

University of East Anglia

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**British–Saudi Relations 1902-1932**

Ph.D Thesis

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## **Abstract**

The years 1902-1932 have received relatively little attention in Arab and British history. This study examines the British-Saudi relationship from its inception, covering the entire period from the restoration of Riyadh in 1902 to the creation of Saudi Arabia in 1932. The study focuses on the Arabian Peninsula, including Najd, Has'a, Hijaz, and the northern Arabian Peninsula, including Ha'il and Al-Jawf, as well as southern Arabia, including Asir, and is the first to do so in such depth. Together, these regions became the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932. The research has assessed a significant number of primary sources, including correspondence between the various parties involved, reports, public records, private papers, newspapers and photographs, and includes Arabic and English secondary literature. Special attention has been given to British primary sources, as well as Ottoman documents, obtained from the Ottoman archives in Istanbul. In addition, a number of Arabic primary sources were obtained from the King Abdul Aziz Foundation in Saudi Arabia. This Foundation also provided a number of primary sources in German, Dutch and French, translated from their original languages into Arabic.

The thesis explores the multiple factors that influenced the composition of Saudi Arabia before its actual creation. In particular, it examines British-Saudi relations focussing on the understanding of British and international perspectives, as well as those of the Ottomans prior to the departure of Ottoman forces from Has'a. The first phase of the British-Saudi relationship is examined from its inception to the signing of the first agreement by Ibn Saud with a great power, namely the Darin Convention of 1915.

This thesis aims to take a fresh approach to state formation in Saudi Arabia by focusing on all the factors that made Ibn Saud into a leader. It explores the extent to which Ibn Saud benefited from all the means surrounding him, from internal and external alliances, and the ways in which he used these to further his interests. An in-depth analysis of the period from 1902 to 1932 is therefore crucial. It explores the internal and external factors which moulded the development of British-Saudi relations, as initiated by Ibn Saud. This relationship went through uncertainties and frustrations that did not ultimately change the commitment that Ibn Saud received from the British. From these early stages, after Ibn Saud assumed control over local and regional conflicts, he emerged as a political leader with strategic plans to involve the British in his country's future. The annexation of Al-Qassim, Has'a and Hijaz heralded a change in Britain's policy toward Ibn Saud, such that the British had to establish direct relations with Ibn Saud.

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## British- Saudi Relations 1902-1932

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### List of the Main British Officials

Arthur Prescott Trevor (1872-1930)	First assistant to the British Political Resident in the Gulf (Bushire/Bushehr).	1905
Sir Arnold Talbot Wilson (1884–1940)	First came to Mesopotamia (Iraq) in 1914, then became a political Officer with Sir Percy Cox. He was appointed as General-Governor in 1918 for one year and was later British Civil Commissioner in Baghdad.	1918-1920
Charles Arnold Kemball (1860-1943)	Gulf Resident.	1900-1904
David George Hogarth (1862-1927)	British Commissioner at the Middle East Commission. He was an archaeologist who became an intelligence official in Egypt and the Middle East.	1920-1927
Edward Viscount Grey of Fallodon (1862-1933)	Foreign Secretary under Campbell-Bannerman.	1905-1916
Francis Crow (1863-1939)	British Consul in Basra.	1904-1906
Field Marshal Edmund Henry Hynman Allenby (1861-1936)	High Commissioner for Egypt and Sudan.	1919-1925
General Sir Francis Reginald Wingate (1861-1953)	British General and Administrator in Egypt and Sudan.  Commander of military operations in Hijaz.	1899-1916  1916-1919

Lieutenant-Colonel Robert Edward Archibald Hamilton (1871-1950)	After 1934, he was known as Robert Edward Archibald Udney-Hamilton.	1895-1903
Gerard Evelyn Leachman (1880-1920)	Geographer and botanist who made several journeys in Arabia after 1910. He was a government spy whose main mission was to negotiate with Ibn Saud in Riyadh.	1909-1920
George Nathaniel, Marquess Curzon of Kedleston (1859-1925)	Viceroy of India, and Minister of Foreign Affairs. Referred to as Lord Curzon in the thesis.	1899-1905
Gilbert Falkingham Clayton (1875-1929)	British Army intelligence Officer and colonial administrator who held several posts in the Arab countries. He worked in Sudan before moving to Egypt, where he worked at Civilian Intelligence.	1922-1929
John Gordon Lorimer (1870-1914)	Political Resident in Turkish Arabia (based in Baghdad) and Consul-General from 1911.	1909-1914
Sir Percy Zachariah Cox (1864-1937)	Distinguished British Indian Army Officer and Colonial Office administrator in the Persian Gulf and Middle East.	1904-1919
Stuart George Knox (1869-1956)	British Political Agent in Kuwait.	1904-1909

Thomas Edward Lawrence (1888-1935)	'Lawrence of Arabia', as he is often known, became an intelligence Officer in the Middle East and went with Sir Ronald Storrs on a political mission to the Hijaz in 1916, where Sharif Hussein bin Ali had just declared himself independent of the Ottoman Empire. He was confined to Sharif Hussein's armed force, under the charge of Hussein's son Faysal, as military adviser, and helped to initiate a series of guerrilla raids against Ottoman forces and the Hijaz Railway.	1916-1920
Sir Vincent Arthur Henry McMahon (1862-1949)	Foreign Secretary of the British Government in India.	1911-1917
William Henry Irvine Shakespear (1878-1915)	British Political Agent in Kuwait.	1909-1914
Sir Winston Leonard Spencer Churchill (1874-1965)	Secretary of State for the Colonies.	1921-1922
William St. John Brodrick (1856-1942)	Secretary of State for India.	1903-1905

### List of the Most Important Saudi Personalities

Abdul-Aziz bin Saud (1876-1953)	King of Saudi Arabia 1902-1952, referred to throughout the thesis simply as Ibn Saud.
Abdul-Aziz bin Mutib al-Rashid (1870-1906)	Came from the House of Rashid and was Emir of Jabal Shammar 1897-1906; faced Ibn Saud in several battles and was killed in 1906; referred to throughout the thesis as Ibn Rashid.
Mubarak Al-Sabah (1837-1915)	Seventh ruler of Kuwait from 1896 until 1915.
Sharif Hussein bin Ali (1854-1931)	Sharif and Emir of Mecca from 1908 and, after proclaiming the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire, King of the Hijaz from 1916 to 1924.
Khazal bin Jabir (1861-1936)	Sheikh of Muhammerah (present-day Khorramshahr) in the emirate of Arabistan (Khuzestan) in Persia (1897–1925).
Khalid bin Luway (1865-1933)	Khalid bin Mansour bin Luay, one of Hijaz’s Sharifs, was a prince of Al-Kharma (near Tai’f). In 1914, at the time of the Arab revolution, he was sent by Sharif Hussein and his son Abdullah bin Hussein to block the remnants of the Turks in the city. A member of Otaibah’s tribe hit Khalid, but Abdullah bin Hussein did not do anything, which left Khalid angry at Abdullah. He wrote to Abdulaziz bin Saud to inform him of his support of him, but when Sharif Hussein found out about the letter, he launched three small campaigns against Khalid, which the latter defeated.
Awdah abu Tayah (1874-1924)	Leader of the Hawayat tribe.

Faisal Al-Dweish (1882-1931)	Leader of the Mutair tribe and Ikhwan (Brotherhood) leader.
Sultan bin Bjad (1876-1934)	Leader of the Otaiba tribe and Ikhwan leader.
Salem Al-Sabah (1864-1921)	Ruler of Kuwait from 1917 until 1921.
Ahmad Al-Sabah (1885-1950)	Ruler of Kuwait from 1921 until 1950.
Hassan Al-Ayidh	Leader of the Aïd Emirate in Assir from 1911 until 1924.
Nori Al-Shaalan (1847-1942)	Leader of the Roula tribe from 1901 until 1942.
Ali bin Mohammed al-Idrissi (1876-1923)	Became the ruler of the Al-Adarisah after the death of his father in 1923. At just 17 years of age, he had neither administrative nor political experience. In 1926, his uncle, Hassan bin Ali al-Idrissi, revolted and took the leadership from him. He ruled from 1926-1932 and made an alliance with Ibn Saud against Yemen.
Hassan al-Idrissi	Leader of the Al-adaresah in Asir in southern Arabia from 1926 to 1932.
Yahya Homid al-Din (1869-1948)	Imam of Yemen from 1904 until 1948.

## List of the Most Important Towns and Regions of the Arabian Peninsula

Najd	<p>Region in north-central Saudi Arabia, the rocky plateau of Najd (in sources sometimes Nejd) was a kingdom from 1902 until 1932. It is bordered by the mountains of Hijaz in the south-west, Jordan and Iraq in the north, the Saudi coast of the Persian Gulf, known as Has'a, in the east, and the empty quarter of the Arabian peninsula, Rub al-Khali, in the south. Najd is politically the heartland of modern Saudi Arabia, as it was from here that the Saud family conquered the rest of the regions now making up the country. In modern Saudi Arabia, Najd is called the Central Region, comprising three provinces: Ha'il, al-Qassim and Riyadh.</p>
Hijaz/Hejaz/Al-Hijaz	<p>Region is Western Saudi Arabia, along the mountainous Red Sea coast of the Arabian Peninsula from Jordan in the north to the Asir region in the south. Directly controlled by the Ottomans after 1845, who built the Damascus–Medina railway (1990-1908) to unify their domain. In 1916, Sharīf Ḥusayn ibn 'Alī, who claimed lineal descent from the Prophet Muhammad, revolted against Turkish rule, destroyed the railway, and proclaimed himself King of Hijaz. Ḥusayn's reign ended in 1924, when he abdicated in the face of a Wahhābī invasion. In 1925 his son and successor, 'Alī, also abdicated and left the country. Hijaz is the western quarter of Saudi Arabia and, along with Najd and the Eastern Province, one of the three most important regions of the kingdom.</p>
Has'a (al-Ahsa')	<p>Incorporated into an Ottoman Sanjak (district) in 1872, Has'a was recaptured by Imam 'Abd al-'Aziz bin 'Abd al-Rahman in 1913 and</p>

	integrated into the present Saudi kingdom. Al-Hufuf served as the capital of Has'a Province until 1952, when the province was renamed the Eastern Province and the capital was moved to al-Dammam. About half the Hasawis are Sunni, with the rest being Shi'ah.
Jabal Shammar	Mountainous area in northwestern Saudi Arabia, bounded by the regions of Hijaz in the west and Al-Sharqiyyah in the east. The Jabal Shammar area has long been inhabited by the Shammar clan. An independent principality of the Ibn Rashīd dynasty from 1834 to 1921, Jabal Shammar was involved in constant strife among al-Sa'ūd dynasty, the Rashīd rulers, and the sharifs (nobles) of Mecca until the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia was formed in 1932.
Ha'il	Principal town of the Jabal Shammar district of northern Najd. Ha'il was the capital of the Al Rashid emirate until it was conquered by his arch-rival Al Sa'ud in 1921. It is now the capital of a Saudi province of the same name.
Al-uyaynah	Village in central Saudi Arabia, located some 30 km northwest of the capital, Riyadh. Al-Uyaynah was the birthplace of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, whose followers are known as Wahhabis. Today, Uyaynah is a small village and forms, together with its neighbour al-Jubayla, the Subgovernorate of Al-Uyaynah and Al-Jubayla.
Diriyah	Town in Saudi Arabia located on the north-western outskirts of the capital, Riyadh. Diriyah was the original home of the Saudi royal family and served as the capital of the Emirate of Diriyah under the first Saudi dynasty from 1744 to 1818. Today, the town is the seat of the Diriyah

	Governorate, which also includes the villages of Uyayna, Jubayla, and Al-Ammariyyah, among others, and is part of Ar Riyad Province.
Washim	District at the north-western edge of southern Najd, bordered by Sudayr to the north and al-'Arid to the south. Its capital is Shaqrah and its principal settled population is drawn from the Bani Zayd and Bani Tamim; the largest badu (bedouin) tribe is aL'Utaybah.
Shaqra	The biggest city in Washim County, declared its loyalty and subordination to Ibn Saud in 1904.
Sudair	District of southern Najd, about 145 miles long, abutting al-Qasim province of central Najd on the north and 'Arid district on the south. The most important towns are al-Majma' (the capital) and al-Zilfi.
Al-qassim	Located at the heart of the country, and almost in the centre of the Arabian Peninsula. Its capital city is Buraydah.
Al-jwaf	Region in the north of Saudi Arabia.
Riyadh	Saudi Arabia's capital and largest city. Located in the southern Najd, it became the seat of the al-Saud family after the destruction by an Egyptian army of their ancestral home at nearby al-Dir'iyah in 1818. It was lost to the rival al-Rashid dynasty of Ha'il in 1891.

### List of Agreements between Ibn Saud and Others

<b>Treaty</b>	<b>Parties</b>
Darin Treaty 1915	Britain and Ibn Saud
Al-saibiha Conference 1914	Ottoman Empire and Ibn Saud
Muhammara Conference 1922	Najd, Kuwait and Iraq
Ugair Treaty 1922	Iraq and the Sultanate of Najd, and Kuwait and Najd.
Kuwait Conference 1923-1924	Kuwait and Ibn Saud.
Agreement of Bahra and Hada, 1925	Iraq, Transjordan and Ibn Saud.
Treaty of Jeddah, 1927	Britain and Ibn Saud.

## List of Battles

Mulayda 1891	Amir of Ha'il Mohammed Rashid against Amir Buraidah. Ibn Rashid won.
Al-Bukayriyah 1904	The Emirate of Jabal Shammer under the leadership of Abdulaziz bin Mteib Al Rashid against the Emirate of Najd led by Abdul Aziz Al Saud. The battle ended with victory for Ibn Saud.
Rawdat Muhana 1906	Ibn Saud against Ibn Rashid. Ibn Saud won and killed Abdul Aziz bin Mutaib Ibn Rashid.
Jarrab 1915	Saudu bin Abdulaziz ibn Rashid against Ibn Saud, which Ibn Rashid won. Shakespear was killed in this battle.
Turabah 1919	The Ikhwan, led by Sultan bin Bajad and Sharif Khalid bin Loay, against the forces of Sharif Hussein bin Ali, ruler of Mecca and Medina, under the leadership of his son Abdullah ibn al-Hussein. The battle ended in victory for the Ikhwan.
Sabilla 1929	Ibn Saud against the Ikhwan, which ended in victory for Ibn Saud.
al-Khurmah 1919	The battle took place between Hijaz and Najd in 1919, which initiated a series of battles that did not actually end until December 1925, when Ibn Saud entered Medina and Jeddah.

## Abbreviations

CO	Colonial Office
FO	Foreign Office
IO	India Office
IOR	India Office Records
WO	War Office
GoI	Government of India
SSI	Secretary of State for India
L/P&S/	India Office: Letters, Political and Secret
R/15	Residency Records
FKA	Foundation King Abduaziz

## Transliteration System

The modified version of the Library of Congress Arabic transliteration system shown in Tables 1 and 2 below has been used by the author.

Table 1: Transliteration note: consonants

Arabic letters	Romanization	Arabic letters	Romanization
ا	ā	ض	ḍ
ب	B	ط	ṭ
ت	T	ظ	ẓ
ث	Th	ع	‘
ج	J	غ	Gh
ح	ḥ	ف	F
خ	Kh	ق	Q
د	D	ك	K
ذ	Dh	ل	L
ر	R	م	M
ز	Z	ن	N
س	S	هـ	H
ش	Sh	و	W
ص	ṣ	ي	Y

Table 2: Vowels

Long		Short	
ا	ā	َ	a
ي	ī	ِ	i
و	ū	ُ	U

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## Introduction

‘Abd al-‘Azīz bin ‘Abd Âl-Raḥmān Âl-Fayṣal Âl-Sa‘ūd (Ibn Saud) was born in the city of Riyadh in 1876,<sup>1</sup> into the Âl-Saud family, which had consolidated its authority across much of the Arabian Peninsula in the previous century. At the time of Ibn Saud’s birth, however, the family’s power was greatly diminished, and in 1891, under threat from the powerful Âl-Rashid<sup>2</sup> family (an implacable enemy of the Sauds), Ibn Saud and his family were taken into exile in Kuwait, which is where he spent his early years.

These years of exile made a profound impression on the young Ibn Saud. From the late 1890s, as Ibn Saud grew up in Kuwait, his thoughts were focused on reclaiming his family’s domain, which was by then occupied by the Rashid family. He had spent long enough in exile. He judged that if with God's help he could reclaim Riyadh, then the people of Najd would support his family and help him to oust Âl Rashid from the region.

In 1902, 'Abd al-'Aziz ibn 'Abd al-Rahman infiltrated the city with a small band of followers, launched a surprise attack on al-Musmak fortress, and succeeded in capturing the al-Rashid governor. Over the next two decades, the al-Saud family used Riyadh as their base to extend their authority once again across Najd. Ibn Saud's drive for consolidation was successful to the extent that, by the end of 1904,<sup>3</sup> he had managed to break the stronghold of the Rashids and push them into Jabal Shammar in northern Najd. The Rashids desperately appealed to the Turks, who sent reinforcements. Nevertheless, Ibn Saud's desert fighters maintained control of the situation in Najd, and through diplomatic negotiations at one time,

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<sup>1</sup> Ibn Saud’s birth date has been a source of debate. Generally accepted as 1876, some sources give it as 1880. Lacey, Robert, *Inside the Kingdom: Kings, Clerics, Modernists, Terrorists, and the Struggle for Saudi Arabia* (London: Hutchinson, 2009), p. 335.

<sup>2</sup> Âl Rashid, is a 19th-century central Arabian dynasty, based in the town of Ha'il in northern Najd and derived from a Sheikh clan of the Shammar tribe.

<sup>3</sup> Philby, Harry St. John, *Saudi Arabia* (London: Ernest Benn, 1955), p.45.

and guerrilla warfare at another,<sup>4</sup> he forced the Ottoman Empire to recall its troops from Najd. Thus, when Abd al-‘Azīz bin Mutib al-Rashid died in 1906, Ibn Saud enjoyed complete control over Najd.

Having accomplished his objective, he turned his attention to al-Ḥasā and the area of the Arabian Gulf that was still under Turkish rule. Calculating that the Ottoman Empire was preoccupied with uprisings in Europe, and that Britain would consider it a domestic affair and remain neutral, Ibn Saud launched a successful assault, and by 1913 he had consolidated his authority in both Najd and al-Ḥasā. Ibn Saud concluded another Treaty with Britain, the Treaty of Darin of December 26, 1915, establishing him as the sole ruler of Najd and al-Ḥasā, giving him the tacit right to oust the remaining members of the Rashid family. He did so, and by 1918 his authority was extended to reach the outskirts of Ha’il, the capital of the Rashid area. During the next year clashes occurred between the forces of Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, and a force of the *Ikhwan*.<sup>5</sup> Nevertheless, Ibn Saud withheld his troops from attacking Hijaz. In 1920, he moved further south and consolidated his authority in Asir. The following year, he completed his campaign against the Rashids in Ha’il, which also fell under his control. Restraining himself time and time again from proceeding to Hijaz, Ibn Saud adopted a policy of waiting for the correct timing to claim Hijaz.

This final consolidation of the Arabian Kingdom was accomplished by the end of 1925. In the previous three years, the Sharif of Mecca had failed to maintain good relations with the British. Ibn Saud, responding to popular demand from the people of Mecca,<sup>6</sup> became the King of Hijaz and Sultan of Najd and its dependencies. Ibn Saud was now ruling most of the Arabian Peninsula and was guardian of the holy cities of Mecca and Medina.

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<sup>4</sup> Champion, Daryl, *The Paradoxical Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and the Momentum of Reform* (London: Hurst, 2003), p.38.

<sup>5</sup> The early twentieth century *Ikhwan* (Brotherhood) movement resulted from the encouragement given by the al-Saud Imam (later King) 'Abd al-'Aziz of an Islamic revival, with emphasis on *Wahhabi* tenets, among the Bedouin.

<sup>6</sup> Al-Farsy, Fouad *Modernity and Tradition the Saudi Equation* (New York: Routledge, 2009), p.19.

The outbreak of the First World War in the autumn of 1914 and the Ottoman Empire's alliance with Germany forced Britain to evaluate its position in the Middle East and the Persian Gulf. The British effort to ensure the co-operation of the rulers in the area, in case a war against the Ottomans became inevitable, raised in particular the question of Ibn Saud, whose overtures for British protection and support London had consistently rejected since 1902. Though initially confident that Ibn Saud would side with Britain, the British Government was increasingly concerned that the Saudi ruler might ultimately support the Sublime Porte [Alábab Aláali]. To forestall his subversion, the India Office proposed to send an emissary to convince Ibn Saud to side with Britain if and when war arose. The choice of Captain William Henry Irving Shakespear (sometimes spelt Shakespeare in contemporary sources),<sup>7</sup> former political agent in Kuwait, as emissary, was unanimously endorsed by all British officials concerned with Arabian policies, mostly by virtue of his being the most competent British political officer on Saudi affairs.<sup>8</sup>

The defeat of the Ottomans and the subsequent fragmentation of their empire left Saudi rule in Arabia stronger than before. Before long, the rival rule of the Rashids in Shammar, no longer assisted by their Ottoman patrons, was extinguished. The First World War and its aftermath was a turning point also for British-Saudi relations.<sup>9</sup> It bears repeating here that Britain had succeeded in seeing off its European challengers in the Gulf by this stage, although in Persia competition with Russia (and subsequently the Soviet Union) remained.<sup>10</sup> This

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<sup>7</sup> As the British Political Agent in Kuwait in 1910, Shakespear became the first British official to meet and deal personally with Imam (later King) 'Abdul Aziz ibn 'Abd al-Rahman. After the outbreak of the First World War, Shakespear was sent to Najd to enlist 'Abd al-'Aziz's support against the Ottomans. He finally caught up with the Saudi leader in January 1915, on the eve of a battle with the Al Rashid at Jarrab, near al-Zulfi. During the course of the battle, a wing composed of 'Abd al-'Aziz's tribal allies collapsed and Shakespear, who had accompanied the Saudi forces in British uniform, was killed. Peterson, John, *Historical Dictionary of Saudi Arabia*, Second Edition (Lanham MD: Scarecrow, 2003), pp. 133-134.

<sup>8</sup> FO 424/251 (13135), from Sir Edward Grey (Foreign Secretary) to Sir Lewis Mallet, British Ambassador to Istanbul, 26/03/1914.

<sup>9</sup> Nonneman, Gerd, 'Saudi-European relations 1901-2001: a pragmatic quest for relative autonomy', *International Affairs* 77, 3 (2001), pp.631-661.

<sup>10</sup> Choueiri, Youssef M., *A Companion to the History of the Middle East* (Malden: Blackwell, 2005), p.251.

dominance was unchallenged along the Arab Gulf littoral (bound to Britain by a series of protective and exclusive treaties), and would also become evident to the north, when the two new states of Iraq and Transjordan were carved out as monarchies under British tutelage (under the Sharif's sons Faisal and Abdallah respectively). The Saudi ruler always kept his options and other channels of communication open, a policy facilitated by a recognition on the part of Germany and the Soviet Union, among others, that he was the power to be reckoned with in a strategically ever more important part of the world.<sup>11</sup>

### **Background and relations**

When Ibn Saud began to establish his state, there was British presence in the small coastal protectorates, but there was hardly any on the east coast. It was then essential for Ibn Saud to contact the British and consequently build a good relationship with them in order to protect his interests and strengthen his authority.<sup>12</sup> Britain observed the struggle between Ibn Saud and al-Rashid, but did not want to become involved due to concern that if either party won, his influence might stretch to the countries under British authority in the region, particularly Kuwait. Therefore it was in Britain's best interests to keep the region split between the two families.<sup>13</sup> Britain therefore did not want to interfere in such internal affairs that would also provoke Turkish anxieties. The British ignored all Ibn Saud's early approaches, such as in 1902 when he asked if Britain would sign treaties immediately after the conquest of Riyadh, but subsequently Britain told its allies not to support him. Britain continued its policy towards Ibn Saud even when he asked for help in 1904,<sup>14</sup> and then strengthened its negative position after Ibn Saud's victory in the Battle of al-Bukayriyah and Rawdat Muhana against Ibn Rashid and

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<sup>11</sup> Nonneman, *'Saudi-European relations'*, pp. 631-661.

<sup>12</sup> Al-Kahtani, Mohammed Zaid, *'The Foreign Policy of King Abdul-Aziz: A Study on the International Relations of an Emerging State'* (Unpublished Doctorial Dissertation, University of Leeds, 2004), p.32.

<sup>13</sup> FO 371/353. 29/05/1904, Viceroy of India to St. John Brodrick, Minister of India in London.

<sup>14</sup> IOR/ R/15/5/59. 29/05/1904, St. John Brodrick, Minister of India in London to the British Viceroy of India.

the Turks. Britain retained the same neutral policy, despite the recommendation of Sir Percy Cox (Political Resident of the Gulf) that Britain should deal with Ibn Saud, who continued trying to gain Britain's recognition.<sup>15</sup>

Despite this, all attempts ended in failure, and Britain's response was decisive in 1907, stating that it did not see a need to create any kind of relationship with Ibn Saud, due to its loyalties to the Turkish Government.<sup>16</sup> The situation remained unchanged, so Ibn Saud continued to strengthen his internal position and expand his state in Najd and, with time on his side after dominating the Najd region and killing Ibn Rashid in 1906, and with increasing numbers of followers of Shammar tribes, he worked to consolidate his sovereignty and leadership in the area. There were no changes in his relationship with the British until 1910, when he met with Captain Shakespear, then a political agent of Kuwait, whilst visiting the Amir of Kuwait. The following year, they met again in Ibn Saud's camp (150 miles north-west of Zilfi). Ibn Saud told Shakespear about his desire to capture al-Ḥasā in order to end the Turkish presence in the region. He asked Britain to support him and to deal with him as they did with the other Gulf leaders. However, Shakespear confirmed that Britain could not damage its relations with Turkey for fear of driving it into an alliance with Germany. The British Foreign Office issued orders to the Indian Bureau<sup>17</sup> to stay completely neutral and not to intervene directly or indirectly in the affairs of Najd.<sup>18</sup> As of 1904, the Foreign Office had also stated that all attempts by British politicians in the Gulf and India to change Britain's attitude toward Ibn Saud from 1904 would be sternly rejected as Britain's international interests surpassed India's local or regional interests. This policy changed in 1913, just prior to the

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<sup>15</sup> L/P&S/10/50 (3), 16/09/1906, Major Sir Percy Cox to Sir Louis W. Dane.

<sup>16</sup> Troeller, Gary, *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud* (London: Routledge, 2013), pp. 22-25; Wahbah, Ḥāfiẓ. *Ayyām Arabīyah*, (Bīyrūt: A Barker. 1964), pp. 244-248; Ghannam, Husayn Ibn, *Tarikh Najd, Rawḍat al-Afkār* (Bīyrūt: Dar Alshoroq, 1999), pp. 58-67.

<sup>17</sup> The Government of India was responsible for British relations with the Gulf States through the PRPG and his subordinate Political Agents along the littoral. PRPG: Political Resident in the Persian Gulf. Peterson, *Historical Dictionary*, p. xvii.

<sup>18</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 228; Winstone, *Shakespear*, p. 18.

outbreak of the First World War, when Britain began to give more consideration to Ibn Saud, even contacting him directly. In fact, the attitude of Britain toward Ibn Saud was a key factor, convincing him to strengthen his internal authority.

Najd also expanded the state further, especially to the region of al-Ḥasā. In 1913 Ibn Saud conquered al-Ḥasā and ended Turkish authority in the east coast region, extending his authority to the Gulf Sheikhdoms, which were under the protection of the British. By doing so, Ibn Saud convinced Britain of two important things: firstly, he had become the most powerful leader in the area, and secondly, his position was such that he could threaten the provinces under the protection of the British. Thus, he convinced Britain to change its policy towards him and to take a positive stance, particularly as Britain's representative in the region had already convinced the country that relations with him were essential to the security of the Gulf Sheikhdoms, which were under British protection. He was also convinced that he should strengthen his relationship with Britain, as it was a great power in the region. However, it can be said that the political competition between Britain and Turkey in the region led both of them to seek Ibn Saud's friendship. Turkey rushed to sign a Treaty with Ibn Saud on May 15, 1914. Britain also hastened to change its previous stance towards Ibn Saud radically once war had been declared with Turkey. Thus, Shakespear visited Riyadh in March 1914 to request Ibn Saud's support in the British mission to capture Basra from Turkey.<sup>19</sup>

Ibn Saud insisted on speaking personally to Shakespear, who had always been impressed by him, and he met the British Captain again in December 1914. Shakespear was keen to strengthen the relationship with Ibn Saud, but during their meeting he found that Ibn Saud insisted on maintaining his neutral position between the Turks and the British. In addition, Ibn Saud also insisted on obtaining a formal treaty between him and Britain before changing

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<sup>19</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, 47; Vassiliev, Alexei, *The History of Saudi Arabia* (London: Saqi Books, 1998), p. 237.

his position. Shakespear advised Ibn Saud to draw up a preliminary treaty setting forth his desires and stating what he was ready to accept from Britain. After long discussions, they finally signed the Treaty of Darin on December 26, 1915, from which Ibn Saud benefited, given the circumstances at the time. One of the articles of this treaty meant that Britain would recognise Ibn Saud as Sultan of Najd, al-Ḥasā and its dependencies, and provide help and protection to the new Sultan from any external aggression. He agreed not to conclude treaties with any foreign governments and not to interfere in the affairs of the areas under British protection.<sup>20</sup> The major result of this treaty was Britain's agreement to provide Ibn Saud with military protection.<sup>21</sup>

During the First World War, Britain feared that Ibn Saud might lend his support to the Turks, or possibly take action against the Allies (among whom was Sharif Husain), which would obstruct the country's plans in the region. Britain, therefore, offered Ibn Saud a monthly subsidy of £5000 and gave him 3000<sup>22</sup> rifles to maintain security and protect British interests in the Gulf. After the end of the First World War, Britain became the most influential power in the region as Mesopotamia, Palestine and Transjordan now came under its authority. By virtue of this strengthened presence, Britain became the power that influenced relations between the leaders of the region and Ibn Saud. At the same time, the tense relationship between Ibn Saud and Sharif Husain was coming to a head regarding al-Khurmah,<sup>23</sup> when it became clear that the British position was in favour of Sharif Husain. Britain also broke many promises of support for Ibn Saud regarding armaments and finance and also asked Ibn Saud to leave al-Khurmah to Sharif Husain. Sharif Husain took advantage of this and sent 5000 troops equipped

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<sup>20</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 55-89.

<sup>21</sup> Wahbah, *Ayyām Arabīyah*, pp. 248-249

<sup>22</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Policy of King Abdulaziz', p. 35.

<sup>23</sup> In 1926, he accepted an invitation to take the title King of the Hijaz. Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Policy of King Abdulaziz', p.35.

with artillery, under the leadership of his son Abdullah,<sup>24</sup> which led to the Battle of Turabah in 1919.

After the decisive defeat of Sharif Husain by Ibn Saud's *Ikhwan* in 1919, which was led by Khalid Ibn Luway and Sultan Ibn Bijad, and then subsequently fortified by the arrival at Turabah of Ibn Saud with an army of 12,000 fighters, Britain threatened Ibn Saud with military action and asked him to halt his advance towards Hijaz and return to Riyadh. Since Ibn Saud had no ambitions in Hijaz, and still looked for a favourable relationship with Britain, which could intervene by force against his interests or internal affairs, he agreed not to attack Hijaz. Ibn Saud also accepted the invitation to participate with Britain and its allies in the victory ceremonies, and sent his son Faisal with two consultants, Ahmad al-Thunayyan and Abdullah al-Qusaibi, to London in 1919.<sup>25</sup>

## Literature review

There are several historical works on the Arabian Peninsula prior to the establishment of the modern Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. These provide particularly valuable material on specific moments in Arabian history. Most notable are the contributions of R. Bayly Winder, who covered the early Saudi-Wahhabi<sup>26</sup> policies in the nineteenth century in texts such as *Saudi Arabia in the Nineteenth Century*, and whose interest lay in the 1910-1926 period, as seen with *The Birth of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise of the House of Sa'ud*. Kostiner focuses on aspects of state formation and tribal politics in an important study of the 1916-1936 period, as does Christine Helms with *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia: Evolution of Political Identity*. C. Leatherdale's *Britain and Saudi Arabia 1925-1939* follows British interests in Arabia from the

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<sup>24</sup> Abdullah Ibn Husayn al Hashimi, 1880-1951, was son of Husayn ibn 'Ali, the Sharif of Makkah and subsequently King of al-Hijaz from 1916-1924.

