notwithstanding these professions Wauchope noted that Amir Shaker, believed to be the leader of the anti-Saudi campaign, remained in office.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Ibid.

2. Ibid.

London declined to give any formal reply to the two Saudi memoranda of 15 and 27 November until a clarification of the situation in Transjordan had been achieved. In fact no reply was made as it was hoped that Ryan, on his return to Jeddah on 28 December, would manage verbally to sooth Saudi anger and to take charge of the peace negotiation. He was to try to avoid the topic of recrimination and to concentrate on the matters of mutual recognition.<sup>1</sup>

Accordingly, in January 1933 Ryan conveyed to the Saudi Government London's definite proposals regarding the procedure for mutual recognition between 'Abd-Allah and Ibn Saud and for subsequent negotiation of a bilateral treaty for the execution of which Britain would be directly responsible. The Saudi Government satisfactorily replied on 22 January assuring Ryan that the Ikhwan forces which had been concentrated near the borders had been withdrawn and that they were prepared to exchange assurances of non-aggression.<sup>2</sup>

Having ascertained the Saudi attitude, Ryan visited Jerusalem on 15 February to pave the way, in consultation with Wauchope, for further discussions with the Saudi Government. After these preliminary discussions, Ryan proceeded to Amman the following day. He and Colonel Cox

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1. Ibid.

2. Jeddah Report, Jan. 1933, F.O. 371/16875

lunched with Amir 'Abd-Allah, who "reaffirmed his willingness to comply in every respect with the wishes of H.M.G. regarding the relations with Ibn Saud". On 26 February Ryan returned to Jeddah. Now, a year after he had visited Jerusalem and Amman in February 1932, Ryan's initiative seemed to be working despite the severe damage caused by Ibn Rifada's incursion and by the al-Dabbagh plot. This visit had produced three major results:

- a) "Drafts in English and Arabic ... were prepared of the communication to be addressed by the Amir's chief Minister to the High Commissioner regarding mutual recognition, and of a telegram to be sent by the Amir to Ibn Saud after the completion of the recognition. The Amir accepted the drafts ..."
- b) "Similar agreements to those which had been concluded between the Hejaz-Nejd and Iraq in 1931 would be negotiated in two stages, the first at Jeddah in April and the second in Jerusalem in June."
- c) "Tentative drafts of the proposed treaties were prepared, at Amman, for submission to higher authority."<sup>1</sup>

In March special arrangements were made to forward certified copies speedily to Ryan and Wauchope for transmission to the respective Governments.<sup>2</sup> These arrangements were completed on 1 April and the two rulers formally recognised each other. On the following day they exchanged friendly telegrams.<sup>3</sup> A year of extensive work now ended with a complete success for British policy when the two parties started negotiations later in April on a treaty of friendship and Bon Voisinage.<sup>4</sup>

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1. Jeddah Report, Feb. 1933, F.O. 371/16875.

2. Jeddah Report, March 1933, F.O. 371/16875.

3. Jeddah Report, April 1933, F.O. 371/16875; Umm al-Qura, No. 434, 16 April, for Arabic text of the telegrams.

4. Umm al-Qura, No. 471, 23 Dec. 1933 for text of the treaty.



## Conclusion and Epilogue

During the interwar period Britain's main concern in the Middle East was almost entirely with Egypt, the Mandates and Persia. The security of these areas had always been essential for the protection of Britain's traditional interests in India. In spite of her apparently dominating position at the end of the war she soon faced real challenges in the Middle East, as elsewhere in India and Ireland, from the local national movements. Not surprisingly peace and order were given top priority by the policy makers in London.

Apart from Britain's concern about the safety of the Muslim Holy Places in the Hejaz, little attention was given to Arabia, where the British had by now succeeded in almost totally excluding the influence of other Great Powers from its shores. However, the interior of Arabia was in a ferment of family and tribal feuds and religious fanaticism. Violence soon erupted and the balance of power changed in favour of 'Abd-al-'Aziz Ibn Saud. His Ikhwan followers posed an immediate threat to the security of the Mandates. The attention of British policy-makers was abruptly directed to Central Arabian affairs.

Ibn Saud, who had formerly played a modest role in Britain's calculations during the Great War, now profited from Britain's neutral stance in the Hejaz war and succeeded in making himself master of most of Arabia. Recognizing this fact and prone to support the strong, Britain began to look towards friendship with Ibn Saud as a means of securing the safety of the Mandates

and the sea and air routes around his dominions. By 1926 this had become a major element in Britain's eastern policy.

The Hashemites, abandoned by Britain in the Hejaz war, remained under British protection in the Mandates. This directly influenced the development of Anglo-Saudi relations. So did the attitude of the Ikhwan. Having carried their King to power, they began, on religious grounds, to question his policy and in particular his relations with Britain. A rift opened between Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan. In the meanwhile, the warlike activities of the Ikhwan were causing Britain increasing concern. A common interest in clipping the wings of the Ikhwan now began to develop between Ibn Saud and the British. Thus, although Ikhwan intemperance had impeded Anglo-Saudi friendship, it eventually helped to bring Ibn Saud and the British closer together. They were not deterred by hostile reactions in other parts of the Muslim world where Britain's involvement was viewed with disfavour. With the Mandates now protected from the Ikhwan, Britain was able to concentrate on the vexed question of Saudi-Hashemite relations. Reconciliation between Ibn Saud and the Hashemite rulers in Iraq and Transjordan became a prime target. Its achievement and the collapse of the Ikhwan rebellion brought to an end one of the most turbulent eras in Arabian history and thus provided the kind of peace that seemed best to suit British interests.

The whole process, which brought Britain into a close relationship with Ibn Saud, depended on intensive labour by the policy-makers in London and by British representatives in the Middle East and in Arabia itself. Notwithstanding the amount of attention given to Arabian affairs, they rarely were discussed either at Cabinet level or in Parliament. This was no doubt because, although the complexities of the situation and the number of departments concerned imposed the most detailed consideration, Arabia itself still seemed to Britain of less importance than other parts of the Middle East.

In Arabia there was no serious challenge to Britain from any other Great Power. The French had been successfully warned off during the war years. The Russians seemed powerless to interfere. With the Italians Britain had a good understanding over the Red Sea. The need for any major policy attitude towards Saudi-Arabia was not apparent. In the absence of any fixed idea, British policy makers simply reacted to local events. Even when Britain played a decisive role in Arabian affairs and, in so doing, helped to create Saudi-Arabia, this was not the result of deliberate policy.

By cooperating with Ibn Saud, Britain solved a number of awkward problems relating to the security of the Mandates and to the stability of an area vital to imperial communications. True enough issues such as the Hejaz Railway, the Aqaba and Maan question and the Awqaf al-Haramain, remained in



contention but, after 1932, they were not, for Britain, a matter of major pre-occupation even though Ibn Saud began to suspect British motives in failing to meet his wishes.

Ibn Saud's biggest disappointment, however, was Britain's unwillingness to provide financial assistance. It was because of his own pressing financial problems that the Americans were able to dominate the eastern half of Saudi-Arabia as an oil concession area. Only recognising Saudi-Arabia in 1931, they remained without a representative at Jeddah until 1942. Their main concern was investment and business rather than politics. Having established some economic interests in the Mandates through the open-door policy, they succeeded, by the Red Line Agreement of 1928, in obtaining a number of oil concessions in areas under British influence. Ibn Saud, financially embarrassed during the lean years which followed his wars in Arabia and the Ikhwan rebellion and coincided with the Great Depression, felt constrained to seek other than British help. Reluctantly and against the will of his people he offered to grant concessions in his country to anyone who could provide him with £50,000. The Americans were prompt with the money and in 1933 they obtained a vast concession. Sir Andrew Ryan, the British Minister at Jeddah was surprised and horrified by the news. As Philby, a participant in the making of the concession, indicated, more was at stake than the size of the concession. It was a sign of changing times and was in fact to prove the moment at which Britain's influence in Arabia began to decline and that of Americans to rise.

