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the recognition of the great part played by the Shairs during these years of war.

14. The Wahhabi Revival.

Colonel Hamilton, on his journey to Rivadh in October, 1917, had occasion to pass within a day's journey of Artwiya, one of the centres of the new Wahhabi movement associated with the name of the Akhwan brotherhood. He was impressed with what he heard regarding the tenets of this fanatical sect and, without enquiry accepted as probably correct a local estimate, which gave the town a population of 35,000 souls. A little reflection would, I am convinced, have deterred Colonel Hamilton from reporting what he had heard without further investigation, and it is not improbable that he did not expect his report to be taken seriously. In the first place it was prima facie improbable that a town, twice as big as the biggest town in Central Arabia, could have sprung up in the spaces

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of a few years: in the second place- and this point is to my mind conclusively- native estimates of population are notoriously unreliable. Doughty's plan of reducing all such estimates by 90 per cent. might have been usefully resorted to in this case. I saw the town, from a safe distance, in October, 1918, and I am satisfied that its population cannot exceed from 10,000 to 12,000 souls.

As it may, I found, on my arrival at Jidda and Cairo, that Colonel Hamilton's report had obtained official publicity and a disturbing amount of credence, causing no little alarm and predisposing the authorities in charge of Arab affairs to attach more prejudiced source regarding the growth and objects of the Wahhabi revival. A report, written by Lieut-Colonel F.E. Lawrence and purporting to give the views of Sharif Faisal, appeared in the Arab Bulletin (No. 74 of 1917); Sharif Abdulla's views, in due course, received prominence in the same vehicle, and I left that the issue was being- if it had not already been-



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prejudged on totally insufficient data. I deprecated the attaching of too much importance to the views of obviously prejudiced individuals and did my best to discount the serious view that was being taken of the situation in high quarters, but Sharifian circles made the most of the imaginary menace and represented the Wahhabi revival as immediately threatening the peace and security of Arabia.

A solitary incident - the only instance in the course of 12 months, so far as I am aware, of the active ebullition of the dreaded militant Wahhabi movement - occurred, about this time, to lend colour to the stories circulated by the King's sons. A party of non-Wahhabi Ataiya tribesmen, including a Shaikh, had come into conflict with the Akhwan of Ghat Ghat, whither they had repaired apparently to raid or rob, and had paid for their temerity with their lives. The injured relatives rushed to the Sharif for redress and the latter drew alarming pictures of the ubiquity of Wahhabi propagandists and the urgency of checking the movement in its initial stages. Ibn Saud was accused of fostering the movement for the furtherance of his own political ambitions.

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Suffice it to say that, from this time onwards, the fear of Wahhabi rising played no small part in disposing H.M.'s Government to regard unfavourably any proposal likely to increase the Military strength of Ibn Saud. The crisis created by the Sharif's attacks on the Wahhabi tribesmen of Khurma and the growing possibility of an open rupture between Ibn Saud and the King, which clouded the latter part of the period under report, confirmed Government in their reluctance to arm the former, though the necessity of keeping his attention distracted from Sharifian affairs by active employment against the enemy was recognised.

Subsequent study of the situation in Central Arabia tended to confirm me in my view that the Wahhabi peril, as such, was the fiction of prejudiced minds: I became convinced that Ibn Saud had the movement under perfect control. At the same time, it became increasingly apparent that the most alarming factor of the situation was the Sharif's apparent determination to provoke Ibn Saud to set the forces of Wahhabism in motion against himself, either to convince H.M.'s Government of the justice of his warning or, at the worst, to force Government to choose between himself, and Ibn Saud - a dilemma, which, obviously, could not

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could not be resolved in one direction. This fact has not perhaps been sufficiently recognised - the Shariff's persistence in the affairs of Khurma, unimportant as it was in itself, can have had no other object than to provoke Ibn Saud into open hostility. This was patent to Ibn Saud who was not blind to the inevitable consequences of action by himself to assert his rights by force, and his determination to avoid being drawn into conflict on a matter, on which, on its merits, he had no strong feelings, was equalled only by the difficulty he experienced in persuading his subjects to be patient. Fortunately for him, the people of Khurma were well able to look after themselves; their defeat by the forces of the Sharif would, certainly, have precipitated a conflict.

Two great difficulties have, from time immemorial, beset the path of those, who have sought to rule Arabia - the nomadic habits of its tribesmen and the lack of a common rallying point. To a certain extent, the house of Rashid has been able to triumph over these difficulties by reason of the peculiar constitution of the Shammar tribe, whose solidarity is emphasised by the possession of a common capital and a ruler of their own blood. It has, however, been

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foreign rulers residing in a centre of their own creation and ruling a confederation of tribes never unready to throw off their allegiance in the event of its becoming inconvenient.

The Civil wars, if we may so call them, of the decades which followed the death of Faisal, aptly exemplify this point, and the present ruler of Najd had no sooner come to the throne of Riyadh, than he found himself called upon to face the same difficulty pretenders of his own house not only raising the standard of revolt against him but receiving strong support among the tribes and townships of Najd. Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud proved himself, however, to be a man of no mean mould, - the first years of his reign were spent in expelling the foreign invaders from the furthest frontiers, then followed a period, during which he had to face the claims of rival candidates for the throne, then a short sharp successful effort to extend his frontier at the expense of the Ottoman Empire; finally followed the period of reconstruction, which, though retarded by the war, has been steadily pursued. Now, as never before, Najd is a homogeneous political entity acknowledging the rule of Ibn Saud.

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In setting to work at the task of consolidation, by which he was confronted, Abdul Aziz cannot have failed to be impressed by two models from the history of Central Arabia. Muhammad Ibn Rashid had owed his strength to the peculiar characteristics, which made the Shammar what they have been and are - a Badawin tribe based on a Badawin city, - while his own great ancestor, Saud Ibn Saud, had carried his conquering arms to the farthest ~~corner~~ corners of Arabia by reason of the judicious combination of religion and policy, to which he owed his power.