<sup>25</sup> Philby, Harry St John, *The Empty Quarter: Being a Description of the Great South Desert of Arabia Known as Rub' al Khali* (London: Constable, 1933), pp. 268-272; Vassiliev, *History*, pp. 246-250.

<sup>26</sup> Wahhabism, founded by Muhammad 'Abd al-Wahhab (1703-1792), has been the creed of the Al Sa'ud since the mid-18th century. Peterson, *Historical Dictionary*, p.157.

conquest of Hijaz to the era immediately preceding the outbreak of the Second World War. However these works are primarily focused on examining Ottoman and British interests and often underestimate the importance of Kuwait in the establishment of the Saudi state.

One of the most prolific writers on Saudi Arabia has been the British diplomat and adventurer, Harry St. John (also known as Jack) Philby (1885-1960), who, as an advisor to Ibn Saud, had a unique perspective. His book, entitled simply *Saudi Arabia* and published in 1955, is a fascinating insight into the rituals of court life, Arabian history and culture. Philby had served as official in the British Indian Government but finished his service prior to the establishment of the Kingdom. This left him with a life-long disdain for British policy, which is reflected in his work, as he left the government against his will and on bad terms. Philby might not be objective in his presentation of the British, because he was on bad terms with them, and he was a close friend with Ibn Saud. The research has also benefited from a selection of Arabic and foreign historical studies and documents in the writings of Philby, one of the most prominent English writers who documented aspects of the Saudi state history during Ibn Saud's rule. Philby's writings include historical, geographical and archaeological details, as he was a British spy, which helped him to get the information from direct sources and reports. Therefore, he could form a precise conception on the British stance on Ibn Saud. The researcher particularly benefited from Philby's account as it focussed on the tribes' conflicts, the political changes the country had been through, and the country's relations with foreign and neighbouring powers.

Other sources have proved invaluable. Leslie McLoughlin provides an interesting biography of Ibn Saud, primarily based on other biographies, memoirs and anecdotes, however this lacks the perspective of diplomatic records that Philby offers. There are popular and journalistic accounts of Saudi Arabia, such as Robert Lacey's *Inside the Kingdom* and David Holden's and Richard Johns' *The House of Saud*. All these books discuss the cultural, social,

and political life of the three Saudi rulers' reigns. As this thesis has its focus on Saudi-British relations and how they were affected by other powers in the region, such as the Hashemites and the regions of Kuwait and Has'a, these works have proved particularly useful.

There are two classic works written in Arabic dealing with eighteenth and nineteenth century Saudi history. The first is *Unwan al-Majd fi Tarikh Najd* by Uthman Ibn Bishr, first published in 1982. The second is Husayn Ibn Ghannam's 1999 study of the history of Najd.<sup>27</sup> These two books are important sources for the history of the first Saudi state from 1744 to 1818, due to their historical insight into the topic. A more contemporary work is the four-volume *Shibh al-Jazirah fi ahd al-Malik Abd al-Aziz [The History of the Arabian Peninsula]*, published in 1970 and written by Khir Al-dīn Al-Zrklīy (sometime known as Zirkili), a Syrian employee of the Saudi Foreign Ministry.<sup>28</sup> However, despite his governmental position, Zrklīy sources much of his information from his mentor, fellow compatriot, and advisor at the royal court, Sheikh Yusuf Yassin. Though Zrklīy provides worthwhile insight into the development of the Kingdom in the twentieth century, reference to an official work is vital in understanding the origins of the Kingdom. One work that could serve as an official history has been produced by 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ, whose multi-volume history of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia relies extensively on Ibn Bishr, Zrklīy and European authors, such as the 1829 and 1831 accounts by John Lewis Burckhardt and Philby.<sup>29</sup> Due to the dearth of declassified official documents by the Saudi authorities, several contemporary Arabic works on Saudi political history have relied almost exclusively on English language sources. Arabic authors gather material from memoirs, biographies, and published collections of declassified documents and translate the information for their own audience.

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<sup>27</sup> Ghannam, Husayn Ibn, *Tarikh Najd, Rawdat al-Afkār* (Bīyrūt: Dar Alshoroq, 1999).

<sup>28</sup> Khir Al-dīn Al-Zrklīy, *Shbh Al-jzīyah Al- 'rbūah* (Bīyrūt: Dār Al-'lm lilmalāyīyn, 1970).

<sup>29</sup> Al-'Uthaymīn, 'Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ. *Tārīkh al - mamlakah al - ' arab īyah al - su 'ūdīyah*. Vol. 2. (Al-ṭab 'ah al-thāminah. AlRiyād: Maktabat al-'Ubaykān, 2007)

Regarding published sources of official documents, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia*, a handbook compiled by John Gordon Lorimer to serve the British diplomats in the Arabian Peninsula and Persia, is valuable. It is a four-volume handbook prepared in 1915 and was considered confidential until 1955. The handbook has significant information on the first and second Saudi states, Ibn Saud's relations with Britain (1905-1906) and its neighbouring powers, and the British stance on that. *Documents on British Foreign Policy 1919-1939*, Vol. 1, Part 3, published in London in 1963, is one of the more useful collections of contemporary documents. These documents cover all the issues related to Hussein's relations with Britain and Ibn Saud, and the British response to these relations. They also cover a critical period during the Hijaz-Najd conflict, and the correspondence exchanged between Hussein and the British Government and Offices in Iraq, Jeddah and London. The Najd documents published by Najd Government in *Al-Akhdar al-Najdi*, after Kuwait conference in 1924 are particularly important, as they were formal documents written during the conference on the disputes between Najd, from one side, and Iraq and Trans-Jordan, from the other.

Gilbert Clayton's *An Arabian Diary*, published by the University of California, Los Angeles, in 1969, is one of the main English-language sources used here. Written by a British politician, who occupied various political positions, Clayton's diary documents the events the region had been through. It is particularly useful to analyse his account of the delegation to Ibn Saud in Bahra in 1925, the agreements between Najd and Iraq, and Najd and Trans-Jordan, and appendices in chapter 5 regarding the Bahra Agreement. Other sources consulted include Heather Wagner's 2009 book, *Saudi Arabia*, Alexei Vassiliev's 1998 study, *The History of Saudi Arabia*, Fahd ibn 'Abd Allāh Samārī's *Mawsū'at tārīkh al-malik 'abd al-'azīz al-siyāsīy [Encyclopedia of the history of King Abdul Aziz]*, James Wynbrandt's 2010 book, *A Brief History of Saudi Arabia*, and Peter W. Wilson and Douglas Graham's 2015 book, *Saudi*

*Arabia: The Coming Storm*. These books address the history of Saudi Arabia and Ibn Saud's internal conquests. They are particularly useful in understanding Ibn Saud's relations with the British Government at the start of his rule, and his endeavours to annex Hijaz and stabilize his rule.

The development of Saudi-British relations are covered by Askar AlEunazy's *The Creation of the Sa'udi Arabia, 1910-1930* and Khaled Bin Thunaian's *Alsuad, Alealaqat Alsudai Albraitania 1922-1932* [*Al Saud, Saudi British Relations 1922-1932*]. These books are of particular value regarding the Treaty of Jeddah and the communication channels between Britain and the Saudi state. In *A History of Saudi Arabia*, Madawi Al-Rasheed talks about the history of Saudi Arabia and its emergence and development, including the history of Saudi-British political relations during Ibn Saud's rule and the annexation Al-Qassim and Hijaz. Al-Rasheed focuses on Ibn Rashid's role in confronting Ibn Saud. Nonetheless, to some extent, the book overpraises the writer's tribe, Al-Rasheed (Rashid), especially since she is an activist and a political opponent of Ibn Saud in London. Harold Richard Dickson, *Kuwait and her Neighbours*, published in 1956, is a valuable source in the history of the Arabian Peninsula and the Arab Gulf. Dickson was a political agent for his country in Kuwait from 1922 to 1929 and was therefore able to obtain first-hand information on the region's issues, especially the border disputes between Kuwait and Najd and the talks that led to signing the Treaty of Muhammarah and Treaty of Uqair in 1922. The research for this thesis particularly relied on this book regarding the relations between Ibn Saud and Ahmad Al-Sabah, and the settlement of the border issues between Najd, Kuwait, and Iraq.

*The King of Arabia*, published in 1923 by Colonel H. Jacob, is a useful source on the views of the Arabian Peninsula's princes during the First World War. Jacob was a writer, an Officer in the British army, and an expert in Arab affairs. His book also discusses the relationship between Hussein and Ibn Saud. and the attitude to it of the British Governments

in Cairo and India. *Captain Shakespear*, by Harry Victor Feredrick Winstone, is an important source, in which the author explains Shakespear's role in developing Saudi-British relations.<sup>30</sup> The present study has relied on this source for the investigation of Shakespear's correspondence with Ibn Saud, and his role in signing the Treaty of Darin. C. C. Lewis' *Ibn Sa'ūd and the Future of Arabia*, Richard H. Sanger's *Ibn Saud's Program for Arabia*, and J. B. Mackie's *Hasa: An Arabian Oasis* are all sources for the emergence of the Saudi State and Ibn Saud's role in that. These books are useful in the understanding of Saudi-Hashemite relations and the Ottoman Government's stance on annexing Has'a.

Other important sources include John Slight's *The British Empire and the Hajj: 1865-1956*, Munīrah 'Abd Allāh's *'Uraynān, Ālaqat Najd bi-al-quwa al-muhitah* [Munira Abdullah Al-Arian's Najd's Relations with Surrounding Forces], Fathī 'Afifī's *Mushkilat Alhadod al-siyāsīy fī shibh al-jazīrah al-'arabīyah* [Problems of Political Boundaries in the Arabian Peninsula], Michael S. Casey's *The History of Kuwait*, and Moudi Mansour Abdul-Aziz's *King Abdul-aziz & The Kuwait Conference*. All these sources discuss Saudi-British relations and Ibn Saud's relations with neighbouring countries. They are valuable in understanding Ibn Saud's relations with the British Government in the crucial period from 1913 to 1916, and his relations with other powers, such as Kuwait and the Ottoman Empire.

A number of sources discuss the Ikhwan's history in Najd, including Muḥammad Kamāl Yahyá's *Almuhadon Algadad, Jamat Alkhwan fi Njed* [The New Unitarians, the Ikhwan (Brotherhood) in Najd], Donna L. Zamiska's *The Ikhwan of Saudi Arabia past and present* (a Master's thesis at McGill University, Montreal, from 1993), John S. Habib's *The Ikhwan Movement of Najd: Its Rise, Development, and Decline*, and Talal Sha'yfan Muslat Al-Azma's *The role of the Ikhwan under 'Abdul-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, 1916-1934*. These sources focus on the

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<sup>30</sup> Winstone, Harry Victor Frederick, *Shakespeare* (New York: Quartet Books, 1978), p.18.

emergence of the Ikhwan and its role in supporting Ibn Saud at the beginning, and are valuable in understanding the Ikhwan's role in annexing Najd, and Ibn Saud and Britain's attitudes to the Ikhwan.

A pertinent example of modern Arabic sources is Ameen Rihani (also known as Amīn al-Rīḥānī), a Lebanese Arab-American writer. He visited the region, met with Ibn Saud, and wrote his study of the history of Najd in 1927.<sup>31</sup> The book represents a Saudi view of the incidents that were taking place at that time, and it contains the observations Rihani wrote during his visits and talks with Ibn Saud and the documentary information he obtained. Sheikh Hafiz Wahba's works are valuable sources for Saudi-British relations and the history of the Saudi state under the rule of King Abdulaziz bin Saud. He was originally from Egypt and worked for Ibn Saud in the diplomatic sector until he became the Saudi ambassador in London. In 1935, he wrote a book entitled, *Jazeera al-Arab fi al-qarn al-eshrin*. The book discusses the incidents that took place on the Arabian Peninsula from 1915 until 1934, and Wahba depended on information and documents that he could find as he engaged in the country's affairs. It also contains social, historical, and political studies of the region, in addition to details on the relationship between Ibn Saud and Hussein, the British attitude towards them, and Ibn Saud's relations with neighbouring powers. Wahba's works include *khamsun aman fi Jazeera al-Arab*. This book is based on Wahba's own observations, and he wrote it in Arabic and English. It covers the incidents that took place during the entire period from 1902 to 1932, that the author often witnessed first hand, and the problems Ibn Saud went through, especially his relations with the Hashemite and the British. The present research benefitted significantly from these two books in relation to a number of incidents mentioned in this thesis.

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<sup>31</sup> It was subsequently republished as Al-Rīḥānī, Amīn. *Tārīkh Najd al-Ḥadīth wa-Mulḥaqātuh* (Bīyrūt: Dār Rihani, 1973).

Muhammad Jalal Kishk's *'al-Sa'udiyyun wa al-Hall al-Islami masdar al-shareiya li al-nizam al-Saudi'* was published in Virginia in 1982, and then published five more times. Kishk relied in his book on numerous British documents archived in London, and he aimed at discussing Saudi history since the time of Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab. He suggested the Islamic Sharia as a solution for all the issues Muslims faced, since Saudis, following this concept, had succeeded in establishing a modern state, free of foreign dependency. The book tackles the incidents that took place from 1902 to 1932, has marginal notes and new information, and represents a distinct Islamic political point of view.

John Townsend's *Proconsul to the Middle East: Sir Percy Cox and the End of Empire*, published in 2010, focuses on the Cox's role in the Middle East region, in the First World War, and in establishing the new Iraq. The author demonstrates the personal leadership of Sir Percy Cox and his importance, along with Ibn Saud, in controlling the Najd and Hejaz regions. However, the book provides no details of Ibn Saud's battles inside Najd and Hejaz, nor of his relations with the local princes.

Scott Anderson's *Lawrence in Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East* gives good coverage of familiar ground, outlining the political, diplomatic, military and economic drivers of imperial ambitions, as the Western allies plotted the dismantling of the Ottoman Empire. In telling this story, Anderson discusses the usual suspects: Mark Sykes, Henry McMahon, King Husayn, Faisal ibn Husayn, Lord Kitchener and a host of others. Of greater interest is the book's explanation of Lawrence's leading role in persuading the Arabs to fight the Ottomans. This book provides information for Chapter Three with respect to Lawrence's role in bringing down the Ottoman rule and its relationship to the Hashemites.

In his 1989 thesis, 'Saudi-British Diplomatic Relations, 1918-1920: The Khurmah dispute', Hussein Al-Zaydi explains the military and political aspects in the Najdi-Hijazi

conflict over the Oasis of Khurmah,<sup>32</sup> which contributed to the later creation of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The study deals with the years of dispute from 1918 to 1920, arguing that Britain played a major role in support of Hussein Ibn Ali, head of the Hashemite family, in his rule over Hijaz. His Najdi opponent, Ibn Saud, needed great diplomatic skills to avoid a dangerous confrontation with the British. As Al-Zaydi's period of study precedes that of the present study, his work presents an historical background to the events immediately leading up to those dealt with in this research.

In his 2001 thesis, entitled 'Saudi British Relations, 1939-1953', Aldamer Shafi presents the question of whether Saudi Arabia or Britain was responsible for the deteriorating relations between the two states. His work reflects another study, published in 2009 by Christopher M. Blanchard, on US-Saudi relations, which reveals that "Abd al-Aziz worked carefully to draw American political interests where private American economic interests were engaged."<sup>33</sup> Besides this, Shafi felt that it did not suggest that Saudi Arabia directly strengthened US-Saudi ties. Shafi also looks at how the deterioration of British-Saudi relations strengthened US-Saudi relations, as there is speculation that Saudi's relations with the US damaged those with Britain. This study was based on secondary data that was obtained largely from the National Archives in London.

In his 1968 doctoral dissertation, Mohammed Zayyan Al-Jazairi focuses mainly on the Saudi Arabian diplomatic relations, and the development of the Saudi Government, with a clear history of the al-Saud family from the migration period to the period of settlement. Al-Jazairi discusses the development of Saudi foreign policy in detail, with particular attention to issues such as the Yemeni problem with the Oman governorate, Buraimi. In the study, al-Jazairi reveals that the politico-religious alliance succeeded in the foundation of a strong state, as most

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<sup>32</sup> The Oasis of Khurmah is discussed in Obojski, R. 'Stamps and the History of the Hijaz', *Aramco World: Arab and Islamic Cultures Connections*, 30(5) (1979), pp. 6-7.

<sup>33</sup> Lacey, *Inside the Kingdom*, pp. 14-16

of the territories that were controlled by the first Wahhabi state were taken during the regime of Ibn-Saud. Another finding of note is how a tribal government structure developed into a modern government. Al-Jazairi concludes that Saudi Arabia maintains its relations with the West and the USA. He does not, however, mention the fate of British-Saudi relations. Also, according to Al-Jazairi, the British contacted Ibn Saud in 1915 and signed a treaty with him. They began by inducing him to rise above the Turks, as the British Government gave Ibn Saud privileges in Has'a, and it seemed that the annexation of Has'a provided him with a notable position in the region. This saw the inauguration of a diplomatic relationship between Ibn Saud and the British Government. Ibn Saud signed the Treaty of Darin with Britain to give him a strong position from which to promote British interests in the Gulf. However, these renewed relations between Saudi Arabia and Britain deteriorated again, leading to Britain bombing parts of Saudi Arabia. However, Saudi-US relations continued to get stronger, because there was mutual economic benefit in protecting both shipping convoys and the Arabian Gulf.

In various studies and publications, King Abd al-‘Azīz is regarded by the British as the most important political envoy in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. This is particularly the case in Ameen Rihani's 1927 study on the history of Najd, because he considered social and regional perspectives to be vital.<sup>34</sup> In his publication, translated by Mohamed Atif, Khaled al-Jeraisy states that King Abd al-‘Azīz used these relations for his own political gains. In particular, al-Jeraisy argues that the Treaty of Darin in 1915, between King Abd al-‘Azīz and Britain, helped the king manage the problems he was having with Kuwait. Despite supplying money and arms to King Abd al-‘Azīz, the Treaty did not change Britain's position in the Gulf. This was another tear in the deteriorating relations between Saudi and Britain.

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<sup>34</sup> Al-Rihani, *Tārīkh Najd*, p. 72.

In a separate 2004 study by Al-Kahtani,<sup>35</sup> the foreign policy of King Abd al-‘Azīz is put into perspective. In particular, he bases his study on the international relations of the merging Saudi state. He aims to provide a clear understanding of Abd al-‘Azīz’s process of making foreign policy. His main finding is that Saudi Arabia, as a young state, was not ready to handle the problems that existed in the implementation of its foreign policy. Al-Kahtani’s study is significant as it presents a comprehensive understanding of the entire reign of Abd al-‘Azīz, and all the relations within the period of his study, whereas previous studies have only covered earlier and modern periods, or have focused on Saudi bilateral relations.

G.M.M.A. Hagar presents a study of the emergence of Saudi Arabia, as well as the British presence in the Middle East.<sup>36</sup> As his data comes from the Public Records Office in London, Hagar’s information about the beginning of the relations between Britain and Saudi is similar to that of other scholars. He sets forth a chronology of events between 1926 and 1932, paying particular attention to the conduct and development of Britain’s relations with Saudi Arabia under Ibn Saud’s rule. His conclusions reveal that the situation in the interior of Saudi Arabia involved tribalism and religious fanaticism, leading to a war that diverted the British into this area. This benefitted Ibn Saud, as he was able to eliminate the factions in the interior easily, or put them under his rule, which he would not have been able to do if they had remained united. Furthermore, Hagar tackles the issue of Britain’s reluctance to offer financial assistance, arguing that the main concern of the British was business and investment rather than politics. The US was able to offer financial assistance, and thus strengthened its relations with Saudi while the relationship with Britain vanished.

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<sup>35</sup> Al-Kahtani, Mohammad Zaid, ‘The Foreign Policy of King Abdulaziz (1927-1953): A Study in the International Relations of an Emerging State’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Leeds, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Hagar, G.M.M.A., ‘Britain, her Middle East Mandates and the Emergence of Saudi-Arabia, 1926-1932: A Study on the Process of British Policy-making in the Conduct and Development of Britain’s Relations with Ibn Saud’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Keele, 1981).

A number of academic theses also informed this study, including George Ogden Linabury's 'British - Saudi Arabia relations, 1902-1927: A Revisionist Interpretation' at Columbia University from 1970, and Turkey Al-Kabeer's 1989 thesis, 'The Great Achievement (The Founding Of The Third Saudi State)'. Both of these study political, social and economic relations between Ibn Saud and Britain. They provide basic empirical information about Saudi-British relations, as well as Ibn Saud's relations with the neighbouring countries and his stance on the First World War. However, there appear to be contradictions in these studies, especially as they are overly reliant on Arabic sources and documents, so that they required corroboration from British, Saudi and Ottoman documents.

Sadiq Ali Sudani's, 'al-alaqat al-Iraqiyya al-Saudiyya, 1920-1931, derasa fi al-alaqat al-siyasiyya' [Iraqi-Saudi relations, 1920-1931, a study on the political relations], a master's thesis from the University of Baghdad in 1972, is valuable with respect to relations between Najd and Iraq, and the attitude of the British authorities in Baghdad towards them. It is also informative on the border issues, the conferences of Muhammarah, Uqair, Kuwait and Bahra, and the crisis revolving around the Busayyah police station in 1927. Nonetheless, the study represents a single viewpoint and still requires an investigation of the stances of the other parties that took part in the incidents.

T. Wahim's 'Mamlakat al-Hijaz, 1916-1925, derasa fi al-awda'a al-siyasiyyah' [The kingdom of Hijaz, 1916-1925, a study on the political situation] was awarded a master's degree from the University of Baghdad in 1977. The thesis tackles the emergence of Saudi Arabia, the internal developments the Kingdom had been through, and its foreign relations. It is valuable in terms of the relations between Najd and Hijaz, the stages through which the Saudi-Hashemite conflicts evolved, especially the armed conflict between 1924 and 1925, and the British stance on the conflicts. A similar study is Abdulaziz Al-Shebl's 'The Emergence and Demise of an

Independent Arab State: The Kingdom of Hijaz 1916-1925', a University of California doctoral thesis from 1988.

Khālid Maḥmūd Al-Sa'dūn's 1983 master's thesis, 'al-alaqat bayn Najd wa al-Kuwait, 1902-1922' [Najd-Kuwait relations, 1902-1922], uses both British documents and modern Arabic writings and is useful regarding Najd-Kuwait relations, Ibn Saud's relations with Britain during the First World War, and the role of Mubarak Al-Sabah in developing these relations.

Daniel Nolan Silverfarb's doctoral thesis, 'British Relations with Ibn Saud of Najd 1914-1919', from the University of Wisconsin in 1972 is valuable for understanding the development of Saudi-British relations in 1916-1918. It also refers to Philby's travels to Riyadh and to other British delegations, in addition to the appearance of Hussein bin Ali during the First World War as a pro-British power.

Linabury's 'British - Saudi Arabia Relation, 1902-1927' is a significant thesis as it shows an important aspect of Saudi-British relations during the Al-Khurma dispute and the First World War, in addition to Ibn Saud's relations with Hussein and the British attitude towards them. However, the thesis discusses the issues from one point of view, without any Arabic source. It also talks about Saudi-British relations without any reference to the reasons behind Ibn Saud's alliance with Britain.

Gary Troeller's *The British of Saudi Arabia: Britain and the Rise the House of Saud*, published in 2013, is helpful in terms of Saudi-British relations between 1902 and 1925, and the Treaty of Darin (1915). It also aids understanding of relations between Hussein and Ibn Saud relations, and the border negotiations between Najd and its neighbouring powers. Troeller relies in his study on some British documents, and the study represents a British viewpoint on the political situation.

Among the Arabic sources is Sulaymān Mūsá's 'al-hrkah 'arab'iyah: 'Imarhalah Alūlá al-nahḍah 'arab'iyah 'lhaditha 1908-1924' [The Arab movement: the first stage of the modern

Arab renaissance 1908-1924], a doctoral dissertation from 1977. Mousa bases his study on British documents and personal papers and memos. The study covers an important period of the history of the Arab movement during and after the First World War, and the British role in the incidents that the region faced. It is useful regarding the relationship and conflicts between Hussein and Ibn Saud, and the British attitude towards them.

There is valuable material in the articles and lectures published by the *Journal of The Royal Central Asian Society*, a society for the British experts and politicians who are concerned with the affairs of the Middle East and areas under British influence in Asia. The society published in its periodical the suggestions and opinions of people relevant to his study, including Ameen Rihani, Hafiz Wahba, Philby and others.

In an article by Gerd Nonneman in the *Journal of International Affairs*, a theoretical line of thought is adopted in analysing the pattern of policy making that led to significant autonomy in Saudi Arabia. He presents the key themes in Saudi Arabia's foreign policy towards relations with Europe. Among the themes he lists are geopolitical balancing, acquisition of economic resources, religious and political ideology, and political survival.

The relationship between Britain and Saudi Arabia can be attributed to the leadership of the Saudi Kingdom. According to John Paul Jones,<sup>37</sup> the action of any leader is judged in relation to its context. The complexity of the international community and its interdependence is characterised by cultural diversity. Therefore, King Abd al-'Aziz should have embraced as many qualities as the Saudi citizens as a whole needed. Michael Klare<sup>38</sup> writes about the consequences of over-dependence on US financial aid in *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Petroleum Dependency*. Although the relationship between the Saudis and British vanished, it may have been a blessing to the British economic

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<sup>37</sup> Jones, John Paul, *If Olaya Street Could Talk: Saudi Arabia - The Heartland of Oil and Islam* (Albuquerque: Taza, 2007). p.89.

<sup>38</sup> Klare, Michael, *Blood and Oil: The Dangers and Consequences of America's Growing Petroleum Dependency* (New York: Metropolitan, 2004).

sector, as the USA's dependence on oil makes it vulnerable to any regional instability or changes within the foreign policies of Saudi Arabia.<sup>39</sup> Klare states that relations between most other countries and Saudi Arabia have been paralysed by terrorism, which can be seen with the British, who were among the first to experience the hostility that was evident in the Gulf War. The Ottoman presence in the Persian Gulf is an example of the over-suspicion that led to the reaction to the British presence.<sup>40</sup>

According to Saleh Al-Nowaiser,<sup>41</sup> the study of Saudi Arabian foreign policy suffers from various limitations, among which is the fact that nearly all studies are more descriptive than analytical, as well as narrow and outdated. He argues that, due to this, studies of Saudi-British relations are unable to contribute to the study of unequal relationships between developed and developing countries. Al-Nowaiser cites as examples studies by Fred Halliday,<sup>42</sup> Husayn Abdullah Al-Amri,<sup>43</sup> James Anthony,<sup>44</sup> and Hafiz Wahbah.<sup>45</sup> According to Al-Nowaiser, none of these studies explain Saudi policy-making, but are instead general studies of Saudi relations. He does, however, suggest alternative studies that provide meaningful insights into aspects of Saudi Arabia's foreign policy. These include those by Madani, Nizar Obaid,<sup>46</sup> Adeed Dawisha,<sup>47</sup> D.E. Long,<sup>48</sup> and James Piscatori.<sup>49</sup> Finally, Al-Nowaiser states

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<sup>39</sup> Jones, *If Olaya Street Could Talk*, p.121.

<sup>40</sup> Al-Mhaidib, A.A. I. *From the Life of King Abdul-Aziz* (Riyadh: al-Tajaari Press, 1979).

<sup>41</sup> Al-Nowaiser, Saleh, 'Saudi-British Relations During the Period 1915-1991' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Reading, 2004).

<sup>42</sup> Halliday, Fred, *Arabia Without Sultans: A Survey of Political Instability in the Arab World*, (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1975).

<sup>43</sup> Al-Amri, Husayn Abdullah, *Towards Understanding Saudi Foreign Policy in Saudi Arabia and its Place in the World* (Washington: Three Continents Publishers, 1979).

<sup>44</sup> Anthony, James. 'Foreign Policy: The View From Riyadh', *Wilson Quarterly*, 1979.

<sup>45</sup> Wahbah, Hāfiz. *Ayyām Arabīyah* (Bīyrūt, A. Barker, 1964).

<sup>46</sup> Madani, Nizar Obaid., 'The Islamic Content of the Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia. King Faisal's Call for Islamic Solidarity' (PhD dissertation, The American University at Washington, DC. 1977).

<sup>47</sup> Dawisha, Adeed, 'Internal Values and External Threats: The Making of Saudi Foreign Policy', *Orbis*, 23.1 (1979), pp. 129-143.

<sup>48</sup> Long, D. E. 'Saudi Arabia,' *The Washington Paper*, 5:39 (Washington, DC: Sage Publishing Co. 1976).

<sup>49</sup> Piscatori, James, 'Islamic Values and National Interests: The Foreign Policy of Saud Arabia', in *Islam in Foreign Policy*, Adeed. Dawisha, ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983).

that the main vulnerabilities of Saudi Arabia were its dependency on oil exports and its geopolitical challenges.

Other useful journal articles include Abdullah Mohammad Sindi's 'Britain and the Rise of Wahhabism and the House of Saud', John Calabrese's 'The United States, Great Britain, and the Middle East: How special the Relationship?', Arnold J. Toynbee's 'A Problem of Arabian Statesmanship', and Halford L. Hoskins' 'Background of the British Position in Arabia'. Some authors highlight Ibn Saud's role in establishing the Saudi state and his alliance with Great Britain, which took his side and helped him. These articles are useful in understanding the British writers' points of view towards Ibn Saud, in addition to Wahhabism's role in establishing the Saudi state, alongside that of Ibn Saud.

Two articles focusing on Shakespear's role and his attitude towards Ibn Saud, Jacob Goldberg's 'Captain Shakespear and Ibn Saud: A Balanced Reappraisal' and Douglas Carruthers' 'Captain Shakespear's Last Journey', are particularly useful in relation to the Treaty of Darin.

Other papers include Moinuddin Ahmed Khan's and Harford Jones' 'A Diplomat's Report on Wahhabism of Arabia', Lewis Pelly's 'A Visit to the Wahabee Capital, Central Arabia', and Joseph A. Kéchichian's 'Succession in Saudi Arabia'.<sup>50</sup> These studies are concerned with the role of Wahhabism in the establishment of the Saudi state, and mention the reasons behind calling Wahhabism by this name. They help to clarify some questions with regard to the emergence of Wahhabism, the difference between Wahhabism and Ikhwan, and also, importantly, the British stance on Wahhabism.

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<sup>50</sup> Pelly, Lewis, 'A Visit to the Wahhabi Capital, Central Arabia', *Journal of the Royal Geographical Society of London*, 35.1 (1865), pp. 169-191.

## **The study**

The objectives of this research are to present the reasons for and results of the alliance-building process between Britain and Ibn Saud from 1902 to 1932. It seeks to establish why Ibn Saud wanted to become an ally of Britain, and why Britain chose not to ally itself with the other Arab countries, the Hashemites or Ibn Rashid. Furthermore, it asks why Britain recognized Ibn Saud as ruler of Najd and Has'a, signed the Treaty of Darin, sought to satisfy him and granted him such privileges as monthly aid and arms support. It also explores Ibn Saud's relations with the Ottoman Empire during the same period.

The research seeks to understand Ibn Saud's support for the Ikhwan, as it emerged as a force with which to be reckoned, and what its role was in the establishment of Saudi Arabia. Issues include Ibn Saud's reasons for taking over Ibn Rashid's city, Ha'il, and for eliminating the Ikhwan, surprising given its assistance in that take-over, and the exacerbation of the conflict between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein. Similarly, Britain's stance on these developments, and its role in signing treaties and pacts between the neighbouring powers, are of interest.

The research relies primarily on British and Arabic sources and documents. This allows a number of further issues to be considered, such as why King Abd al-'Aziz was so keen to win Britain's favour during this period by presenting an understanding of the British position towards the King's expansion and conquest, establishing the interests of Britain in the Arabian Peninsula during this time, and how allying with King Abd al-'Aziz helped it to achieve such goals. In doing so, the study maps the diplomatic strategies used for the continuation of this relationship. Furthermore, the study looks to a wider context, presenting a deeper understanding of the relationship between King Abd al-'Aziz and the Ottoman Empire and other powers in Hijaz, Has'a and Najd, and with al-Rashid.