The Second World War and the decrease in the number of pilgrims to Mecca increased Ibn Saud's financial problems. London again disappointed his hopes for assistance and instead advised him to approach the American Government for the necessary help, urging him to realise that the British were no longer his only friends. Notwithstanding this advice the British were reluctant to allow the Americans<sup>to</sup> achieve overnight quite the same position in Saudi-Arabia as it had taken them long years to build up. Ibn Saud himself was cautious in his dealings with his new friends. The Americans of their own accord agreed not to pursue any political ambitions while Ibn Saud made a point, before the end of the war in 1945, in publicly declaring himself to be a friend of Great Britain. At the same time the British and the Americans concluded an understanding whereby the United States recognised Britain's political and strategic interests while Britain recognised America's oil interests in Saudi-Arabia. More important, however, than these declarations was Roosevelt's own meeting with Ibn Saud on board U.S. Ship Quincy on the Great Bitter Lake, on 14 February 1945. The meeting was decisive for the development of the Saudi-Arabian oil industry and for America's future financial aid to Ibn Saud.

From then onwards a close relationship between Saudi-Arabia and the United States steadily developed. After the war the Saudi leaders like those of many other Middle East states, began to look increasingly towards America as a

counter-weight to Russia or Britain or both. A positive response notably in the case of Saudi Arabia was to characterize future American Middle East policy. With America completely in the ascendent, the vestiges of a British role in Saudi Arabia had, already by the time of the Suez fiasco, virtually vanished.



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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### THE ANGLO-SAUDI TREATY OF 1915

#### Preamble

THE High British Government on its own part, and Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal Al-Saud, Ruler of Najd, El Hassa, Qatif and Jubail, and the towns and ports belonging to them, on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors, and tribesmen, being desirous of confirming and strengthening the friendly relations which have for a long time existed between the two parties, and with a view to consolidating their respective interests - the British Government have named and appointed Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox, K.C.S.I., K.C.I.E., British Resident in the Persian Gulf, as their Plenipotentiary, to conclude a treaty for this purpose with Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal Al-Saud.

The said Lieutenant-Colonel Sir Percy Cox and Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdur Rahman-bin-Faisal Al-Saud (hereafter known as "Bin Saud"), have agreed upon and concluded the following articles:-

#### I

The British Government do acknowledge and admit that Najd, El Hassa, Qatif and Jubail, and their dependencies and territories, which will be discussed and determined hereafter, and their ports on the shores of the Persian Gulf are the countries of Bin Saud and of his fathers before him, and do hereby recognise the said Bin Saud as the independent ruler thereof and absolute Chief of their tribes, and after him his sons and descendants by inheritance; but the selection of the individual shall be in accordance with the nomination (i.e., by the living Ruler) of his successor; but with the proviso that he shall not be a person antagonistic to the British Government in any respect; such as, for example, in regard to the terms mentioned in this treaty.

#### II

In the event of aggression by any foreign Power on the territories of the countries of the said Bin Saud and his descendants without reference to the British Government and without giving her an opportunity of communicating with Bin Saud and composing the matter, the British Government will aid Bin Saud to such extent and in such manner as the British Government after consulting Bin Saud may consider most effective for protecting his interests and countries.



III:

Bin Saud hereby agrees and promises to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement, or treaty with any foreign nation or Power, and, further, to give immediate notice to the political authorities of the British Government of any attempt on the part of any other Power to interfere with the above territories.

IV

Bin Saud hereby undertakes that he will absolutely not cede, sell, mortgage, lease, or otherwise dispose of the above territories or any part of them, or grant concessions within those territories to any foreign Power or to the subjects of any foreign Power,\* without the consent of the British Government.

And that he will follow advice unreservedly provided that it be not damaging to his own interests.

V

Bin Saud hereby undertakes to keep open within his territories the roads leading to the Holy Places, and to protect pilgrims on their passage to and from the Holy Places

VI

Bin Saud undertakes, as his fathers did before him, to refrain from all aggression on or interference with the territories of Kuwait, Bahrein, and of the Sheikhs of Qatar and the Oman Coast who are under the protection of the British Government, and who have treaty relations with the said Government; and the limits of their territories shall be hereafter determined.

VII

The British Government and Bin Saud agree to conclude a further detailed treaty in regard to matters concerning the two parties.

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\* The words "or the subjects of any foreign Power" were accidentally omitted in the copies signed by Sir P. Cox and Bin Saud on the 26th December, 1915. Sir P. Cox drew Bin Saud's attention to this omission in a letter dated the 27th December, 1915 (38086/16), and added: "I have duly written them in the text of the original document which I am submitting to Government, and Government will consider it in this form; so that if the same mistake occurs in the copy with you, I trust you will add the words above quoted."

Dated 18th Safar 1334, corresponding to 26th December, 1915

(Signed and sealed) ABDUL AZIZ AL-SAUD  
P.Z. COX, Lieutenant-Colonel  
British Resident in the Persian Gulf

(Signed) CHELMSFORD,  
Viceroy and Governor-General of India

This treaty was ratified by the Viceroy and Governor-General of India in Council at Simla, on the 18th day of July, 1916 A.D.

(Signed) A.H. GRANT,  
Secretary to the Government of India,  
Foreign and Political Department

Source: F.O. 371/12244

## APPENDIX B

### THE HADDA AGREEMENT

THE HIGH BRITISH GOVERNMENT on its own part and HIS HIGHNESS 'ABDU'L-'AZIZ IBN 'ABDU'R-RAHMAN AL-FAISAL AL SA'UD, Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies on behalf of the Government of Nejd, on his part, in view of the friendly relations which exist between them, being desirous of fixing the frontier between Nejd and Trans-Jordan and of settling certain questions connected therewith, THE HIGH BRITISH GOVERNMENT have named and appointed SIR GILBERT CLAYTON, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., as their Commissioner and Plenipotentiary, to conclude an Agreement for this purpose with SULTAN 'ABDU'L-'AZIZ IBN 'ABDU'R-RAHMAN AL-FAISAL AL SA'UD on behalf of Nejd.

In virtue of which the said SULTAN 'ABDU'L-'AZIZ IBN 'ABDU'R-RAHMAN AL-FAISAL AL SA'UD and the said SIR GILBERT CLAYTON, have agreed upon and concluded the following Articles:-

#### Article 1.

The frontier between Nejd and Trans-Jordan starts in the north east 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 parallel 31°30'N, and thence along meridian 37°E to the point of the 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.

#### Article 2.

The Government of Nejd undertake not to establish any fortified post at Kaf or utilise Kaf or the district in its neighbourhood as a military centre; and should they at any time consider it necessary to take exceptional measures in the neighbourhood of the frontier with a view to the maintenance of order or for any other purpose, involving the concentration of armed forces, they engage to notify His Majesty's Government without delay.

The Government of Nejd undertake to prevent, by all the means at their disposal, any incursions by their forces into the territory of Trans-Jordan.

#### Article 3.

In order to avoid misunderstanding over incidents which may arise in the neighbourhood of the frontier, and to promote mutual confidence and full co-operation between His Majesty's Government and the Government of Nejd, the two parties agree to maintain constant communication between the Chief British Representative in Trans-Jordan or his delegate and the Governor of the Wadi Sirhan.



#### Article 4.

The Government of Nejd undertake to maintain all established rights that may be enjoyed in the Wadi Sirhan by tribes not under their jurisdiction, whether such rights appertain to grazing or to habitation, or to ownership, or the like; it being understood that those tribes, so long as they reside within Nejd territory, will be subject to such internal laws as do not infringe those rights.