Ibn Saud followed, neither the one model nor the other in its entirety - he set to work to combine the two and the result was the Akhwan movement, whose essential characteristics are as follows:-

(1) it was restricted to the Badawin, who, though nominally, for the most part, adherents of the Hanbali or, as they came latter to be called, the Sahhabi doctrines were in practice divided in their allegiance between those doctrines and the codes of unwritten customary law, by which their lives were regulated; the townsfolk of Najd, among whom the tyranny of public opinion in matters of religion is strong and well organized, are tacitly assumed to be devout Wahhabis and, therefore, required no special attention;



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attention:

(2) Mutawaas or, as Palgrave aptly calls them, Zelators, were appointed from among the Ulama of the minister of the towns to minister to the religious needs of the Badawin, to instruct them in the simple tenets of the Wahhabi faith, to extol the merits of a life lived on Prophet's own model, to condemn the wickedness of the customs of desert society, to preach the physical glories of Paradise, and to inculcate the duty of death for the faith as the surest means of obtaining direct entirety into that haven of rest and delight. The Mutawas at first worked among the nomads, but sedulously extolled the superior merit of communal life in the service of God;

(3) the train thus laid for the breakup of the essential characteristics of Badawin society, suitable sites were, as discovered, made available for the foundation of permanent settlements, and a number of villages or towns have sprung up during the last five or six years in various parts of Najd, a feature of which was the substitution of the bond of religious brotherhood for family ties - thus, while the Akhwan, for instance, of the Mutair retained in relation to their own Akhwan tribesmen the rights

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rights and privileges of tribal society, they acquired with the Akhwan of tribes formerly hostile, all the rights and privileges of religious brotherhood:

(4) The Akhwan, thus collected in convenient centres and enthusiastic for their new faith, immediately evinced a desire to sever their old ties with their unconverted tribesmen, but this tendency Ibn Saud, with rare political acumen, discourtegerated and thus was forged a strong bond of communal interest between important sections of all the great tribes of Najd - on this foundation Ibn Saud built the edifice of his political power, relying on the Badawin elements of his new settlements equally with the old settled township-folk, whom he was now able to release, to a large extent, from the irksome obligation, under which they had long lain of fighting the battles of their rulers.

(5) the peace and security of his territories being assured by the obligation to discard the ancient practice of raiding imposed on the new brotherhood, Ibn Saud was able to use the reserve energy of the Akhwan, henceforth vowed to fight only for the faith or in self-defence against attack, as the nucleus of his standing army. To them alone he distributed



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distributed the arms and ammunition at his disposal; on them he relied to form the backbone of his army in war; they combined the hardiness of Badawin with the stability of the Hadhr; the interest of economy were served without loss of efficiency.

To sum up, we may say that the object of Ibn Saud in fostering the Akhwan movement has been to increase his military strength by spreading the burden of military service over a greater number of his subjects, to minimise the elements of weakness inherent in a Badawin state and a Badawin army and to economise his resources by substituting the hope of eternal reward for more mercenary considerations.

It may be asked with what ultimate end in view Ibn Saud has created this organization and whether there is any guarantee of his ability to control the movement. To the first question I would answer that he is actuated by no motive other than the desire to create a strong permanent bulwark against foreign aggression in the future and by a vague ambition to bring Jabal Shammar once more under the sway of his house; as regards his ambitions in

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in other directions - for he cannot fail to have considered the possibility of extending the Wahhabi frontiers once more to the furthest confines of Arabia - it is impossible to say more than that he regards the British Government as an insuperable and permanent obstacle to the realisation of such dreams and is prepared to accept that position.

The answer to the other part of the question is more difficult; it can, I think, be confidently answered in the affirmative, so far as regards any possible forward policy, but it would be too much to expect that a system based on fanaticism could be controlled at will in the event of that fanaticism being seriously provoked by hostile aggressive action. It is this possibility, the more perilous in the event of Ibn Saud himself passing from the <sup>scene</sup> ~~scheme~~, that renders it desirable, in the interests of the future peace of Arabia, to discourage aggressive action by the Sharif or other elements under our control. The hornets nest of Wahhabism may be regarded with equanimity, so long as it is left undisturbed, but the latest advices from Arabia, received so late as a few days ago, indicate that the Sharif is preparing yet another attack on Khurma.

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The prospect of hostilities between Ibn Saud and the Sharif need not, in the changed circumstances, cause us any anxiety for ourselves, but it should be realised, before it is too late, the Khurama is but an incident in a bigger struggle yet to come. His Majesty's Government should make up its mind whether or not they are prepared to see Mecca attached and overrun once more by the Wahhabis. On the whole I am inclined to the view that, so long as Khurma holds its own, as there seems good reason to believe it will, there is little danger of a far-reaching extension of Wahhabi activities, but I am convinced that the defeat of Khalid Ibn Luwai will be a ~~signal~~ signal for the storm.

15. The Khurma Episode.

When I passed through the little village of Khurma, situated in the lower reaches of the Wadi Subai, in December 1917, on my way to Taif, I became aware of the existence of trouble but the manoeuvrings of the Saubai and Baqum tribes had little in them to indicate that a storm was brewing in that quarter which was destined to form, as it were, the leit-motiv of Central Arabian politics. The circumstances that the Baqum were acting under the command of the Amir of Turaba, official representative of the King of the

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from the eternal outridings of Ataiba, Harb and Qahtan in the vast steppe country of the west.

According to such information as I was able to collect in Central Arabia, Khurma, having, like the rest of Arabia, formed part of the great Wahhabi Empire and having received from Saud himself dispensation from the obligation to pay taxes to the Central treasury, had settled down under its Ashrad headmen, who exercised a time-honoured overlordship over the Subai owners and negro cultivators of the palm groves of the villages, to the enjoyment of practical autonomy under the vague suzerainty of Najd. At a later period, it passed under the similarly vague suzerainty of Turkey, and Ottoman authority was, doubtless, exercised, on behalf of the Sultan, by his representative, the Sharif of Mecca. During the last decades of the 19th Century, however, when the whole of Najd acknowledged the sway of Ibn Rashid, they appear to be reason for believing that Muhammad Ibn Rashid extorted from the Turkish authorities a substantial recognition of his authority and the acceptance of the line of Wadi Acqiq as the boundary between his own territories and the area of elective Turkish dominion, namely, the

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the Hijaz. By this arrangement Khurma must have been included by implication in the territories of Ibn Rashid, on whose expulsion from Najd, at the beginning of the present century, Ibn Saud resumed sway over the territories of his ancestors.

The important facts of the case are, firstly that, so far as I have been able to ascertain, Khurma was always in the past too insignificant, either to form a bone of contention between the authorities concerned or to be mentioned specifically in any public agreement; secondly, that it always remained in enjoyment of virtual autonomy and independence; and lastly, that it was, if anything, naturally dependent on Najd in virtue of allegiance to the Wahhabi faith. With that allegiance to attempt appears ever to have been made to interfere, and I see no reason for questioning the correctness of Ibn Saud's statement that Shara Law has always been administered at Khurma for the benefit of its inhabitants by ecclesiastical official of the Wahhabi persuasion, of whom the Qadhi, actually in office at the present time, succeeded his father, who, in turn, owed his appointment to Faisal Ibn Saud at least 50 years ago.