In order to address the main questions, related issues are considered throughout the study, beginning with the actual context of the relationship between Britain and Saudi Arabia

during the First World War. This leads to the question of the relationship between Ibn Saud and the Hashemite family, and in turn to the role this security played in the relationship between Britain and Saudi Arabia. Next, the extent of Britain's support for King Abd al-'Azīz in his annexation of Hijaz is considered, along with the part played by the British financial support, monthly and annually, in determining the relationship between both parties. The study considers the reason for the British Government's recognition of the rule of King Abd al-'Azīz in Najd and Hijaz, and how and why Britain and King Abd al-'Azīz built their alliances in the pertinent period of 1902-1932.

Finally, the thesis explains the pragmatic strategies of both parties in building a modern Saudi Arabian state, the role of the Ottoman Empire in making Ibn Saud a king, and the relationship between King Abd al-'Azīz and the actors within Hijaz, Has'a, Najd and al-Rashid.

### **The question**

This study considers the influence of British Foreign policy in the Middle East on the relationship between Britain and Saudi Arabia. In particular, it looks at how this relationship evolved and changed over time, and how Britain has been involved in Saudi policy formation since 1920.

### **The arguments**

This dissertation challenges some of the common misconceptions that exist concerning the vision of Ibn Saud's and his motives for expanding his rule. As an example, Ibn Saud experienced difficulties with the maintenance of his rule, the expansion of the army and the provision of inducements to supporters. This research has demonstrated the influence of these challenges on the expansion of Saudi Arabia, lessening its ties to the ideology of Wahhabism and emphasising the necessity of maintaining economic and political security. In addition, the

research concludes that Britain supported Ibn Saud because of its own concerns about competition and the security of the region. Britain sought to preserve its own political interests around the Gulf, gain access to the region's economic resources, and assume control of the waterways of the Gulf. Consequently, Britain had to develop a good relationship with Ibn Saud, as the region's pre-eminent political figure. Ibn Saud made use of both politics and religion to stabilise his regime, which had the effect of tying belief and patriotism more closely together. Similarly, he combined reforms in the social and religious spheres with his political control, so developing a distinctive nation. He established schools, settled Bedouin nomads and organised the army. So, whilst Ibn Saud assumed control of much of the Arabian Peninsula under the banner of Islam, aided by the Ikhwan, his motivation had more to do with economic and political pragmatism than ideology.

Britain's interests in the Middle East revolved around the oil economy in 1922. Its interests in regional stability came about in order to enhance trading opportunities. Britain initiated the relationship to establish British companies in Saudi Arabia in order to share and exploit their resources through mutual economically beneficial agreements. Known as the Union of Eastern Companies and General, it was represented in the Middle East by Major Frank Holmes in 1925. Britain became the dominant power in the Gulf region, and transformed business interests into colonial possessions. It was in the interest of Britain to protect Ibn Saud and the recognition of his authority, but not to allow Ibn Saud to establish relations with any other country, in exchange for granting Britain oil privileges. But the company did not find oil, and Ibn Saud instead granted concessions to US companies.

## **Methodology**

The study is based on various sources, especially unpublished British documents that are particularly important to show the region's history. This includes British documents in the

Public Records Office and the Foreign Office in London, as they contain reports of politicians and reports on the Arab tribes' affairs, trade, and other issues. It also makes use of the documents of the India Office Records and Library (I.O.R) that discuss the Saudi state during Abdulaziz bin Saud's rule (1902-1932), in addition to the documents of the British National Archives. There is a particular focus on the Arabic documents in the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives, King Abdulaziz Public Library and the King Faisal Center for Research and Strategic Studies in Riyadh. The relevant Ottoman documents and related topics are also encompassed.

### **Structure of the thesis**

Chapter One considers the emergence of the Saudi State, from 1902 to 1909 when the Third Saudi State was established by Ibn Saud, who unified the various tribes, Sheikhs and emirates of the Arabian Peninsula.

Chapter Two looks at the control of al-Hasa and the period of direct contact with Britain, from 1910 to 1916. It examines the annexation of al-Hasa, Ibn Saud's relationship with the Ottomans, and the role of Captain William Henry Shakespear in the evolution of Anglo-Saudi relations.

Chapter Three discusses the complex and evolving relationship between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein at a crucial stage for the foundation of the new state, 1917-1921, together with the role of Britain in that relationship.

Chapter Four considers Saudi-British diplomatic relations in the period 1922-1925, including the transfer of its allegiance from Sharif Hussein to Ibn Saud.

Chapter Five continues the story of Saudi-British Relations up to 1932. Ibn Saud was able to consolidate his rule (although the Ikhwan caused numerous problems on the Iraqi-Najdi borders) and concentrated his international gaze on Britain, as a world power in a dominant

position in the Middle East. In turn, Britain supported Ibn Saud because he represented the largest force in the Arabian Peninsula after the annexation of Hijaz, which made him a focus of world attention.

The Conclusion then presents the findings of the study, and summarises its unique contributions, together with the limitations of the research.

## Chapter One: The Emerging Saudi State, 1902–1909

### 1.1. Introduction

This chapter provides a history of the emergence of modern Saudi Arabia, focusing in particular on the period between 1902 and 1909, when the Third Saudi State was established by Ibn Saud, who unified the various tribes, Sheikhs and emirates of the Arabian Peninsula. The Al Saud family is analysed from the mid-eighteenth century to the present day, in order to understand the context in which the Third Saudi State emerged and why the Sultanate of Najd was chosen by Ibn Saud as the centre of the new state. In addition, Britain's interest in the Gulf region is discussed in terms of its economic aspects, in order to understand why Britain considered it so necessary to establish close relations with the rulers of this area. The history of the Al-Saud family is divided into three historical periods: the First Saudi State (1745–1818), the Second Saudi State (1822–1891), and the Third Saudi State (1902–present), which was established by Abd al-Aziz bin Saud and named the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in 1932.<sup>51</sup> The origins of the Al-Saud family can be traced back to the great grandfather, Mani Al-Mraydi,<sup>52</sup> who resided in the town of Droh in Qatif,<sup>53</sup> which conceded Mulaybid and Ghusayba near Diriyah to him because of the poor quality of life and poverty that they were suffering for the first time in the town. His family resided there from 1446 onwards, later expanding to govern other locations until the family established an independent emirate.<sup>54</sup>

Control of the Arabian Gulf region was under dispute between British and Ottoman forces. Muhammad Ali Pasha, made Wali of Egypt by the Ottoman Empire, sent Ibrahim Pasha

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<sup>51</sup> Gary, Matthew, *Global Security Watch – Saudi Arabia*, (Oxford: Praeger, 2014, p.5); Al-Ziydīy. Mufid, *Mūsū't Tārīkh almamlakah al'arabīyah alsu 'ūdīyah l-ḥadīth aw al-mu'āšir*, ('amman, dār 'sāmah liI nashr aw lil taūzay', 2004), p.13.

<sup>52</sup> Mani' bin Rabi'ah al-Muraydi was said to have come from Qatif and founded the settlement of al-Dir'iyah a few miles north of the present-day capital of Riyadh, in 1446–1447, Peterson, *Historical Dictionary* p.128.

<sup>53</sup> Droh is a town in Has'a that was inhabited by Da'r bin Rabia during the twelfth century (Khaz'1. Ḥussīn, *Ḥaiyāt al-shīkh Moḥammed 'bn 'bd alwhāb*, (Bīyrūt: Mṭb't dār al-kutub, 1968), p. 149).

<sup>54</sup> Peterson, *Historical Dictionary*, p.128.

to Darya'h to eliminate the rule of Saud in 1818. Subsequently, the area became the Has'a region and Najd fell under Ottoman rule.

Abdullah Ibn Faisal ruled the Second Saudi State in 1865, during which time he formed an alliance with Midhat Pasha of Baghdad, who agreed to join the Empire and observe its rules, which were reinforced in the Arabian Gulf and Red Sea regions. This contributed to the Ottoman conquest of the Has'a province in 1871, where it planned to prevent the expansion of the British forces in the region.<sup>55</sup> The overall nature of the Ottoman–Saudi relationship in the period between 1871 and 1918 was one of mistrust and simmering conflict, periodically erupting in violence. In 1888, when Riyadh fell into the hands of Ibn Rashid, the Ottomans rejoiced. The Ottoman Sultan Abdul Hamid sent gifts to Ibn Rashid and certain tribes to ensure their loyalty to him.<sup>56</sup> During that time, the Ottomans intensified their military campaigns against Ibn Saud to force him to give full loyalty to the Empire. Although they tried to win over Ibn Saud to establish their presence in Najd and Hijaz, they failed, which coincided with the general disintegration of their authority.

## **1.2. The creation of a dynasty**

In 1682, Emir Mohammed bin Muqrin bin Markhan,<sup>57</sup> the grandson of Mani Al-Mraydi and the prince of the Najd Sultanate, claimed Diriyah<sup>58</sup> as its capital. It remained so until an agreement between his grandson, Muhammad bin Saud, and Muhammad bin Abdul Wahhab, in 1745, which led to the beginning of the First Saudi State. During his rule, Muhammad bin

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<sup>55</sup> Kirk, George E, *A Short History of Middle East*, (London: Methuen, 1955), p.71.

<sup>56</sup> Al-Zīyāḍī, *Mūsū'at Tārīkh almamlakah*, p.13.

<sup>57</sup> Mohammed bin Saud bin Mohammed bin Muqrin bin Rabia bin Markhan bin Ibrahim bin Musa bin Rabia bin Mani Al-Mraydi Al-Dari Al-Yazidi Al-Waeli. This family can be traced back to tribal Bani Hanifa Allowailah inhabitants of this valley and its people from two thousand years ago. Born in the late seventeenth century, he took the Emirate of Diriyah in 1726. (Jarydt al-Rjād, Trāth, 02 February 2006, Al'dd 13843, <http://www.alriyadh.com/155574>).

<sup>58</sup> The village of al-Dir'iyah was founded in southern Najd by Mani' bin Rabi'ah, and Muhammad bin Sa'ud bin Muqrin became the first independent Saudi Ruler of al-Dir'iyah. (Peterson, *Historical Dictionary* p.xx; Khaz'1, *Haiyāt al-shīkh Moḥammed*, p152.

Abdul Wahhab emerged<sup>59</sup> in Al-'Uyaynah,<sup>60</sup> near Diriyah. Both Ibn Saud and Ibn Abd ul Wahhab managed to expand their influence and eliminate their opponents. In Diriyah, it was agreed that Ibn Saud would be accountable for expansion and conquests, and Ibn Abdul Wahhab for the propagation of religion. Sheikh Mohammed was under the protection of Muhammad bin Saud, who was able to take control of a number of nearby regions, such as Harimlae and Shaqra,<sup>61</sup> as their state stretched from Has'a in the east to Hijaz in the west, and from Asir in the south to Ha'il in the north.<sup>62</sup> The agreement between the two men in Diriyah in 1745 marked the beginning of a new era in the Salafi and Wahhabi movements.<sup>63</sup> Delegates from different emirates and tribes arrived in Diriyah, whose Emir and citizens were already supporters of the Wahhabi movement. Many historians<sup>64</sup> believe that, because of the spread of polytheism throughout the Arabian Peninsula, the Sheikh was invited to return the people to the right path, so that Diriyah quickly became the religious and political capital of the new state. Diriyah entered a new phase in its history when it started confronting other emirates and tribes. This period of confrontation led to the establishment of the Saudi State and witnessed the expansion of Ibn Saud's influence in Najd, as the new state managed to annex the villages and towns one after another, by both peaceful negotiations and violent conquest.

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<sup>59</sup> The emergence of Sheikh in Al-'Uyaynah, but Uthman ibn Muammar (Amir Al-'Uyaynah) dismissed existence al sheikh with him, and expelled him, went al sheikh to Diriyah ('Abd Allāh al-Ṣāliḥ 'Uthaymīn, *Muḥammad ibn Abd al-Wahhāb: the man and his works* (Riyadh, Dārat al-Malik 'Abd al-'Azīz, 2009), p.114).

<sup>60</sup> Preacher Muhammad ibn Abdul Wahhab (1703–1791) had many opponents inside and outside Najd. He moved to Diriyah and gained the support of the Emir Muhammad Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud agreed to spread Islam in Najd and to protect Ibn Abdul Wahhab, who promised to stay in Diriyah to spread the 'true' principles of Islam. Therefore, some historians call the Saudi State the 'Wahhabi state' (Al-Zīyādī, *Tārīkh almamlakah*, p.12; Al-Rasheed, Madawi, *A History of Saudi Arabia* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.17.)

<sup>61</sup> Cooper, Lee D., 'Travelers' accounts as a source for the study of Nineteenth-Century Wahhabism', MA in History, Department of Oriental Studies, (University of Arizona, 1984), p.60.

<sup>62</sup> Darūish. Madīḥh, *tārīkh al-dawlah al-su'ūdīyah ḥtiy al-Rub' al'ūl min al-qarn al-'shrīn* (Bīyrūt: Dār al-Shrūq, 2007), p.14.

<sup>63</sup> It was named 'Wahhabi' after Abd al-Wahhab. Some scholars call it Salafi, while the supporters of the movement call themselves Hanbalis, Muahhids, or Salafis.

<sup>64</sup> Rentz, George S., *Muhammed Ibn Abd al-Wahhab (1703–1792) and the Beginnings of the Unitarian Empire in Arabia* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1948), p.14; Margoliouth. D.S., 'Wahhabiya', *Shorter Encyclopaedia of Islam* (Leiden, B.J. Brill, 1953), p.618; Al-Juhany, Uwaidah, 'The History of Najd Prior to the Wahhabis, A Study of Social, Political and Religious Conditions in Najd During Three Centuries', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Washington, 1983, p.79.

The first Saudi phase defeated a series of opponents, including Dham bin Dawwas, Emir of Riyadh, Ibn Muammar in Al-'Uyaynah, Ibn Odwan in Huraimla, and Zaid bin Zamil in al-Kharj. It also assumed control of regions such al-Washm, Sudair, al-Qassim, Has'a and Ha'il, until it reached Hijaz and the southern parts of the Peninsula.<sup>65</sup> The Saudi rulers not only annexed the internal parts of the country, but also reached Qatar and al-Zbara. The leader of the Saudi forces, Fahd bin Sulaiman bin Ofisan, took control of Bahrain and assigned his brother, Ibrahim bin Ofisan, as Emir. However, Al Khalifa<sup>66</sup> and the rulers of Masqat and Utub returned to reclaim their lands, and subsequently expelled the Saudi-endorsed Emir.<sup>67</sup>

The period 1805–1811 witnessed a number of attacks along the Mesopotamia border, as Saud Ibn Abduaziz Ibn Mohammed reached Karbala and sacked the city through a series of significant battles, and the Saudi forces moved to Najaf. Emir Ibn Saud was killed by an Iraqi man while he was praying in the Grand Mosque in Diriyah in 1805.<sup>68</sup> Following this, the First Saudi State fell into the hands of Egyptian forces in 1818, under the leadership of Ibrahim Pasha, an event that formed part of the Ottoman Empire's aims to restore control over the Two Holy Mosques. Thus, the Empire assigned its governor in Egypt, Muhammad Ali Pasha, to guide a military campaign to restore Najd and Hijaz by eliminating the Saudi influence, after the governors of Baghdad and Damascus failed to do so. Through a series of campaigns between 1811 and 1818, Muhammad Ali Pasha defeated the Saudi State and razed Diriyah to the ground.<sup>69</sup> As Abdullah bin Saud, the last ruler of the First Saudi State, surrendered to Ibrahim Pasha, the tribes declared allegiance to the Pasha, while those who refused to comply fled to Yemen and Oman. Ibrahim Pasha also committed crimes against the people and emirs,

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<sup>65</sup> Al-Ziyādy, *Tārīkh al-mamlakah*, p.17.

<sup>66</sup> The Al Khalifa family of the Onzah tribe lived in Najd and then settled on the Arabian Gulf. The first of their rulers was Khalifa bin Mohammed in 1701 (Al-Khalifa, Sheikh Abdullah bin Khalid, and Rice, Michael, *Bahrain through the Ages: The History* (New York: Routledge, 2014), p.332.

<sup>67</sup> Wynbrandt, James, *A Brief History of Saudi Arabia*, Second Edition, (York PA: Facts on File, 2010), p.147.

<sup>68</sup> Al-Mukhtār, Salāh Al-dīn, *Tārīkh Al-Mamlakah Al-'rābiyah Al-Sa'ūdīh* (Biyūt: Dār Maktbt Al-Hīyah, 1998), p. 54.

<sup>69</sup> Al-Rīhānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, pp.91–92.

and sent a number of captives to Cairo and Istanbul in an effort to expel the people of Najd from the country. He also demolished Diriyah, Al-Saud's palace, and the walls of other cities to prevent their resistance.<sup>70</sup>

As Ibrahim Pasha finished the campaign against the Saudi State, he withdrew to Hijaz and then to Egypt in 1819, leaving Najd behind in chaos after being forced by the British to withdraw. Mohammad bin Mushari bin Muammar and Abdulaziz bin Muhammad bin Saud left Diriyah after it fell into the hands of Ibrahim Pasha, and settled in Al-'Uyaynah. However, when Ibrahim Pasha withdrew from Najd, Ibn Muammar reconsidered the idea of establishing a state in the region, especially since he was connected to Al-Saud by kinship, had the financial resources to do so, and the region was open for a new leader. Ibn Muammar chose Diriyah to be the base for a new state, as it had a special place in the hearts of the people of Najd. He reached Diriyah in 1818 to attempt to rebuild the city, calling upon the tribes' leaders to pledge allegiance. However, some of the people of Najd refused to recognize him and began negotiations with the leaders of the Bani Khalid<sup>71</sup> to eliminate him.<sup>72</sup>

Majed bin 'Urayir and his followers went to Najd and reached Riyadh, while those allied with al-Kharj and Huraimla joined him. Ibn Muammar tried not to oppose the allegiance and sent them gifts. Since Ibn 'Urayir was under the Ottoman Sultan's rule, he went back to his country. Ibn Muammar became popular in Najd, and those who had left Diriyah during the clashes with Pasha – including Turki bin Abdullah bin Muhammad Al-Saud and his brother Zaid, who originally helped Ibn Muammar – returned to it. The towns of Najd fell under the control of Ibn Muammar, marking the re-establishment of the Saudi State. However, when Mishari bin Saud escaped Egypt in 1820, and travelled through Medina, Yanbu and al-Washm

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<sup>70</sup> Al-Zīdy, *Tārīkh al-mamlakah*, p.34.

<sup>71</sup> Bani Khalid, one of the oldest and historically most important tribes of Arabia that ousted the Ottomans from eastern Arabia in the mid-seventeenth century and ruled much of the Gulf littoral until superseded in Kuwait by the Al Sabah in the eighteenth century and in Has'a by the Al Sa'ud in the nineteenth century (Peterson, *Historical Dictionary*, p.80).

<sup>72</sup> Al-Rasheed, *History of Saudi Arabia*, p.23.

accompanied by his supporters from the towns of Najd, eventually arriving in Diriyah, Ibn Muammar had no option but to step down.<sup>73</sup> Mishari bin Saud was named ruler but Ibn Muammar did not show allegiance, instead assembling his supporters and appealing to Ibn Saud in Diriyah. Following this, Ibn Muammar arrested Ibn Saud and sent him to Sodous before travelling to Riyadh and assuming control of it.<sup>74</sup>

Turki bin Abdullah Al-Saud (who ruled from 1820 to 1833) did not remain neutral in events involving Ibn Muammar. He claimed and supported Mishari bin Saud as the legitimate ruler, but when Ibn Muammar betrayed him – by killing Mishari bin Saud – Abdullah killed Ibn Muammar in retaliation. He went to Diriyah, arrested Ibn Muammar and assumed control himself, thus marking the establishment of the Second Saudi State, of which Riyadh was established as the capital in 1820.<sup>75</sup> However, the internal conflict within the Al-Saud family weakened them, ultimately ruining their state and leading to the emergence of the Al Rashid family, the rulers of the Emirate of Jabal Shammar, who eventually assumed control of the country. Abd al-Rahman bin Faisal, Abd al-Aziz's father (who ruled Najd from 1889 to 1891), tried to defend the family's capital, but the defeat of Abd al-Rahman in al-Qassim by Ibn Rashid in the Battle of Mulayda (1891) ultimately prevented this. According to Rihani and Zaidi,<sup>76</sup> Abd al-Rahman Al-Faisal asked permission to journey through Has'a; he remained between Has'a and Qatar for seven months before travelling to Kuwait, but the Sheikh of Kuwait declined his request to settle there. Following this, in 1891, he travelled back to the desert and spent several months in the al-'Ajman lands before moving to Qatar and staying there for a month until he agreed with the Ottoman Empire to reside in Kuwait in 1892. The Ottoman Empire sent the governor of Has'a to negotiate with Ibn Saud, who accepted the

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<sup>73</sup> Alenazy, Asker H. *The Creation of Saudi Arabia, Ibn Saud and British Imperial Policy, 1914–1927* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2010), p.10.

<sup>74</sup> Al-'Uthaymīn, *Tārīkh al-mamlakah*, p.211.

<sup>75</sup> Howarth, David, *The Desert King: A Life of Ibn Saud* (London: Quartet Books, 1980), p.11.

<sup>76</sup> Al-Rīhānī, *Tārīkh Najd* p.75; Al-Zīydy, *Tārīkh al-mamlakah*, p.58.

invitation to remain in Kuwait with his family under the Al-Sabah family's protection, and receive a monthly stipend of sixty pounds. Because the Al Saud family were homeless after being driven from Najd, Ibn Saud asked the Ottoman Government for permission to go to Kuwait, to which they agreed.

According to Wahba and Armstrong,<sup>77</sup> the Ottoman Sultan contacted the Sheikh of Kuwait, Mohammad Sabah, and convinced him to invite Ibn Saud to reside with his family in Kuwait, which raises important questions about the precise reasons motivating the Emir of Kuwait to provide sanctuary for the Al Saud family in his country. One possible answer is that, due to Al Saud's close relationship with the Ottomans, the Kuwaiti Emir could not refuse the request. However, Wahba's perspective seems more accurate, as he argues that the Ottoman Empire enjoyed the competition for control between the two powers in Najd, especially as both powers recognized the rule of the Empire. The Ottomans also wanted to maintain a good relationship with Ibn Saud and to ensure that both powers could be used as a means of exerting pressure on the rulers of Ha'il in case they tried to revolt against the Empire.<sup>78</sup> Turkish officials made an arrangement with Ibn Saud through the Sheikh of Kuwait, thus avoiding direct contact with Ibn Saud, while still providing him with a safe place to stay, excellent living conditions and a stable income.<sup>79</sup>

In 1902, the year in which the Third Saudi State first emerged, the conditions were ripe for Ibn Saud bin Abdul Rahman bin Faisal Al-Saud (1880–1953) to restore the rule of Riyadh. Ibn Saud was only eleven years old when his father decided to stay in Kuwait after having left Riyadh in 1891. Ibn Saud stayed in Kuwait for 10 years, where he learned about the Bedouin life and political affairs. This experience prepared him for the task of restoring his family's rule

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<sup>77</sup> Wahbah, *Ayyām Arabīyah*, p.123; Armstrong, H.C., *Lord of Arabia* (Riyadh, King Abdulaziz Foundation, 2005), p.34.

<sup>78</sup> L/P&S/20FO12 (1), 22/03/1902, Letter from Albert Wratislaw, British Consul in Basra to Nicholas O'Conor, British Ambassador in Constantinople.

<sup>79</sup> Myshān, Jacques Banu, *'abdal-'ziz bin Sa'ūd sīrat baṭal wa mawlid al-mamlaka*, tarjmh: 'bdalfatāh yāsīn (Bīyrūt: Dar alketāb al'rbī, 1966), p.51; IOR/ R/15/473(3), 20/04/1901, Report from Arnold Kemball.

(1902–1932). In September 1932, he announced the establishment of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and worked to build the state until he died in 1953.<sup>80</sup> The new Saudi ruler was raised in Kuwait, and it was here that he decided to accept the responsibility of reclaiming the rule of his nation from the Al Rashid family, a decision that would change the geopolitical map of the region. While living under the stewardship of Sheikh Mubarak, Ibn Saud developed his political views, while his attendance at Mubarak's negotiations with British, German and Ottoman representatives was hugely influential in the creation of his own diplomatic identity. For this reason, Kuwait is considered Ibn Saud's political school.<sup>81</sup>

During this period, Ibn Saud studied Sheikh Mubarak's activities and learned about the country's affairs, in particular the events between 1883 and 1901, and how Kuwait became a British protectorate in 1899 under the Anglo-Kuwaiti agreement.<sup>82</sup> On 22 January 1899, an agreement was signed between Mubarak Al-Sabah and the British Government (represented by Colonel Malcolm John Meade, the Political Resident in the Gulf). The agreement stipulated that Kuwait would be under British protection; Mubarak Al-Sabah committed not to sell, lease, mortgage or give any part of its territory away without the approval of the British Government.<sup>83</sup>

Mubarak Al-Sabah had several motives for signing this agreement. Firstly, Sheikh Jassim Al-Thani of Qatar had signed a Treaty with Ibn Rashid that put the Kuwaiti borders under threat from the expansion of Ibn Rashid's rule. There was also a constant threat from the Ottomans, as their forces occupied the islands of Warba and Bubiyan.<sup>84</sup> In addition, there was

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<sup>80</sup> Gary, *Global Security*, p.6.

<sup>81</sup> Wagner, Heather, *Saudi Arabia (Creation of the Modern Middle East)* (New York: Chelsea House, 2009), p.29.

<sup>82</sup> Sheikh Mubarak decided to sign the British protection agreement to get rid of the Ottoman influence against his country as well as the threat imposed by his cousins on his rule. On 22 January 1899, Sheikh Mubarak and the British Resident in Kuwait, Malcolm John Meade, signed the agreement. Some of the stated conditions were that the Kuwaiti ruler could not sell or rent any part of his lands without British permission; the British government had to protect Kuwait from any assault; and the rule of Kuwait was reserved to Mubarak al-Sabah's offspring (Al-Hātm. *'Abd Allāh, min hunā bd.t alkuwwūt* (Kuwait: Maṭba'at al-'umh, 1962), p.232).

<sup>83</sup> IOR/R/15/1/472, File:53/6 (D2), Kuwait Affairs 1889–1899.

<sup>84</sup> Walīd Ḥillī, *al-'Irāq: al-wāqi' wa-āfāq al-mustaqbal* (Baghdād: Dār al-Furāt, 1992), p.365.

Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah's desire to make Kuwait a regional power. Mubarak Al-Sabah sought an agreement with the British Government to prevent German, Russian and French ambitions<sup>85</sup> to take control of Kuwait because of its strategic location. When Mubarak signed the Treaty, it angered the Ottoman Government, which was able to gather forces around Basra to attack Mubarak al-Sabah, but the British Government came to Mubarak's defence.<sup>86</sup>

It would therefore seem to be the case that the Anglo-Kuwait agreement gave Mubarak Al-Sabah strength in his negotiations with other powers, such as the Ottoman Empire, Imperial Russia, Germany and France. They would not encroach on Kuwaiti territory for fear of a British response. In addition, Mubarak Al-Sabah could assist Ibn Saud in his campaign to restore Riyadh. The alliance with Britain strengthened Kuwaiti power in the region. As Kuwait allied with Al Saud in an attempt to reclaim its lands from Al Rashid, the latter allied with the Ottoman Empire. Mubarak Al-Sabah helped Ibn Saud in his campaign to restore Riyadh, his grandparents' land, from the rule of Ibn Rashid,<sup>87</sup> who sought support from the High Poste,<sup>88</sup> claiming that the Shammar<sup>89</sup> was under his rule. He also called upon the Ottoman Empire to support him, which exerted pressure on the Sheikh of Kuwait to end his support of Ibn Saud. Despite this, the Ottomans' efforts proved futile as Britain confirmed its support for Mubarak Al-Sabah and, as a consequence, for Ibn Saud rather than Al Rashid.<sup>90</sup>

Ibn Saud received support from Mubarak Al-Sabah, who was himself receiving support and assistance from the British Government. At the same time, Ibn Rashid received assistance

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<sup>85</sup> Lauterpacht. E. C. J. Greenwood, Marc Weller, Daniel Bethlehem, *The Kuwait Crisis: Basic Documents*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge, 1991), p.9.

<sup>86</sup> IOR/R/15/1/472, File:53/6 (D2), Kuwait Affairs 1889–1899.  
<http://www.qdl.qa/archive/81055/vdc>.

<sup>87</sup> Kheirallah, George, *Arabia Reborn*, (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1952), p.72.

<sup>88</sup> al-Bāb al-‘āliy or Topkapı Brick Palace, the largest palace in the Turkish city of Istanbul, and seat of the Sultans of the Ottoman Empire for four centuries, from 1465 to 1856 (Faroqhi, Suraiya, *Subjects of the Sultan: Culture and Daily Life in the Ottoman Empire*, (London: Tauris, 2007), p.284).

<sup>89</sup> Shammar: centred on the Jabal Shammar region of northern Najd, as was evidenced during the late nineteenth century when the Shammar family of Al Rashid, based at Ha'il, ruled much of Najd with the support of the Ottomans and even occupied Riyadh. (Peterson, *Historical Dictionary*, p.134).

<sup>90</sup> David Holden & Richard Johns, *The House of Saud* (London: Pan Books, 1981), p.4.

from the Ottoman Government, which tried to prevent Mubarak Al-Sabah from supporting Ibn Saud. This attempt failed because of Britain's support for Kuwait's ruler, which enhanced Ibn Saud's position in his struggle with Ibn Rashid. It appears that both the British and the Ottoman superpowers were keen to subordinate each of the small powers, such as Ibn Rashid, Ibn Saud and Mubarak Al-Sabah, as well as the rulers of Qatar, Bahrain and Oman, in order to secure their interests in the Gulf and to ensure stability. However, Qatar, Bahrain and Oman wanted British protection; they did not trust the Ottoman Government, but had confidence in the British, with whom they had no negative history. Yet Ibn Rashid was supported by the Ottoman Government because of his intimate relationship with these states, as well as the fact that the Ottomans believed that their enemies Al-Saud and Al-Sabah were receiving support from the British Government.

### **1.3. The Sultanate of Najd**

Ibn Saud initiated his attempt to reclaim Riyadh by attacking the Masmak fortress. However, the ruler of Riyadh, Ajlan bin Muhammad, defended the fortress, while Al-Sabah was defeated by Ibn Rashid in the Battle of Sarif (1901). This series of events caused Ibn Saud to return to Kuwait due to his fear that Ibn Rashid would attack Riyadh imminently. Ibn Rashid was in Hafar Al-Batin<sup>91</sup> to suppress a number of revolts against him, and, when he learned of the arrival of Ibn Saud in Riyadh, quickly returned to expel him.<sup>92</sup> Despite this failure, Ibn Saud did not abandon his aspirations, especially having garnered support from numerous tribes as a result of his ambitious campaign. Instead, Ibn Saud tried to convince his father and Al-Sabah to attack Riyadh again, an appeal that ultimately proved unsuccessful due to the dangers such an act might engender.

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<sup>91</sup> Hafar al-Batin in the north-east near the Kuwait and Iraq borders (Lapidoth, Ruth, *International Straits of the World: The Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden* (London: Martinus Nijhoff, 1982), p.58).

<sup>92</sup> Wynbrandt, *Brief History*, pp.168–169.

As a result of his continued pressure, however, Al-Sabah finally agreed to provide him with the support necessary to complete this mission.<sup>93</sup> According to Zaidi and Wynbrandt,<sup>94</sup> Ibn Saud departed for Riyadh with only forty men,<sup>95</sup> including his brother Muhammed bin Abdulrahman. However, others contest this, claiming that sixty-three men accompanied him.<sup>96</sup> This raises an important question about Ibn Saud's intentions, namely, did he actually intend to attack Riyadh and properly challenge the rule of Ibn Rashid with such a small force?

From the above, it is reasonable to reject the argument of some sources,<sup>97</sup> that Ibn Saud left Kuwait with this small number of supporters to carry out a military operation that depended on such precision,<sup>98</sup> spreading fear among the enemy's lines and attacking Riyadh, as it was far from Ha'il. While it is possible that such a minimal number of troops might be a direct result of Al-Sabah's hesitation to support Ibn Saud, it is far more likely that the latter had no real intention of confronting Ibn Rashid directly, but rather was more interested in gathering supporters and making his position more powerful in that way.<sup>99</sup> This interpretation of events is further supported by the fact that Ibn Saud travelled directly to other tribes in the region upon leaving Kuwait, hoping to generate support for his campaign either by coercion or by providing financial incentives.<sup>100</sup> As he travelled through Has'a and Yabrin, tribes from al-'Ajman, al-Murrah, Subay' and al-Suhool joined him.<sup>101</sup> Threatened by this larger force, Ibn Rashid

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<sup>93</sup> Van Meulen. D., *The Wells of Ibn Saud* (London: Kegan Paul, 2000), p.39.