The Government of Trans-Jordan undertake to extend identical treatment to Nejd subjects who may enjoy similar established rights in Trans-Jordan territory.

#### Article 5.

The Governments of Nejd and Trans-Jordan severally recognise that raiding by tribes settled in their territories into the territory of the other State is an aggression which necessitates the severe punishment of the perpetrators by the Government to which they are subject, and that the chief of the tribe committing such aggression is to be held responsible.

#### Article 6.

(a) A special tribunal shall be set up, by agreement between the two Governments of Nejd and Trans-Jordan, which shall meet from time to time to enquire into the particulars of any aggression committed across the frontier between the two States, to assess the damages and losses and to fix the responsibility. This tribunal shall be composed of an equal number of representatives of the Governments of Nejd and Trans-Jordan, and its presidency shall be entrusted to an additional person, other than the aforesaid representatives, to be selected by the two Governments in agreement. The decision of this tribunal shall be final and executory.

(b) When the tribunal has fixed the responsibility, assessed the damages and losses resulting from the raid, and issued its decision in that respect, the Government to whom those found guilty are subject shall execute the aforesaid decision in accordance with tribal customs, and shall punish the guilty party in accordance with Article 5 of the present Agreement.

#### Article 7.

Tribes subject to one of the two Governments may not cross the frontier into the territory of the other Government except after obtaining a permit from their own Government and after the concurrence of the other Government; it being stipulated, however, in accordance with the principle of the freedom of grazing, that neither Government shall have the right to withhold such permit or concurrence if the migration of the tribe is due to grazing necessities.

#### Article 8.

The two Governments of Nejd and Trans-Jordan undertake to stand in the way, by all the means at their disposal other than expulsion and the use of force, of the emigration of any tribe or section of a tribe from one of the two countries into the other unless its emigration takes place with the knowledge and consent of its Government. The two Governments undertake to abstain from offering any present of whatsoever kind to refugees from the territories of the other Government, and to look with disfavour on any of their subjects who may seek to entice tribes belonging to the other Government or to encourage them to emigrate from their country into the other country.

#### Article 9.

The Governments of Nejd and Trans-Jordan may not correspond with the Chiefs and Sheikhs of tribes subject to the other State on official or political matters.

#### Article 10.

The forces of Nejd and Trans-Jordan may not cross the common frontier in the pursuit of offenders, except with the consent of both Governments.

#### Article 11.

Sheikhs of tribes who hold an official position or who have flags showing that they are the leaders of armed forces may not display their flags in the territory of the other State.

#### Article 12.

Free passage will be granted by the Governments of Nejd and Trans-Jordan to travellers and pilgrims, provided they conform to those regulations affecting travel and pilgrimage which may be in force in Nejd and Trans-Jordan. Each Government will inform the other of any regulation issued by it in this matter.

#### Article 13.

His Britannic Majesty's Government undertake to secure freedom of transit at all times to merchants who are subjects of Nejd for the prosecution of their trade between Nejd and Syria in both directions: and to secure exemption from Customs and other duty for all merchandise in transit which may cross the Mandated Territory on its way from Nejd to Syria or from Syria to Nejd, on condition that such merchants and their caravans shall submit to whatever Customs inspection may be necessary, and that they shall be in possession of a document from their Government certifying that they are bona fide merchants; and provided that trading caravans carrying merchandise will follow established routes, to be agreed upon hereafter, for their entry into and their exit from the Mandated Territory; it being understood that the above restrictions will not apply to trading caravans whose trade is confined to camels and other animals, or to tribes migrating in accordance with the preceding Articles of the present Agreement.



His Britannic Majesty's Government further undertake to secure such other facilities as may be possible to merchants who are subjects of Nejd and who may cross the area under British Mandate.

Article 14.

This Agreement will remain in force for so long as His Britannic Majesty's Government are entrusted with the Mandate for Trans-Jordan.

Article 15.

The present Agreement has been drawn up in the two languages, English and Arabic, and each of the high contracting parties shall sign two English copies and two Arabic copies. Both texts shall have the same validity, but in case of divergence between the two in the interpretation of one or other of the Articles of the present Agreement, the English text shall prevail.

Article 16.

The present Agreement will be known as the HADDA Agreement.

Signed at Bahra Camp on the 2nd November, 1925 (corresponding to the 15th Rabi' Thani 1344).

(Signed) GILBERT CLAYTON  
'ABDU'L-'AZIZ

Source: F.O. 371/11437



## APPENDIX C

### THE BAHRA AGREEMENT

WHEREAS with a view to securing good relations between the two Governments of 'Iraq and Nejd, a Treaty known as the Muhammara Convention was agreed upon between those two Governments and signed on the 7th Ramadan 1340 (corresponding to the 5th May, 1922), and

WHEREAS the aforesaid Treaty was supplemented by two Protocols, known respectively as Protocol Number I and Protocol Number II of the Muhammara Convention, which were signed at 'Uqair on the 12th Rabi' Thani 1341 (corresponding to the 2nd December, 1922), and

WHEREAS the aforesaid Treaty and Protocols have been duly ratified by the two Governments of 'Iraq and Nejd, and

WHEREAS in Article 1 of the aforesaid Muhammara Convention the Governments of 'Iraq and of Nejd have guaranteed mutually that they will prevent aggression by their tribes on the tribes of the other and will punish their tribes for any such aggression and, should the circumstances not admit of such punishment, the two Governments will discuss the question of taking combined action according to the good relations prevailing between them, and

WHEREAS it is considered advisable by His Britannic Majesty's Government and by the two Governments aforementioned, in the interests of friendship and good relations between the two countries of 'Iraq and Nejd to come to an agreement regarding certain matters which are outstanding between those two countries,

WE, the undersigned, His Highness 'Abdu 'l-'Aziz ibn 'Abdu'r-Rahman al-Faisal Al Sa'ud, Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies, and Sir Gilbert Clayton, K.B.E., C.B., C.M.G., the duly accredited Commissioner and Plenipotentiary of His Britannic Majesty's Government, who has been empowered to come to an agreement and sign on behalf of the 'Iraq Government, have agreed upon the following articles:-

#### Article 1.

The States of 'Iraq and Nejd severally recognise that raiding by tribes settled in their territories into the territory of the other State is an aggression which necessitates the severe punishment of the perpetrators by the Government to which they are subject and that the chief of the tribe committing such aggression is to be held responsible.

#### Article 2.

(a) A special tribunal shall be set up, by agreement between the two Governments of 'Iraq and Nejd, which shall meet from time to time to enquire into the particulars of any aggression committed across the frontier between the two States, to assess the damages and losses and to fix the responsibility. This tribunal shall be composed of an equal number of representatives of the Governments of 'Iraq and Nejd, and its presidency shall be entrusted to an additional person, other than the aforesaid representatives, to be selected by the two Governments in agreement. The decisions of this tribunal shall be final and executory.

(b) When the tribunal has fixed the responsibility, assessed the damages and losses resulting from the raid, and issued its decision in that respect, the Government to whom those found guilty are subject shall execute the aforesaid decision in accordance with tribal customs, and shall punish the guilty party in accordance with Article 1 of the present Agreement.

### Article 3.

Tribes subject to one of the two Governments may not cross the frontier into the territory of the other Government, except after obtaining a permit from their own Government and after the concurrence of the other Government; it being stipulated, however, in accordance with the principle of freedom of grazing, that neither Government shall have the right to withhold such permit or concurrence if the migration of the tribe is due to grazing necessities.