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The fons et origo mali- and this we have on the authority of certain letters written by Sharif Abdulla himself to the tribal leaders of the Subai- was an attempt on the part of the Sharif in the Summer of 1917 to impose an orthodox Qadhi on the people of Khurma in a place of the Wahhabi official, who had ministered to them for so long or, in other words, to interfere with the religious liberty of the community. This attempt was strongly resented and stoutly opposed by the people of Khurma, led by Sharif Khalid Ibn Luwai, their Amir; the newly appointed Qadhi was refused admission to his See and the forces of the Sharif were set in motion to enforce submission to his orders by the rebellious community.

The Sharif, imputing to Ibn Saud certain unspecified and certainly imaginary activities calculated to undermine his authority in the Khurma area, announced to the British Authorities his intention of sending troops to reduce the Subai and the drama began on or about the 1st June, 1918, with an attack on the Subai

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encampment , which resulted in the defeat of the Sharifian forces with the loss of two guns and two automatic rifles.

Ibn Buwai announced his victory to Ibn Saud in the customary Badawin way and I, at Riyadh, was in an excellent position to appreciate the effect of the ostentatious announcement of the victory of the true faith over the infidel on the dour spirits of the fanatical Wahhabish seared by the painful rigours of a mid -summer Ramdhan.

The messengers from Khurma had passed, on their way, through the important Wahhabi stelement of Ghat, whose inhabitants responded without delay to the call for assistance by despatching a strong contingent towards the scene of action. Riyadh clamoured for war with the Sharif and, so far as I was in a position to judge, its clamour secured the important advocacy of the Imam Abdual Rahman himself and of the Wahhabi high priest, but Ibn Saud, making no secret of the seriousness of the situation in his conversations with me,



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resisted the pressure brought to bear on him,  
 recalled the Ghat Ghat contingent and sent it  
 off for service with Turki against the Shammar,  
 and wrote, at my request, to Khaild Ibn Luwai,  
 assuring him that he was making representations  
 in the matter to the British Government and  
 directing him to refrain from forward action in  
 the confidence of his ability and determination  
 to protect his frontiers against attack.

The Sharif, in the course of the discussion,  
 which followed, justified his action on the  
 ground that Khalid Ibn Luwai owed his appointment  
 as Amir of Khurma to himself- this claim was,  
 according to my information, extremely doubtful,  
 as Khaild had succeeded his cousin Ghalib in  
 the ordinary course of inheritance on the death  
 of the latter about four years ago, and that  
 Khurma itself lay within his own frontiers. In  
 the meantime, he did not consider it necessary  
 to interrupt his operations against the "rebels"  
 and preparations were pushed on for the renewal  
 of the expedition. Khurma was attacked a second  
 time in July; the Sharif's troops were again

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routed with the loss of two guns and automatic rifles and the affair was reported to Ibn Saud by Khalid in a letter, in which he pressed for assistance and threatened to take matters into his own hands, if Ibn Saud found himself unable to support him, by sending forth his women and children to rouse Najd to action. Meanwhile there was little room for doubt that the tribes of the south were collecting for the defence of Khurma and that the Turkish authorities were watching the development of the situation with interest. The letters of the Asir Chiefs and of Fakhri Pasha, referred to in another part of this report, provided sufficient confirmation of the suggestion to this effect I made in my reports.

My efforts were devoted to engaging Ibn Saud actively in hostilities with the Shammar, if only to keep his attention off the Khurma trouble and to ensure the employment of as large a part of his available force as possible. He naturally emphasised the delicacy of the situation, protested against the unprovoked

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aggression of the Sharif and wrote to Ibn Luwai, assuring him that, while British Government had not had time to consider my representations before the second attack occurred, he would, without fail, go to his succour in the event of a third attack becoming imminent.

I was not in a position to do more than guarantee to Ibn Saud that the British Government would not suffer a violation of his territorial integrity, but the course of the correspondence, which ensued, made it evident that such a guarantee was meaningless. Ibn Saud, while assuring me once more that the Khurma people would not adopt an aggressive policy warned me that he was pledged to go to their assistance in the event of another, attack and disclaimed all responsibility for the consequences, if the Sharif persisted in his course. At the same time, he offered to submit the boundary dispute involved unreservedly to the arbitration of the British Government with a guarantee that he would accept their decision, whatever it might be. Reporting

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these conversation I pressed for a settlement of the boundary question or in the event of that being impossible under war conditions, for the imposition on both parties of a provisional boundary from Marran to Turaba along the line of the Shaib Shaba, which forms the natural boundary between the Subai and Buqum tribes.

My greatest hope lay in the fact that some time must necessarily elapse before the Sharif could renew his operations, and I left confident that H.M.'s Government would insist on his holding his hand pending consideration of the issues in dispute. In this I was mistaken. The Sharif opposed the idea of arbitration on a question regarding the rights of which he had no doubt, and H. M. 's Government would insist on his holding his hand pending consideration of the issues in dispute. In this I was mistaken. The Sharif opposed the idea of arbitration on a question regarding the rights of which he had no doubt, and H. M. 's Government in a placatory message to Ibn

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without committing itself to any definite decision on the matter in dispute, adopted the Sharif's formula that he had no intention of allowing his operations, which were directed solely against the "rebel" Amir of Khurma, to develop into hostilities east of Khurma against Ibn Saud's territory.

Such a message, evading the whole point of the dispute as it did, was little consoling to Ibn Saud, who took strong exception to the wording of the clause of Government's message relating to the matter and repeated his inability to accept responsibility for the consequences of further aggressive action by the Sharif. Thus matter drifted inevitably towards war; H.M.'s Government had reassured Ibn Saud regarding his prospects in the event of his undertaking active measures against Ibn Rashid, and I made the most of this message to press him into action, conscious that it was a race with Sharif Shakir, who was known to be preparing for another descent on Khurma.

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As a matter of fact, the news of his third attack on Khurma, undertaken, according to information culled from deserters from his force, in consequence of the receipt of peremptory orders from the Sharif to take action or surrender his command, and ending like its predecessors in the defeat of the Sharifian force with the loss of two guns and two automatic rifles, arrived on the day I rejoined Ibn Saud at Qusaiba after his successful raid against Hail.