<sup>94</sup> Al-Zīydy. Mufīyd, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd wa Brīytānīyā 1915–1927* [*Abdulaziz Al-Saud and Britain*] (Bīyrūt, Dār Al-taliy' h, 2002), p. 61; Wynbrandt, *Brief History*, p.168.

<sup>95</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.55.

<sup>96</sup> Hassan S. Abedin, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud and the Great Game in Arabia, 1896–1946', PhD thesis, London: King's College, 2002, p.69; King Abdulaziz Darah (King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives) listed the names of 63 men who entered Riyadh with Ibn Saud, and they were announced and honoured in 1999, on the first anniversary of the Riyadh conquest (Al-Zīydy, *Tārīkh al-mamlakah*, p. 72).

<sup>97</sup> Darlow, Michael, and Barbara Bray, *Ibn Saud: The Desert Warrior Who Created the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (New York: Skyhorse, 2010), p.93.

<sup>98</sup> Myshān, ' *bdal' ziz al-Sa' ūd*, p.70.

<sup>99</sup> That is why he headed to the south of Najd, as there were lots of supporters of his family in that region, which was far away from Ha'il, where Ibn Rashid and his supporters were located (Wahbah, *Ayām 'rbyh*, p.161).

<sup>100</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.239.

<sup>101</sup> This was the actual tribe that had settled in the east of the Arabian Peninsula at the time; they were carried on 1500 camels and 600 horses (Al-Rīhānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.118; R/15/1/475(4), 19/04/1902, A message from Ali Ghuloom Ridha, newsagent in Kuwait to Arnold Kemball).

contacted the Ottoman authorities in Basra and Baghdad, while also reaching out to the Sheikh of Qatar to encourage him actively to oppose Ibn Saud's activities.<sup>102</sup> The Ottoman authorities responded by protecting Ibn Rashid and preventing Ibn Saud from receiving support through Has'a, while also reducing the stipend paid to his father, Abdulrahman. In addition, many people also volunteered to report Ibn Saud's movements.<sup>103</sup> As a result, a number of tribes, which could no longer see the benefits of supporting Ibn Saud, abandoned him, but this failed to weaken him properly, because Ibn Saud knew that Mubarak Al-Sabah would be supported and subsidised by the British Government. Similarly ineffectual was increased pressure from his father and Ibn Sabah.<sup>104</sup> By 1902, Ibn Saud's aspirations had not abated, leading ultimately to his returning to Riyadh with his remaining supporters and killing Ajlan bin Mohammed bin Rashid. This allowed him to assume control of Riyadh and extend his area of authority by invading other villages in Najd.<sup>105</sup> Capturing Ibn Rashid's fortress marked a symbolic victory, as the inhabitants of Riyadh declared their alliance to Ibn Saud, who then entrenched his position by fortifying the city walls.<sup>106</sup> When Abdulaziz Ibn Mota'b Ibn Rashid learned that Riyadh was conquered, he demanded immediate retribution. However, after receiving further support and supplies from Kuwait,<sup>107</sup> Ibn Saud continued his expansion and occupied Al-Kharj in the North. In May 1902, Abdulrahman Ibn Al-Faisal arrived in Riyadh, prompting Ibn Saud to ask the scholars and elders of Riyadh to take an oath of allegiance to his father, Abdulrahman. The latter made his son Emir for his bravery. Thus, Ibn Saud became the ruler of Riyadh.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>102</sup> Hathlūl, *Sa'ūd., Tārīkh mulūk Āl Sa'ūd* (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Riyād, 1960), p.53; L/P&S/10/4(3), 23/02/1902, Report from John Calcott Gaskin (British Political Assistant Under Secretary in Bahrain).

<sup>103</sup> L/P&S/10/4, 23/02/1902, Report from John Calcott Gaskin in Bahrain; L/P&S/19, 31/03/1902, Letter from Albert Wratislaw (British Consul in Basra) to Nicholas O'Conor (British Ambassador in Constantinople).

<sup>104</sup> Al-Rīhānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.120.

<sup>105</sup> L/P&S/7/142, 31/01/1902, Letter from Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah (Kuwaiti Sheikh) to Arnold Kemball.

<sup>106</sup> L/P&S/20/C239 (2), 01/11/1902, Report of events from January 1902 to November 1902.

<sup>107</sup> L/P&S/20/FO12 (1), 31/07/1902, Letter from Albert Wratislaw in Basra to Nicholas O'Conor in Constantinople.

<sup>108</sup> Jacob Goldberg, 'The Foreign Policy of Saudi Arabia: The Formative Years, 1902–1918', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 25.4 (Oct. 1989), pp.569–570.

In July 1902, Ibn Rashid tried to launch an attack against Riyadh, while also confronting other rival tribes in the region, such as Al Washem, Al Mahmal, and Al Qassim. These acts of aggression resulted in increased support for Ibn Saud from the people of the Addwaser and Al-Murrah tribes. Although, following this change in circumstances, Ibn Rashid decided not to attack the now impenetrable Riyadh directly in the future and instead resort to skirmishes, Ibn Saud forced him to withdraw to the north.<sup>109</sup> When Ibn Rashid decided to invade Kuwait because of its authorities' continued support for his enemy in Najd,<sup>110</sup> Ibn Saud went his ally's defence. In early 1903, Ibn Rashid again tried to conquer Riyadh, but this time Abdulrahman, the father of Ibn Saud, defeated him. This victory further legitimised the position of Ibn Saud in Riyadh.

Subsequently, Ibn Rashid marched his troops towards Tharmada'a for fear that al-Qassim would also fall into Ibn Saud's hands, ultimately succeeding in finding Musaid bin Sweilem in Shaqra.<sup>111</sup> When Ibn Sweilem was besieged in Shaqra'a by Ibn Rashid, Ibn Saud was forced to send troops from Riyadh to Harimalaa to end the siege and enable him to move to al-Ghat. This inadvertently allowed Ibn Saud to assume control of Shaqra'a, and he also used this series of events to commission his uncle, Abdullah Ibn Jilawy, to raid Tharmada'a. The increased pressure felt by Ibn Rashid led him to abandon al-Ghat and deploy troops to Al Majma'ah and Al-Rawdah. Under the command of Khalid ibn Ahmed al-Sudairy, Ibn Saud's forces reclaimed Al-Rawdah and the rest of Sadir's county, excluding Al Majma'ah. Ibn Saud and some of his men stayed in Al-Rawdah and Jalajil, and Ahmed al-Sudairy was appointed as Emir of Shaqra'a.<sup>112</sup> Despite Ibn Saud's continued successes, Ibn Rashid was not deterred, as

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<sup>109</sup> IOR/R/15/1/475 (3), 17/11/1902, Letter from John Calcott Gaskin (British Political Assistant under Secretary in Bahrain) to Arnold Kemball.

<sup>110</sup> IOR/R/15/1/475 (5), 13-14/05/1902, Report from the British Political Resident in the Gulf; Ottoman Archives BEO-1857-139217-1-1, 06/08/1902, Letter from the Prime Minister to the Ministry of the Interior.

<sup>111</sup> One of Abdulaziz's men from Riyadh. Ibn Saud counted on him in many battles, and assigned him governor of Al-Harīq.

<sup>112</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.245; Ottoman Archives BEO-2309-173156-8-1, 12/09/1902, Letter from the Prime Minister to the Ministry of the Interior.

he invaded the lands of the Utaybah<sup>113</sup> and Qahtan tribes, and besieged Twaim, a village in Sadir. These acts forced Ibn Saud to confront Ibn Rashid directly, and he therefore ordered the people of al-Washm to assist Ahmed al-Sudairy. As Ibn Rashid established himself in Ma'a Alartwiyah, Ibn Saud travelled to Thadeq and Jalajil, before moving through Al Majma'ah to Al-Ghat and Zulfi. From there, he sent word to the Sheikh of Kuwait asking him to send the rulers of Qassim, Aba Alkhil,<sup>114</sup> Amir Buraydah and Alsulim Amir Unaiyza<sup>115</sup>, to help him, which he did. When Ibn Rashid relocated to Al-Batniyay and sent forces to Unaizah under the command of Majid Ibn Hamoud Al Rashid, and to al-Sir led by Hussein Ibn Jarad, the Sheikh agreed to assist Ibn Saud and personally travelled to Baghdad to generate further support from the tribes of Shammar.<sup>116</sup>

When Ibn Rashid moved towards Baghdad, Ibn Saud seized the opportunity to assault Hussein Ibn Jarad in Al-Faedah on 20 January 1904, killing approximately four hundred enemy troops.<sup>117</sup> Building on this significant victory, Ibn Saud then attacked the forces of Majid Ibn Hamoud Al Rashid, which were making preparations to defend Unaizah. Following the death of their commander, Fahid Ibn Sabhan, Al Rashid's forces surrendered and Majid Ibn Rashid fled.<sup>118</sup> Ibn Saud entered the city on 22 March 1904, appointing Abdullah al-Salem as the governor, before continuing on to Buraydah, which he encircled on 30 May, besieging the forces of Abdulrahman Ibn thaba'an, who surrendered three months later. Ibn Saud had by this stage successfully annexed the entire al-Qassim Region, assuming control of Najd and the

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<sup>113</sup> The Utaybah tribes are nomadic, centred stability of the Hijaz to Qassim, and traditionally fierce (Peterson, *Historical Dictionary*, p.156).

<sup>114</sup> The Aba Alkhil family were rulers of Buraydah in 1872, where they were appointed by the Ottomans. They were loyal to Ibn Rashid in the era of Mohammed Ibn Rashid, but the relationship between them soured due to the intervention of Ibn Rashid in Buraydah's internal affairs. The governor of Buraydah, Saleh bin Hassan bin Muhanna, joined forces with Mubarak Al-Sabah and Ibn Saud, against Ibn Rashid (Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.126).

<sup>115</sup> The Emirate began Alsulim to Onaizah of 1819, they belong to a tribe called Subaie, which was allied with Ibn Saud against Ibn Rashid and helped him in the annexation of the Najd region. The Alsulim family still governs Unaizah at the behest of Abdul-Aziz Al Saud (Al-Riḥānī, Amīn, *Tārīkh Najd*, p, 154).

<sup>116</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.72.

<sup>117</sup> IOR/R/15/1/476, 19/02/1904, Letter from Mubarak al-Sabah to Abdulaziz Ibn Saud; British Library.

<sup>118</sup> Abedin, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud', p.76.

tribes in the region.<sup>119</sup> However, Ibn Saud's victories aroused the suspicion of the Ottoman Government, as they signalled the possible rise of a Salafi state, if they were ignored by the Ottoman Empire.<sup>120</sup> This posed a particular threat to the Empire due to concurrent tensions and disturbances in its other Arab and European territories, because it realised that the Salafi scholars were against the Ottoman Empire, and were militants of the Hanbali School, whereas the Ottomans were followers of the Hanafi School.<sup>121</sup> As a result, the Ottoman authorities deemed it necessary to demonstrate their continued ability to discipline regimes that proved disloyal, and agreed to Ibn Rashid's request to intervene actively and strangle the emerging Saudi State in its infancy.

After equipping its uniformed military services with the necessary weapons, the Ottoman Empire sent seven corps to aid Ibn Rashid in May 1904.<sup>122</sup> These troops came mainly from Medina and Baghdad, and were under the leadership of Lieutenant Generals Sidqi Pasha and Ahmed Faidi Pasha, respectively. The forces reached Najd, where they joined with Ibn Rashid and marched through Buraidah, Alqraa, and Al-Bukayriyah. The combined forces confronted Ibn Saud's troops on 15 June 1904.<sup>123</sup> According to Philby and Ibn Meishan, the Turkish artillery attacked the Saudis, and Ibn Saud was shot in his left hand. He immediately realized that he would lose the battle if he did not generate more support. He proceeded to create alliances in the region by sending numerous messengers to Mutayr, Utaibah, Al Dawasir and Unaizah, even personally visiting a number of villages to convince particular tribes to join him.<sup>124</sup> However, as the British documents<sup>125</sup> illustrate, news of Ibn Saud's injury, capture and

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<sup>119</sup> L/P&S/20/ (FO12 (1), 06/04/1904, Letter from Mubarak al-Sabah to Arnold Kemball.

<sup>120</sup> Ottoman Archives BEO-2313-173409-2-1, 04/02/1904, Letter from the Prime Minister to the Ministry of the Interior.

<sup>121</sup> David Commins, *The Wahhabi Mission and Saudi Arabia* (London: Tauris, 2006), p.134.

<sup>122</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24, 20/09/1904, Letter from O'Connor in Constantinople to the Marquess of Lansdowne, British Foreign Minister.

<sup>123</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24(3), 11/08/1904, Report from George Knox, British Political Agent in Kuwait.

<sup>124</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.246; Banu Mishān, *'Abd al-'Azīz Āl Su'ūd*, p.51.

<sup>125</sup> L/P&S/20/FO13 (2), 25/08/1904, Letter from Mohammed Mohsen (British Consul in Karbala) to Major L.S. Newmarch (British Consul General in Baghdad).

even death began to circulate in the region. Despite these setbacks, Ibn Saud wasted no time in organising his forces, gathering them near the town of Al Mothanab before moving towards Al-Bukayriyah to take revenge. Ibn Rashid withdrew to the village of Al Khobara to strengthen his forces before attacking Al-Bukayriyah.<sup>126</sup> Ibn Saud's and Ibn Rashid's forces met on the outskirts of Al-Bukayriyah. Following a period of severe fighting, Ibn Saud triumphed and his forces successfully entered Al-Bukayriyah.

Above all, this battle strengthened Ibn Saud's position in Najd. It greatly enhanced his reputation among the tribes, seriously undermined the Rashid ascendancy and weakened Ottoman influence across Arabia. Mubarak Al-Sabah called the Wali of Basra, Fakhri Pasha,<sup>127</sup> to persuade him to negotiate with the Saudis in response to Ibn Saud's request. Having agreed, Abdel Rahman, accompanied by Mubarak Al-Sabah, travelled to Mesopotamia to commence negotiations in al-Zubair on 18 February 1905. During these talks, Fakhri Pasha presented some proposals for possible reconciliation, such as making al-Qassim a neutral zone between Riyadh and Ha'il, allowing the Turks to position a military force in al-Qassim and two garrisons in Unaizah and Buraidah, and ensuring that the people and officials of the Ottoman Empire recognized the sovereignty of Ibn Saud over the disputed territories in Najd.<sup>128</sup> However, Abdulrahman al-Faisal agreed to the proposal, and the two sides met in Safwan between the 6<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> February 1905. Al-Faisal declared his allegiance to the Ottoman Government, and acceptance of the presence of the Ottoman protectors in Qassim.<sup>129</sup> Ibn Rashid prepared to confront Ibn Saud in Rawdat Mahnna on 14 April 1906, which ended with the latter's victory

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<sup>126</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p.122.

<sup>127</sup> Fakhri Pasha, acting Wali of Basra and officer of the Ottoman army (1868–1948), was the commander of the Ottoman army and governor of Medina from 1916–1919 (Lorimer, John Gordon, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf, Oman and Central Arabia: Historical* (Calcutta: Superintendent Government Printing, India, 1915), p.1148).

<sup>128</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.80; L/P&S/20/FO31 (1), 14/02/1905, Letter from Wather B. Townley to the Marquess of Lansdowne; FO248/842(3), 20–26/02/1905, Secret report by Arthur Trevor.

<sup>129</sup> Hamzah, Fu'ād. *Al-bilād al-'arabīyah al-su'ūdīyah*, Al-tab'ah al-thānīyah (Al-Riyāḍ: Maktabat al-Naṣr al-Ḥadīthah, 1968), p.372; L/P&S/20/FO31 (3), 24/02/1905, Letter from James Monahan (Acting British Consul in Basra) to Walter Townley (British Chargé d'affaires in Constantinople).

and the death of Abdualaziz bin Mutib Ibn Rashid.<sup>130</sup> Following this, Emir Mutib bin Abdualaziz Ibn Rashid (who took over the Ha'il emirate after the death of Abdul Aziz bin Mutib Ibn Rashid) and Ibn Saud came to the agreement that Ha'il and the surrounding areas would belong to Ibn Rashid, while Najd,<sup>131</sup> including al-Qassim, would belong to Ibn Saud. Prince Mutib also pledged to return the Saudi refugees in Ha'il to Riyadh.<sup>132</sup>

#### 1.4. The effects of Ibn Rashid's death

The Ottoman authorities worried about the rising power of the Saudis in Najd. According to Rihani and Philby, they contacted Ibn Rashid, imploring him to abandon the compromise deal and resume the fight against Ibn Saud. They also demanded that Ottoman sovereignty over al-Qassim be recognized in return for providing it with military and financial resources. After contacting Ibn Saud regarding the presence of Turkish troops, both sides met near Al-Bukayriyah. However, the mediator, Sami Pasha al-Farouki's proposal that the Turks assume control of al-Qassim was rejected by Ibn Saud, despite efforts to coerce him with financial incentives and threats of further aggression.<sup>133</sup> Ibn Saud warned Sami Pasha to leave with his troops and travel to Wadi al-Sir. In addition, Ibn Saud was asked by Sami Pasha to keep away from discussions with Ibn Rashid and to move his troops to Medina; otherwise, his troops would be convinced to force him to leave.<sup>134</sup> According to Bader al-Khususi,<sup>135</sup> the Turkish authorities responded to Ibn Saud's warnings by abandoning Najd and relocating their troops

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<sup>130</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.81; Alghanim, Salwa, *The Reign of Mubarak-Al-Sabah: Sheikh of Kuwait 1896-1915* (London: Tauris, 1998), p.85.

<sup>131</sup> Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p.94; FO248/875, 15-21/1/1906; L/P&S/20/FO31 (2), 13/5/1906, Letter from Mohammed Hussein (British Consul in Jeddah) to O'Conor in Constantinople.

<sup>132</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.251; Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p.94; L/P&S/7/190, 4-10-/06/1906, Periodic report from Arthur Trevor on behalf of the Resident in the Gulf.

<sup>133</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.251; Al-Riḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.161.

<sup>134</sup> Wahbah, *Ayām 'rbyh*, p.172.

<sup>135</sup> Al-Khuṣū'iyy, *Badr al-dīn, qīām saḥānt Najd, Majlat altārykh al'rbyy, mujld 18* (Baghdad, al.mānh al'āmh lil thād almw'rkhyn al'rab 1981), p.196.

to Medina and Baghdad in November 1906.<sup>136</sup> According to Philby, Sami Pasha attempted to bribe Ibn Saud to allow the Ottoman troops to remain in al-Qassim. It can be observed that, when the Ottoman forces came to the Arabian Peninsula to support Ibn Rashid and maintain a political balance in the region, the troops were badly affected by the conditions of combat and suffered numerous defeats at the hands of Ibn Saud. In addition, the Ottomans lost an important ally when Abd al-Aziz bin Mutaib Ibn Rashid was killed. His son and successor, Mutaib, was not as strong as his father and failed to pose an adequate threat to Ibn Saud due to his inexperience. He even warned the Ottomans of the dangers of remaining in Najd.<sup>137</sup> As a combined result of these circumstances, the Ottoman Empire withdrew its troops from the centre of Najd, a decision made increasingly unavoidable by the pressure being placed on its military resources by confrontations and tensions in its other Arab and European territories.<sup>138</sup>

The Ottoman Empire recognised Ibn Saud as the governor of Najd and promised to provide him with a salary of approximately £120 in return for his continued loyalty. The Turkish Government also relocated some of its forces in al-Qassim and initiated official relations with Ibn Saud.<sup>139</sup> Although Ibn Saud had control over most of Najd and benefited from improved relations with the Ottoman Empire, he was in dispute with his allies, the Mutair family, which was led by Faisal Duweish and allied with the Governor of Buraidah, Abdullah Abu Khalil. In April 1907, a battle took place during which Faisal Duweish was injured and forced to ask for reconciliation.<sup>140</sup> As a result, Ibn Saud was able to enter al-Qassim and force Abu Alkhail to retreat, an act which led the British Consulate in Muscat to send a report informing the Indian authorities that Ibn Saud was now recognized by all Bedouin tribes as the

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<sup>136</sup> L/P&S/7/195(4), 29/10/1906, Report from John Hugo Bill (First Assistant to British Political Resident in the Gulf).

<sup>137</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.89; Lawson, Fred, 'Modern Saudi Arabia', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Asian History*, pp. 1-21 (on-line publication date: May 2017; accessed 3 December 2018).

<sup>138</sup> L/P&S/10/50(1), 24/11/1906, Letter from James Monaghan to Walter Townley.

<sup>139</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24, 15/02/1905, Letter from George Knox to Sir Percy Cox; FO 248/842(3), 27/02-05/03/1905, Secret report of Arthur Trevor.

<sup>140</sup> Wahbah, Ayyām 'arab 'iyah, p.172.

official leader of Najd.<sup>141</sup> Ibn Saud now had control of Najd, an area that stretched from Wadi ad-Dawasir in the south to Ha'il in the north, and which was later renamed Sultanate of Najd in 1908.

### **1.5. British interests in the Arabian Peninsula**

The earliest instance of British interest in the Arabian Peninsula dates back to the period of Portuguese colonialism in the sixteenth century. When British companies failed to dominate their competitors completely from the north, through the territories of Persia, they instead gained access to the area by following the route established by the Portuguese around the Cape of Good Hope. Initially, the British had only a few commercial privileges granted to them by the Government of the Iranian Shah and often had to function as a military partner to Persia and the Al Qawasim in the region.<sup>142</sup> Britain quickly began displacing its competitors in the Gulf in order to realize its colonial and economic ambitions, which were embodied in the establishment of the East India Company in the seventeenth century.<sup>143</sup> British citizens dominated all positions of authority in the Gulf<sup>144</sup> and the native tribes' future depended on their decision to settle in Bushehr. In addition, the British naval fleet played a policing role in the Persian Gulf, as British merchants, ship owners and other affiliates assumed complete control of trade and navigation.<sup>145</sup> This period saw the decline of the Ottoman Empire, which resulted in Britain attempting to increase its authority in the region by promoting its political and economic systems.<sup>146</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p.142.

<sup>142</sup> John Barrett. Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf: 1795–1880* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), p.342.

<sup>143</sup> Lawson, Philip, *the East India Company: A History* (London: Harper Collins, 1991), p.19.

<sup>144</sup> Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, p.9.

<sup>145</sup> Tūmān.fīsh, *Natāliyā Nīkūlāyfinā·al-Duwal al-Ūrūbbiyah fi al-Khalīj al-‘Arabī min al-Qarn al-Sādis ‘ashar ilā al-Qarn al-Tāsi‘ ‘ashar* (Dubai: Juma Almajed Centre, 2006), p.325.

<sup>146</sup> Piyush Kumar, ‘Blowback: British Imperialism in the Middle East’, *International Policy Digest, World News*, Library of Congress, 12 August 2014 (<http://intpolicydigest.org/2014/08/12/blowback-british-imperialism-in-the-middle-east/>).

From its inception, Britain's policy in the Persian Gulf was based on two main points: firstly, maintaining its economic and strategic interests, and secondly, placing the region's security and stability under its singular stewardship.<sup>147</sup> Britain quickly realised that it could only achieve these goals by expanding its commercial influence in the region, ultimately supporting English commercial enterprises, such as the East India Company, which was established on 31 December 1600.<sup>148</sup> This meant preventing companies from other countries competing directly with British ones, in particular those from Holland and France, the two other major European colonial powers. Once Britain managed to deal with the threat posed to its interests by the Al Qawasim's<sup>149</sup> maritime activities against European ships, it was able to assume control of the region.<sup>150</sup> An official accord was signed on 18 January 1820, permitting Britain to extend its authority over the entire region and granting her authorities the role of mediating all maritime disputes among the Sheikhs of Oman's northern coast. This agreement meant more tenable peace but, perhaps more importantly; it also ensured that no Arab naval force could possibly emerge.<sup>151</sup> Disregarding the obvious economic influences that led to this agreement, there was also a number of important political motivating factors, such as fragmenting the region, securing the goods of Britain and its nationals in the Persian Gulf, preserving maritime peace through inspecting ships entering the area, and imposing numerous other measures to ensure the continuity of British domination in the region.<sup>152</sup>

According to Lieutenant Campbell and John Kelly, Britain signed a Treaty in 1843 that claimed to guarantee a durable peace by ending maritime disputes amongst the Sheikhs of

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<sup>147</sup> Onley, James, *Britain and the Gulf Sheikhdoms 1820-1971: The Politics of Protection* (Doha, CIRS, Center for International and Regional studies, 2012), p.9.

<sup>148</sup> Lawson, *East India Company*, p.22.

<sup>149</sup> One of the Arab tribes settled in Ras Al Khaimah. The British forces became aggressive and followed a specific strategy to dominate Al Qawasim from 1820–1970 (Hurriez, Sayyid Hamid, *Folklore and Folklife in the United Arab Emirates* (New York, Routledge, 2002), p.22).

<sup>150</sup> Potter, Lawrence G., *The Persian Gulf in History* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), p.279.

<sup>151</sup> Onley, *Britain and the Gulf Sheikhdoms*, p.4.

<sup>152</sup> Hasan Loai, Abdul Rasool, 'The UK policy toward the Persian Gulf region until WWII 1939', *Samera' Journal*, Folder 8, Series 30, Year 8th, July 2012, p.141.

Oman's north coast, but this ten-year Treaty actually installed Britain as the direct supervisor of the Gulf sheikhs' affairs.<sup>153</sup> However, J. A. Saldanah argues that Britain's objective with this Treaty was not simply to achieve naval peace, but also to divide the Arab Emirates and prevent any popular movement aimed at achieving political unification.<sup>154</sup> It is clear from the above observations that this Treaty was not actually aimed at managing naval conflicts between the Sheikhs, but rather with Britain, assuring the safety of its shipping lanes in the region. This Treaty, therefore, fulfilled Britain's interests by establishing its authority and naval dominance in the region, as it granted permission to her officials to interfere in the Sheikhs' domestic affairs and any other attendant issues arising amongst the tribes in the region. Due to the relatively small size of the sheikhdoms along the Oman coast, larger states in the region, such as Muscat and the Saudi states, repeatedly tried to extend their influence. However, British authorities actively resisted any attempt of this nature. When Thuwaini bin Said bin Sultan Al Busaidi<sup>155</sup> tried to ally with the ruler of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh Zayed bin Khalifa,<sup>156</sup> in opposition to Al Qawasim, the British authorities hastened to prevent any communication between them.<sup>157</sup> Furthermore, to prevent any partial or total federation or cooperation between the sheikhdoms, Britain proposed a new Treaty with the Sheikhs of the region. The British Resident<sup>158</sup> in the Persian Gulf suggested that Adelbert Cecil Talbot<sup>159</sup> should draft the Treaty,

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<sup>153</sup> Kempland, Arnold, *Observations on the past Policy of the British Government towards Arab tribes of the Persian Gulf* (Bombay: Education Society Press, 1856), pp.61–89; Kelly, *Britain and the Persian Gulf*, p.369.

<sup>154</sup> Saldanha, Jerome. A., *Persian Gulf Précis, Précis of Turkish Arabia Affairs 1901–1905* (Calcutta, 1906), pp.145–244.

<sup>155</sup> Thuwaini bin Said bin Sultan Al Busaidi became the Omani Sultan (1856–1866) and was killed in Sohar (Ochs, Peter, *Maverick Guide to Oman* (Gretna: Pelican Publishing Company, 2000), p.149).

<sup>156</sup> Zayed bin Khalifa Al Nahyan (1836–1909), also known as Zayed the First, President of the United Arab Emirates (1855–1909).

<sup>157</sup> Sarbu, Bianca, *Ownership and Control of Oil: Explaining Policy Choices across Producing Countries* (Abingdon, Routledge, 2014), p.128.

<sup>158</sup> The Persian Gulf Residency was an official colonial subdivision of the British Empire from 1763 until 1971, whereby the United Kingdom maintained varying degrees of political and economic control over several states in the Persian Gulf. The British Residency included representatives in Bushehr, Kuwait, Bahrain and others, with the sole responsibility of maintaining British authority in the region.

<sup>159</sup> Sir Adelbert Cecil Talbot, 1845–1920, army and political officer in India, the Resident in the Gulf (September 1891 to May 1893) (Habibur Rahman, *The Emergence of Qatar: The Turbulent Years 1627–1916* (London: Routledge, 2010), p.112).

which was submitted to the Indian Government in 1891 and ratified in July 1892. The Governments of Muscat and Zanzibar, fearing a retaliatory response from the British, refused to sign a Treaty with the French. The Sheikhs of the coast of the Persian Gulf signed a general accord referred to as the Eternal, or Inhibitor, Accord, because it prohibited any influence in the region other than Britain's. This accord meant that the Sheikhs pledged to avoid dealing with any country other than Britain or allow foreign representatives to engage in any economic dealings in terms of land deals in the form of sales or leases.<sup>160</sup> By officially entering this accord, the Emirates lost their independence and sovereignty, while all relationships with other states in the region were determined by Britain's strategic interests.

According to the conditions of the accord, the Sheikhs could not engage in any economic agreements or diplomatic correspondences with authorities other than the British Government, permit any official foreign agent to stay in their territories without the prior consent of the British Government, nor offer any land to foreign countries other than Britain through either sale or lease.<sup>161</sup> This accord ultimately granted Britain absolute authority over the economic capabilities of Oman's northern coast, a position it enjoyed for more than three quarters of a century. In 1899, Kuwait signed a similar treaty with Britain, which extended the imperial power's dominance in the region. As a direct result, the Indian Navigation Company<sup>162</sup> assumed control of the maritime trade route in the Gulf and earned unlimited privileges by establishing numerous subsidiary organisations in Gulf countries. This increase in commercial activity meant that British banks also opened a number of regional branches, such as the Eastern

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<sup>160</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer*, Vol 3, a, p.732; Al-Hiluyy, Sādiq, al-Sīāsah al-Barīṭānayyḥ tigāh mashīkhāt alkhalīg, [British policy towards the sheikhs of the Gulf], unpublished research (Baghdād, 2001), p.1.

<sup>161</sup> Aitchison, C.U, *A collection of treaties, Engagements, and Sanads relating to India and Neighbouring Countries* (Delhi: Government of India, 1929-33), p.256; Heard, B.F., *From Trucial States to United Arab Emirates: A Society in Transition* (London: Longman, 1984), p.294.

<sup>162</sup> Founded on 31 December 1600, the Indian Navigation Company's objective was to establish a trade monopoly in the Indian Colonies, and it became a major element in the British economy (Chaudhuri, K.N, *The English East India Company: The study of an early joint-stock company 1600–1640* (London: Thoemmes Press, 1999), p.3).

Bank.<sup>163</sup> The beginning of the twentieth century also witnessed the reinforcement of British influence in the Gulf region, with the Sheikhs agreeing to several accords in 1902 prohibiting the importation of military armaments into their emirates. More importantly, however, Britain employed its navy to attack those Arab states that refused to recognize its authority, under the guise of eradicating piracy and the slave trade, a tactic used most frequently in Ras Al Khaimah, Muscat, Oman and Bahrain. Lord Curzon, the Viceroy of India, visited the region on 1 January 1903 to enhance the relationship between Britain and the Gulf Sheikhs, requesting that the latter fulfil the commitments they had originally made to the British Government, to refrain from establishing alliances with other countries and to acknowledge the authority of George Knox as Political Resident in the Gulf. In return, he claimed, the British Government would respect the independence of the sheikhdoms and refrain from interfering in their affairs unless absolutely necessary.<sup>164</sup>

From 1907 to 1912, the British Government monitored the situation between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, and between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein, the Emir of Mecca, but still believed there was no need to establish relations with Najd as an emerging inner strength, as well as to avoid stirring up the Ottoman Empire.<sup>165</sup> On 29 September 1913, Britain and the Ottoman Empire reached an agreement about how the two states would share the Arabian Peninsula. The negotiations took more than two years, from February 1911 to July 1913. Haqi Pasha represented the Ottomans and Edward Grey represented the British. The Treaty included many terms about the Gulf area, especially Kuwait. According to the terms of this agreement, the Ottomans were entitled to reclaim the territories that Ibn Saud had conquered.<sup>166</sup> Such an agreement proved embarrassing to the British Government since it did not want to lose favour

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<sup>163</sup> Onley, *Britain and the Gulf Sheikdoms*, p.9.