### Article 4.

The two Governments of 'Iraq and Nejd undertake to stand in the way, by all the means at their disposal other than expulsion and the use of force, of the emigration of any tribe or section of a tribe from one of the two countries into the other unless its emigration takes place with the knowledge and consent of its Government. The two Governments undertake to abstain from offering any present of whatsoever kind to refugees from the territories of the other Government, and to look with disfavour on any of their subjects who may seek to entice tribes belonging to the other Government or to encourage them to emigrate from their country into the other country.

### Article 5.

The Governments of 'Iraq and Nejd may not correspond with the Chiefs and Sheikhs of tribes subject to the other State on official or political matters.

### Article 6.

The forces of 'Iraq and Nejd may not cross the common frontier in the pursuit of offenders except with the consent of both Governments.

### Article 7.

Sheikhs of tribes who hold an official position or who have flags showing that they are the leaders of armed forces may not display their flags in the territory of the other State.

### Article 8.

In case one of the two Governments were to call upon tribes residing in the territory of the other State to furnish armed contingents, the said tribes will be free to respond to the call of their Government on condition that they betake themselves with their families and belongings in complete tranquillity.



Article 9.

In case a tribe were to emigrate from the territory of one of the two Governments into the territory of the other Government and were subsequently to commit raids into the territory in which it formerly resided, it will be open to the Government into whose territory this tribe has immigrated to take from it adequate guarantees on the understanding that, if a similar aggression were to be repeated by the tribe, those guarantees would be liable to confiscation, without prejudice to the punishment to be inflicted by the Government as provided in Article 1, and without prejudice to whatever impositions may be decreed by the tribunal specified in Article 2 of the present Agreement.

Article 10.

The Governments of 'Iraq and Nejd undertake to initiate friendly discussions with a view to concluding a special agreement in respect of the extradition of criminals in accordance with the usage prevailing among friendly States, within a period not exceeding one year from the date of the ratification of the present Agreement by the Government of 'Iraq.

Article 11.

The Arabic version is the official text to be referred to in the interpretation of the Articles of the present Agreement.

Article 12.

The present Agreement shall be known as "The Bahra Agreement".

Signed at Bahra Camp this fourteenth day of Rabi' Thani 1344, corresponding to the first day of November, 1925.

(Signed) GILBERT CLAYTON

(Signed and Sealed) 'ABDU'L-AZIZ

Source: F.O. 371/11437



APPENDIX D

BRITISH DRAFT TREATY FOR JORDAN'S GUIDANCE DURING HIS NEGOTIATIONS  
WITH IBN SAUD, DECEMBER 1926

HIS Majesty the King of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland and of the British Domions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies, being desirous of confirming and strengthening the friendly relations which exist between them, and of consolidating their respective interests, have resolved to conclude a treaty of friendship and good understanding, for which purpose His Britannic Majesty has appointed as his plenipotentiary his trusty and well-beloved Stanley Rupert Jordan, Esquire, acting British agent and consul at Jeddah.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies, and the said Mr. Stanley Rupert Jordan, His Britannic Majesty's plenipotentiary, have accordingly now agreed upon and concluded the following articles:-

ARTICLE 1.

There shall be peace and friendship between His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies. Each of the high contracting parties agrees and promises to use all possible means to prevent his territory being used as a base for activities directed against the present or future interests of the other.

ARTICLE 2.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies hereby recognises the special position of His Britannic Majesty in Iraq, Transjordan and Palestine.

ARTICLE 3.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies hereby undertakes to facilitate the performance of the pilgrimage by British subjects and British-protected persons of Moslem faith, and to protect such persons during the performance of the pilgrimage.

ARTICLE 4.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies agrees that the property of the aforesaid pilgrims who may die in the territories of His Majesty shall be handed over to the British representative in the said territories, or to such authority as he may appoint for the purpose, to be disposed of in accordance with the law applicable to the case. The British representative in the said territories will see that any dues or taxes which are payable on such property under Nejdí or Hejazi laws are duly paid.

ARTICLE 5.

His Britannic Majesty agrees to recognise the national status of all subjects of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies who may at any time be within the territories of His Britannic Majesty or within British-protected territory or territory in respect of which His Britannic Majesty has accepted a mandate on behalf of the League of Nations.

On his part, His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies agrees to recognise the national status of all British subjects or persons enjoying the protection of His Britannic Majesty who may be at any time within the territories of His Majesty.

ARTICLE 6.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes, as his fathers did before him, to refrain from all aggression on, or interference with, the territories of Kuwait, Bahrain, and of the Sheikhs of Katar and the Oman Coast, who are under the protection of the Government of His Britannic Majesty and who have treaty relations with the said Government.

ARTICLE 7.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes to co-operate with His Britannic Majesty in the suppression of the slave trade and to recognise the right of manumission of His Britannic Majesty's consular officers at Jeddah and elsewhere.

ARTICLE 8.

The present treaty shall be ratified and the ratifications shall be exchanged as soon as possible. It shall come into force immediately upon ratification and shall be binding during seven years from the date of its coming into force, when the treaty concluded between His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies, then Sultan of Nejd, on the 26th December, 1915, shall cease to have effect. In case neither of the high contracting parties shall have given notice to the other six months before the expiration of the said period of seven years of his intention to terminate the treaty, it shall remain in force until the expiration of six months from the day on which either of the high contracting parties shall have given such notice.

The present treaty has been drawn up in quadruplicate in English and Arabic. Both texts shall have the same validity, but in case of divergence the English text shall prevail. One copy of each text shall remain deposited in the archives of the Government of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and its Dependencies and one copy of each text in those of the Government of His Britannic Majesty, the remaining copies being used for the purpose of the exchange of ratifications provided for in this article.

In witness whereof, &c.

Source: F.O. 371/11438



APPENDIX E

DRAFT TREATY PRESENTED BY THE KING OF THE HEJAZ ON DECEMBER 4, 1926

PREAMBLE

Accepted as proposed by His Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE 1.

There shall be peace and friendship between His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies. Each of the high contracting parties undertakes to maintain good relations with the other, and to endeavour by all the means at his disposal to prevent his territories being used as a base for unlawful activities against the other party.

ARTICLE 2.

His Britannic Majesty recognises the complete and absolute independence of the dominions of His Majesty 'Abdul 'Aziz-ibn-'Abdul Rahman-al-Faisal-Al-Sa'ud, King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies.

ARTICLE 3.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies notifies that the performance of the pilgrimage will be facilitated to Moslem British subjects or British-protected persons, to the same extent as to all other pilgrims; that they will be safe as regards their property and their persons during their stay in the territories of His Majesty; and that they shall receive no treatment which is contrary to the established laws while in the territories of His Majesty.

ARTICLE 4.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies undertakes that the belongings of any of the pilgrims referred to in the preceding article of the present treaty who may die in the territories of His Majesty and have no lawful trustee in those territories shall be handed over to the British representative in Jedda or to such person as may be delegated by the latter for the purpose, for transmission to the rightful heirs of the deceased pilgrim; it being understood that such belongings will not be handed over to the British authority until the formalities required by the relevant Shar'ia laws will have been accomplished and the dues prescribed in the ordinances of the Hejaz-Nejd Government will have been collected.

ARTICLE 5.

His Britannic Majesty recognises the national (Hejazi or Nejdi) status of all subjects of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies who may at any time be within the territories of His Britannic Majesty. On his part His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan



of Nejd and their Dependencies recognises the national (British) status of all subjects of His Britannic Majesty who may at any time be within the territories of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies; provided that such persons shall be subject to the established laws of the country in which they may be.

#### ARTICLE 6.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies undertakes to maintain, as did his fathers and grandfathers, relations of friendship and peace with Kuwait and Bahrain and with the Shaikhs of Qatar and the Oman Coast.