Ibn Saud, delighted at his own success and equally so by the offer I was now able to make to him, on your authority, of a regular subsidy of £10,000 per month, so long as he maintained active operations against Jabal Shammar and, above all, convinced, by the result of the third attack on Khurma, of the ability of Ibn Luwai to hold his own single-handed took the news calmly and, without losing so good an opportunity of protesting once more against the undisguised and active hostility of the Sharif, made it clear that he would now be too busy with his own operations against Hail.



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Such was the position, when war against Turkey came to an abrupt conclusion relieving the British Government of all immediate anxiety in regard to the development of the Central Arabian situation. As noted in the last section, denouement of the episode, whether it may be and with whatever consequences to the peace of Arabia, falls beyond the scope of this report.

Sufficient has been said to show that the Khurma affair constituted in reality a test case for the decision of the Sharif's claim to jurisdiction over Najd no small part of it. The British Government is committed by treaty to delimit the frontiers of the territory, over which Ibn Saud is recognised as independent ruler. This problem of reconstruction, now imminent, and it will not be out of place to consider briefly some of the main points of the problem and to suggest, at any rate, the lines, on which it may be approached.

The problem, reduced to its simplest form, is that, while Ibn Saud claims absolute



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independence and integrity in the whole of Najd, the Sharif has put forward pretensions of overlordship over the whole of the Ataiba and Harb tribes and the western section of the Subai.

One has only to take cognisance of the fact that the Ataiba occupy the Najd highlands and the western steppe from the line of the Dalqan and Sirr Nafudhs to well within the line of the Hijas mountains; that the Harb extend from the confines of the Batin to Madina over the whole desert of upper Qasim and that the western section of the Subai marches with Buqum on the line of the Shaib Shaba on the west and with the Atabia along Wadi Naim on the east; to realise that, in effect, the Sharif claims sovereignty over Central Arabia westward of a line drawn from Thamamim at the west end of the Batin, along the Wadi Rima and thence roughly southward along the eastern boundary of the Mudhib and Sirr districts to the Nafudh Sirr, south of the Najd dary of the Mudhib and Sirr, districts to the Nafudh

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Sirra, south of the Najd Highlands, and so westward to the neighbourhood of Wadi Ranya. Thus the whole of the Qasim and Sirr provinces are claimed by the Sharif, whose eastern frontier would almost touch the frontier of Kuwait territory.

Such a claim would, it is needless to say, be resolutely contested by Ibn Saud, who claims jurisdiction over the whole of Najd and over such parts of the tribes above mentioned as reside therein. He rejects the possibility of a solution on tribal lines and is supported in this contention by history, which, so far as I know, has never been able to record the solidarity of the Atabia and Harb tribes in allegiance to a single ruler.

In any case, it is obvious that any claim on the part of the Sharif involving his acquisition of the Qasim and Sirr, is absurd on the face of it, and that fact alone makes the solution of the problem on a tribal basis impossible. The only alternative solution is a territorial boundary and the recognition

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of the authority of each ruler over all tribes and individuals residing on his side of such a frontier.

To find such a boundary is no easy task, but not so difficult as it may appear, as Central Arabia has the advantage of having well marked physical features, extending from north to south between the east and west line of the Nafudh Sirra, which sbuts off the Wadi Dawasir region, and the boundaries of Jabal Sahmmar. The boundary line, above referred to, may be rejected as impreaticable, its southern section along the Nafudh Dalwan, continued northwards along the western boundary of SIRR and the Qasim is equally impracticable in that it places the whole of the true -Najd Highlands, which are and have always been under the effective rule of Ibn Saud, within the jurisdiction of the Sharif. The next possible line is the Wadi Naim, running roughly due south from Sija; beyond that westward is the lone of the Shaib Shaba; beyond that again is the line of the Wadi Aqiq.

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Between these three lines- and there seem to me no other possible ones- the eventual decision must rest; the last though it enjoys a certain degree of historical sanction may be rejected as giving Ibn Saud more than he claims; the first is only open to the objections, firstly that it places the western section of the Subai tribes and its capital Khurma within the jurisdiction of the weak communities. which is to say the least, entitled to respect and secondly, that it leaves a Wahhabi island in orthodox sphere and this keeps open the door of religious to the requirements of local conditions, the one most acceptable to the people most virtually concerned, the one that comes nearest to providing an exact line of demarcation between the hitherto vague geographical terms Najd and Hijaz, and the only one which follows a recognised tribal boundary for a considerable part of its length. Subject to minor modifications of detail its exact course would be along the Hamdh- Rima watershed in the Harrat Khaibar to Hanakiya (which would

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it seems to me, form a convenient meeting place of the boundaries of the Hijaz, Majd, Jabal and Shammar), thence straight across the steppe to Marran, thence to the point on the Shaib Sabba, where the Ataiba, Subai and Buqum boundries meet and thence up the course of that Shaib to its point of departure from Wadi Subai, whence the line would follow the Wadi to Turaba. Whether from Turaba to Bisha the line would run east or west of the Banya tract is a question, on which I am not in a position to express an opinion could be left to be decided by circumstances.

The one point, which cannot, in my opinion- and you have already give expression to the same view- be taken into consideration in determining the respective spheres of jurisdiction of the Sharif and Ibn Saud is the incomparably greater military service rendered by the decision and the desirability of leaving no loophole for the occurrence of religious



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friction in the future are practical consideration of cardinal importance, to which the historical and geographical aspects of the case would serve as important, but subordinate, adjuncts.

When to these considerations is added the reflection that, whatever the abstract merits of the dispute between the Sharif and Ibn Saud over their boundaries may be, the actions of the Sharif and Ibn Saud over their boundaries may be, the actions of the Sharif during the past years have so alienated the sympathies of the people of Khurma that they will not submit to his rule in any circumstances whatever, the delicacy of the task confronting H. M. 's Government in the near future can be readily imagined. On the other hand, if they decline the heavy responsibility of deciding and enforcing their decision of the dispute, they will find themselves on the other horn of the dilemma in determining the attitude to adopt in the event of the outbreak of

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hostilities between the Sharif and Ibn Saud which to me, seems inevitable and to be fraught with far-reaching consequences.