<sup>164</sup> *ibid*, p.11.

<sup>165</sup> Jacob, Harold F., *Kings of Arabia: The Rise and Set of the Turkish Sovranty in the Arabian Peninsula* (London: Mills and Boon, 1923), p.99.

<sup>166</sup> L/P&S/10/B381 (18), 29/07/1913, Agreement signed by Haqi Pasha and Edward Grey.

with Ibn Saud, the emerging force in the region. However, with the outbreak of the First World War, the situation changed to Britain's advantage, as the Ottomans aligned themselves with the Central Powers. This meant British authorities could then announce their support for Ibn Saud. As a result, when jihad was declared against Britain by the Ottoman Empire, Ibn Saud remained neutral.<sup>167</sup> The First World War gave Britain a new opportunity to take control of the region by occupying Mesopotamia, strengthening its political and economic relationships in the Arabian Peninsula, and tightening its grip on the sheikhdoms of the Arabian coast. British officials also set about forging alliances with Hussein bin Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, who was a significant rival of the Saudi leader. More significantly, Britain took Qatar and Kuwait under its protection, thus asserting its control over the Gulf region.<sup>168</sup>

Despite the commitments made by Britain in the treaties signed with the emirates of the Persian Gulf, British authorities failed to provide the sheikhdoms in the southern region of the Gulf with official assurances to protect their borders during the First World War. The reason for this failure derives from a diplomatic principle first introduced in the nineteenth century, namely, that Britain would not intervene in the internal affairs of the Arabian Peninsula. Although the sheikhdoms had no physical borders in the conventional sense at the time, it was assumed that Britain would protect these areas against external aggressions by virtue of its political and economic commitments to the region.<sup>169</sup> By the end of the First World War, Britain was the uncontested European authority in the Persian Gulf; Germany was defeated, and the Bolshevik revolution saw the collapse of the old Russian political system and the imperial ambitions of the Tsar's regime, particularly its ability to impose trade taxes in the region. Meanwhile, France surrendered its interests in the region to Britain, its ally in the Gulf,

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<sup>167</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Police of King Abdulaziz', p.39; Geoffrey Hamm, 'British Intelligence and Turkish Arabia: Strategy, Diplomacy, and Empire, 1898–1918' (unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Toronto, 201), p.224.

<sup>168</sup> Onley, *Britain and the Gulf Sheikhdoms*, p.13.

<sup>169</sup> Al-Riḥānī, Amīn, *Mulūk al-'arab aw riḥlah fī al-bilād al-'arab īyah*, Vol. 1 (Bīyrūt: al-Maṭba'ah al-'Ilmīyah li-Yūsuf Ṣādir, 1924), pp.769–770.

closing its consulate in Muscat in 1920.<sup>170</sup> This meant that the period of constant contention and negotiation with other imperial nations pursuing their interests in the region ended, with Britain enjoying complete authority over the Persian Gulf.<sup>171</sup> The area assumed huge significance for Britain in the inter-war years, as it became a hub for moving military resources between Europe, India, the Far East and Australia. As a result of its strategic importance, Britain became increasingly willing to intervene directly in the internal affairs of emirates along the northern coast of Oman. The changing fortunes of the region meant that British policy also changed to reflect its increased interests by establishing closer relations with the Sheikhs of coastal countries. Consequently, British officials started to pay closer attention to issues affecting their allies, and thus became more willing to support the coastal emirates by defending their national interests and securing their land and sea borders against external aggressors.<sup>172</sup>

### **1.6. Ibn Saud and the early emergence of Saudi–British relations**

Britain decided to pursue close relations with areas in the Middle East, such as the Oman coast, the Second Saudi State and Al Qawasim, because of the region's strategic location between the continents of Asia, Africa and Europe. In particular, the geographical characteristics of the Arabian Peninsula were especially important, hence the development of positive relations between the British authorities and rulers in the region, which ultimately resulted in the colonial power's relationship with the First and Second Saudi states.

The political relationship between Britain and Al-Saud first developed when Abdul Aziz bin Mohammed bin Saud arrived in Has'a on the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula in 1795 and immediately began to exert his influence in other areas within the region.

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<sup>170</sup> David E. McNabb, *Oil and the Creation of Iraq: Policy Failures and the 1914–1918 War in Mesopotamia* (New York: Routledge, 2016), p.162.

<sup>171</sup> Zkryā, Jmāl. *Dirāsāt litārīkh al'mārāt al-'arabyih 1840–1914* (Al-Qāhirah, Maṭba'ah, Jāmi'at 'Ayn Shams, 1966), p.134.

<sup>172</sup> Louis, Wm. Roger, *The British Empire in the Middle East, 1945–1951: Arab Nationalism, the United States and Post-war Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), p.562.

Consequently, the British authorities were apprehensive that Ibn Saud might emerge as a powerful force along the coast. As John Kelly illustrates in *Britain and the Gulf*, government officials explained that the policy was to “use their influence to prevent Wahhabi expansion because it would stand in the way of British efforts to eliminate piracy and to achieve our commercial interests.”<sup>173</sup> Despite its preoccupation with Napoleon’s Egyptian campaign in 1798, Britain was highly conscious of the growing Saudi presence in the region. In 1799, Britain sent a political envoy to Najd, led by John Lewis Raynaud, the British consul assistant in Basra, with the intention of meeting Prince Abdulaziz bin Mohammed (1765–1803) to convince the latter of his country’s desire to establish friendly relationships with Al-Saud. Due to a series of military campaigns undertaken in the region by Prince Abdulaziz and his son Saud,<sup>174</sup> the delegation hoped to obtain a guarantee from the Saudi ruler that would address the issue of the frequently disrupted postal links between Aleppo and Basra.<sup>175</sup> Raynaud, however, failed in his mission for a number of reasons, chiefly his inability to convince Ibn Saud to improve the security of the postal infrastructure, because the Saudi leader made such improvements conditional upon Britain helping in the mediations between him and the Ottoman governor in Baghdad to improve their strained relationship.<sup>176</sup>

The administration of Prince Saud bin Abdul Aziz (who ruled from 1803 to 1814) witnessed a major shift in the attitude of the Indian Government towards Al-Saud after the latter assumed control of the west coast of the Arabian Gulf from Basra to Muscat, from the east of the Arabian Gulf to the Red Sea in the west, and from Yemen in the south to the Levant borders in the north. For this reason, the British authorities advised the Political Resident in

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<sup>173</sup> Kelly, *Britain and the Gulf*, p.156.

<sup>174</sup> Saud bin Abdulaziz bin Mohammed (Saud Al Kabeer) ruled the First Saudi State after his father, Abdulaziz (1803–1814) (Sabri, Sharaf, *The House of Saud in Commerce: A Study of Royal Entrepreneurship in Saudi Arabia* (New Delhi: I.S. Publications, 2001), p.213).

<sup>175</sup> Kelly, *Britain and the Gulf*, p.213.

<sup>176</sup> Perrin, Jacqueline, *Ektshaf jzirah ala’rb [The Discovery of the Arabian Peninsula, Five Centuries of Adventure and Science]*, translated by Kadri Qalaji (Beirut: Crescent House, 2003), p.13.

Bushehr, Nicholas Hankey Smith, to reaffirm the benefits of the British–Saudi relationship to both countries’ interests in the Gulf and the international trade opportunities the relationship presented.<sup>177</sup> They became increasingly concerned while observing the situation from India, as Egypt gained access to Dir’iyah and Saudi influence in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula collapsed. Britain feared that the Saudis would be replaced by Muhammad Ali Pasha, whose aim of unifying the region by establishing sovereign nation states posed a real danger to its interests in the region.<sup>178</sup> In 1811, the envoy of Saud bin Abdulaziz, Ibrahim Karim, met with William Bruce, British Resident in Bushehr, conveying to him Saud’s intention of establishing and maintaining productive relations with the Government of India.<sup>179</sup> Subsequently, in 1814, Saud Ibn Abdulaziz expressed his sincere desire to reciprocate these sentiments, but when the possibility of a mutually beneficial accord was suggested to the British governor in Calcutta, Marquis Richard, it was immediately rejected. Instead, the governor suggested that the Indian authorities should maintain friendly relations with Al-Saud and appreciate their positive attitudes towards Britain.<sup>180</sup>

During the period of the Second Saudi State, Britain focused on the Middle East because of its strategic location between continents (Asia, Africa, and Europe) and the geographical importance of the Arabian Peninsula. However, during Faisal bin Turki’s reign, in 1865, relations between Britain and the Al Saud became highly strained because of the Saudi military campaign to capture Sohar in Oman. A number of protestations against this campaign were communicated by the British Resident in the Gulf, Samuel Hennell, to Faisal. As a result, Britain increased its naval presence in the region considerably, forcing Faisal to withdraw his troops.<sup>181</sup> The British authorities then prohibited Al-Saud from gaining any further influence

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<sup>177</sup> Kelly, *Britain and the Gulf*, p.34.

<sup>178</sup> *ibid* p.37; Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, p.412.

<sup>179</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf* Vol viii, p.1124.

<sup>180</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, Vol VI, p.993.

<sup>181</sup> Al-Zīdy ‘Abd al - ‘Aziz al-Saa ūd, p.49.

in areas belonging to the sheikhdoms along the Oman coast, even interfering in 1865 when the Saudis attacked Muscat.<sup>182</sup> The British Government then sent a mission to Riyadh headed by Colonel Lewis Pelly and two Royal Navy Officers, Dr Colville and Lieutenant Dawes,<sup>183</sup> who held official meetings with Prince Faisal bin Turki and Abdullah bin Faisal to convince them of Britain's peaceful intentions in the Persian Gulf and to make observations about the new Saudi State for a report to their own government.<sup>184</sup>

Faisal bin Turki's sons Abdullah and Saud disputed over the position of ruler. Abdullah defeated his brother and took control of Has'a from 1865 to 1871. The Ottomans claimed they wanted to support Abdullah in order to gain control of Has'a. On 20 April 1871, the Ottoman Viceroy in Mesopotamia, Medhat Pasha, sent a military campaign led by Nafith Pasha, which succeeded in bringing the Has'a region under Ottoman control.<sup>185</sup> They expelled Abdullah and Saud. It appears that this campaign angered the Indian Government, which wanted to secure the area and feared Ottoman expansion. In 1873 Abdullah Al-Faisal tried to restore Has'a from the Ottomans, but he failed. It appears that the British Government ignored his requests for help. It did not support him in this campaign, fearing that perhaps even Abdullah al-Faisal could not expand in the Gulf region, impose his influence on the Arab Gulf sheikhdoms, and keep the situation under British control. Saudi rulers continued to improve their relationship with Britain during the reign of Abdullah bin Faisal (second period of his rule) from 1875 to 1889, where the Saudi ruler vowed not to harm British nationals and pledged not to attack the Arab tribes allied with the British Government.<sup>186</sup> In 1888 the struggle between the sons of Faisal bin Turki resumed. Mohammed bin Abdullah Ibn Rashid took advantage of this

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<sup>182</sup> Wynbrandt, *A Brief History*, p.160.

<sup>183</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p.49.

<sup>184</sup> Pelly, Lewis, *Report on a Journey to Riyadh in Central Arabia* (London, Oleander Press, 2013), p.26.

<sup>185</sup> Williams, Seton, *Britain and the Arab States: a survey of Anglo-Arab relations, 1920-1948* (Westport: Hyperion, 1981), p.185.

<sup>186</sup> IOR/R/15/6/166(1), 12/04/1966, Memorandum from the British Embassy in Jeddah.

opportunity to eliminate the Saudi regime and took over the emirate of Najd, while Abdul Rahman and his sons moved to Kuwait until 1902.

Britain also observed the situation between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, with Charles Arnold Kemball, the British Resident in the Persian Gulf, reporting in mid-1902 on the events occurring in Riyadh, in particular Saud's control and Rashid's weakness.<sup>187</sup> After restoring Riyadh in 1902, Ibn Saud sent a letter to Colonel Arnold Kemball informing him of the position he envisaged for Britain in his future activities, and also conveying his interest in obtaining British protection.<sup>188</sup> However, Kemball did not respond to this message, as Ibn Saud was considered merely the governor in the Ottoman regions of al-Bab al-Aaly, whereas the interests of Kemball's country were concentrated along the coastal areas of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>189</sup> When British authorities compared Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, they determined that the latter was a more favourable ally because he was politically informed. Despite this observation, Britain remained impartial throughout the Saud–Rashid conflict, even though there was concern for Saud's control over Qatar and his threats towards Bahrain.<sup>190</sup> In 1903, Ibn Saud sent a delegation headed by Abdul Rahman bin Salman, a high-profile figure in Has'a, to meet the political agent in Bahrain, John Calcott Gaskin. This visit was intended to establish political relations that would engender support for the Saudis in their struggle against the Ottomans in the Arabian Peninsula, but Gaskin refused to provide any guarantee and simply relayed Salman's request to the British Government installed in India.

Louis Dane, the secretary of Foreign Affairs in India, expressed his government's official view that the lands of the House of Saud could not be made a British protectorate because they were under Ottoman rule, but he still believed that both sides could reach an

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<sup>187</sup> L/P&S/20/C239 (2), 01/11/1902, Report events from January 1902 to November 1902.

<sup>188</sup> IOR/R/15/1/475 (2), 14/05/1902, Letter from Abdulrahman ibn Saud to Arnold Kemball.

<sup>189</sup> L/P&S/20/FO12 (1), 22/05/1902, Cable from Arnold Kemball to the British Government of India (Simla).

<sup>190</sup> Howarth, *Desert King*, p.41.

agreement to establish relations between Ibn Saud and Britain.<sup>191</sup> The British Government discussed the feasibility of dispatching an envoy to Ibn Saud, but the Political Resident in Bushire, Kemball, did not agree with this proposal, claiming that the internal political situation in Riyadh was too unstable.<sup>192</sup> He also reported that Ibn Rashid was currently acquiring reinforcements that would allow him to defeat Ibn Saud, hence his insistence that sending an envoy from the British Indian Government to Ibn Saud could not be kept hidden from the Ottoman Empire, an observation that the British Foreign Office wholly agreed with.<sup>193</sup> The Marquess of Lansdowne then personally wrote on behalf of the British Government to Nicholas O’Conor, the British Ambassador in Istanbul, to assure him that the Indian Government would refrain from entering into any political relationship with Najd without prior approval from the British Government, which was wholly opposed to supporting Ibn Saud against Ibn Rashid.<sup>194</sup>

In 1904, as the alliance between the Ottoman Empire and Ibn Rashid strengthened further, Ibn Saud tried to revive a dialogue with the British in order to overpower the Ottoman Empire, thinking that Britain’s intervention was of paramount importance given the danger such an enemy posed for Najd and the larger region.<sup>195</sup> As a result, Ibn Saud bin Abdulrahman entered into correspondence with the British Resident, Sir Percy Cox, in the Persian Gulf. In March 1904, Ibn Saud expressed his opposition to Ottoman interference in the affairs of the region and requested British protection, another request that was ultimately ignored. In August, Ibn Saud sent another letter to Cox protesting against the armed intervention of the Ottoman Empire in support of Ibn Rashid and asking the British authorities to reconsider their policy towards the Saud–Rashid conflict and deter any further Ottoman involvement.<sup>196</sup> In addition,

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<sup>191</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24 (3), 07/11/1903, Letter from John Calcott Gaskin to Sir Arnold Kemball; V/23/81 (57), 1902–1903, Report from Sir Arnold Kemball to Louis Dane (Secretary of the Government of India in Simla).

<sup>192</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24 (1), 06/01/1904, Letter from Louis Dane to Sir Arnold Kemball.

<sup>193</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24 (3), 05/02/1904, Letter from Sir Arnold Kemball to Louis Dane.

<sup>194</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24 (1), 08/02/1904, Cable from the Marquess of Lansdowne to Sir Arnold Kemball.

<sup>195</sup> L/P&S/20/FO12 (1), 27/04/1904, Letter from Francis Crow to Nicholas O’Conor in Constantinople.

<sup>196</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24(4), 13/08/1904, Letter from Abdulrahman ibn Saud to George Knox; British Library, India Office, Residency Records, IOR/R/15/5/24(2). 30/08/1904, Letter from Sir Percy Cox to George Knox.

he warned that if Britain did not support him militarily and financially, he would accept an offer of assistance provided by Imperial Russia. In September 1904, Mubarak Al-Sabah of Kuwait tried to mediate between Ibn Saud and Cox, but Britain remained unresponsive to the continued overtures, preferring to limit its relations to the coastal Sheikhdoms in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>197</sup>

The British Government learned of the mediation undertaken by Abdul Rahman Al-Faisal by the Wali of Basra, Ahmad Pasha, to gain the trust of the Sublime Porte. As a reaction, the British Government stressed that the Ottoman Empire should not interfere in Ibn Saud's affairs, while the Government of British India proposed to appease Ibn Saud by protecting his country, a proposal that Cox again rejected.<sup>198</sup> Subsequently, Mubarak Al-Sabah and the Sheikh of Qatar tried to reconcile Britain and Ibn Saud by convincing Cox of the vital importance of protecting the Saudis. Although Cox consulted the British in India about establishing a limited alliance with Ibn Saud, the Foreign Office ultimately opposed any commitment to becoming involved in conflicts within the Arabian Peninsula, with John Morley, the Secretary of State for India, remaining adamant that a policy of non-interference was the only viable option.<sup>199</sup> In January 1906, the British Government voiced its concerns regarding Ibn Saud's intention to visit the Trucial Coast and Oman, thus indicating their awareness of the significance of the Wahhabi presence in the region. Furthermore, Britain was concerned about the security of the sheikhdoms in the region, hence the request for Cox to substantiate this perceived threat by determining Mubarak Al-Sabah's willingness to remain neutral regarding the affairs of any Arab tribe that was allied with Britain.<sup>200</sup> The British Government warned Ibn Saud not to interfere with any of the sheikhdoms already in Treaty

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<sup>197</sup> L/P&S/20/FO13 (2), 03/09/1904, Cable from Sir Percy Cox to The Government of British India.

<sup>198</sup> L/P&S/20/FO13 (1), 05/09/1904, Telegram from Sir Percy Cox to the Government of India; IOR/R/15/5/59(2), 07/09/1904, Letter from C.L. Russell to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>199</sup>, L/P&S/10/50(3), 16/09/1906, Letter from Sir Percy Cox to John Morley.

<sup>200</sup> L/P&S/20/FO31 (1), 11/1/1906, Letter from John Morley to Sir Percy Cox.

relations with Britain and informed him that Britain would provide them with all the military resources required to defend themselves against attack.<sup>201</sup> According to Khàzal,<sup>202</sup> the relationship between Ibn Saud and Mubarak al-Sabah began to deteriorate, particularly following the victories of Ibn Saud in Najd.<sup>203</sup> In response, al-Sabah sought to persuade Britain not to interfere in Najd's affairs in order to satisfy the Ottoman Government.<sup>204</sup>

Al-Sàdoun<sup>205</sup> argues that Mubarak al-Sabah began to abhor Ibn Saud after his victory over Ibn Rashid. According to Saadoun, Mubarak al-Sabah began to fear Ibn Saud as he observed the balance of power shift in the latter's favour. According to Philby,<sup>206</sup> concerns were raised in October 1904 following Ibn Saud's victory against the combined forces of Ibn Rashid and the Ottomans. Nonetheless, Mubarak al-Sabah began to change his relationship with Ibn Saud. He also complained to the British Government about Ibn Saud's attempts to contact the Gulf sheikdoms. Al-Sabah opposed such contacts, as pointed out by Cox, because he did not want Ibn Saud to use any port other than that in Kuwait.<sup>207</sup> Al-Saadoun and Philby are correct in identifying that Al-Sabah knew that, if Ibn Saud got what he desired in Najd, he would then extend his power to annex Al-Sabah's own region and perhaps use any port other than Kuwait.<sup>208</sup> In 1905, to restore balance, Mubarak al-Sabah accepted the offer made by Khalid Pasha, the Sheikh of Zubair, to mediate with Ibn Rashid, who proposed that he pledge to remain neutral in the conflict of Najd. As relations between Al-Sabah and Ibn Saud had deteriorated further,<sup>209</sup> both parties exercised caution until 1908, when a triple alliance

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<sup>201</sup> L/P&S/20/FO31 (1), 22/02/1906, Letter from Alfred Godely, Ministry of India, London to Foreign Affairs.

<sup>202</sup> Ḥussīn Khaz'ī, *Tārīkh al-Kūyūt al-syāsy* [*Kuwait's Political History*] (Bīyrūt, Maktabt al-hilāl, 1962), p.241.

<sup>203</sup> L/P&S/10/50(2), 13/10/1906, Letter from George Knox to Sir Percy Cox; L/P&S/20/FO31 (1), 23/02/1906, Letter from Sir Percy Cox to the Government of British India.

<sup>204</sup> L/P&S/10/50(8), 06/11/1906, Memorandum issued by the Ministry of British India, entitled 'British Relations with the Emir Wahhabi'.

<sup>205</sup> Al-s'dūn, Khalid, *Al-'alāqāt bīn Najd wa Al-Kwūūt* (Al-Rīyāḍ: dārat al-Malik bdual z'īyz, 1983), p.114.

<sup>206</sup> Philby, Harry St John, *The Heart of Arabia* (London: Constable, 1922), p.213.

<sup>207</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24, 03/02/1906, Letter from George Knox to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>208</sup> L/P&S/20/FO31 (1), 19/01/1906, Letter from George Knox to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>209</sup> Khaz'ī, *Tārīkh al-Kūyūt*, p.186; Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.3; L/P&S/7/190(4), 11–17/06/1906, Periodic report from Arthur Trevor on behalf of the Resident in the Gulf.

consisting of the Wali of Basra, Talib al-Naqib,<sup>210</sup> Sheikh Khàzal, the governor of Muhammarah, and Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, convinced Al-Sabah to stop interfering in the political affairs of Najd.<sup>211</sup>

In February 1906, Ibn Saud tried to test Britain's reaction to his attempts to extract Has'a from the Ottoman grip. He therefore sent Mosàd Ben Sweilem as an envoy to Prideaux, the British Political Agent in Bahrain, in order to reach a formal agreement with Britain. However, Prideaux held the same position of his government; he preferred not to get involved in the affairs of the region.<sup>212</sup> In May 1906, Ibn Saud defeated Ibn Rashid and killed approximately 250 of his troops. He then dispatched correspondence to the British authorities in Jeddah, Basra, Istanbul and Baghdad, informing them of the victory, an act which raised further concerns for O'Connor in Istanbul.<sup>213</sup> In 1908, the British Consul in Muscat reported to his Government in India that Ibn Saud had become the Emir of Najd and was now officially recognized by the Bedouin tribes.<sup>214</sup> Consequently, the Ottoman Empire realized that Ibn Saud had become a significant political force in the region and decided to offer a monthly stipend of 220 lira in return for a guarantee that he would seek only their support in the future.<sup>215</sup> This gesture was also intended to ensure that the Ottoman Empire could obtain secure passage for its pilgrims, in particular against attacks by Bedouin Wahhabis.<sup>216</sup>

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<sup>210</sup> Talib al-Naqib (1862-1929) was born in Basra and became a member of the Ottoman Parliament in 1909. Exiled to India between 1915 and 1921, he returned to Baghdad to become the Interior Minister (1920–1921). (Dougherty, Beth K, Edmund A. Ghareeb, *Historical Dictionary of Iraq* (Plymouth, Scarecrow Press, 2013), p.443.

<sup>211</sup> IOR/R/15/1/478, 09/02/1906, Letter from Francis Prideaux, British Political Agent in Bahrain, to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>212</sup> IOR/R/15/1/478(5), 09/02/1906, Letter from Francis Prideaux to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>213</sup> L/P&S/20/F031 (1), 01/05/1905, Letter from Nicholas O'Connor (British Ambassador in Constantinople) to Edward Grey, British Foreign Minister.

<sup>214</sup> IOR/R/15/1/710(111), 1907–1908, Report from the Political Resident in the Gulf, Sir Percy Cox, for the year 1907–1908.

<sup>215</sup> IOR/R/15/5/24, 17/03/1909, Letter from George Knox to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>216</sup> L/P&S/7/227, 15–21/03/1909, Political Report from Sir Percy Cox.

## 1.7. Summary

Saudi attempts to achieve rapprochement with Britain were not based on speculation or presumption, but real knowledge about Britain's political power and strategic interests in the Middle East, especially the Arabian Peninsula. The pursuit of rapprochement was motivated by the fact that Ibn Saud required British protection in both the short and long term, and he needed the guarantee of immediate assistance should the Ottoman Empire invade his territories, as well as Britain's support should he decide to reclaim regions such as Has'a from Ottoman control. It can be argued that the main motive behind Ibn Saud's desire to control Najd was his intention of restoring the rule of his ancestors in the region. Despite this, one must also consider the hatred he felt towards the Ottoman Empire for torturing his predecessors during the era of the First Saudi State, hence his willingness to seek an alliance with the British Government, which enjoyed a position of hegemonic authority in the region.

Ibn Saud tried on a number of occasions to befriend the British Government in order to gain its political and economic support, but officials remained committed to neutrality since they saw no benefit in supporting Ibn Saud and risking the possibility of complicating its pre-existing relations with the Ottoman Empire, which supported Ibn Rashid. Nevertheless, although Britain warned Mubarak Al-Sabah not to intervene in Najd's internal affairs, he provided financial support and military assistance to Ibn Saud in his campaign against Ibn Rashid, something the British Government largely overlooked. In 1904, British India chose Kuwait to be the primary source of military armaments for Ibn Saud. Due to Al-Sabah's position in the struggle within the Arabian Peninsula, the British Government agreed to delay its proposed weapon import ban.<sup>217</sup> Following his victories, Ibn Saud tried to improve his relations with the Ottoman Empire and appointed Mubarak Al-Sabah to serve as mediator with

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<sup>217</sup> L/P&S/18/B164 (10), 01/1908, Memorandum from the Political Department of the Ministry of India about Britain's relations with the Wahhabis; L/P&S/18/B166 (34), 18/03/1908, Memorandum from the British Foreign Office about British interests in the Gulf.

the British Government, which was now finally beginning to recognise the power of the Saud family in the Arabian Peninsula under his stewardship.<sup>218</sup> Ibn Saud's aim was to expand its influence in the Arabian Peninsula, so as not to enter into a direct confrontation with the Ottoman Empire.

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<sup>218</sup> L/P&S/7/232(10), 08/1909, Report from Sir Percy Cox.

## Chapter Two: Control of Has'a and Direct Contact with Britain, 1910–1916

### 2.1. Introduction

This chapter examines the annexation of Has'a, including its coming under the rule of Ibn Saud and into direct contact with the British, Ibn Saud's relationship with the Ottomans, and the role of Captain William Henry Shakespear in the evolution of Anglo-Saudi relations. It seeks to clarify the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Saudi Arabia, and specifically the role of this relationship in realising the strategic interests of both sides in the central Arabian Peninsula. The beginning of this relationship was marked by caution on the part of Ibn Saud, and violence at other times in the period 1909-1918. This violence was due to Ibn Saud's growing power and Ottoman military pressure on him to follow them.

The authorities in Istanbul were disappointed that Ibn Saud seized control of Riyadh from Ibn Rashid. This initiated an increase in communication between Ibn Rashid and Fakhri Pasha, the Wali (Provincial Governor) of Basra, in March 1902, with Ibn Rashid seeking financial and military aid to support his war against the nascent Saudi Government. However, Istanbul ignored Ibn Rashid's requests and instead only granted him *Wisam Al Iftikhar*<sup>219</sup> (an honorary award). One of the reasons Istanbul ignored Ibn Rashid is that Ibn Saud had announced his loyalty to the Ottoman Sultan and that his conflict was purely with Ibn Rashid,<sup>220</sup> which was viewed as an inter-Arab matter between the two.<sup>221</sup> However, Ibn Saud succeeded in defeating Ibn Rashid in the battles of Bakyreya and Shnana in 1904.<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>219</sup> An Osmani military decoration, created by Sultan Abdul Hamid and given to selected men in the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>220</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, p.427.

<sup>221</sup> Jacob Goldberg, 'Philby as a Source for Early Twentieth-Century Saudi History: A Critical Examination', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 21.2 (Apr. 1985), pp. 223-243.

<sup>222</sup> Al-bukīryīh and Shnānah are in Qassim County (central Saudi Arabia), where a battle between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud occurred in June and July 1904, with victory going to Ibn Rashid (Al-'Uthaymīn, *Tārīkh al - mamlakah*, p.202).

In 1905, Ibn Saud had taken total control of Al Washim in Sadir, the northern part of Najd, and had managed to defeat the Ottoman-Rashid ally, Abdulaziz bin Mut'ib. The Ottomans realized Ibn Rashid's inability to maintain control of the region. Consequently, the Ottomans began deploying military aid to Ibn Rashid and his allies from Baghdad and Has'a. This was possibly because the Ottomans thought that Ibn Saud would be invited to become a British ally, defecting as the Sheikh of Kuwait had previously.<sup>223</sup>

In 1905, the relationship between Ibn Saud and the Ottomans was characterized by the exchange of messages between them, where the former confirmed his devotion and loyalty to the Ottoman state, begged it to pay him his pension emoluments, which were several months behind,<sup>224</sup> and contact Ibn Saud Wali Baghdad Ahmed Faidi Pasha and mediated Talib al-Naqib Wali Basra and Sheikh Kuwait Mubarak Al-Sabah to mediate between him and the Ottomans, and across Ibn Saud in his letter to the governor of Baghdad, for his loyalty to the Ottoman state and pledged to carry out her wishes.<sup>225</sup>

In February 1905, negotiations were held in Safwan,<sup>226</sup> on the border between Kuwait and Basra, between Mukhles Pasha, Wali of Basra, for the Ottomans, and Imam Abdul Rahman Bin Faisal (the father of Ibn Saud) and Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah, to discuss measures to prevent Ibn Rashid from interfering in the affairs of Najd.<sup>227</sup> The Ottoman Empire recognised the virtue of Ibn Saud's rule in the Najd region and agreed not to interfere in his affairs. In return Ibn Saud recognized the Ottoman presence in Qassim.<sup>228</sup>

As shown above, the Ottoman Empire tried to give Ibn Saud control of Najd to maintain the loyalty of local rulers who were under Ibn Saud's control, thereby keeping the area

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<sup>223</sup> Lutsky, V. *Tā'rīkh al-aqtār al-'al-qtār al-Hadīth* (Beirut: Dār al-Farābī, 2007), p.177.

<sup>224</sup> L/P&S/20/F031 (1), (10/02/1905), Letter from Walter Townley the British Chargé d'affaires in Constantinople to Marquess of Lansdowne, the British Foreign Secretary.

<sup>225</sup> L/P&S/20/F031 (2), (15/01/1905), Telegram sent by Ibn Saud to the Ottoman Sultan.

<sup>226</sup> Village located 17 miles south of Zubayr, 56 miles north of Jahra in Kuwait, comprising a few houses and palm trees (Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, p. 3041).

<sup>227</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, p. 1706.

<sup>228</sup> FO248/842, 20, (26/02/1905), Confidential report from Arthur Trevor the British Political Resident in the Gulf.

subordinate to the Ottoman Empire. Ibn Saud had to accept this, since he had not yet settled in the area and could not confront the Ottomans. On the other hand, the Ottomans were keen on maintaining their relationship with Al Sabah and on being part of the Safwan negotiations in order to win his loyalty, and not allow it to be diluted by his penchant for the British Government.

In 1906, the Ottomans deployed their forces in Yemen to confront the revolution of Imam Yahya Hamidaldean.<sup>229</sup> However, despite this demonstration of force, the situation worsened in Najd, especially in Al Qassim. The Ottomans were distant from their bases, surrounded by rebellions, and cut off from food, water or medicine, leading to widespread demoralisation and desertion. Ibn Saud was aware of the risks that engulfed the Ottomans in Yemen and Hijaz, along with the mass unrest in the rest of the Arab states and the Balkans. However, this unrest caused Ibn Saud to avoid direct confrontation with the Ottomans, preferring to rely on armed groups to neutralize the Ottomans' presence in Al Qassim. Ibn Saud used this chaos as an opportunity to lead his attack on Ibn Rashid, and successfully defeated him in the Battle of Rowdha Muhana on 13 June 1906, in which Ibn Rashid was killed.