#### ARTICLE 7.

Under consideration. (This article relates to the suppression of the slave trade.)

#### ARTICLE 8.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies will be at full liberty to purchase and import arms, war material and ammunition, and such machines and implements as may be required from abroad for the Hejaz-Nejd Government. His Britannic Majesty undertakes that no measure shall be taken to prevent the importation of whatever arms, war material, ammunition, machines and implements as may be required from abroad for the Hejaz-Nejd Government. His Britannic Majesty undertakes that no measure shall be taken to prevent the importation of whatever arms, war material, ammunition, machines or implements which the Hejaz-Nejd Government may consider necessary for their own use.

#### ARTICLE 9.

The present Treaty shall be ratified by each of the high contracting parties and the ratifications exchanged as soon as possible. It shall come into force on the date of the exchange of the ratifications and shall be binding for seven years from that date. In case neither of the high contracting parties shall have given notice to the other six months before the expiration of the said period of seven years of his intention to terminate the Treaty, it shall remain in force and shall not be held to have terminated until the expiration of six months from the date on which one of the parties shall give notice of termination to the other party.

#### ARTICLE 10.

The treaty concluded between His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Sultan of Nejd and their Dependencies on the 26th December, 1915, when His Majesty was Ruler of Nejd and of its then Dependencies, shall cease to have effect as from the date on which the present Treaty comes into force.

ARTICLE 11.

The present Treaty has been drawn up in English and Arabic. Each text will have the same validity, but in case of divergence in the interpretation of any part thereof reference will be made to the English version.

Source: F.O. 371/12244

APPENDIX F

THE TREATY OF JEDDAH, 20 May 1927

TOGETHER WITH NOTES EXCHANGED 19-21 May

HIS Majesty the King of Great Britain, Ireland and the British Dominions beyond the Seas, Emperor of India, on the one part; and

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies, on the other part;

Being desirous of confirming and strengthening the friendly relations which exist between them and of consolidating their respective interests, have resolved to conclude a treaty of friendship and good understanding, for which purpose His Britannic Majesty has appointed as his plenipotentiary Sir Gilbert Falkingham Clayton, and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies has appointed His Royal Highness the Amir Faisal ibn Abdul-Aziz, his son and Viceroy in the Hejaz, as his plenipotentiary.

His Highness the Amir Faisal ibn Abdul-Aziz and Sir Gilbert Falkingham Clayton, having examined their credentials and found them to be in good and due form, have accordingly agreed upon and concluded the following articles:-

ARTICLE 1.

His Britannic Majesty recognises the complete and absolute independence of the dominions of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies.

ARTICLE 2.

There shall be peace and friendship between His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Nejd and its Dependencies. Each of the high contracting parties undertakes to maintain good relations with the other and to endeavour by all the means at its disposal to prevent his territories being used as a base for unlawful activities directed against peace and tranquillity in the territories of the other party.

ARTICLE 3.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes that the performance of the pilgrimage will be facilitated to British subjects and British-protected persons of the Moslem faith to the same extent as to other pilgrims, and announces that they will be safe as regards their property and their person during their stay in the Hejaz.

ARTICLE 4.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes that the property of the aforesaid pilgrims who may die within the territories of His Majesty and who have no lawful trustee in those territories shall be handed over to the British Agent in Jeddah or to such authority as he may appoint for the purpose, to be forwarded by him to the rightful heirs of the deceased pilgrims; provided that the property shall not be handed over to the British representative until the formalities of the competent tribunals have been complied with and the dues prescribed under Hejazi or Nejdi laws have been duly collected.



ARTICLE 5.

His Britannic Majesty recognises the national (Hajazi or Nejdi) status of all subjects of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies who may at any time be within the territories of His Britannic Majesty or territories under the protection of His Britannic Majesty.

Similarly, His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies recognises the national (British) status of all subjects of His Britannic Majesty and of all persons enjoying the protection of His Britannic Majesty who may at any time be within the territories of His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies; it being understood that the principles of international law in force between independent Governments shall be respected.

ARTICLE 6.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes to maintain friendly and peaceful relations with the territories of Kuwait and Bahrain, and with the Sheikhs of Qatar and the Oman Coast, who are in special treaty relations with His Britannic Majesty's Government.

ARTICLE 7.

His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies undertakes to co-operate by all the means at his disposal with His Britannic Majesty in the suppression of the slave trade.

ARTICLE 8.

The present treaty shall be ratified by each of the high contracting parties and the ratifications exchanged as soon as possible. It shall come into force on the day of the exchange of ratifications and shall be binding during seven years from that date. In case neither of the high contracting parties shall have given notice to the other six months before the expiration of the said period of seven years of his intention to terminate the treaty it shall remain in force and shall not be held to have terminated until the expiration of six months from the date on which either of the parties shall have given notice of the termination to other party.

ARTICLE 9.

The treaty concluded between His Britannic Majesty and His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and its Dependencies (then Ruler of Nejd and its then Dependencies) on the 26th December, 1915, shall cease to have effect as from the date on which the present treaty is ratified.

ARTICLE 10.

The present treaty has been drawn up in English and Arabic. Both texts shall be of equal validity; but in case of divergence in the interpretation of any part of the treaty the English text shall prevail.

ARTICLE 11.

The present treaty shall be known as the Treaty of Jedda.

Signed at Jedda on Friday, the 20th May, 1927 (corresponding to the 18th Zul-Qa'da 1345).

GILBERT FALKINGHAM CLAYTON  
FAISAL ABDUL-AZIZ AL SAUD

(1)

Sir G. Clayton to His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd  
and its Dependencies

Your Majesty,

I HAVE the honour to remind your Majesty that, in the course of our negotiations, which have happily resulted in the conclusion of a treaty of friendship and good understanding between His Britannic Majesty and your Majesty, the question of the frontier between the Hejaz and Transjordan was discussed, and I explained to your Majesty the position, as defined in a draft protocol submitted by me to you, which His Majesty's Government have taken up on this question and to which they must adhere.

His Majesty's Government regard the above-mentioned frontier as being defined as follows:-

"The frontier between the Hejaz and Transjordan starts from the intersection of meridian  $38^{\circ}$  E. and parallel  $29^{\circ} 35'$  N. which marks the termination of the frontier between Nejd and Transjordan, and proceeds in a straight line to a point on the Hejaz Railway 2 miles south of Mudawwara. From this point it proceeds in a straight line to a point on the Gulf of Aqaba 2 miles south of the town of Aqaba."

Respects.

GILBERT CLAYTON

His Britannic Majesty's  
Commissioner and Plenipotentiary.

Jeddah, May 19, 1927 (18th Zul Qa'da, 1345).

(2)

Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdul-Rahman al Faisal al Saud to His Britannic  
Majesty's Commissioner and Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

IN reply to your letter dated the 18th Zul Qa'da, 1345, on the subject of the Hejaz-Transjordan frontier, we note that His Majesty's Government adhere to their position, but we find it impossible, in the present circumstances, to effect a final settlement of this question. Nevertheless, in view of our true desire to maintain cordial relations based on solid ties of friendship, we desire to express to your Excellency our willingness to maintain the status quo in the Ma'an-Aqaba district, and we promise not to interfere in its administration until favourable circumstances will permit a final settlement of this question.

Respects.

(Sealed)

ABDUL-AZIZ IBN ABDUL-RAHMAN AL SAUD

19th Zul Qa'da, 1345 (May 21, 1927)

(3)

Sir G. Clayton to His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Nejd and  
its Dependencies

Your Majesty,

IN continuation of our conversations relating to the question of the slave trade, I have the honour to inform your Majesty that His Britannic Majesty's Government feel it their duty to abstain at present from renouncing the right of manumitting slaves, which has long been practised by His Majesty's consular officers, and which enables them to liberate any slave who presents himself of his own free choice with a request for liberation and repatriation to his country of origin.