16. Ibn Saud and the Turks.

From time to time, and notably on one occasion, when a consignment of money appears undobutedly to have got through from Madina to the Turkish froces, in Yaman, I think in the summer of 1917, it was stated that Ibn Saud was not altogether innocent of connivance with the Turks and on this point the Sharif never tires of laying especial emphasss. Whatever may have been the facts regarding the consignment of money referred to, I am convinced that, it if got through, it did so without the knowledge of Ibn Saud, as it might well do by passing down through the great Atáiba steppe, and the suggestion that Ibn Saud gave the party safe conduct, etc, I have no hesitation in dismissing an unfounded



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and absurd. It has never perhaps been sufficiently realised that, whatever the intricacies of Central Arabian politics, the Turk is Ibn Saud's natural enemy, not only because he is accounted on infidel by the Wahhabites but because it is impossible that he should acquiesce in the permanent loss of Hasa, if he remains after the war in a position to contest the arbitrament of fate.

When I was at Jidda, the Sharif asserted with much vehemence, as a fact of which he had incontestable proof, that Ibn Saud had long been in secret correspondence with Fakhri Pasha, the Turkish Commandant of the Madina garrison, As a matter of fact, when I was at Riyadh, Ibn Saud had not only informed me of the receipt of letters by himself from Fakhri Pasha, but had handed me three original letters, one of which at any rate, shewed conclusively that Ibn Saud had never vouchsafed a reply to the others. The Sharif having made his accusation and offered to produce

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his evidence- I think a human witness. I duly informed him of the nature of the proofs I held that his information, he obstinately refused to listen and declared that he was justified in his view of Ibn Saud- but said nothing more about producing his convincing evidence.

I mention the matter here both as shewing the attitude of the Sharif towards Ibn Saud and as sufficiently satisfactory proof that, though the Turkish authorities, were fully alive to the advantages of detaching Ibn Saud from our cause, he himself never gave them the slightest encouragement. Fakhri Pasha was, at any rate discouraged by his experiences and ceased addressing letters to Ibn Saud, until matters became really acute between the latter and the Sharif over the Khuma affair when in September, 1918. he took the opportunity of writing, ostensibly to give Ibn Saud the somewhat belated news of the demise of the late Sultan but, more particularly

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to congratulate him on the victories of the Akhwan of Khurma over the Sharifian expeditions and, incidently to offer to supply him with anything he might require in the matter of arms, ammunitions and funds to prosecute a campaign against the Sharif. These letters also, Ibn Saud made over to me in original and, though, the offer of arms, etc, came at a critical moment, when his relations with the Sharif are extremely strained and H. M. Government had expressed their inability to supply arms for the Hail campaign, it is to Ibn Saud's credit that he resisted the temptation to reply to Fakhri Pasha.

Another Turkish communication received in August he treated with similar contempt- a letter signed by four leading chiefs of the Asir tribes, but obviously, from its style and contents, dictated by Muhiyuddin Beg, the Turkish Commandant and Mustasarrif in Asir, in which Ibn Saud was reminded of the benefits accruing to the Asir from Turkish rule and was

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defence of the true faith.

So much for such correspondence as is known to have been addressed to Ibn Saud by or on behalf of the Turkish authorities. In June a report, emanating from Aden, indicated, apparently on good authority, that Ibn Saud and the Turks had concluded arrangement whereby certain officers were to be allowed, to pass down to Yaman to set the finances of the troops serving there in order, but at no time did this report seem to me to be anything but the fiction of some prejudiced brain. In any case, it was intrinsically improbable on the face of it, and I never heard any more of the results of the alleged arrangement.

The only occasion, on which, so far as I know, Turkish Officers attempted to pass through Najd, occurred in April, when on my return to Riyadh, Ibn Saud informed me that, having received information of the passage of a Darwish through Riyadh, he had stopped

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and arrested the man, who proved to be a certain Qol- Agasi Qudsi Effendi, an Officer of the Yaman forces, endeavouring to make his way from Sanaa and a ~~Tbn~~ via Riyadh to Medina and Constantinople with a considerable sum (£T 341) in Turkish notes and a number of private letters, which contained little of interest and importance beyond the information that another officer had left Ibha some three weeks or so ahead of Qudsi Effendi bound for the same destination, whether that officer got through or perished on the journey it is impossible to say, but he was not intercepted by Ibn Saud.

As regards Qudsi Effendi, who remained in custody at Riyadh to the end of the period under report, I expressed a desire to see him on my return from Wadi Dawasir, with a view to arranging for his despatch to the coast for interment by the British authorities. My desire to visit him being communicated to him, he made it quite clear that, though he could not refuse to see me, if Ibn Saud insisted on



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his doing so, his disgust for and hatred of infidels was such, that he would rather be spared the ordeal. In these circumstances I respected his wishes and never saw him, though, hearing from another source that he was in custody in circumstances of great hardship and discomfort, I begged Ibn Saud to improve the conditions of his imprisonment. Qol Agasi Qudsi Effendi, for all his unreasoning fanaticism, had reason to be grateful to an infidel for a very substantial alleviation of the miserable conditions under which he lived in the dungeons of the Riyadh fort for nearly two months.

17. Arms in Najd.

In view of the often-repeated reluctance of H.M.'s Government to supply Ibn Saud with arms and the High Commissioner's insistence on the inadvisability of strengthening the Wahhabi forces on account of the possible development of a Wahhabi menace,

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it is important to note that, while Government's policy in this matter had the effect of alienating, to a certain extent, the sympathies of Ibn Saud, it failed of its main object owing to the Sharif's lavish distribution of arms and ammunition among irresponsible elements of the population of Najd in the mistaken belief that he was thereby securing ammunition out of which, there seems little doubt, certain Sharifian officials, responsible for the custody of military equipment, made considerable profits.

The traffic in arms and ammunition was carried on in Najd on a wholesale scale, and cases came to my notice of the transit thereof through Najd to the Persian Gulf coast. Ibn Saud was constrained to forbid the export of ammunition from his territories and to take steps to purchase such surplus stocks, as were available, for his own use, with the last months, of the period under report, he had brought up consider

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ably in excess of 300,000 rounds, while T estimated that at least an equal quantity, in the aggregate, was held by individuals. Ibn Saud being content to leave rifles in the possession of those who had them, knowing that they would always be available for his service. it was not possible to procure even the roughest estimate of the number received from Sharifian sources, but it is known that Najd volunteers were freely supplied with arms and regularly came away with equipments so secured - frequently as deserters. In these circumstances it may be assumed that in one way or another Najd secured large quantities of arms, possibly not far short of 5,000, if we assume a rough percentage of one rifle to 100 rounds of ammunition brought away.