In 1908, Ibn Saud was able to expel the Turkish garrison in Al Qassim and so the Najd region came under his control. In 1909 the Union and Progress Association, led by Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, proceeded to overthrow Sultan Abdul Hamid and with the announcement of the constitution he was arrested and sent into exile. Ibn Saud was satisfied with this shift because of his hatred of the rulers of the Ottoman Empire, who had previously controlled Najd, and supported Ibn Rashid.

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<sup>229</sup> Imam Yahya Hamid al-Deen's revolution for independence against the Ottoman Empire led to the Da'an agreement on 9 October 1911, which was approved by Furman Osmani in 1913, stating that security and peace in Yemen would be achieved within ten years. See: Eugene L. Rogan, *Frontiers of the State in the Late Ottoman Empire: Transjordan, 1850-1921* (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.16.

In 1550, the Has'a area had been under Ottoman rule since the reign of Sultan Suleiman the Magnificent (Kanuni).<sup>230</sup> In 1670 Has'a was under the control of the Bani Khalid rulers led by Barak Ben Greer.<sup>231</sup> In 1795, the expansion of the first Saudi state meant that Has'a came under its control. In 1818, Ibrahim Pasha<sup>232</sup> occupied Najd and took control of all the areas that followed it, including the Has'a. In 1871, Midhat Pasha, the Wali of Baghdad,<sup>233</sup> tried to seize on the opportunity of the dispute between the two brothers, on the authority of Abdullah bin Faisal and his brother Saud. Midhat Pasha decided to take a military force from Mesopotamia to Has'a, intending to help Abdullah bin Faisal and bring the wisdom of the Has'a, because he was appointed by the Ottoman Empire to be the mayor of Najd and any affiliated cities under the rule of Ibn Saud. When the Ottomans helped Abdullah bin Faisal their goal was to control the Has'a, but after the Ottoman occupation, Has'a refused to submit to Abdullah bin Faisal, and remained under Ottoman sovereignty until 1913.

When the Ottomans claimed Has'a, they closed all roads leading to the interior of Najd from the sea, which gave them control of Arab trade and movement in the area from 1871 to 1893. Ibn Saud's leaders realized the danger the Ottomans posed and started to resist the occupation by force, which ultimately failed.<sup>234</sup>

Ottoman rule over Al Has'a was known for its militancy, but even after two years of occupation, the Ottomans still found it extremely difficult to control the tribes of the territory. Additionally, the public began to criticise the performance of the Ottoman forces in managing

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<sup>230</sup> Suleiman's reign has been considered a golden age of Ottoman civilization. A man of broad culture, with a deep knowledge of the Koran and religious thinking, and was the tenth and longest-reigning sultan of the Ottoman Empire from 1520 to his death in 1566, Clot, André, *Suleiman the Magnificent*, (London: Saqi Books, 2012), p.162.

<sup>231</sup> Barak Ben Greer bin Othman bin Masoud Hamid, the head of the Bani Khalid (1666-1682), seized Has'a from the Ottomans. (Kh'zal, *Tārīykh al-jazīrah al-'rbīyah*, p.256).

<sup>232</sup> In 1838, Mohammed Ali Pasha's son demolished the Wahhabi threat by razing the Al Sa'ud capital of al-Dir'iyah. He then took some of the al-Saud and the Najdi people to Istanbul and killed them there, Peterson, *Historical Dictionary*, p.113.

<sup>233</sup> Midhat Pasha was appointed Wali of Bagdad and Basra in 1878. He made civic improvements, widening streets and improving sanitation. He died in Taif (modern Saudi Arabia) in 1883, Haj, Samira, *The Making of Iraq, 1900-1963: Capital, Power, and Ideology*, (Albany: State University of New York, 1997), p.25.

<sup>234</sup> Onley, *Britain and the Gulf Sheikdom*, p.9.

the needs of Has'a, as they were enforcing exorbitant tax increases, resulting in numerous uprisings. Has'a remained a source of distress for the Ottomans due to lootings and corruption, and the Al Has'a province included some cities that accepted Ibn Saud and some that rejected his rule. The latter aligned with the Ottomans against Ibn Saud, while the former accepted him because they believed the Ottomans were corrupt and had been looting. Therefore, the province was divided upon itself, and became one of the first territories to seek autonomy from Ottoman authority.<sup>235</sup>

Ibn Saud's ambition was to add Al Hijaz to his authority. One of the main reasons to occupy Al Has'a was to remove the Ottoman embargo on Najd, as the Ottomans occupied an important trade access route. Furthermore, it was important to end the occupation in order to stop tribal attacks in Ajman, Al Mura and the trading lines to and from Kuwait. Ibn Saud laid claim to the conflicted territories for the House of Saud.<sup>236</sup>

## **2.2. Relationship between Ibn Saud and the Ottomans**

The Ottoman Empire was clearly interested in intervening in any dispute within its affiliate states, to demonstrate its power both to British authorities and the states concerned. This was clear in the battle of Hadia,<sup>237</sup> between Mubarak Al-Sabah and Ibn Saud on one side, and Saadoun bin Mansour Al-Sadoun, chief of the Al-Muntafiq tribe,<sup>238</sup> who had attacked and robbed some of the tribal followers of Ibn Sabah. This made Bin Sabah angry. He asked Saadoun to return what had been stolen, but Saadoun and his companions ignored his request. Consequently, Mubarak Al-Sabah sought the help of Ibn Saud to defeat Saadoun in a battle, in

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<sup>235</sup> Anscombe, Frederick, *The Ottoman Gulf and the creation of Kuwait, Sa'udi Arabia and Qatar, 1871-1914* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.18–19.

<sup>236</sup> Mufiyd Al-Zīdy, *'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa'ūd*, p.59.

<sup>237</sup> For more information about the Battle of Hadia, see Al-s'dūn, Khalid, *Al-'laqt bīn Najd wa Al-Kūyāt [The Relationship Between Najd and Kuwait]* (al-Rīyād: dārat al-Malik b'dual zīy, 1983), pp. 121–128.

<sup>238</sup> Saadoun bin Mansour al-Saadoun won the title of Pasha in 1904, when Abdulaziz Ibn Rashid between him and the Ottoman Caliph.

March 1910, but Saadoun defeated Bin Sabah and Ibn Saud's forces.<sup>239</sup> According to Saadoun, Ibn Saud entered this battle because the chief of Al-Muntafiq had formed an alliance with Zamel Al-Sabhan,<sup>240</sup> the guardian of the Emir of Ha'il, which was a threat to Ibn Saud.

The Ottoman documents demonstrate that Ibn Saud had sought assistance from Bin Sabhan, who refused his request.<sup>241</sup> Also, from the above, it seems that Ibn Saud was involved in the war at Bin Sabah's insistence.<sup>242</sup> So, too, it appears that the Ottoman Empire was not happy about the fighting between the two parties.

There are two documents with different perspectives. According to the British report, sent by Shakespear, the British political agent in Kuwait, to Sir Percy Cox, the British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Mubarak Al-Sabah was assured that the Ottoman authorities were pleased by the attack on Sheikh Saadoun.<sup>243</sup> The Ottoman document, on the other hand, states that the Ottoman Empire was concerned about the conflict between the two parties and assigned the state of Basra to follow up any emerging concerns because of its location.<sup>244</sup>

The state of Basra viewed what was happening as a riot, which meant it could not stand by as a spectator. Although it admitted that Saadoun was the one who assaulted some of Sheikh Mubarak's tribes,<sup>245</sup> the state of Basra worked to prevent the fighting between the two sides because of the harm that would come to the reputation of the Ottoman Government.<sup>246</sup> Furthermore, there are several Ottoman documents which cover the importance of taking adequate measures to prevent any likely clash. It would therefore seem that the Ottoman Empire had no desire for a dispute between the two parties, so that it could keep its reputation

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<sup>239</sup> Philby, *Heart of Arabia*, p.74.

<sup>240</sup> Zamel Bin Salim al-Sabhan fought a number of battles with Ibn Saud. He also restored the dignity and political power of Ha'il. He was killed by Saud al-Sabhan in 1914. (Al-Sabaani, Saud, *Britain's Lackeys: Pawns of Percy Cox and Henry McMahon*, II (Al-Qāhirah: Shams Lilnashir, 2016), pp. 436–441.

<sup>241</sup> IOR/R/15/1/479, 30/03/1910, Report from William Shakespear in Kuwait to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>242</sup> Ottoman Archive, Interior, DH.UMI 75/71, 12/05/1910, from the Wali of Basra to the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>243</sup> IOR/R/15/1/479, 30/03/1910, Report from William Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>244</sup> DH. MUI 75/71, P (3), 30/02/1328-11/03/1910, from the Wali of Basra to the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>245</sup> DH. MUI 75/71, P (3), 30/02/1328-11/03/1910, from the Wali of Basra to the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>246</sup> DH.UMI 75/71, P (7), 08/03/1328-20/03/1910, Letter from the Deputy Commander of the sixth army in Baghdad to the Ministry of War.

clean. Nevertheless, as evidenced by the British documents, Mubarak Al-Sabah considered it to be a matter of pride. Therefore, Bin Sabah sought to punish Saadoun, which is why he claimed that the Ottoman Empire was happy about the war. An objective view of this contradiction is that the Ottoman Empire was not supportive, since it mediated between the two sides, so confirming the authenticity of the Ottoman documents.<sup>247</sup>

As for the relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Ibn Saud, Suleiman Nazif, the governor of Basra, emphasised that Saadoun asked him to mediate in the dispute between Saadoun and Ibn Saud.<sup>248</sup> For that reason, he sent Soad Bak<sup>249</sup> to reconcile the two parties. The administrator of Basra emphasised that the goal of such a reconciliation was to show off the influence of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>250</sup>

In 1908, the Committee of Union and Progress led a revolution in the Ottoman capital. The aim was to reinstate parliamentary and municipal elections. However, some Arab provinces did not participate actively in the elections because of the physical distance and lack of knowledge of the Turkish language. The discussion below focuses on Najd, since it was the heart and centre of Ibn Saud.

Ibn Saud sent Mahmoud Maher Bak to Has'a to apologize for not sending delegates to the Chamber of Deputies because nobody did take any census for, in addition to lack of knowledge of the Turkish language.<sup>251</sup>

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<sup>247</sup> DH.UMI 75/71. P (13), 11-06-1328-20/06/1910, from Nathif basha to Wali Al Basra.

<sup>248</sup> Suleiman Nazif Pasha (1868-1927) was a Turkish poet and historian. He was appointed ruler of Basra, followed by Mosul and Baghdad. Aboul-Enein, Youssef. H, *Iraq in turmoil: Historical Perspectives of Dr. Ali Al-Wardi, from the Ottoman Empire to King Feisal* (Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2012), p.134.

<sup>249</sup> Ali Soad Bak was a graduate of Administrative Sciences from Istanbul who was appointed as an administrative official from 1909 to 1911. He also wrote books about his journeys to Has'a, Bahrain and Medina.

<sup>250</sup> DH.MUI.75 / 71. Paper (10). 05/07/1910, Secret telegram sent from the state of Basra to the Ministry of Interior about the reconciliation between Ibn Saud and the Chief of al-Muntafiq.

<sup>251</sup> Qūrshūn, Zakrīyā. *Al- 'Uthmānīyyn wa al-su 'ūd fīy al 'rshīy Al- 'Uthmānīy 1745–1914* (Bīyrūt: Dār al-Kātib al- 'Arabī, 2005), p.223.

As for the tribes of Najd and Al-Qassim, which were subject to King Abdulaziz, the governor of Median, Osman Basha,<sup>252</sup> suggested involving them in the Chamber of Deputies. He wrote to the Ministry of Interior that the selection of a representative for Ibn Rashid and another for Ibn Saud would bring their followers closer to urbanisation.<sup>253</sup> It seems that this suggestion was sent at the end of that year. The council apologised to him that it could not consider his suggestion, although it would be taken into account.<sup>254</sup>

Here, it is appropriate to consider the participation of tribes belonging to Ibn Saud in the Chamber of Deputies. There are two opinions. First, the Ottoman staff in the nearby provinces of Najd believed that allowing delegates from Ibn Saud would result in public benefit for the State, even if the standard conditions were not met by the candidates. On the other hand, some people, such as influential and high-profile figures in the Government, insisted on certain preconditions, such as knowledge of the Turkish language, being met by members of the Chamber of Deputies.<sup>255</sup> The Government agreed with the latter opinion, since the tribes of Ibn Saud did not fulfil such conditions.<sup>256</sup>

On the other hand, Ibn Saud was not sure about participating in parliamentary life. Perhaps this hesitation was caused by the presence of the Ottoman Empire, as Ibn Saud wanted to get rid of all restrictions imposed by the Ottoman authorities. In fact, he longed to expand his influence and control over Has'a.<sup>257</sup> Therefore, too, the Ottoman Empire was not enthusiastic about choosing envoys from Najd and some other territories because they were afraid of the opponents of a federal government.<sup>258</sup>

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<sup>252</sup> Osman Fareed Bak was the illiterate governor of Medina during the reign of Sultan Abdul Hamid, *Abdulsalam Naqbadishi, the Complete Works* (Medina, Abdulkasoud Khawaja, 2005), p. 98.

<sup>253</sup> DH.UMI.75/35, Letter from the Governor of Medina to the Ministry of Interior about choosing a representative for Ibn Saud in the Chamber of Deputies, 02/10/1910.

<sup>254</sup> DH.UMI.75/35, Letter from the Ministry of Interior to the Governor of Medina, 17/03/1910.

<sup>255</sup> Mufrh, Sāid. *Sīyasat Aldūh Althmānīyih tjāh Almalk 'bdal z'z 1902–1918*, (Riyadh: King Saud University, 2006), p.118.

<sup>256</sup> M.V.162/42, MV.236/32.

<sup>257</sup> Qūrshūn, *Al- 'thmānīyūn uww al-s 'ūd*, p. 326.

<sup>258</sup> B.E.O.302455. Report about Najd submitted to the Grand Vizier. (28/4/1912).

In 1912, Mohammed Taher Effendi, governor of Basra, sent a telegram to the General Department of War in Istanbul, telling them that Ibn Saud could be useful in eliminating Mohammed Bin Idrissi in Asir in exchange for supporting him with money and equipment.<sup>259</sup>

Arabic sources agree with the Ottoman documents regarding the proposal, but they provide another reason that led to the failure to get things done.<sup>260</sup> Al-Rīhānī and Mukhtar assume that Ibn Saud refused the Ottoman proposal, saying, ‘Arabs do not fight for the sake of the Turkish nations. Al Edrisi and he are allies.’ The Ottoman documents indicate that it did not exceed the official circles of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>261</sup> In fact, the governor of Mecca, Sharif Hussein,<sup>262</sup> was consulted about the suggestion submitted by the state of Basra. Consequently, Sharif Hussein seized the opportunity to remind the Ottoman officials of what Ibn Saud had done to the soldiers of the Ottoman Empire in Al-Qassim about eight years previously. With respect to the suggestion of Basra, Sharif Hussein pointed out the distance between them, highlighting that Ibn Saud was trying to expand his power and influence as he did with the tribes of Hijaz.<sup>263</sup> On the other hand, the Ottoman Government sent a letter to the minister of war, expressing its opposition to Basra's suggestion.<sup>264</sup>

Considering the above, it appears that the Ottoman authorities did not inform or ask Ibn Saud to attack Al-Idrisi, but it was a matter discussed between the Ministry of Interior and the Ministry of War. It appears unlikely that Ibn Saud would accept such a request, because of the distance between him and Al-Idrisi. Also, Ibn Saud had known that there were three powers surrounding him. Furthermore, Ibn Saud was aware that he did not have enough power to raid the Ottoman Empire, and Britain did not guarantee his protection. So, it appears the Ottoman

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<sup>259</sup> DH.SYS.40/7-1. (19/6/1912), Secret cable from the State of Basra to the General War Department.

<sup>260</sup> Al-Rīhānīy, *Tāriykh Najd aw Mulḥqāthā*, p.181; Al-Mukhtār, *Tārikh Al-Mamlkah*, p.133.

<sup>261</sup> DH.SYS.40/7-1. (19/06/1912), Cable from the Ministry of Interior to the State of Basra.

<sup>262</sup> Hussein Bin Ali (1859–1931) became Emir of Mecca in 1908 (Teitelbaum, Joshua, *The Rise and Fall of the Hashimite Kingdom of Arabia* (London: Hurst, 2001), p.40.

<sup>263</sup> DH.SYS.40 / 7-2. (16/07/1912), Telegram from the Ministry of the Interior to the Minister of War.

<sup>264</sup> DH.SYS.40/7-1. (05/08/1912), Cable from Sharif Hussein to the Ministry of Interior.

documents give the most reliable account of the events, although Ibn Saud was tired of the Ottoman Empire's presence in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>265</sup>

In 1913, Ibn Saud managed to control Has'a, as the Ottoman Empire was unable to send a military campaign to Najd to reclaim Has'a from Ibn Saud, since it was busy fighting Italy and the Balkan powers. As a result, the Ottoman Empire was forced to recognize the sovereignty of Ibn Saud over Has'a and worked to gain his trust.<sup>266</sup>

The First World War began in August 1914 and the Ottoman Empire sought to lure the princes of the Arabian Peninsula to stand at its side in the war. To that end, the Ottoman authorities sent envoys to them loaded with gifts. This worked very well. Some of the princes were successfully lured, such as Imam Yahya Hamid Al-Din, the Imam of Yemen, and the Emir of Ha'il,<sup>267</sup> Saud Ibn Rashid.<sup>268</sup>

Similarly, Britain did the same to Sharif Hussein bin Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, the governor of Najd, Imam Yahya bin Hamid, the Imam of Yemen, and Mohammed Al-Idrissi, prince of Asir. Britain told them this alliance would help them to attain independence in the future.<sup>269</sup> Britain was keen to attract the princes of the Arabian Peninsula to this war because they controlled its transport routes to India.<sup>270</sup> Meanwhile, Ibn Saud had been watching the course of war in order to choose his perfect ally.

Throughout this period, the Ottoman Empire sent several pieces of correspondence and envoys to gain the trust of Ibn Saud. In fact, the Ottoman authorities sent Anwar Pasha,<sup>271</sup> its

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<sup>265</sup> L/P&S/10/827(15), 01/1912, Letter from William Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>266</sup> Anscombe, *Ottoman Gulf*, p.244.

<sup>267</sup> Hamm, *British Intelligence*, p.223. In 1914, Ha'il was not under the control of Ibn Saud, and was ruled by Emirs.

<sup>268</sup> Saud Bin Abdul Aziz Bin Miteb Bin Rashid (1898-1920) was Emir of Ha'il (1914-1920 and faced Ibn Saud in the 1915 Jerab battle, in which Shakespear was killed (Al-Zrkliy, Khir Al-din, *Al 'alam* (Biyūt: Dār Al-Im lilmalāiyyn, 2002), p.67.

<sup>269</sup> Hogarth, D.G., *A History of Arabia* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1922), p.184; Abedin, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud', p.132.

<sup>270</sup> Wahbah, *Ayyām 'arab 'iyah*, p. 175.

<sup>271</sup> Ismail Anwar Pasha (1881–1922) was a military commander. He was also a member of the Committee of Union and Progress. Chaurasia, Radhey, *History of the Middle East* (New Delhi: Atlantic Publishers, 2005), p.355.

Minister of War, with his troops to defend Basra, he request from Ibn Saud help them. Nevertheless, Ibn Saud refused to help them, explaining that he was busy with internal affairs.<sup>272</sup> The Ottoman Empire was keen to lure Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid. It therefore declared war, to inflame Muslims' spirits and gain their sympathy.<sup>273</sup>

In fact, Ibn Saud used Ibn Rashid as an excuse for not supporting the Ottomans so that he could maintain his relations with the British authorities, which sent Shakespear to build a good relationship with Ibn Saud, in exchange for British protection. Ibn Saud, therefore, preferred to stay neutral between the two sides.

The Ottomans tried to send a number of letters to Ibn Saud through Anwar Pasha, the Minister of War, and Tala'at Pasha,<sup>274</sup> the Minister of the Interior, asking for reconciliation with Ibn Rashid. They suggested that they could help one another, along with the Ottoman Empire, but Ibn Saud ignored these letters.<sup>275</sup> Consequently, Ottoman officials began sending delegations to negotiate with Ibn Saud and to remind him that he had previously agreed to support the Ottoman Empire with forces when needed. They chose Taleb Al Naqib to meet Ibn Saud because of his good relationship with the latter since the Al Sabiha negotiations.

The sole aim of sending delegations was to persuade Ibn Saud to cooperate with the Ottoman Empire. Al Sadoun said that Talib Al Naqib wanted to leave Al Basra before it fell under the control of the British, keeping this hidden from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>276</sup> This is surely accurate and it seems that, from the documents exchanged between Talib and Sir Percy Cox, Al Sadoun wanted to escape from Al Basra, seeking a safer place for his family, away from the Ottomans. On 12 November 1914, Talib Al Naqib arrived in Kuwait before heading to

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<sup>272</sup> IOR/R/15/5/25(1), 27/10/1914, Letter from William Grey the British Political Agent in Kuwait to the British Political Resident in the Gulf.

<sup>273</sup> IOR/R/15/5/25(2), 21/11/1914, Letter from William Grey to the British Political Resident in the Gulf.

<sup>274</sup> Mohammed Talaat Pasha (1974–1921) was part of the wartime triumvirate that ruled the Ottoman Empire and a co-founder of the Committee of Union and Progress (McNabb, *Oil and the Creation of Iraq*, p.62).

<sup>275</sup> Mufrh, *Sīyasat Aldūlh Alīhmānīyh*:203. Ottoman Archives, Interior, DH.SFR.47 / 14, 15/11/1914, Letter from Minister of the Interior to Ibn Saud.

<sup>276</sup> Al-S' dūn, Khalid, 'Sir rhlāt Tālib Al-Naqīyb ' lâ Najd 1914' (*Majalat Al-Khalīyj Al- ' rabīy, Jām 't Al-Başrah: Al- ' dd Al'ūal*, 1987), pp.97–111.

Buraidah<sup>277</sup> to meet Ibn Saud. It seems that the British officials were worried about Al Naqib, because he refused their offers to collaborate with them after the fall of Basra.

It appears that the campaign of Taleb Al-Naqib failed because of Ibn Saud's active pursuit of the creation of his own state. That is, when the Ottomans were weakened, Ibn Saud grew stronger. Ibn Saud, therefore, stayed neutral in the war.

After the failure of Talib Al-Naqib, the Ottomans renewed their endeavours, sending an envoy headed by Mohmoud Shukri Al-Alusi;<sup>278</sup> they tried to persuade Ibn Saud to join the Ottoman side. Ibn Saud welcomed the delegation<sup>279</sup> warmly, but he did not accept the offer for the British to control the waters of the Gulf. Nevertheless, Ibn Saud promised the Ottoman delegation that he would not prevent traders from supplying their army.<sup>280</sup>

One can conclude that Ibn Saud was aware that there was no benefit to supporting the Ottomans. Moreover, Ibn Saud had wanted to move the Islamic caliphate from the Ottomans to the Arabs, especially after taking over Najd and Has'a.

The Ottoman Empire continued its quest to attract Ibn Saud through Ghalib Pasha, the governor of Hijaz.<sup>281</sup> It used several means to seduce Ibn Saud, including offering him the rulership of Mecca if he joined the Ottoman Empire.<sup>282</sup> However, through his talks with the Ottomans, Ibn Saud realized that the dominant power in the region was the British Government, particularly after they occupied the coast of the Gulf and held a protection agreement with Bin Sabah.

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<sup>277</sup> Buraidah is the largest city in al-Qassim and was ruled by the family of Mehna, who were loyal to Ibn Rashid. After that, it was taken over by Ibn Saud (Al-Rūhāni, *Tāriykh Najd*, p.142).

<sup>278</sup> Mohmoud Shukri Al-Alusi was a reformer, historian, and author, born in Baghdad in 1957 (Al-Zrklī. 'lam, p.25).

<sup>279</sup> The delegation included Alaa al-Din al-Alusi and al-Haj Nuaman al-Atham besides Mohammed al-Alusi (Mufrih, *Siyasat Aldūlh Althmānīyih*, p.209).

<sup>280</sup> Vassiliev, *History*, p.389.

<sup>281</sup> Ghalib Pasha was a governor of Hijaz and chief-in-command in Mecca (Tauber, Eliezer, *Arab Movement in World War I* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p.63).

<sup>282</sup> Al-Zrklīy, *Shbh Al-jzīyah Al- 'rbūah*, p.216.

According to Vassiliev and Al-Rīhānī, when the First World War began, Ibn Saud seized the chance to strengthen his position in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>283</sup> He sent several letters to Sharif Hussein, Saud bin Rashid, Sheikh of Kuwait, and Mubarak Al-Sabah, to unveil their attitudes towards this war. However, Ibn Saud was deflated when Ibn Rashid informed him that he was supporting the Ottoman Empire.<sup>284</sup>

In 1915, Abdullah Bin Al-Hussein tried to learn of Ibn Saud's attitude towards the Ottoman Government. He sent him a letter, stating that the Ottomans asked his father to participate in Jihad with the other tribes. Ibn Saud replied that he had received a similar letter and told him that his participation had no value. This highlights that Ibn Saud was not impartial, and was planning to make a protection agreement with the British.

Ibn Saud tended to lean towards the British side because of their presence in the Gulf. Also, Britain did not aspire to take over Najd, since it is located in the desert. The British authorities were concerned about securing the maritime trade routes between the Gulf and India and so, fearing for their commercial interests in the Gulf, wanted to maintain good relations with all countries. Despite Ibn Saud's desire to form a close relationship with the British, he supported the Ottomans in Qatar.<sup>285</sup>

According to Daoud and Troeller, Ibn Saud did not support the Ottoman Empire due to the British financial support that was distributed to Arab rulers, particularly Sharif Hussein and Sheikh Khazaal.<sup>286</sup> This however is not likely, because Ibn Saud was also supported financially by the Ottomans; moreover, they offered him Mecca to rule. On the other hand, al-Khatrash

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<sup>283</sup> Al-Rīhānī, *Tāriykh Najd*, p.223; Vassiliev, *History*, p.214.

<sup>284</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.82.

<sup>285</sup> Vassiliev, *History*, p.403.

<sup>286</sup> Al-Dāūūd, Mohammed, *Al-khalīygh al-'Arabīy* (Baghdād: Maṭba'at Al-'rshād, 1980), p.89; Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.100.

believes that Ibn Saud did not support the Ottoman Empire because it refused to recognise the spiritual power of the Wahhabi movement.<sup>287</sup>

Keshek is doubtless correct that Ibn Saud, despite his hatred of the Ottomans, did not make any military moves against the Ottoman Empire, especially after restoring the Has'a region.<sup>288</sup>

In 1916, after the Arab Revolt of Sharif Hussein, Fakhri Pasha asked Ibn Saud to attack Sharif Hussein and control Mecca.<sup>289</sup> Ibn Saud did not respond to his request.

### 2.3. Captain Shakespear and Ibn Saud

William Irvine Shakespear was born in Punjab in October 1878 and died in 1915. He was from an English family and settled in Bengal. He trained at Sandhurst military school, then joined the army at Pompeii. He was assistant to a Political Resident in Muscat and later became a Political Resident in Kuwait. He mastered several languages, including Arabic. In addition, he established good relations with tribal leaders.<sup>290</sup>

Succeeding Knox, Shakespear was appointed as a political agent in Kuwait in 1909.<sup>291</sup> He was directly responsible for British-Kuwaiti relations, as well as monitoring circumstances and changes in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>292</sup> British documents state that Shakespear and Ibn Saud first met on 26 February 1910.<sup>293</sup>

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<sup>287</sup> Al-Khatrash, Fatūh, *Al-Tārikh Al-Sīyasī al-Kūyī fī 'hd Mubârk Al-Şbâh* (Kwūit: Dhat Al-Şalâs, 1985), p.89.

<sup>288</sup> Kishk, Muḥammad Jalâl, *Al-su 'ūdīyūn wa-al-ḥall al-islāmī: maşdar al-shar 'īyah lil-nizām al-su 'ūdī* (Al-Qāhirah: Al-Mṭb h Al-Fnīyah, 1984), p.461.

<sup>289</sup> Kandemir, Feridun, *Fahreddin Paşa'nın Medine Mudafaasi-Peygamberimizin Golgesinde son Türkler* (Istanbul: Yagmur Yayinevi, 2008), p.368.

<sup>290</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, pp.9–11.

<sup>291</sup> Beolens, Bo, Michael Watkins and Michael Grayson, *The Eponym Dictionary of Reptiles* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2011), p.98.

<sup>292</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, p. 68.

<sup>293</sup> OR/ R/15/1/479(3), 09/03/1910, Cable from William Shakespear to the British Political Resident in the Gulf; Jacob Goldberg, 'Captain Shakespear and Ibn Saud: A Balanced Reappraisal', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 22.1, Jan. 1986, pp.74–88.

According to Winstone, after meeting with Ibn Saud, Shakespear asked the British Government to change its policies with Ibn Saud. Also, in 1909, Captain Shakespear contacted the British authorities, speaking of stopping support to Ibn Rashid. He also asked that Ibn Rashid be prevented from controlling the Arabian Peninsula. However, no one responded to Shakespear's requests. Furthermore, S. H. Butler, State Secretary in India, communicated with Cox, underlining that Shakespear had to follow the policy of non-interference with the affairs of the Ottoman Empire in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>294</sup>

According to Al-Kabeer, Shakespear first met Ibn Saud in 1911,<sup>295</sup> whereas Al-Ananisays it was in 1910.<sup>296</sup> However, Winstone appears the most accurate, placing the meeting in 1910, in Kuwait.<sup>297</sup> He explains that there is a letter from Shakespear to Bushehr, the British political agent in the Gulf, dated 10 March 1910, which shows that Shakespear saw Ibn Saud in Kuwait.<sup>298</sup> Shakespear had made several trips on the Arabian Peninsula,<sup>299</sup> but an investigation of all of them is beyond the scope of this thesis. What matters here is Shakespear and his meetings with Ibn Saud.

The second meeting between Shakespear and Ibn Saud was on 7 January 1911, in Has'a. According to Amin, the British Government was not informed about Shakespear's trip.<sup>300</sup> This, however, seems unlikely, because British officials do not deviate from their government instructions. According to Winstone, Shakespear's visit to Ibn Saud was to gather information on the latest political developments in the region.<sup>301 302</sup> During his meeting with

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<sup>294</sup> Al-‘nānī, Ahmad, *Rh̄lāt al-kāb̄tn William Shakespear* (Al-rīyād: jāḡt al-rīyād, 1985), p.472.

<sup>295</sup> Al-Kabeer, Turkey, ‘alāqāt *Bryṭānīyā* ma‘ ibn Sa‘ūd, al-mū‘t̄mr al‘ālmīy ‘an tāriykh almalek ‘bdual‘zīz (Al-rīyād: jāḡt Al-‘mām Mohamed, 1985), pp. 9-32.

<sup>296</sup> Al-‘nānī, *Rh̄lāt al-kāb̄tn Shakespear*, p.472.

<sup>297</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, p.22.

<sup>298</sup> IOR/R/15/1/479(3), (10/03/1910-19/03/1910), Excerpts from the diary of William Shakespear.

<sup>299</sup> Shakespear prospered between 1909 and 1915, at which time he took a trip to Kuwait (Winstone, *Shakespear*, p. 79; IOR/R/15/1/479 (1), (23/03/1910), Cable from William Shakespear, the British political agent in Kuwait to Sir Percy Cox, the British Political Resident in the Gulf).

<sup>300</sup> Sa‘īd, Amīn, *Tārikh al-dawlah al-su‘ūdīyah*, (Bīyrūt: Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabī, 1948), p.65.

<sup>301</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, p.80.

<sup>302</sup> Al-Anani, *Rh̄lāt al-kāb̄tn Shakespear*, p.473.