I wish to assure your Majesty that His Britannic Majesty's Government's insistence on this right is not intended to mean any interference in the affairs of your Government or any infringement of your Majesty's sovereignty; but that it is due to His Britannic Majesty's Government's resolve to carry out a duty which they owe to humanity. I would add that His Britannic Majesty's Government will be prepared to consider the abolition of the right of manumission as soon as it becomes clear to both parties that the co-operation stipulated in article 7 of the Treaty of Jeddah has resulted in the enforcement of such practical measures as to render the exercise of the right of manumission no longer necessary.

I trust that your Majesty will appreciate the attitude of His Britannic Majesty's Government in this matter and that you will see fit to acquiesce in the procedure which I have described above.

Respects.

GILBERT CLAYTON,

His Britannic Majesty's  
Commissioner and Plenipotentiary.

Jeddah, May 19, 1927 (18th Zul Qa'da, 1345)

(4)

Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdul-Rahman al Faisal al Saud to His Britannic  
Majesty's Commissioner and Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

IN reply to your Excellency's letter No. 2, dated the 18th Zul Qa'da, 1345 (19th May, 1927), relating to the manumission of slaves, I am confident that the British agent at Jeddah will always act in accordance with the spirit in which our agreement was arrived at, and that he will not permit any confusion as this might have undesirable effects on the

administrative and economic aspects of this question.

Respects.

(Sealed)

ABDUL-AZIZ IBN ABDUL-RAHMAN AL SAUD

19th Zul Qa'da, 1345 (May 21, 1927)

(5)

Sir G. Clayton to His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and Nejd and  
its Dependencies

Your Majesty,

WITH reference to the proposal put forward by your Majesty for the inclusion in the treaty of an article providing that His Britannic Majesty's Government should take no measures to prevent the purchase and importation of whatever arms, war material, ammunition, machines or implements with the Government of the Hejaz and Nejd may require for their own use, I have the honour to inform your Majesty that His Britannic Majesty's Government are of the opinion that this is a question which need not be dealt with in the body of the main treaty.

I am, however, empowered by His Britannic Majesty's Government to inform your Majesty that the embargo on the export of war materials to Arabia has been removed, and that, if your Majesty should see fit to place orders for arms, ammunition and war material with British manufacturers, in accordance with the conditions set forth in the Arms Traffic Convention (1925), for the use of the Government of the Hejaz and Nejd, His Britannic Majesty's Government will not prevent the export thereof or place any obstacle to their importation into your Majesty's territories.

I shall endeavour, in answer to your Majesty's desire, to present your Majesty with a copy of the convention referred to above as soon as may be.

Respects.

GILBERT CLAYTON,

His Britannic Majesty's  
Commissioner and Plenipotentiary

Jeddah, May 19, 1927 (18th Zul Qa'da, 1345)

(6)

Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdul-Rahman al Faisal al Saud to His Britannic Majesty's  
Commissioner and Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

In reply to your letter dated the 18th Zul Qa'da 1345 (19th May, 1927)  
relating to arms, I wish to thank you for your statement which makes it clear  
that the importation of arms into Arabia is not prohibited.

Respects

(Sealed) ABDUL-AZIZ IBN ABDUL-RAHMAN AL SAUD

19th Zul Qa'da 1345 (May 21, 1927).

(7)

Sir G. Clayton to His Majesty the King of the Hejaz and of Nejd and  
its Dependencies

Your Majesty,

WITH reference to article IV of the Treaty of Jeddah, I have the  
honour to confirm the statements I made to your Majesty in the course of  
our conversations, in which I stated that the sole object of the insertion  
of that article in the treaty is, first, to establish the present procedure  
formally, and, secondly, to furnish His Britannic Majesty's Government  
with such assurances as might enable them to bring that procedure to  
the notice of all Moslems in British territories.

I wish, moreover, to assure your Majesty that the presence of that article  
in the treaty does not affect and will not be interpreted as affecting the  
procedure relating to the belongings of deceased persons other than pilgrims,  
which remains subject to the rules of reciprocity which are the basis of  
the usual practice between independent countries.

Respects.

GILBERT CLAYTON,

His Britannic Majesty's  
Commissioner and Plenipotentiary

Jeddah, May 19, 1927 (18th Zul Qa'da, 1345)



(8)

Abdul-Aziz ibn Abdul-Rahman al Faisal al Saud to His Britannic Majesty's  
Commissioner and Plenipotentiary

(Translation)

IN reply to your letter dated the 18th Zul Qa'da 1345 (19th May, 1927)  
relating to the disposal of the belongings of our subjects in your territories  
and your subjects in our territories, I wish to assure your Excellency  
that the procedure will be, as you state, in accordance with international  
practice, by which we mean that the belongings will be entrusted to our  
tribunals, who will hand them over to the British agent after the legal  
formalities and the collection of the dues, and that, mutatis mutandis,  
the belongings of those of our subjects who may die in British  
territories will be handed over to us by the British agent at Jeddah.

Respects.

(Sealed)      ABDUL-AZIZ INB ABDUL-RAHMAN AL SAUD

19th Zul Qa'da 1345 (May 20, 1927)

APPENDIX G

BRITISH REPRESENTATIVES IN THE MIDDLE EAST 1926-32

JEDDAH:

- Jordan, S.R. (Acting Agent and Consul) 1925-Aug. 1926
- Mayers, N. (Acting Agent and Consul) 15 Sept. 1926 - 26 April 1927
- Stonehewer-Bird, F.H.W. (Agent and Consul) May-Sept. 1927,  
Dec. 1927-Sept. 1928, Jan.-Feb. 1929
- Jakins, H.G. (Acting Agent and Consul) Sept.-Nov. 1927,  
Oct.-Dec. 1928, March-May 1929
- Bond, W.L. (Acting Agent and Consul) June-Dec. 1929,  
(Chargé d'Affairs) 21 Dec. 1929-20 March 1930
- Ryan, Sir Andrew (Envoy Extraordinary and Minister) 22 April 1930,  
(Consul-General) May 1930-June 1936
- Hope-Gill, C.G. (Vice-Consul and Chargé d'Affairs) 4 June 1930-1933

CAIRO: (High Commissioners)

- Lord Lloyd, 1925-29
- Loraine, Sir P.L. 1929-33

JERUSALEM: (High Commissioners)

- Samuel, Sir H., 1920-25
- Lord Plumer, 1925-28
- Chancellor, Sir J., 1928-31
- Wauchope, Sir A., 1931-38

BAGHDAD: (High Commissioners)

- Cox, Sir Percy, 1920-23
- Dobbs, Sir Henry, 1923-29
- Clayton, Sir Gilbert, 1929 (previously 1925-28 special envoy to Ibn Saud)
- Humphreys, Sir Francis, 1929-35

BUSHIRE: (Political Residents)

- Prideaux, Lt. Col. F.B., 1924-27
- Haworth, Lt. Col. L.B., 1927-28
- Johanston, Sir F., 1929
- Barrett, Lt. Col. C.C., 1929
- Biscoe, Lt. Col. H.V., 1929-32
- Fowle, Lt. Col. T.C., 1932-39

BAHRAIN: (Political Agents)

- Daly, Lt. Col. C.K., 1922-26
- Barrett, Col. C.C., 1926-29
- Prior, Capt. C.G., 1929-32
- Loch, P.G., Col., 1932-33

KUWAIT: (Political Agents)

- More, Major J.C. 1922-28
- Dickson, Lt. Col. H.R.P., 1929-36

AMMAN: (Residents)

- Philby, St. J.B., 1921-24
- Cox, Col. T., 1924-39



## APPENDIX H

### Biographical Notes:<sup>1</sup>

The list is in alphabetical order using surnames throughout. Leading figures are not included.