The result of the Sharif's policy and, indeed, of our own was to weaken Ibn Saud in relation to his own subjects and leave him in a worse position to control

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the Wahhabi movement than before, while, at the same time, greatly increasing the strength of the tribes.

Ibn Saud, while conscious that, under normal conditions, this meant an accession of strength to himself, was not blind to the history of his own house or to the objections against the indiscriminate arming of his tribes. It was largely for this reason rather than in view of his immediate requirements for the campaign against Ibn Rashid, that he pressed so strongly to be provided with arms. Every rifle in his arsenal meant the equipment of an Akhu, the addition of one regular soldier to his army, and it was I venture to think, a mistaken policy to keep him weak in armament, unless adequate steps could be taken to prevent the wholesale arming of his tribes.

As matters now stand, Ibn Saud even if we count to him the tribesmen armed by the Sharif, is probably weaker in point of

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armament that Ibn Rashid, who, in addition to what he had received from the Turks in the early stages of the war, received, towards the end of the period under report, at least part of a consignment of arms promised him by his allies. The Sahfif, is, of course, immeasurably superior in armament to both his Central Arabian rivals, but the continuance of his present methods of checks and control will, in course of them, redress the balance in their favour.

18. Pilgrimage to the Shaikh Holy Places.

I have noted, in the fourth section of this report, that the Mission was instructed to discuss, among other things, with Ibn Saud the question of the restrictions on pilgrimage to the Shaikh holy places necessitated by war conditions.

At a very early stage of my work, however, I realised that this portion of the Mission's mandate must have been based on a misapprehension, for, if there is one subject on which Ibn Saud feels strongly, it is the Shaikh



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heresy and everything connected with it. I exercised my discretion, therefore, to avoid all reference to the matter in connection with my work, though the subject was one on which Ibn Saud never tired of expressing his views in general conversation.

The origin of the misapprehension appears to have been a report of Captain Loch, made in August, 1917, in connection with Dr. Hassi son, in commenting on Ibn Saud's attitude towards us, had mentioned that our failure to open a general river traffic to Baghdad had incurred his censure and Captain Loch had added, as the result of his own observations, at Qalif and Bahrain, that the restrictions placed on the Shiah pilgrimage had also evoked similar criticism. Sir Percy Cox had naturally enough, concluded that both those subjects were of interest to Ibn Saud, whereas I am now convinced that he never felt and, therefore, had probably never expressed the slightest concern with either. Both

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were, however, matters expressed the slightest concern, respectively to the merchant and Shiah communities of the Arabian littoral, and the local reports had been oriented accordingly in circumstances liable to give rise to misunderstanding.

Ibn Saud, himself a strong Wahhabi, whose authority in Central Arabia is based on that creed, revived by himself, finds himself in a somewhat delicate position in relation to the Sunni and Shiah elements subject to him in the Qasim and the Hasa respectively. Formal recognition of the orthodoxy of the one or the heresy of the other would involve him in a charge of laxity, intolerable to the followers of the true creed, and is therefore, impracticable, while persecution of either would certainly end in the loss of his richest provinces and is, therefore, inexpedient. With rare political wisdom, he has evolved a policy, which while satisfying the Wahhabi element by prohibition of the public parade

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of unacceptable creeds, is sufficiently gratifying to the followers of such creeds by reason of its toleration of the private celebration of their ceremonies without let or hindrance.

On rare occasions he has had to interfere in cases of actual conflict, and the instances, which have come to my notice, show that he has the courage to check uncalled for interference in matters of religion on the part of Wahhabi zealots. On one occasion, for instance, a party of men from Anaiza were smoking round their camp fire when five Akhwan, happening to pass by and observe them, took it upon themselves to correct the sinners. They had not got further than the stage of reprobation, when the men of Anaiza rose up and slew their reprovers, whose relatives, demanding satisfaction in the court of Ibn Saud, were curtly informed that it was his, not their, prerogative to administer correction to his erring subjects.

To a policy of toleration Ibn Saud looks for the eventual conversion of all

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his subjects to the true faith, but further than this he does not and cannot go. The pilgrimage to Shiah holy places is not encouraged, but returning pilgrims are subjected to no inquisition. nevertheless no one would be more glad than Ibn Saud, if the pilgrimage to Karbala and Najaf were made permanently impossible, and no one was more delighted than he at the punishment recently meted out to the miscreants of Najaf.

The pilgrimage to Mecca, enjoyed in the Quran itself, stands on a different footing and is not only considered permissible to but obligatory on all Wahhabis. The conjunction with it of the pilgrimage to the tomb of the Prophet at Madina is anathema and holy inveighed against; the reverence of other Sunni saints and their tombs, of which an instance is the pilgrimage to the tomb of Abdulla ibn Abbs at Taif, largely resorted to by women disappointed of offspring; is regarded as an act of idolatry; while Ibn Saud never tries of inveighing against the Sharif for permitting the laxity of morals, which makes

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In 1917 Ibn Saud arranged a ceremonious pilgrimage on a large scale from Najd, in which rode his father and his brother Muhammad. The former's return on account of illness before he reached Mecca was, without any reason whatever, interpreted in Sharifian circles as being indicative of fear or hatred, while the experiences of Muhammad and his fellow-pilgrims and the growing delicacy of the political situation decided Ibn Saud to allow no official pilgrimage for Najd during the year under report. I have no reason to credit reports emanating from Mecca to the effect that Ibn Saud had threatened to visit disobedience in this matter with dire penalties - his orders were in themselves sufficient; while he did all that was reasonably possible to facilitate the journey of the Kuwait pilgrimage, which passed through Bruaida, when I was there at the end of the August.

On the whole, I am of opinion that Ibn Saud's decision to send no pilgrimage

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from Najd this year was a wise precaution against trouble; the Sharif's actions and public pronouncements at this period were, at any rate, not calculated to make a Najd pilgrimage free of serious risk of disturbance.

19. Location of Political Agent in Najd.

The question of the permanent location of a British Agent at the Wahhabi court, on which I was instructed to elicit Ibn Saud's views, was a very delicate matter to approach, more particularly in view of Ibn Saud's growing dissatisfaction at his treatment by H.M.'s Government, and I regret to say that I had had no reasonable opportunity to make such a proposal when my Mission terminated in circumstances which left no doubt that Ibn Saud would not consent to it inreservedly.