Shakespear, Ibn Saud expressed his desire to strengthen his relations with Britain. He also talked about his hatred of the Ottomans and how they killed his ancestors during the Egyptian campaign.<sup>303</sup> In addition, Ibn Saud suggested that, if Britain helped him to eliminate the Ottomans, he would welcome a political agent in his country. This would be beneficial for British trade because Ibn Saud would secure and protect trade routes.<sup>304</sup>

From the above, it is clear that Shakespear was inspired by Ibn Saud's personality. He also hoped that his government would take the initiative to protect Ibn Saud. It seems that Shakespear did not expect Ibn Saud to have such positive qualities, as is mentioned in his report to Sir Percy Cox.<sup>305</sup>

In March 1913, Shakespear met Ibn Saud again. Ibn Saud welcomed the meeting. He said that he was delighted because the Ottoman Empire had a battle with Al-Balkans. Ibn Saud thought that the opportunity should be seized to free Has'a from the Ottoman forces.<sup>306</sup> However, Shakespear told him that he had no power pertaining to such decisions.

When Shakespear returned from Kuwait, he wrote a report to his government, through which he hoped to change the policy of Britain towards Ibn Saud.<sup>307</sup> All of this demonstrates that Shakespear's increased confidence in Ibn Saud. On 26 May 1913, Cox stated, in his response to Shakespear, that the Government of India recognized Ibn Saud as the independent governor of Najd.<sup>308</sup> The aforementioned indicates that Ibn Saud longed to take over Has'a during that period, to expand his influence and control in the region.

After some time, Ibn Saud was able to control Has'a and subsequently, he reformed his relations with Britain and the Ottoman Empire. The British Government was compelled to send

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<sup>303</sup> Goldberg, 'Captain Shakespear', pp. 74–88; L/P&S/7/248(6), (08/04/1911), Cable from William Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>304</sup> L/P&S/7/248(6), in 08/04/1911, Cable from William Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>305</sup> IOR /R/15/1/479(3), in 19/03/1910, Cable from William Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>306</sup> IOR / R / 15/05/27 (5), in 15/05/1913, Cable from William Shakespear to the British Political Resident in the Gulf.

<sup>307</sup> Goldberg, 'Captain Shakespear', p.74.

<sup>308</sup> FO.371 / 1820 (110543), 29/05/1913, Letter from Sir Percy Cox to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, Simla, No.1668, Bushire.

Shakespear to Ibn Saud in October 1914. Shakespear was chosen because he had knowledge of the Arabian Peninsula and had been on friendly terms with Ibn Saud. Britain was concerned about the Sharif of Mecca and the Red Sea coast. Furthermore, after occupying al-Basra, the British forces were threatened by some Arab tribes, such as Mutair and Otaiba. Shakespear's mission was to consolidate British relations with Ibn Saud, who could tame them.<sup>309</sup>

According to Saeed and Qasim, the British Foreign Office informed the Government of India about Shakespear's political agenda, which included maintaining peace and security in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula and preventing the Ottoman Empire from penetrating the region.<sup>310</sup> As for Britain, it would recognize Ibn Saud's achievements in Najd and Has'a.

On the other hand, Mubarak al-Sabah had been in correspondence with Ibn Saud, encouraging him to eschew the Ottoman Empire and German Government.<sup>311</sup> Also, the Ottoman Government had sent another delegation, headed by Talib al-Naqib, to persuade Ibn Saud to cooperate with the Ottoman Government. However, Ibn Saud rejected this request, because he distrusted the Ottomans and had a legacy of hostility with them. More importantly, Talib al-Naqib himself was not that supportive of the Ottomans. In fact, in his letter to Cox, he explained that he only accepted the mission because he feared for himself and his family.<sup>312</sup>

It is clear that Ibn Saud refused to enter the war in alliance with the British Government. He preferred to stay impartial, as usual. Besides, Ibn Saud made a vow to Shakespear that he would not engage in any hostile acts against Britain's allies, especially the Sharif of Mecca.<sup>313</sup>

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<sup>309</sup> Silverfarb, Daniel, 'The Anglo-Najd Treaty of December 1915', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 16.3, Oct. 1980, pp.167-177;

L/P&S/10/387(2), 29/11/1914, Cable from Sir Percy Cox to the secretary of the British Indian Government; FO 371/2143(57141), 05/10/1914, Cable from the British Ministry of India to William Shakespear.

<sup>310</sup> Sa'īd, *Tārīkh al-dawlah al-su'ūdīyah*, p.72; Qāsim, Jamāl Zakarīyā, *al-khlij ala'rbi alhadith aw alm'āshr* (Bīyrūt: dār al-fkr al'rbīy, 1997), p. 320.

<sup>311</sup> IOR/R/15/5/25, 14/10/1914, Letter from Sheikh Mubarak Al-Sabah to Ibn Saud.

<sup>312</sup> L/P&S/10/387, Letter from Talib al-Naqib to Sir Percy Cox, 10/12/191.,

<sup>313</sup> Goldberg, 'Captain Shakespear', pp.74-88.

Ibn Saud asked Shakespear to demand that his government officially recognise and provide protection to the House of Saud.<sup>314</sup> Ibn Saud's talks with Shakespear were the first step in building Saudi-British relations.

The British documents indicate that Ibn Saud wished to continue his friendship with Britain.<sup>315</sup> However, involving the Ottomans in the war put Ibn Saud in a critical position, so that he began to feel in dire need of Britain's assistance.

On 17 January 1915, Shakespear wrote to Sir Percy Cox that the British Government should adopt a positive attitude towards Ibn Saud. He also highlighted, in his report, that the proposed Treaty would give Britain many benefits, including political control of the rest of the Arabian Peninsula's leaders, as well as the ability to monitor their military moves and prevent any foreign power from interfering in the affairs of Najd and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>316</sup> Shakespear promised Ibn Saud that if he, Ibn Saud, cooperated with Britain in the war, the British authorities would guarantee his protection, as well as Britain's recognition.<sup>317</sup> Shakespear also suggested that his government should recognise Ibn Saud's independence and prevent any power, except Britain, from building a relationship with the House of Saud.<sup>318</sup> Shakespear remained resident in Riyadh, awaiting his government's response. But the British authorities in Cairo felt the importance of giving Ibn Saud some diplomatic significance.<sup>319</sup> Ibn Saud decided to prepare to fight Ibn Rashid. It seems that Shakespear's provocation of the Ottomans had paid off. Also, Shakespear offered to fight with Ibn Saud against Ibn Rashid, but Ibn Saud replied, 'it is good for our guests to rest themselves'.<sup>320</sup> Nevertheless, Shakespear

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<sup>314</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, p.74; L/P&S/10/387(2), 06/02/1915. Telegram from the Secretary of the Government of India to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>315</sup> IOR/R/15/5/25, Letter from Abdulaziz to Major Cox, 17/01/1915.

<sup>316</sup> IOR/R/15/5/25(2), 17/01/1915, from Captain Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox; L/P/&S/10/387(2), 06/02/1915, Telegram from the secretary of the Government of India to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>317</sup> Alenazy, *Creation of Saudi Arabia*, p.53; L/P&S/10/387(6), 04/01/1915, Report from Captain Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>318</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.86; IOR/R/15/5/25(2), 17/01/1915, from William Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>319</sup> Clayton, Gilbert F., *An Arabian Diary* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p.22.

<sup>320</sup> Al-Zīydy, *Tārīkh almamlakah*, p.73.

insisted on fighting alongside the people of Najd.<sup>321</sup> On 24 January 1915, the Jarab<sup>322</sup> war was launched between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, but no one triumphed. Nevertheless, Shakespear was killed in this war, while wearing the British military uniform.<sup>323</sup>

Sources differ regarding the death of Shakespear. According to Philby, Shakespear had contributed effectively to the fight,<sup>324</sup> while Bell and Winstone believe that he was filming and writing rather than fighting.<sup>325</sup> Yet others say that he was killed by Khalid bin Bilal, his cook, who accompanied him in the battle.<sup>326</sup> However, there is no evidence for this. If the British Government was aware of any disagreement between Khalid and Shakespear, it would no doubt be mentioned in the sources and documents. Perhaps Winstone's point of view is more probable, because Shakespear was fond of photography and writing. Therefore, it is believed that Shakespear was busy filming what was happening while wearing his military uniform, which made him an easy target. In truth, Britain lost a very significant person who participated in changing British policies.<sup>327</sup> Shakespear's death was also a loss to Ibn Saud who sent a letter to Sir Percy Cox asking him to send a substitute for Shakespear, but Cox did not show any willingness on this point.<sup>328</sup>

#### **2.4. The Darin Treaty and the annexation of Has'a**

In November 1871, the Ottomans took over Has'a. Medhat Pasha<sup>329</sup> formed a new administrative association with the Ottoman Empire. The province was then called Najd

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<sup>321</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, p.203.

<sup>322</sup> A water spring located in the east of al-Zalfi and in the north of al-Artaliyah.

<sup>323</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, pp. 271–272.

<sup>324</sup> *Ibid*, p.272.

<sup>325</sup> Gertrude Bell, *Review of the Civil Administration of Mesopotamia*, (London: His Majesty's Stationery Office, 1920), p.25; Winstone, *Shakespear*, p.209.

<sup>326</sup> Goldberg, 'Captain Shakespear', pp.74–88.

<sup>327</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, p.210.

<sup>328</sup> Howarth, *Desert King*, pp.86–88.

<sup>329</sup> Medhat Pasha was a ruler of the Ottoman Empire. From 1869–187, he was a governor of Basra. After that, he led a military campaign against Has'a and annexed it to the Ottoman Empire (Chaurasia, *History of the Middle East*, p. 316).

brigade. Mohammed Nafez Pasha<sup>330</sup> became administrative official of the province. The Ottoman Government took such step after internal conflict in the Saud family. It controlled Has'a, explaining that the authorities were defending the legitimate ruler, Abdullah.<sup>331</sup>

The Ottoman campaign influenced Najd because the annexation of Has'a had closed all roads leading to Najd. Thus, the Ottoman Empire tightened its grip on Najd from 1871 to 1893. The rulers al-Saud started to resist the Ottoman occupation of Has'a, but their attempts were unsuccessful.<sup>332</sup> According to Zaidi, Britain was not supportive of al-Saud's claims. It seems that Britain feared the expansion of al-Saud. Therefore, Britain kept the situation under its control without tipping the scale in favour of either side. The British Government was informed about the Ottoman campaign, and demonstrated its concern regarding the remaining Gulf areas. As a result, the British Government in London briefed the Government of India on the capital importance of protecting the region from any local or regional power.<sup>333</sup> However, this campaign stopped when Has'a was taken over.

According to Qasim and Aliwat, Ottoman rule was characterised by its military nature from the beginning.<sup>334</sup> But after two years of occupation, the Ottomans encountered multiple difficulties in controlling the tribes of the region.<sup>335</sup> Lorimer also believes that al-Has'a had become a source of concern and annoyance for the Ottoman Empire.<sup>336</sup> The internal turmoil in Has'a encouraged Ibn Saud to put an end to the Ottoman presence in the region.

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<sup>330</sup> Nafez Pasha was one of the leading commanders of the Ottoman Empire who led the Ottoman campaign against Has'a in 1871.

<sup>331</sup> There was conflict between the brothers Saud and Abdullah after the death of their father Faisal bin Turki in 1865. This led to the weakness and the fall of the Second Saudi government, because all of them claimed entitlement to rule, leading to the Ottoman state to take control of the country.

<sup>332</sup> Onley, James, 'Britain's Informal Empire in the Gulf, 1820-1971', *Journal of Social Affairs*, 22.87, 2005, p.41; Fattah, Hala, *The Politics of Regional Trade in Iraq, Arabia, and the Gulf, 1745-1900* (New York: University of New York, 1997), p.119.

<sup>333</sup> Canton, James *From Cairo to Baghdad: British Travellers in Arabia* (London: Tauris, 2011), p.58; Vincent, Peter *Saudi Arabia: An Environmental Overview* (London, Taylor and Francis, 2009), p.9.

<sup>334</sup> Qasim, *alkhlij ala'rbi*, p.200; Al-'lūāt, Moḥammed, *'lāqāt 'bdual 'zīz Ibn S'ūd fīy alqūiy almtūājdh fīy Najd uww alkhlij 1902-1922* (Ammān, al-jām'h al'urdnīh, 1996), p.104.

<sup>335</sup> Ottoman Archives. Interior. Political section, BOA.BEO 204266, 30/06/1912, Telegram issued by the sixth army commander.

<sup>336</sup> Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, p.1685.

Ibn Saud alluded to the British Government about his intention to annex Has'a. He also asked for British protection. However, the British Government ignored his requests and warned him off such actions. When Ibn Saud met Captain Shakespear in 1911, he explained to him that he wished to annex Has'a and Qatif. Furthermore, he wanted Britain to give him marine protection against any Ottoman attack. At the same time, Britain began talks with the Ottoman Empire to sign an agreement regarding its interests in the Persian Gulf.<sup>337</sup>

In 1912, Captain Gerard Leachman visited the Arabian Peninsula. He stopped in Riyadh, where Ibn Saud welcomed him. Nevertheless, Ibn Saud thought that Leachman was an Ottoman spy.<sup>338</sup> In 1913, Ibn Saud moved his troops towards Has'a. He wrote to the administrative official of Has'a, Nadeem Bak,<sup>339</sup> that he was coming and that he aimed to address the problem of looting tribes, such as the al-Ajman and al-Morah. To reassure the administrator, Ibn Saud sent some people<sup>340</sup> to buy some supplies from al-Hafuof.<sup>341</sup> But the governor of Has'a expressed his concerns about Ibn Saud's campaign. It seems that the real motive for sending people to buy supplies was in fact to investigate the region and see what power the Ottomans had.<sup>342</sup>

When there was a chance, Ibn Saud moved with 600 men in May 1913, and managed to control Has'a without any resistance from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>343</sup> After entering Has'a on 13 June 1913,<sup>344</sup> Ibn Saud wrote to Sir Percy Cox immediately, to inform him officially that he had just taken over Has'a, the land of his forefathers. Here, Ibn Saud emphasized his friendly feelings towards Britain, and since Britain was the sole powerful naval force in the region, Ibn

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<sup>337</sup> IOR/R/15/5/27(3), 18/03/1911, Letter from William Shakespear to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>338</sup> Bidwell, Robin, *Travellers in Arabia* (London: Hamlyn, 1976), p.158.

<sup>339</sup> Nadeem Bak Efendi was appointed as an administrator for Najd from 1911–1913, but known for his administrative weakness.

<sup>340</sup> There were six people led by Mohammed bin Shalhoub (Mufrah, *Sīyasat Aldūlh Althmānīyih*, p.126).

<sup>341</sup> DH.SYS.25 / 75, 02/04/1913, Secret telegram from the state of Basra to the Ministry of Interior on the arrival of Ibn Saud.

<sup>342</sup> L/P&S/10/827(20), 03/1913, Political report from Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>343</sup> L/P&S/10/384(1), 13/05/1913, Telegram from Sir Percy Cox to Edward Grey.

<sup>344</sup> L/P&S/10/384(1), 13/06/1913, Telegram from Ibn Saud to Sir Percy Cox.

Saud was keen to establish a good relationship with the British Government, so that it could protect him from any Ottoman attack.<sup>345</sup> On 19 September 1913, Sir Percy Cox replied to Ibn Saud, asking him to refrain from any actions that could escalate the current situation. In return, Britain would guarantee the good relations.<sup>346</sup> As for the Ottoman Empire, it sent a force led by Nours Bak to regain Has'a.<sup>347</sup> However, Ibn Saud again managed to defeat this attack.<sup>348</sup> Ottoman reactions varied. According to Philby, the officials in Has'a, Basra and Baghdad considered it vital to recapture Has'a,<sup>349</sup> whereas Al-Zīydīy and Mafrāh believe that there were some officials in the Ottoman capital who wanted to resolve the issue peacefully, because the Empire was encountering multiple international conflicts in the Balkans and with Italy.<sup>350</sup>

Nadeem Bak was ardent about restoring Has'a, so he sent several telegrams and letters to the state of Basra and the Ministry of Interior.<sup>351</sup> However, the Ottoman Empire did not pay much attention to this because they preferred a peaceful resolution. According to Korshoun, the Ottoman officials did not approve the military solution because some Arab intellectuals and politicians met in Paris in June 1913, calling for decentralisation. This conference aimed to make certain reforms in Arab countries.<sup>352</sup> In February 1914, the Ministry of Interior began to resolve the Najd issues. Therefore, Hijaz declared that it wanted to settle everything peacefully and would assign Ibn Saud as an administrator for Has'a.<sup>353</sup> This

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<sup>345</sup> Al-Zīydīy, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa'ūd, p.44.

<sup>346</sup> L/P&S/10/384(1), 13/06/1913, Telegram from Sir Percy Cox to Ibn Saud; Jacob Goldberg, 'The Saudi-Ottoman treaty 1914 – Myth or Reality?' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 19.2 (April 1984), pp.289-314.

<sup>347</sup> Nours Bak Pasha was the leader of the Ottoman force that went to Has'a.

<sup>348</sup> Goldberg, Jacob. 'The 1913 Saudi Occupation of Hasa Reconsidered', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 18.1 (Jan 1982), pp. 21-29.

<sup>349</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.287.

<sup>350</sup> Al-Zīydīy, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa'ūd, p. 46; Mufrāh, *Sīyasat Aldūlh Althmānīyih*, p.130.

<sup>351</sup> Ottoman Archive. Interior Policy. DH.SYS.113 / 25, 06/07/1913, Cable from the Governor of al-Ahsa (Has'a) to the State of Basra.

<sup>352</sup> Qūrshūn, *Al- 'thmānīūn wa Al-sa'ūd*. P.346.

<sup>353</sup> Ottoman Archive. Interior. DH.KMS.2-2 / 2, 04/12/1913, Letter from the Ministry of Interior to Ahmed Nadeem Bak about Ibn Saud's appointment.

decision provoked opposition from army commanders, who said that the agreement would encourage other princes to rebel against the state.<sup>354</sup>

## 2.5. Al-Sabiha Conference

The Najd–Ottoman relations went through a period of relative calm after Ibn Saud took over Has'a. The Ottoman Empire realized the importance of following a new policy with Ibn Saud.

A series of negotiations began between Ibn Saud and the Ottoman Government. The Ottoman Empire sent letters to Mubarak al-Sabah, Sheikh of Kuwait, by Lieutenant Colonel Omar Fawzi,<sup>355</sup> asking him to try to persuade Ibn Saud to come to terms with the Ottoman Empire.<sup>356</sup> Moreover, the Ottoman Empire appointed Talib al-Naqib to head up a delegation and open talks with Ibn Saud in order to reach a settlement. Talib al-Naqib sought the help of Sheikh Mubarak to succeed in his mission.<sup>357</sup> He arrived in Kuwait in April 1914.<sup>358</sup> Sheikh Mubarak suggested holding the meetings in al-Sabiha under his supervision.<sup>359</sup> Perhaps he wanted to exercise his influence on the negotiations indirectly.

According to Kayali, the Sheikh of Kuwait tried to abort the mission of the delegation; he sent a letter to Ibn Saud, advising him to refuse to negotiate with the Ottomans.<sup>360</sup> Perhaps, Mubarak al-Sabah did so because he wanted to head up the delegation, or he was instructed by the British officials in Kuwait to do so.

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<sup>354</sup> Ottoman Archives. Interior. DH.KMS.2/2 - 2. (23), 09/02/1914, Cable from the Ministry of the Interior to the State of Hijaz.

<sup>355</sup> Omar Fawzi Dagestani was born in the village of Hsoaa in the Caucasus in 1878 and joined the Ottoman army in 1910, but then joined the army of the Arab revolution. (Jarīydt Al-r'īy, *Ṣafhāt min tāriykh al'r'dn*, Sa'yd 'buw dīyh, al'dd 9233, kānūn al'ūl, 1995, p.49).

<sup>356</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p.181.

<sup>357</sup> L/P&S/10/385(1), 09/02/1914, Telegram from Mohamed Aref Wali Syria to Mubarak Al-Sabah.

<sup>358</sup> Kayali, Hasan, *Arab and Young Turks: Ottoman, Arabism, and Islamism in the Ottoman Empire, 1908-1918* (Berkeley; University of California Press, 1996), p.130.

<sup>359</sup> Ottoman Archives. Interior. DH.KMS.2 /2-2. (34), 18/02/1914, Telegram from the Governor of Basra to the Minister of Interior.

<sup>360</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tāriykh Najd*, p.318; L / P & S / 10/827 (2), 02/08/1914, Report by the British Political Resident in the Gulf.

The Ottoman Empire continued its attempt to change Ibn Saud's attitude through its envoy, Talib al-Naqib. Also, it signed the Turkish-Najd Treaty with Bin Saud in May 1914. The Treaty stipulated that Najd must be kept under Ibn Saud's control and its administration shall pass to his children and grandchildren as long as they remain loyal to Ottoman authority. It also highlighted the matter of appointing a military official at Ibn Saud's administration. The terms of the agreement included raising the Ottoman flag above government buildings and public places. Furthermore, the agreement specified that Ibn Saud shall be deterred from intervening in foreign or international affairs, besides paying six thousand pounds to the state of Basra annually.

The agreement was signed on behalf of the Ottoman Empire by Suleiman Shafiq. The terms of the agreement remained secretive. The Ottoman documents indicate that British forces occupied al-Basra in November 1914. The original document was to be found in the state records in al-Basra.

Meanwhile, the British documents show that the British Government was well aware of the Najd-Ottoman talks. The British authorities were keen to find out what was going on through their agent, Colonel William Grey, in Kuwait, as well as Mubarak al-Sabah, Sheikh of Kuwait. There are two documents now extant: one describes all the terms which were confidential, whereas the British documents indicate that the British authorities had known all along what was in the agreement. It seems that the secrets in the Ottoman documents were related to terms and details.<sup>361</sup> As discussed, it is clear that the British Government was completely aware of the Treaty draft, which was held in al-Sabiha. But the agreement was postponed because the Ottoman Empire asked the delegation to change some of the conditions

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<sup>361</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tāriykh Najd*, p.319.

therein.<sup>362</sup> When amendments were made to the Treaty, it became secretive, and the British side did not know its details.<sup>363</sup>

On 15 July 1914, the Council of Ministers approved the transfer of the administration of Has'a to Najd. They also appointed Ibn Saud as governor and leader of it.

As stated by the previous agreement, the Ottoman Empire agreed to these terms because they wanted to build good relations with the Arab princes. Fearing Ibn Saud's relations with Britain, the Ottomans considered creating a good relationship with all Arab princes, so they could be united side by side with the Ottoman Empire.

The previous opinions confirm that there was an agreement, without giving details. Amin Saeed mentioned the details of the negotiations between the two parties, but he denied that Ibn Saud had signed the agreement. Western sources deny signing the agreement. Philby wrote in his book, *Saudi Arabia*, that the agreement was oral, which made Ibn Saud accept the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire. Yves Besson Fischer believes that the agreement document, which was found in Basra, was forged.<sup>364</sup> On the other hand, the Ottomans emphasised that the two parties had signed the agreement, citing that there was a document containing all items and stamped by Ibn Saud on 2 May 1914.<sup>365</sup> The agreement, which remained confidential, was signed by Suleiman Shafiq. According to Qūrshūn British forces occupied al-Basra in November 1914. It found the original document in the records of Basra.<sup>366</sup> It is clear from the previous agreement that the Ottoman Empire agreed to these conditions because it wanted to establish good relations with Arab princes so that they could help in the First World War.

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<sup>362</sup> Ottoman Archive. Interior. DH.KMS.2 / 2-2 Paper 200, 15/05/1914, Cable from the Ottoman ambassador in London to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

<sup>363</sup> Ottoman Archive. Interior. DH.KMS.2 / 2-2, 23/05/1914, Telegram from the Administrator of Basra to the Ministry of Interior.

<sup>364</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.289.

<sup>365</sup> Ottoman Archive. Interior. DH.KMS.2 / 2-2, 02/05/1914, Telegraph from Ibn Saud to the Wali of Basra.

<sup>366</sup> Qūrshūn, *Al-'thmānīn wa Al-sa'ūd*. p349.

The present research has not found any Saudi documents concerning this Treaty. Saudi Arabian sources do not deny what was agreed upon by Ibn Saud and Suleiman Shafiq, but they do deny that it was signed and stress that it was oral. Al-Rīhānī emphasizes that there was an agreement, but he did not mention its details.<sup>367</sup> Khaier al-Din Zarkali also stresses that the Ottoman Empire had accepted what was listed in the al-Sabiha Treaty.<sup>368</sup> The Historian, Saud Bin Hazlol, mentions the al-Sabiha meeting in passing.<sup>369</sup>

All of these opinions confirm the existence of the agreement, without giving details. Amin gives some details about the negotiations between the two parties, but denies that Ibn Saud signed the agreement.<sup>370</sup>

Western sources deny signing the agreement. Philby, in *Saudi Arabia*, points out that the agreement was oral.<sup>371</sup> Yves Besson Fischer says that the document found in al-Basra was fabricated.<sup>372</sup> On the other hand, the Ottomans insist that the agreement was signed by the two parties, which they prove by way of a document, which contains all the articles and was stamped by Ibn Saud on 2 May 1914.<sup>373</sup> The signed agreement was subject to many amendments and the final draft was ready on 21 June 1914.<sup>374</sup> Ibn Saud succeeded in embroiling Britain in his dispute with the Ottoman Empire. The British officials were disappointed when they learnt that Ibn Saud held a Treaty with the Ottomans in 1914, during the First World War. Therefore, it was very important for the British Government to know Ibn Saud's attitude towards the Ottomans and whether or not he would support them in the war. Britain's concern was very conspicuous. Knox, the Political Resident in the Gulf, sent letters

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<sup>367</sup> Al-Rīhānī, *Tāriykh Najd*, p.326.

<sup>368</sup> Al- Zrkliy, *Shbh Al-jzīyah Al- 'rbūah*, p.216.

<sup>369</sup> S'ūd Hdhlūl, *tāriykh mlūk Al-S'ūd*, (Al-rīyād: mṭāb' al-rīyād, 1980), p.103.

<sup>370</sup> Sa'īd, *Tārikh al-dawlah al-su'ūdīyah*, p.58.

<sup>371</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p. 292.

<sup>372</sup> Bīsūn if, *Ibn S'ūd malk al-Sahrā*, tarjamah, [Ibn Saud the King of Desert], (translator) 'bduallah al-dulīmī and 'bduallah al-rabī'ī, (Al-rīyād: maktabt al-malik 'bdullaziz, 1999), pp. 97–113.

<sup>373</sup> Qūrshūn, *Al- 'thmānūn wa Al-sa'ūd*, p.395.

<sup>374</sup> King Abdulaziz Foundation, Riyadh, The Treaty of Darin between Ibn Saud and Britain, 26 December 1915, Document No. 17489) File No. 16, E-lev 18-40, Arab-Hedj/25, Ieocfj/B116, Fonds Beyrouth.

to the political agent in Bahrain inquiring about Ibn Saud's attitude towards the British authorities.<sup>375</sup>

## 2.6. The Darin Treaty

The previous section discussed the role of Shakespear in shaping the British-Saudi relationship and the way he drew up the broad context of the alliance between his government and Ibn Saud, until he was killed in the battle of Jarrab in January 1915.<sup>376</sup> Despite that, the British Government proceeded to change its policy towards Ibn Saud, beginning by drawing up a new Treaty. After Shakespear's death, Ibn Saud sent a letter to Sir Percy Cox asking him to send someone to take Shakespear's position, but Cox did not show any interest.<sup>377</sup> On 29 January 1915, the British authorities in India sent a letter to the Indian Ministry in London that contained a suggested Treaty between Britain and Ibn Saud, and which was the same as that between Shakespear and Ibn Saud. It included the following points.<sup>378</sup>

- The British Government recognised that Ibn Saud was the independent ruler of Najd, Has'a and Qatif, maintaining hereditary succession in his family. This would take place if the tribes agreed on the new governor and if the British Government approved.
- The British Government would support Ibn Saud in case of any attack on his territories without justification.
- Ibn Saud undertook not to deal with any foreign party and not to grant any privileges to foreign nationals without first consulting the British Government.

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<sup>375</sup> IOR/R/15/2/31(2), 15/08/1914, Letter from Terence Keyes, British political agent in Bahrain to George Knox, British Political Resident in the Gulf.

<sup>376</sup> Winstone, *Shakespear*, p.194.

<sup>377</sup> Al-Zīdy, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd, p.75.

<sup>378</sup> FO 371/2479, in 30/01/1915, Letter from Thomas Holderness the Ministry of India in London to the Under Secretary of the British Foreign Office; L/P&S/10/387(2); 06/02/1915, Telegram from the Secretary of the Government of India to the British Political Resident in the Gulf.

- The two parties would agree to initiate a detailed Treaty after completing the broad outlines to discuss other important issues. These may have been issues related to protection, trade, and Britain's interests in the Gulf.

On 30 January 1915, the parliament secretary in the Indian Government, Thomas Holderness, sent a letter to the Foreign Office confirming what was included in the British–Saudi Treaty.<sup>379</sup> He stated that it may not be necessary to implement it at the present time as a sign of his keenness to develop good relations with Britain, but the subsequent development of events would determine everything in this regard.<sup>380</sup> The Ottoman Government sent a number of officials and letters to Ibn Saud asking for support, but Ibn Saud ignored them, pretending to be busy with internal affairs. On the other hand, Ibn Saud was interested in forging an alliance with Britain. Britain was updated with these letters and, consequently, it maximised its efforts to sign a treaty with Ibn Saud before the Ottoman Empire did, as noted by Shakespear. On 1 February 1915, the Indian Ministry notified the Viceroy of India, the Marquess of Crewe, that there was a possibility of an agreement with Ibn Saud, emphasising the latter's commitment not to interfere in the business of Kuwait, Qatar, Bahrain and the Oman coast as part of the Treaty.<sup>381</sup> Later, on 6 February 1915, the Indian Government sent a letter to Sir Percy Cox in order to start new talks with Ibn Saud for the sake of formulating a Treaty, to include the broad outlines of the British interests on the basis of the proposals of the employees in the Indian Government. Accordingly, Cox made up a draft for the Treaty that included seven points, which became the basic points in the Treaty between Najd and Britain. It includes the following:<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>379</sup> Silverfarb, 'Anglo-Najd Treaty', p.172.

<sup>380</sup> L/P&S/10/827(3), 05/02/1915, Report from George Knox.

<sup>381</sup> Goldberg, 'Captain Shakespear', p. 80.

<sup>382</sup> IOR/R/15/5/25(1), 27/02/1915, Telegram from the Government of British India to Sir Percy Cox.

- Britain's recognition of Ibn Saud as the independent ruler of Najd and Has'a, maintaining the hereditary succession in his family;
- Ibn Saud not welcoming any foreign party other than Britain in its territories;
- not establishing diplomatic relations or political contacts with other foreign countries;
- not stationing foreign forces in its territories, except British ones;
- ensuring the safe and smooth passage of pilgrims;
- Ibn Saud's vow not to interfere in the internal affairs of Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman and the Omani coast.

At the end of February 1915, the British Government sent a copy of the Treaty to Ibn Saud for review. Ibn Saud returned it to the British Government, adding a number of modifications and suggestions. In August 1915, the Indian Government sent the main points agreed upon between Ibn Saud and the British Government to Sir Percy Cox. It was therefore necessary to hold a meeting between Ibn Saud and Cox to draw up the broad outlines of the suggested proposal and to discuss any controversies. On 26 August 1915, the Viceroy of India sent a letter to Ibn Saud telling him that Cox had been given the right to sign the suggested Treaty. Ibn Saud welcome this and Sir Percy Cox headed to Najd to meet Ibn Saud at the end of 1915, which was the first meeting between them. Cox travelled via Uqair<sup>383</sup> and Qatif,<sup>384</sup> and the meeting was held in Darien.<sup>385</sup> A number of talks took place between Najd and Britain. Throughout the talks, Cox asked what aid Ibn Saud could provide to support the Allies (in particular, Britain) in the war. Ibn Saud vowed not to do anything that would go against Britain's interests and not to establish any relations with any side opposed to Britain and its allies.<sup>386</sup>

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<sup>383</sup> A village of Has'a in eastern Saudi Arabia from the land of Najd, and is an important port in the south-west of Qatif (Al- jäser, Hmad, *Alm`jm aljhräfiy fiy al-jazyrh al-`rbiah* (Al-ryäd: Dār Al-yāmāmh, 1982), p.992).

<sup>384</sup> It is one of the largest provinces of the eastern region, which has a greater number of Shia than Sunni Muslims.

<sup>385</sup> An island located opposite Qatif on the east coast of the Arabian Peninsula, about 230 miles south of Kuwait, 36 miles north of Bahrain, 64 miles northwest of Qatar (Lorimer, *Gazetteer of the Persian Gulf*, p.1884).