#### Al-Dowaish, Faisal:

Born in 1882. Took command of the Mutair tribe in 1908 at the death of his father Sultan al-Dowaish. Ambitious and reluctant to pay zakat to Ibn Saud. Raided Basra in 1912 but driven off by the Turkish troops and returned to Nejd in 1914. Was taught Wahhabi principles and converted his own Mutair in 1917. Entered Ibn Saud's service and led attacks on Iraq during the early 1920s. Increasingly fanatical, he sought appointment as governor of Hail. Led attacks against the Hejaz and sought to govern al-Madinah. In 1926 he began to associate with the leaders of the 'Utaibah and 'Ujman tribes to overthrow Ibn Saud and to divide his dominion among themselves. In 1927 he challenged both Ibn Saud and Britain by attacking the Busaiyah post. In 1929 he openly declared a rebellion. In 1930 he was caught by British forces and handed back to Ibn Saud. Remained in prison until his death.

#### Ali, Mohammad:

Born in 1878 in India. Educated at Oxford. Together with his brother Shawkat, known as the Ali Brothers. Leaders of Pan-Islamism and of the Khilafat movements in India. Religious motives caused them to encourage the Unity of the East to face European Imperialism. They were strongly anti-British. They held a Khilafat Conference in 1919 after which Mohammad Ali was sent to London to put the Indian case. They had been partisans of Ibn Saud during the Hejaz war but ambitious to rule the Holy Places or to make a Democratic Islamic Republic there. They challenged Ibn Saud at the Mecca Islamic Conference 1926 and led opposition to Wahhabism in India until Mohammad's death in London in 1931 while on a mission to press for the Indian independence question. Barred in al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem.

#### Antonius, George:

Born 1891 in Alexandria of parents of Lebanese origin. Educated at Victoria College, Alexandria and at King's College, Cambridge. Deputy Chief Press Censor, Egyptian Expeditionary Force 1917-21. Served in the British Mandatory Administration in Palestine 1921-30. Assisted Sir Gilbert Clayton on his missions to Ibn Saud 1925-28. Senior Associate for the Middle East, Institute of Current World Affairs, an American organization established by Charles Crane. Published in 1938 his well-known book 'The Arab Awakening, the Story of the Arab Nationalist Movement!'.

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1. These notes have been compiled mainly from The Foreign Office List and from The Colonial Office List, in the case of the Arabs and Indians mainly from unpublished official reports.

## Bond, W.L:

Born 1892. Appointed a student Interpreter in the Levant 1913. In charge of Vice Consulate in Crete 1918-19. Promoted to be Vice-Consul at Constantinople, 1919-20. Acting Vice-Consul in Morocco 1921-23. Vice-Consul at Tangier 1923-25. Acting Consul-General there in intervals 1925-27. Given the local rank of Consul at Tangier 1927. Acting Consul-General to 1928. Acting Agent and Consul at Jeddah from 13 June 1929. Charge d'Affair there 21 Dec. 1929 to 20 March 1930. Then to Athens 1930 and to Addis Ababa 1932 and to the French Somali Coast 1933.

## Clayton, Sir Gilbert:

Born 1875. Educated in the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. Entered the army in 1895. Served in the Nile Campaign 1898. Joined the Egyptian Army 1900-10. Served with the Sudan Govt. 1910-19. Director of military intelligence in Egypt 1914-17. Chief political officer, Egyptian Expeditionary Force 1917-19. Adviser to the Egyptian Ministry of Interior 1919-22. Chief Secretary in the Govt. of Palestine 1922-25. Special Envoy to Ibn Saud in 1925, 1927 and 1928. High Commissioner for Iraq 1929. Died in Oct. 1929.

## Cox, Sir Percy:

Born 1864. Entered the army in 1884. Entered the Indian Political Dept. in 1890. Until the outbreak of the war he served as Vice-Consul at Zaila, Somali Coast, Barbara & Muscut. Consul-General at Bushire 1904. Political Resident there 1909. Sec. of the Foreign Dept., Govt. of India 1914. During the war he was Chief Political Officer, Indian Expeditionary Force 'D'. Acting British Minister in Persia 1918. High Commissioner in Iraq 1920-23. Persuaded Ibn Saud to take the British side in the war. Negotiated with him the treaty of 1915. Author of the 'Uqair Protocols and the Mohammarah Convention.

## Damluji, 'Abd-Allah:

A native of Mosul. Educated in the Turkish Medical College at Constantinople. Served in the Turkish army. When Ibn Saud took al-Hasa 1913 he transferred his allegiance to the new Conqueror. Attended the 'Uqair Conference and signed the agreement on Ibn Saud's behalf. Remained attached to him during the Hejaz war. Appointed in 1926 as the first Director for Foreign Affairs. Accompanied Amir Faisal to Europe in 1926. Took part in the Anglo-Saudi negotiations leading to the treaty of Jeddah in 1927. He was not popular among the King's advisers. He was a close friend of Philby's since 1917. Seemed to have consulted him regularly on foreign policy issues, their relationship aroused British Government suspicions. Went back home in 1928.



Dobbs, Sir Henry:

Born 1871. Educated at Oxford. Entered the Indian Civil Service in 1892. Appointed political officer with the Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force 'D'. Foreign Sec. to the Govt. of India in 1919. Head of British Mission of Kabul 1920-21. High Commissioner and Consul-General for Iraq from 1923 to 29.

Hamza, Fuad:

Born about 1900. A Syrian, educated at Beirut Mission College. Had a fair knowledge of English beside Arabic, Turkish and some French. Accused of plotting against the British Administration in Palestine in 1921. Fled across the border to Egypt. Ibn Saud invited him in 1926 to serve the Hejaz-Nejd Government at the advice of Yousuf Yasin the then Acting Director for Foreign Affairs. Took part in the negotiations for the treaty of Jeddah 1927, and in the 1928 negotiations with Clayton on the frontier question. Put in charge of foreign affairs in 1929 he was viewed with suspicion by London on account of his early anti-British activities. When the Ministry for Foreign Affairs was founded in 1930, with Amir Faisal as Minister, Fuad remained as his advisor and deputy. Continuing in Saudi Foreign Affairs service until the 1960s. Published three books: 'Al-belad al-'arabiyah al-saudiyah', 'qalb jazirat al-'arab' and 'fi belad 'asir'.

Hope-Gill, C.G:

Born 1894. Educated at Oxford. Vice-Consul in the Levant Consular Service 1920. Assigned for service as Acting Vice-Consul at Tangier 1921, and at Casablanca 1922 and at Saffi and Tetuan 1923. Vice-Consul at Tetuan 1924. Served on Anglo-Spanish Moroccan Claims Commission 1924. Acting Interpreter at Tangier 1925-26, and Acting Consul-General 1929. Transferred to Jeddah 4 June 1930 as Charge d'Affairs until 1933. Given the local rank of 2nd Sec. in the Diplomatic Service 1932. Transferred to Alexandria 23 April 1933.

Humphreys, Sir Frances:

Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Kabul 1922. Transferred to India 1925 on special duty until 1929. Consul-General for the Kingdom of Iraq 10 Dec. 1929. Organised the meeting between Ibn Saud and King Faisal in 1930. Promoted to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary at Baghdad in Nov. 1932.

Jakins, H.G.:

Born 1897. Appointed Vice-Consul in the Levant Consular Service 1924. Assigned for service at Tangier 1925. Acting Vice-Consul at Rabat 1925. Transferred to Jeddah on 26 Sept. 1927 as Acting Agent and Consul until 1929. One of H.M. Vice Consuls in the Levant Consular Service 1927-29. Acting Consul-General at Isfahan and Mashad 1930. In charge of Vice Consulate at Mohammarah 1931. Employed in the Dept. of Overseas Trade 1932.