Towards myself Ibn Saud was invariably frank and cordial; I saw him daily, often indeed, more than once a day, and he seemed

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to take pleasure in giving me his views and discussing politics, history and the affairs of the world in general. Nevertheless, it was obvious to me that my presence with him was a matter which necessitated continual explanations to a critical and hostile audience; according to his own account, he countered the adverse comments of the strict Wahhabi element by the explanation that my stay, though prolonged, was temporary and necessitated only by the Sharifian situation and the blockade, in regard to which he found it necessary to be in close touch with the British Government. He never allowed it to be supposed publicly that I was in any way interested in his operations against Hail.

At the same time, he made it clear to me that he regarded my presence as absolutely necessary and, indeed, advantageous to him, and he never suggested that I should go, until, in the circumstances already indicated

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he informed me very frankly that if H.M.'s Government were not disposed to modify their recent policy towards him, he would not expect me to return or to be replaced.

Public opinion would certainly be hostile to the permanent location of a British representative in Najd, but Ibn Saud would, I am convinced, be prepared to run counter to the views of his subjects, if the presence of such a representative were likely to be to his own political advantage. That will depend on the line of policy decided on in due courses by H.M.'s Government.

In any case , if we may assume that our policy in the future will be such as to dispose Ibn Saud to agree to the permanent representative of H.M.'s Government at his court, the nature of the agency to be established will be a matter demanding serious consideration. The jealousy and exclusiveness of Najd render it, in my opinion quite out of the question to establish an agency on the

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ordinary lines in vogue at the ports on the Persian Gulf, coast, with all the paraphernalia of office establishments, escorts and flags, The display of alien power would be as unwelcome to the Wahhabi as the influx of alien personnel; the presence of even Muslim clerks and servants from outside would be a ground of suspicion and anxiety to Ibn Saud, calculated to disturb the even tenor of our relations with him.

For these reasons, I am convinced that, at any rate, for many years to come, H.M.'s Government should aim at making their representation at the Wahhabi court as unostentatious as is compatible with efficiency. The British Agent at Riyadh must be content to life of the people, adopt their manner of dress and above all to submit to the somewhat irksome restrictions imposed on social intercourse alike by the bigotry of the people beginning so to arrange matters that the presence of a British Officer at Riyadh

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should be intermittent and not permanent, constituting a series of visits at reasonable intervals rather than continuous residence.

20. Acknowledgments.

This report would not be complete without some attempt on my part to express my gratitude for the generous help and cooperation received by me from many quarters.

On Captain P.G. Loch, I. A., Political Agent, first at Bahrain and then at Kuwait, to whom I cannot adequately express my sense of obligation; fell a heavy burden of work of many kinds in connection with the Mission; on him I could always rely for the prompt disposal of urgent work and for enthusiastic cooperation in a variety of ways.

To Mr. Mungavin and Lieutenant Mac Collum, who succeeded Captain Loch at Bahrain and Kuwait, respectively, I owe a similar debt of gratitude.

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To Lieutenant-Colonel Basset, British Agent at Jidda, and the officers of his Staff and more particularly to Captain Dickson and Lieutenant Grey, on whose generous co-operations in the matter of ciphering I was obliged to make heavy demands during my stay at Jidda, I am under a great obligation for their hospitable entertainment and ready assistance in my work.

And finally, if it is not presumptuous to do so, I take this opportunity of rendering thanks for the hospitality, kindness and unvarying consideration experienced by me during my sojourn in Egypt and Palestine at the hands of His Excellency the High Commissioner for Egypt and the Officers of his Staff, of Commander Hogarth and the Officers and Staff of the Arab Bureau at Cairo and of Brigadier-General Clayton and the Officers of the Palestine administration, with whom I came in contact.

H. ST. J. PHIBBY, I.C.S.,

In Charge of the Najd Mission.

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APPENDIX A.

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Precis of Relations with Ibn Saud (vide para. 2 of Report).

Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud, the present Hakim of Najd, may be said to have begun his reign in 1901, when he was proclaimed governor of Riyadh by his father Abdul Rahman. The Saud Family were at the time in exile, having been driven out of their dominions, in 1891, by their hereditary foe, Ibn Rashid. In 1902, Abdul Aziz with the help of Mubarak Ibn Saud, Shaikh of Kuwait, recovered Riyadh in a daring raid which he led in person, and by 1906 he had so far re-established the old supremacy of the Saud, as to carry hostilities to the gates of Hail. During the years succeeding his return to Riyadh he acted in close alliance with the Shaikh of Kuwait, who had every reason for desiring the curtailing of Rashid.

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influence. For the Rashid were allies, and in a remote acceptation of the term, vassals of the Ottoman empire subsidised and backed by Constantinople, and they represented in Arabia the Turkish policy of centralisation which the Shaikh was covertly resisting in his own territories. His geographical position on the shores of the Persian Gulf had placed him in relations with the British Government; since 1899 we had had a friendly understanding with him and had promised to support him against Ottoman aggression. But the existence of this connection made us unwilling to see him drawn into the confused and uncertain feud of the interior and acting on the principle laid down in 1897 that we were "not disposed to interfere more than was necessary for the maintenance of general peace in the Persian Gulf", we had discouraged him from embroiling himself in Central Arabian Affairs. Ibn Saud, in spite of his growing importance, was outside the limits of our interest, thus appointed, and it was not until 1911 that

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special attention was drawn to him in our official reports. In that year Captain Shakespear, the Political Agent at Kuwait, while on tour, met him by chance in the desert and was hospitably entertained in his camp. Ibn Saud expressed to him a desire to be received into a recognised relationship with Great Britain; he referred to Colonel Pelly's visit to Riyadh in 1865 and to the overtures made to us by his father, Abdul Rahman, in 1904 when a British Agent was first appointed to Kuwait. He spoke in strong terms of the hatred which the Arabs entertained for the Turks and of his own resentment of their occupation of the Hasa, a province which he was particularly anxious to regain, not only because it formed part of his ancestral dominions, but also because it would give him access to the sea and control over the tribes from Riyadh of the coast. He regarded with grave apprehension the aggressive

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policy of the new regime in Turkey and would welcome, if he recovered the Hasa, a British Agent in one of his ports, and he added that our trade would benefit from the increased security which he would maintain on the caravan routes. Captain Shakesper could make no other rejoinder that the British Government confined its interests to the coast and had never challenged Turkish claims to the ordering of affairs in Central Arabia, with which we had no concern; that we were moreover on amicable terms with Turkey and should be averse from anything in the nature of intrigue against the Ottoman Government, but in his comments on the report of this interview, Sir Percy Cox pointed out that as the protegee seemed disposed to be intractable in the adjustment of matters relating to British interests in the Gulf, we could not afford to ignore Ibn Saud's attitude. His personal authority had greatly increased, and it would

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be well to entertain cordial if distant relations with him. The Foreign Office, however, decide that it was impossible at that time to swerve from our policy of strict non-interference.