Jordan, S.R.:

Born 1894. Assistant in the Levant Consular Service 1919. Assigned for service at Constantinople 1920-24. Vice-Consul at Port Said 1924-25. Acting Consul at Jeddah 1925-26. Accompanied Amir Faisal to London 1926. Took part in the preparation for the making of the Treaty of Jeddah. Transferred to Albania and given the local rank of 2nd Sec. in the Diplomatic Service 1928. Acted as Charge d'Affairs 1928-30. Transferred to the Trade Commissioner Service at Durban 1930. Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Jeddah 1943-5.

No 1

Mallet, V.A.L.

Born 1893. Educated at Oxford. 3rd Sec. in the Diplomatic Service 1919. Appointed to Tehran 1919. Promoted to be 2nd Sec. 1920. Transferred to F.O. 1921. Promoted to be 1st Sec. 1925. Transferred to Buenos Ayres 1926. Chargé d'Affair there 1926-8. Transferred to Brussels 1929. Chargé d'Affairs there 1931. Transferred to F.O. 1932. Appointed Acting Counsellor of Embassy at Tehran 1933.

Mayers, Norman

Born 1895. Educated at King's College, London, and Caius College, Cambridge. Served with H.M. Forces 1914-19. Assigned for service in Beirut 1923. Acting Consul there 1925-26. Acting Agent and Consul at Jeddah from 15 Sept. 1926 to 26 April 1927. One of H.M. Vice-Consuls in the Levant Consular Service 1926. 2nd Assistant Oriental Sec. at Cairo 1927.

Monteagle, Lord (T.A. Spring-Rice):

Born 1883. Entered the Diplomatic Service 1908. Promoted to be 3rd Sec. 1910. Transferred to Washington 1913. Promoted to be 2nd Sec. 1917. Transferred to F.O. 1918. Attached to the British Delegation to the Peace Conference in Paris 1919. Promoted to be 1st Sec. 1919. Transferred to Paris 1920 and to Brussels 1921. To F.O. 1924. Succeeded as 3rd Baron 1926. Promoted to be an Acting Counsellor in F.O. Dec. 1928. A Counsellor 1929. Resigned Oct. 1930.

Oliphant, Lancelot:

Born 1881. Clerk in F.O. 1903. Acting 3rd Sec. in Diplomatic Service 1905. Employed at Constantinople until 1906, and at Tehran 1909-11. Assistant Clerk 1917. Acting Counsellor 1920. Counsellor 1923. Acting Assistant Under Sec. of State in F.O. Feb. 1928.

Rendel, G.W.

Born 1889. Educated at Queen's College, Oxford. Attaché in the Diplomatic Service 1913. Appointed to Berlin 1913, to Athens 1914. Promoted to be 3rd Sec. 1915. Appointed to Lisbon 1917, to Madrid 1917. Promoted to be 2nd Sec. 1919. To F.O. 1919. Promoted to be 1st Sec. 1923. Promoted to be a Councillor in F.O. 1930.

Rida, Rashid:

Syrian. Born 1865. A student of Jamal al-Din al-Afaghani and Mohammad Abdu. Muslim reformer and sufi. Established 'Al-Manar' in Cairo 1898. His sympathy with the Hanbali sect made him close to Wahhabism. Partisan of Ibn Saud. Attended the Mecca Conference of 1926 and planned the Agenda. Defended Ibn Saud's cause at the Conference and in his Magazine.

Ryan, Sir Andrew:

Born 1876. A student Interpreter in the Levant Diplomatic Service. Vice-Consul at Constantinople 1903. Consul 1912-14. Employed in F.O. 1914-18. Given the rank of Acting 1st Sec. in the Diplomatic Service. Returned Constantinople 1918. Promoted chief Dragoman 1921 with the local and temporary rank of a counsellor. In charge of Consulate General in Rabat 1912. Consul-General 1924. Appointed Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary at Jeddah 22 April 1930, Consul General May 1930-June 1936. Played a leading role in bringing Ibn Saud and 'Abd-Allah together. Was not on good terms with Ibn Saud. Published in 1951, 'The Last of the Dragomans'.

Shakespear, W.H.I.

Born 1878 in India. Served in the Indian Army until his appointment in 1904 as Deputy Resident at Bushire and Consul at Bandar Abbas. Was sent to Muscat in 1906. Appointed Political Agent in Kuwait 1909. Was sent to Ibn Saud at al-Riyadh in a special mission in 1914. Remained at his side negotiating for a treaty. Killed at the battle of Jarab in January 1915.



Shuckburgh, Sir John E.:

Born 1877. Educated at Cambridge. Junior Clerk at India Office 1900. Private Sec. to Permanent Under Sec. of State 1902. Senior Clerk, Political Dept. 1906. Assistant Sec. 1912. Secretary 1917. Acting Assistant Under Sec. of State C.O. March 1921 to supervise the newly established Middle East Dept. Assistant Under Sec. of State 1924. Deputy Under Sec. of State 1931.

Stonehewer-Bird, F.H.W.:

Born 1891. A student Interpreter in the Levant 1913. Assistant 1915. In Jassy Legation 1917-18. In Bucharest Legation 1918-19. Acting Vice-Consul at Belgrade 1923. Acting Consul at Rabat 1923-24. Vice Consul 1925. Acting Consul General 1925-26. Promoted to be Agent and Consul at Jeddah 27 April 1927. Transferred to Casablanca March 1930.

Wahba, Hafez:

Egyptian. Born 1889. Educated at Al-Azhar and at the School of al-Qada' al-Shar'i. Journalist contributing to Al-Lewa, Al-Ahram, al-Helal al-Osmani and other papers. Supporter of Pan-Islamism in Cairo, Constantinople and India. Regarded with hostility by Britain for his activities even before the First World War. He worked as a school-master in Kuwait 1915-20. Counsellor to Ibn Saud in 1923 and attended the Kuwait Conference. Appointed Governor of Mecca 1924-27. Minister of Education and Assistant to Amir Faisal (Vice-Roy of the Hejaz) 1927-29. First Saudi Minister to Britain and the Netherlands 1930-48. Ambassador in London 1948-56. One of the King's advisers during the Bahrah negotiations 1925 and the Jeddah negotiations 1927-28. Sent in special missions to Kuwait 1927, 1929. Represented the Hejaz-Nejd in the International Post Conference in London 1929. Published three books: in 1935, his: 'Khamson 'aman fi jazirat al-'arab', in 1960 his: 'jazirat al-'arab fi al-qarn al-ishreen' and 1964 his: 'Arabian Days'.

Yasim, Yousuf:

Syrian. Born 1890. A student of Rashid Rida. School-Master in Jerusalem. Chief editor of Al-Sabah newspaper. Joined Amir Faisal Ibn al-Husain at Aqaba and accompanied him to Damascus. Expelled from Damascus by the French. Served under King Husain at Mecca and Amir Abd-Allah at Amman. Invited to meet Ibn Saud in 1923. Accepted the invitation and joined the Wahhabi cause. Appointed political Sec. to Ibn Saud and accompanied him to the Hejaz. Founded the Saudi Official newspaper Umm al-Qura in 1924 at Mecca. Deputized for Damluji and later for Fuad Hamza in directing foreign affairs. He remained close to Ibn Saud despite the anti-Syrian campaign in the Hejaz. Joined all rounds of negotiations with the British. In 1935 he negotiated a Saudi-Iraqi treaty of brotherhood, and in 1942 a Saudi-Kuwaiti agreement.