Two years later Ibn Saud, without the assistance which he had tried to obtain from us, though he was credited throughout Arabia with having secured it, overran the Hasa, ejected without difficulty the small Turkish garrisons and established himself on the coast at Qatif and Ojair, Captain Shakespear, on his return to England in June 1915, from a long projected journey across Arabia, in the course of which he had visited Riyadh, bore witness to the strong personal domination which Ibn Saud's vigorous and commanding personality had established, and from other reports it was clear that he was regarded beyond his own frontiers as the coming man. He proved more than a match for the ineffective efforts of the Turks to retake the Hasa; they resorted

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diplomacy and opened negotiation with him through Saliyd Talib of Basrah. Early in May Tal 'at Bag had formulated in private conversation at the British Embassy the expectations of the Ottoman Government in terms which seemed to his hearers little consonant with actual conditions. He proposed to establish a strictly delimited frontier between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid place representatives of the Sultan at Riyadh and at Hail, and rely upon the guile of these officials to control without the aid of force the action of the two Amirs. As for the Hasa, Ibn Saud would be appointed Mutasarrif of the province, but the collection of the customs would be replaced in the ports.

Nothing was more certain than that Ibn Saud's appearance on the coast must ultimately bring him into direct contact with ourselves whether we welcomed it or sought to avoid it; and this anxiety underlay

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and possibly accelerated the action of the Porte. But at the moment Turkish fears were groundless. We were concerned wholly with the conclusion of prolonged negotiations with Constantinople touching interests in Mesopotamia and the Gulf which were of vital importance, and were less inclined, if possible, than before for Arabian adventure. We made a friendly offer to mediation which was refused, and when, in April, 1914, the Amir met the British Agent, Colonel Grey, outside Kuwait, he was given to understand that we had recently concluded a comprehensive agreement with Turkey and could not to him no hope of support. Ibn Saud was thrown back on his own resources, but these were considerable, and the secret treaty which was signed in May by himself and the Wali of Basrah, fell short of Tal'at Bag's anticipations. He accepted the title of Wali and Military Commandant of Najd which was offered to himself and his descendants as long as they should remain loyal, and engaged to fly the Turkish flag, but he was to have

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charge of the customs, on behalf of the Ottoman Government, raise his own levies and provide the garrisons for Qatif and Ojair. Deficiencies in the Najd budget were to be met from the customs, and no revenue from any local income was to be paid to Constantinople until such time as there was a surplus- an eventuality of doubtful occurrence. But while exercising in his own territories an authority which was in all but the name that of an independent ruler, his correspondence with foreign Powers to be conducted solely through the Porte, and in case of war he was to come to the assistance of the Sultan.

What would have been the upshot of a treaty which so imperfectly reflected the convictions of the contracting parties can scarcely admit of doubt. The guiding trait of Ibn Saud's character is what must be called a racial rather than a national

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patriotism, but this sentiment was not likely to evoke sympathetic consideration from the leaders of the Committee of union and progress, who were blindly determined on the Ottomanization of the Arabs. As a strict Wahhabi, the new Wali of Najd looked with abhorrence on the loose religious principles of the Turks and was far from admitting their pretensions to represent and direct Islam. He had, in conversation with Captain Shakespear, spoken, with unexpected vehemence, on this point, saying that in his eyes the infidel was preferable to the Turk, since the latter broke the rule he professed to follow, while the former acted in accordance with his own law, and to the same listener he declared that he had accepted the terms of the agreement only because he was assured privately that even the small measure of sovereignty accorded to Turkey would never be claimed. The

Kuwait treaty was put to the test by the outbreak of the European war and found wanting.

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The disquieting attitude adopted by Turkey on the outbreak of war between Germany and the Entente Powers produced a profound alteration in our policy towards the Prote. It became necessary to reckon up our assets in Arabia, and early in October Captain Shakespear, who was in England; was ordered to return to the Persian Gulf and get into touch with Ibn Saud so as to prevent if possible the outbreak of unrest in the interior, and in the event of war with Turkey to ensure that no assistance should be rendered from that quarter. Before he could reach his destination war had been declared. A message had been despatched to Ibn Saud informing him of Captain Shakespear's impending visit, recognizing his position in Najd and the Hasa and guaranteeing him against reprisals by sea or land if he would commit himself to enter the list against Turkey. The Turks, on their side, lost no

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time in approaching the Amirs of Central Arabia. Their scheme, which was that Ibn Rashid should aid in the campaign against Egypt while Ibn Saud opposed the British advance in Mesopotamia, showed that they were as unaware of the feeling towards them which prevailed among the Arabs as they were ignorant of the conditions of the desert, where the network of tribal feud permits no man to withdraw his forces on a distant expedition without fear of attack on his unprotected possessions. Ibn Saud, apparently in order to gain time, took advantage of his abiding enmity with Ibn Rashid and launched into open hostilities against him. In vain Enver Pasha urged him to abandon private quarrels, sent him a gift of money for the expenses of co-operation with the Sultan's armies, and ultimately entrusted Saiyid Talib with the task of bringing about a reconciliation. At this juncture Saiyid Talib was busily engaged in endeavouring through the intermediation of Shaikh Khaz'al and His Majesty's

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Consul at Muhammareh to drive a bargain with the Turkey, but the terms which he put forward were so extravagant as to be impossible of acceptance, and he was still hesitating over Shaikh Khaz'al's advice to him to abate them when the declaration of war left him stranded. Then it was that he saw in his proposed deputation to Najd a providential means of escape from Basrah where his position had now become highly precarious, and he left hurriedly for Ibn Saud's camp, via Zubair. Meanwhile the Wahhabi Chief, in response to Turkish exhortation, had pleaded that he could spare no troops for the 'Iraq till he had reduced Ibn Rashid to his rightful state of vassalage. To the British message he replied that he was unshaken in his long-standing desire for intimate relations with us. But he was not unnaturally reluctant to take open part with us until he was satisfied that our change of front towards himself was likely to be permanent, and in spite of his personal confidence in Captain Shakespear it was with some misgiving that he consented to his visit. The meeting took place on December 31st at