<sup>386</sup> Philby, Harry St. John, *Arabian Jubilee* (New York: John Day, 1953), p.185.

According to Wahbah, Ibn Saud said that Cox attempted to persuade him to declare war against the Ottoman Empire during their meeting in Uqair, promising to support him militarily and financially.<sup>387</sup> Ibn Saud was smarter than Cox, and did not accept this, saying that he was facing threats from Ibn Rashid.<sup>388</sup> This prevented him from taking part in the war alongside Britain. Ibn Saud told Cox, 'I'll be facing Ibn Rashid.' Cox was convinced by Ibn Saud's justifications. This shows that Ibn Saud gained two things he was always looking for from the Uqair meeting. The first was that he signed a treaty with Britain recognising his independence and protecting him from any external threat. The second was that Britain promised to support him, militarily and financially, in his struggle with Ibn Rashid, the ally of the Ottomans in Ha'il. It seems that Ibn Saud had his own reasons to sign the Treaty of Darin in 1915, reflecting his view of the regional and international situation. He had become fully aware of Britain's role, especially after the Ottoman Empire lost its influence over the south of Mesopotamia and other areas. Moreover, Britain had control over the Gulf shores and the protection of Kuwait. For these reasons, Ibn Saud sought to become an ally of Britain. Additionally, the conflict with Ibn Rashid had affected him badly, which was why he was looking for an ally to support him both militarily and financially. Also, Britain took advantage of supplying Ibn Saud to attack Ibn Rashid. So, it was a win-win situation. Cox took the draft deal with him to Darin to be the proposed Treaty, which included the following text, 'In the name of Allah. The senior government on its behalf, Abdulaziz Bin Abdelrahman Bin Faisal Al Saud, the governor of Najd, Has'a and Qatif on his behalf are seeking to promote the friendly relations which have persisted over generations and to support their mutual interests.'<sup>389</sup> As a step forward, the British Government chose Cox as a commissioner in the Gulf and granted him the right to sign

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<sup>387</sup> Wahbah worked as an ambassador with Ibn Saud and was the first ambassador between Britain and Saudi Arabia. An Egyptian, born in Cairo in 1889, he wrote books on Saudi history (Hāfiz Wahbah, *Jazīrt al-'rab fiy alqrn al'shrīn* (Alqāhrh: dār al'fāq al'rbīyh, 1935), p.112.

<sup>388</sup> Wahbah, *Ayyām Arabīyah*, p.112.

<sup>389</sup> L/P&S/10/387(2), 26/12/1915, Terms of the agreement between Sir Percy Cox and Ibn Saud.

the Treaty with Abdulaziz bin Abdelrahman bin Faisal al-Saud (Ibn Saud). The two parties agreed on the seven above-mentioned points. Then, Ibn Saud commented on some of what was written and asked for amendments to some items, especially at the beginning of the agreement (preface) where he wanted to add (the governor of Najd, Has'a, Qatif, Jubail and the cities and ports which belong to it). He also asked to change the word 'generations' to 'a long period of time'.<sup>390</sup> Some passages, which are related to the areas under the influence of Ibn Saud and which were not recognised by Britain, were modified. This included Britain's attitude towards the attacks on Najd. The British Government had given Cox the right to act regarding the amendments proposed by Ibn Saud. After a round of talks between Ibn Saud and Sir Percy Cox, they agreed upon the final draft of the Treaty on 26 December 1915, and it was known as the Treaty of Darin. It assured Britain's recognition of Ibn Saud as the governor of his country and its dependent territories.<sup>391</sup>

The results of the Treaty demonstrate its benefits for both Britain and Najd. The British gains included of the supervision of Ibn Saud's foreign relations and securing transport routes through Uqair seaport, which was under Ibn Saud's supervision.<sup>392</sup> Britain also guaranteed to secure the Gulf sheikhdoms against Ibn Saud. British also obtained the prevention of material and military aid supplied from the North of Ha'il or the West of Hijaz, and assurance that Ibn Saud would never assault the Hashemites. Britain guaranteed that Ibn Saud could carry out military action on Ha'il, while Britain executed its plans to occupy the rest of Mesopotamia. The Treaty reinforced British influence in the Arabian Peninsula. In return, Ibn Saud was awarded 1000 rifles and £20,000.<sup>393</sup> Also, Cox promised to give him £5000 per month in

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<sup>390</sup> L/P&S/10/387(2), 26/12/1915, Terms of the agreement between Sir Percy Cox and Ibn Saud.

<sup>391</sup> Townsend, John, *Proconsul to the Middle East: Sir Percy Cox and the End of Empire*, (New York: Tauris, 2010), p.132.

<sup>392</sup> L/P&S/10/387(2), 26/12/1915, Terms of the agreement between Sir Percy Cox and Ibn Saud; Al-Ziydī, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd, p.89.

<sup>393</sup> Al-Ziydī, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd, p.91.

addition to the equipment and ammunition. Cox pledged to resolve the problems between Najd and Kuwait. Ibn Saud, therefore, was guaranteed British protection and recognised as Governor of Najd, Has'a, Qatif and al-Jubail., and given the opportunity to expand his territories and influence in the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>394</sup>

It is clear from the above that the Treaty secured British interests and supported Ibn Saud both politically and militarily.

Historians differ in their points of view about the Treaty.<sup>395</sup> Some, like Sir Percy Cox, believe that this agreement was satisfactory, while others, like Williams,<sup>396</sup> Philby<sup>397</sup> and Jalah,<sup>398</sup> believe that it was not successful because Ibn Saud did not take any effective measures against the Ottomans. The present research, however, supports al-Sadoun in his contention that the Treaty strengthened the power of Ibn Saud<sup>399</sup> He felt safe under British protection, which enabled him to expand his country's borders. Ibn Saud had accomplished results that exceeded his power. According to Bnuww Mishān, the Treaty granted Ibn Saud £5000, besides equipment and weapons.<sup>400</sup> Whilst al-Sadoun is probably correct, Ibn Saud probably had no other option.

## 2.7. Saudi-British relations during the First World War

The Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers on August 2, 1914, as a complement to the secret alliance between the Ottoman Empire and the German Empire that existed at the time. This new alliance posed a threat to the British colonies in India and the East. It was also a challenge to Russian influence

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<sup>394</sup> L/P&S/10/387(2), 26/12/1915, Terms of the agreement between Sir Percy Cox and Ibn Saud; Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.272; Silverfarb, 'Anglo-Najd Treaty', p. 176; IOR/R/15/5/25(2), 07/10/1915, 07/10/1915, from the British Viceroy in India to the Minister of India in London.

<sup>395</sup> Silverfarb, 'Anglo-Najd Treaty', p.176.

<sup>396</sup> Williams, *Britain and the Arab States*, p.237.

<sup>397</sup> Philby, Harry St John., *The Triumph of the Wahhabis* (London: Constable, 1926), p.301.

<sup>398</sup> Jalāl, yaḥiyy, *al- 'ālm al- 'arabī al-ḥadīth* (al-qāhirh: muwwsasat al-m'arif, 1959), p.152; Bnuww Mishān, *'bdal 'ziz al-Sa'ūd*, p.132.

<sup>399</sup> Al-s'dūn, Khalid, *al-mufāwzāt altiyy adt 'liy mu 'āhdt sant 1915 bīn al-malik 'bdullaziz uww Brīṭānīā* (Riyadh, Majlt aldārḥ, al'dd al-rāb', tashrīn al'wal, 1989), p.172.

<sup>400</sup> Bnuww Mishān, *'bdullaziz al-S'ūd*, p.132.

in Armenia, which it had captured in the Russian-Ottoman War (1877-1878). The provinces of Artvin, Ardahan and Kars, and the port of Batum, were under Russian occupation and Ottoman ambitions for their recovery found sympathy at the German Chancellery. Germany also coveted access to the Caspian Sea oil fields, which could be achieved as a result of the accession the Ottoman Empire to the Central Powers alliance.

Germany established the East Intelligence Bureau, which gathered news from Persia and Afghanistan. In its alliance with the Central Powers, the Ottoman Empire sought to take control of the region from Persia to Tajikistan, as far as the Indian sub-continent. Anwar Pasha confirmed that this would happen if Russian forces were defeated in the main cities of Persia.

At this time, the Arab regions in Asia and North Africa were under Ottoman rule, but liberation movements had begun to emerge. The entry of the Ottoman Empire into the war, and the spread of perceived Turkish hostility towards some Arab societies, ignited the Great Arab Revolt. This was started by Sharif Hussein of the Hejaz, with British support and incitement, fuelled by promises of support for Arab independence and to recognise an Arab Muslim caliphate in the liberated regions: promises that were later to be denied by Britain.

Britain was seeking to undermine the influence of competing powers in the Gulf region, whilst working to establish control over the tribal leaders in the region and compel them to submit to its will. In order to achieve this, Britain tried to bind the region's sheikhs with a set of treaties that guaranteed regional security, discouraged whatever threatened British interests, and subjected the sheikhdoms to its sovereignty, preventing them from disposing of parts of their lands to any country without the approval of the British Government, thus preventing other foreign influence in the Gulf.

This was part of a long-term strategy to cement British control in the region. The Suez Canal had become vital to trade and communication with its colonies in India and the Far East, and Britain had taken full control of the waterway when it invaded Egypt in 1882. In the first half of the twentieth century, Britain was able to establish the pillars of its influence in the Persian Gulf after obtaining the basic concessions for oil extraction.

As previously mentioned, Ibn Saud had been attempting to sign a protection agreement with Britain since taking over Riyadh. However, the British Government was not in favour of intervening in the affairs of Najd. When Ibn Saud seized Has'a, British policy changed, and direct correspondence ensued. Shakespear had a major role in bringing their relationship closer. British-Najd relations experienced a period of calm after the death of Shakespear, but were rekindled in the summer of 1915, when Sir Percy Cox attempted to lay the foundations of a new official relationship between Ibn Saud and Britain, which resulted in the signing of the Treaty of Darin,<sup>401</sup> as described in the previous section.

One might wonder what reasons led to the change in strategic policy towards Ibn Saud and the signing of an agreement with him in 1915. As demonstrated above, certain political, strategic and military motives led to the transformation of relations with Ibn Saud. The most prominent of these is that it seems Ibn Saud took advantage of the circumstances surrounding the British forces in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia; the British troops in Basra were threatened by nomadic tribes in the North of the Arabian Peninsula. Britain, therefore, wanted to cooperate with Ibn Saud in order to support its presence in Mesopotamia and stand strong in the face of these tribes.<sup>402</sup> Also, Britain feared Ibn Saud might assault Britain's new ally because of the unstable relations between Ibn Saud and the Hashemites in Hijaz. Shakespear's reports had a major role in building good relations with Al-Saud since he convinced Britain of the vital importance of establishing official relations with Ibn Saud, which could help in securing the British presence on the coast of the Arabian Gulf.<sup>403</sup> In addition, Sir Percy Cox and John Philby worked tirelessly to persuade the officials of the paramount importance of

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<sup>401</sup> L/P&S/10/387(1), 07/07/1915, Letter from the Viceroy of India to the Ministry of India.

<sup>402</sup> Al-Jazairi, Mohammed, 'Saudi Arabi: A Diplomatic History: 1924-1964' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Utah, 1971), p.32.

<sup>403</sup> Silverfarb, 'Anglo-Najd Treaty', p.167.

holding an official treaty with Ibn Saud.<sup>404</sup> Britain was concerned about the growing ambitions of Ibn Saud after he seized Has'a in 1913.<sup>405</sup> Finally, the First World War was a good reason for Britain to be reconciled with Ibn Saud. Britain had sought to attract the princes of the Arabian Peninsula to protect its interests in India.<sup>406</sup>

During this period, the question of leadership was raised. The disagreement was about electing an Arab political figure to lead the Arab revolt against the Ottomans. British political specialists on Middle Eastern affairs were split into two groups: the first was called the Anglo-Egyptian, Cairo or Western School; the second the Anglo-Indian, Indian or Eastern School.<sup>407</sup> In January 1916, the pioneers of the British school in Cairo founded the Arab Bureau,<sup>408</sup> which included a plethora of British politicians, officers, and specialists, the most prominent of which were Gilbert Clayton, David Hogarth and Thomas Edward Lawrence.

The India School was headed by Sir Percy Cox, along with Sir Arnold Wilson, St. John Philby, Reginald Wingate, and William Shakespear. The Indian Government was responsible for the Arab Gulf, including treaties and Sheikdoms. The India School was interested in coordinating relations between Britain, Mesopotamia, the Persian Gulf and the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>409</sup>

These two schools were fragmented politically in the Arab countries. The India School generally favoured Ibn Saud. Therefore, Sir Percy Cox invited Ibn Saud to be a Caliph for Muslims in December 1915. However, Ibn Saud refused his offer and nominated al-Sharif Hussein. Meanwhile, the Cairo School supported the Sharif of Mecca because he had a religious and familial post, which enabled him to call for Jihad against the Ottomans and their

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<sup>404</sup> Ibid, p. 168.

<sup>405</sup> L/P&S/10/384(1), 10/08/1913, Letter from the Viceroy of India to the Ministry of India.

<sup>406</sup> Al-Zaydīy, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa'ūd, p. 86.

<sup>407</sup> Clayton, *Arabian Diary*, p.13.

<sup>408</sup> Founded by some British politicians and intellectuals in Cairo, its activities were included with the British Foreign Office. It was considered the main network for British spies in the Middle East. Hajar, Jamāl, *alqaw alkabriy uww alsharq al'ust* (Al' xendariyh: dār alm' rfh, 1989), p.162.

<sup>409</sup> Clayton, *Arabian Diary*, p.14; Kedourie, Elie, *England and the Middle East* (London: Harvester Press, 1978), p.8.

allies.<sup>410</sup> Moreover, the Sharif of Mecca had a special geographical location, in the heart of the Ottoman lines.<sup>411</sup>

It seems that the aforementioned reasons compelled the British Foreign Office and the Government in London to choose Hussein bin Ali as the leader of the Great Arab Revolt.<sup>412</sup>

It appears to be the case that the British Government did not pick Ibn Saud for leadership because Muslims, especially in India and Egypt, could not be easily persuaded to follow Salafism, which was established by the Hanbali School. Moreover, Ibn Saud was afraid of British influence inside his country, which helped Ibn Saud annex several countries. Subsequently, Ibn Saud could not convince them to negotiate with the British authorities on a larger scale.

It seems that the divergent policies followed by each school resulted in increasing hatred and exacerbated conflicts between al-Hussein in al-Hijaz and Ibn Saud in Najd.<sup>413</sup> The differences between the two schools did not, however, mean that they opposed one another. In fact, they were two teams working towards a shared goal, that is, British interests in the Gulf.

British-Najdi correspondence witnessed a remarkable development after the signing of the Darin Treaty in 1915, as follows.<sup>414</sup>

### **Uqair meeting between Ibn Saud and Sir Percy Cox (11–12 November 1916)**

Ibn Saud was asked to meet Sir Percy Cox to discuss their bilateral relations. The outbreak of the Arab Revolt made the governor of Najd concerned about the political future of Hussein bin Ali.

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<sup>410</sup> King Abdulaziz Foundation, Riyadh, German Report about Britain's relationship with the Arab countries. (1017/101/41/5744).

<sup>411</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, pp.73–74.

<sup>412</sup> Peretz, Don. *Middle East Today*, (Westport: Prager, 1983), p.468.

<sup>413</sup> *ibid*, p.94.

<sup>414</sup> Jalāl, *al- 'ālm al- 'arabī*, p.131.

### **The Three Leaders Conference in Kuwait (23 November 1916)**

During the Uqair meeting, Sir Percy Cox invited Ibn Saud to attend a conference held in Kuwait on 23 November 1916. Along with 200 heads of Arab tribes, the Sheikh of Kuwait, Jaber bin Mubarak al-Sabah,<sup>415</sup> and the Sheikh of al-Mahmara, Khazaal bin Jaber, attended the conference headed by Sir Percy Cox. By means of this conference, Britain aimed to discover their intentions for the region. It also urged the leaders to endorse al-Sharif Hussein bin Ali and his revolution. At the beginning of the conference, Sir Percy Cox gave the Sheikh of Kuwait and the administrator of Najd the Order of Merit.<sup>416</sup> Ibn Saud was awarded the Star of India and the Order of the British Empire. The three leaders promised to support Britain and reiterated their attitudes regarding the Arab Revolt. When the conference was over, Cox congratulated the Sheikhs and leaders who had attended.<sup>417</sup>

### **Ibn Saud's Visit to al-Basra (27 November 1916)**

Ibn Saud visited al-Basra after Cox's invitation, and travelled from Kuwait to al-Basra on 27 November 1916. Cox's aim for the visit was to influence Ibn Saud psychologically by showing him the on-going activities in al-Basra. Ibn Saud toured military units. This forced Ibn Saud to influence the people of al-Basra to accept living under British dominance, because they were receptive to Ibn Saud. According to Howarth, Cox briefed Ibn Saud about military equipment.<sup>418</sup> Gertrude Bell was among those who welcome Ibn Saud in al-Basra.<sup>419</sup> It was the first time Ibn Saud had met a European woman. She said that he was gentle and calm, unlike

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<sup>415</sup> Jaber Bin Mubark al-Sabah (1917–1873) was called Jaber the second. He was a prince of the al-Sabah family. He succeeded his father in 1915 and died in al-Kuwait (Al-Zrkī, *Al 'lam*, p.92).

<sup>416</sup> Al-Zīdy, *'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.99.

<sup>417</sup> L/P&S/10/387(1), 21/11/1916, Telegram from Sir Percy Cox to the Government of British India.

<sup>418</sup> Howarth, *Desert King*, p. 98.

<sup>419</sup> Gertrude Bell was a traveller who contributed to the construction of the Iraqi state in 1921, playing a crucial role in obtaining the loyalty of Arab leaders (Wallach, Janet, *Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: Adventurer, Adviser to Kings, Ally of Lawrence of Arabia* (London: Orion, 2005), p.13).

other Bedouin leaders.<sup>420</sup> Philby described this visit as the first one for Ibn Saud outside the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>421</sup>

## 2.8. Summary

The nature of the relationship between Ibn Saud and Britain changed in the period 1910-1916. Contact between Ibn Saud and Britain began from 1906, as previously mentioned, but did not result in a formal relationship, despite Cox's efforts to persuade his government of the importance of establishing a friendly relationship with Ibn Saud. He believed that ignoring him may make him an enemy. At times, Mubarak al-Sabah was a mediator in the relations between Najd and Britain. Then, the emergence of the Najd state encouraged expeditions to the Arabian Peninsula, like that of Shakespear. As geographical study is necessary to establish political relations, this exploration contributed to British policy guidance in the region. This period witnessed victories for Ibn Saud in Najd, which made the Sheikh of Kuwait, Mubarak al-Sabah, adopt a clear shift in his attitude towards Ibn Saud due to his fear of Ibn Saud's expansion at the expense of Kuwait. The Sheikh of Kuwait took advantage of the conflict between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, by not engaging in wars with either of them, as they were both preoccupied.<sup>422</sup>

Ibn Saud found himself surrounded by the Ottoman Empire, which was suspicious of his intentions towards it, and supported Ibn Rashid against his expansions. As a result, Ibn Saud adopted a policy of non-confrontation because of the losses any conflict could bring about. Furthermore, he recognised the sovereignty of the Ottoman Empire over its areas. He did this because he failed to convince Britain to provide him with protection, as it did for Kuwait. When Ibn Saud seized Has'a, Britain changed its policies accordingly. For instance, when the First World War began in 1914, Britain sought to embrace Ibn Saud. Consequently, Ibn Saud signed

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<sup>420</sup> FO371/3046, 03/12/1916, Letter from Sir Percy Cox to Arthur Hirtzel, the Political Secretary in India, a copy of the writings of Gertrude Bell.

<sup>435</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.274.

<sup>422</sup> Al-'lūāt, 'lāqāt 'bdual 'zīz Ibn S'ūd fīy alqūiy, p.169.

the Darin Treaty, in which he was recognized as an entity. After that, he received supplies from the Ottomans. Although he was neutral in the First World War, he was useful to Britain as he was able to protect British interests from attack by Ibn Rashid and to discipline some troublesome tribes. The First World War contributed to the collapse of the Ottoman Empire, and Britain managed to exert its control over local forces in the Persian Gulf.

## Chapter Three: Britain between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein, 1916–1921

### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter discusses the complex and evolving relationship between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein at a crucial stage for the foundation of the new state. The relationship between the Sharifs and Al Saud began during the first stage of Saudi rule when Saud bin Abdul-Aziz Mohammed took Hijaz in 1805. However, Ibrahim Pasha, the son of Egypt's Muhammad 'Ali who, formally, was acting in the name of the Ottoman Sultan, eliminated the first stage of Saudi rule and restored Hijaz to Ottoman rule, returning its administration to the Sharifs, who were loyal to the Ottoman Empire.<sup>423</sup> The Sharifs were considered more deserving of the rule of Mecca, being descendants of the Prophet, peace be upon him. When Ibn Saud restored Riyadh and took control of Qassim and Sudair, there was nothing to indicate any significant relationship between Ibn Saud and the Sharifs in Hijaz. This was due to the fact that the borders of the Principedom of Ibn Saud did not extend to the borders of Hijaz, and because the Sharifs of Mecca did not aspire to extend their power to the region of Najd, owing to it being a desert area.

However, the relationship between Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud improved. They exchanged gifts and Ibn Saud praised Sharif Hussein and his Arabic ardour. It appears that Ibn Saud acted in this way in order not to demonstrate any bias towards either the British or Ottoman Governments. The British Government would not commit to any protection agreement, while the Ottoman State had previously supported Sharif Hussein and Ibn Rashid. Ibn Saud was concerned not to lose the Ottoman Empire during this period in order to pressurise the British Government to sign an agreement with him. Meanwhile, the Ottoman Government

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<sup>423</sup> Craze, Joshua and Mark Huband, *The Kingdom: Saudi Arabia and the Challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (London: Hurst, 2009), p.219.

looked to Sharif Hussein as the main ally of the Ottoman Empire, giving him all the powers granted to the State to punish any tribe that attacked another. Ibn Saud was obliged to give full assistance to the Ottoman Government whenever needed, such as by recruiting the people of Najd and giving the people of Qassim the freedom of choice to accept the sovereignty of Ibn Saud, Ibn Rashid or the Sharifs.<sup>424</sup>

The Saudi-Hashemite relationship was marked by violence and hostility from the outset. This was due to the emergence of the *Wahhabi* movement in Najd in the eighteenth century, which was adopted by Saudi princes who worked hard to disseminate it. Thus, the *Wahhabi* sect became a political movement, leading to a feud between the Saudis in Najd and the elite tribes in Hijaz. The latter rejected the *Wahhabi* movement because they represented the authority in the Arabian Peninsula, while in turn the Saudis, representing the political leaders of the *Wahhabi* movement, rejected the elite tribal authority.<sup>425</sup>

Contributing to the tense relationship between the two families of Al-Ashraf and Najd, was a fierce dispute between the Hashemite Sharif Hussein bin Ali and the Prince of Najd, Abdul-Aziz bin Abdulrahman Al Saud, which evolved from uncertainties regarding military confrontation. Due to political and expansionist ambitions, the confrontations took place on mutual borders. Their first encounter in 1908 arose between Sharif Hussein bin Ali and the tribes of Otaiba, Harb and Al-Shoa'ra, which were living along the mutual borders with Najd. He also took Abdul-Aziz's brother, Saad,<sup>426</sup> as a hostage, in exchange for Ibn Saud's recognition that these tribes had originally come from Hijaz, as this would be considered a recognition on the part of Ibn Saud that these areas were affiliated to the Sharif. The current research suggests that Sharif's goal was to discipline the outlaws of the Ottoman Empire in

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<sup>424</sup> L/P&S/7/246(21), 22/ 11/1910, Report from Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>425</sup> Troeller, Gary, 'Ibn Sa'ud and Sharif Husain, A Comparison in Importance in the Early Years of the First World War', *Historical Journal*, 14.3, 1971, pp. 627–633.

<sup>426</sup> Sa'ad bin Abdul Rahman Al Saud (1888–1915) was one of Abdulaziz's most devoted supporters and a key lieutenant in the early military campaigns.

order to win the loyalty of the new Turkish Government (the Committee of Union and Progress), while Troeller proposes that his goal was a desire to expand his own influence.<sup>427</sup> However, these confrontations did not result in any military clashes, as Ibn Saud preferred to follow an appeasement and restraint policy, settling the dispute peacefully with Sharif Hussein bin Ali.<sup>428</sup> Ibn Saud determined that the release of his brother Saad from captivity was his first goal. Also, Sharif Hussein did not have the support of the Ottoman Empire to fight Ibn Saud. This meant that reconciliation between the two parties (carried out by Khalid bin Luay and Mohammed bin Hamid from the tribe of Otaiba) was the safest option.<sup>429</sup>

It is possible that Ibn Saud's efforts to avoid conflict were intended so that he could devote himself to the eradication of one of his greatest opponents, Ibn Rashid. It is also possible that he did not want to attract more opponents, or that his only goal was to ensure the safety of his brother, who had been taken hostage by Sharif Hussein. The latter is most likely, especially as the forces controlled by Ibn Saud and the money that was at his disposal were sufficient to start a war with the Sharif at that time.<sup>430</sup>

Despite the temporary atmosphere of friendliness, suspicion and mistrust remained the dominant feature in the Hashemite-Saudi relationship. On 10 June 1916, Sharif Hussein announced himself as King of the Arabs, fuelling Ibn Saud's concerns that this would strengthen the power of Sharif Hussein. The British Government, however, worked to allay his fears by providing him with weapons and financial aid to ensure that he could continue facing the Rashids, who were allies of the Ottomans.<sup>431</sup> Ibn Saud's feelings were not secret, expressed

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<sup>427</sup> Al-Amr, Saleh, *The Hijaz under Ottoman rule 1869–1914: Ottoman vali, the Sharif of Macca and growth of British influence* (Riyadh, University Publication, 1978), p.140.

<sup>428</sup> Mu'īn, Abū Nuwwār, *Tārīkh al-Mamlakah al-Urdunniyah al-Hāshimiyah* (Ammān, al-'rdun Press Foundation, 2000), p.26.

<sup>429</sup> Al-Fā'i, Aḥmad Yahyā, *al-'Alāqah bayna al-Malik 'Abd al-'Azīz wa al-Malik al-Ḥusayn bin 'Alī wa Ḍam al-Hijāz, 1910–1925* (Riyadh: Dār al-Malik 'Abd al-'Azīz, 2013), p.55.

<sup>430</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.125, 'Uraynān, Munīrah 'Abd Allāh. *Ālaqat Najd bi-al-quwa al-muhitah* (Kwūit: Dhāt al-Salāsīl, 1990), p.59.

<sup>431</sup> Troeller, *Ibn Sa'ud and Sharif Husain*, p.629; FO 371/2769(192773), 27/12/1916, from Sir Percy Cox to Viceroy of India; L/P&S/10/635, 26/12/1916, from Ronald Graham (Foreign Office) to the British Treasury Secretary.

in a letter sent to Sir Percy Cox on 19 November 1916, which enquired whether Sharif Hussein had obtained a pledge from Britain to support his sovereignty over the Arabs, to prevent rebellion in his country, Najd. In response, Cox told Ibn Saud, on 20 November 1916, to follow the wording of the first and the second clauses of the Uqair Treaty held between them in 1915.<sup>432</sup> In these clauses the British Government recognized the sovereignty of Ibn Saud over Najd and Al-Hassa. In addition, Britain agreed to protect Ibn Saud.

Nevertheless, Sharif Hussein announced himself to be King of the Arabs on 1 November 1916,<sup>433</sup> and sent a message to Ibn Saud on 15 November 1916 signed ‘The King of the Arab countries and Sharif of Mecca and its Prince’.<sup>434</sup> This, perhaps, is what lessened Ibn Saud’s confidence in Sharif Hussein keeping his commitment not to interfere in the affairs of Najd, nor speak on behalf of the Arabs as their ruler.<sup>435</sup> However, a number of soldiers and rebels united against the Ottoman Government, increasing Sharif Hussein’s strength. Ibn Saud hurried to hold a meeting with Cox two days after the arrival of a message from Sharif Hussein to unveil the truth behind his declaration. They met in Uqair,<sup>436</sup> and Cox pledged again the independence of Najd on condition that Ibn Saud avoid any altercations with Sharif Hussein. Finally, Cox announced that Britain would consider any attack on Hijaz as a personal attack against them.<sup>437</sup> Sharif Hussein’s announcement was a cause of concern for the British and French Governments. After letters were exchanged between both governments, they agreed to send a memorandum on 3 January 1917, to inform Sharif Hussein that he was King of Hijaz only. The British Commissioner in Jeddah, Sir Arnold Wilson, and the French Delegate

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<sup>432</sup> L/P&S/10/387 (5), 18/10/1916, from Sir Percy Cox to Ibn Saud.

<sup>433</sup> L/P&S/10/637 (4), 01/11/1916, from Al Hussein to Sir Arnold Wilson, British Agent in Jeddah.

<sup>434</sup> Hathlül, *Tārīkh mulūk Āl Sa‘ūd*, p.92.

<sup>435</sup> Antonius, George, *The Arab Awakening: The Story of the Arab National Movement*, (New York: Capricorn Books, 1965), pp.164–183.

<sup>436</sup> The treaty was named after the island of Uqair, opposite Qatif, eastern Saudi Arabia. The first article of this treaty set out the independence of Najd, Has’a and its areas residing on the shores of the Arabian Gulf only if the successor was not against the British government in any way. The second treaty set out Britain’s pledge to protect Ibn Saud from any external attack. The treaties are mentioned in detail in the second part of this letter (Darin Treaty – 1915).

<sup>437</sup> L/P&S/10/387(1), 08/09/1916, from Sir Percy Cox to the British East Office in Cairo.

Minister in Jeddah, Brémond,<sup>438</sup> officially delivered this memorandum to Sharif Hussein. Furthermore, it seems that the policy of neutrality Britain followed was necessary during this stage in order to achieve two goals: the continuation of the Arab Revolt operations led by the Hashemites with the Allied forces, and the persuasion of Ibn Saud to fight the Rashid family, who had declared their support to the Ottomans.<sup>439</sup>

However, the uncertainty and competition between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein increased, as Sharif insisted on using the title 'King of the Arabs' when addressing other tribes or signing letters. Ibn Saud refused to accept it. Furthermore, Sharif Hussein's increased fear of Ibn Saud and his *Wahhabi* movement had only intensified the feud, and his military forces were busy fighting the Ottoman forces, led by Prince Faisal bin Al Hussein (1883–1933)<sup>440</sup> in the north, and Prince Abdullah bin Al Hussein, who was leading a blockade on the city.<sup>441</sup>

Britain had three goals in its colonisation of the Middle East: to protect trade routes in the eastern Mediterranean; to protect the sea and land routes to India; and to form new colonies in the Middle East. The 1919 peace conference in Paris did not succeed in restoring the right of self-determination in the Middle East region. Instead, France and Britain shared the countries of the Middle East as set out in the Sykes-Picot Agreement, according to which France obtained most of Syria and Lebanon, and the Mosul region of Mesopotamia, while Britain extended its control from the southern part of the Levant east to include Baghdad and Basra, and all the areas between the Arabian Gulf and the French region of Syria. It was also decided that Palestine should fall under an international administration to be agreed upon in consultation between Britain, France and Russia, but that Britain be granted the ports of Haifa and Acre, but

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<sup>438</sup> Colonel Édouard Brémond, Commander of the French Military Mission to the Hijaz.

<sup>439</sup> Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*, p.145.

<sup>440</sup> Faisal bin Al-Hussein, the son of Sharif Hussein bin Ali and one of the leaders of the Arab revolt against the Turks. Colonial rule proved to be problematic, however, with the Iraqis launching a series of uprisings that forced the British to employ draconian measures. The Hashemite dynasty ruled the country until it was overthrown by a coup d'état in 1958 (Barker, A.J., *The First Iraq War, 1914–1918: Britain's Mesopotamian Campaign* (New York: Enigma Books, 2009), p.xix.

<sup>441</sup> Wahbah, *Jazīrat al- 'Arab*, p.206; Teitelbaum, Joshua, 'Sharif Husayn ibn Ali and the Hashemite Vision of the Post-Ottoman Order: From Chieftaincy to Suzerainty', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 34.1, 1998, pp.103–122.

that France would be free to use the port of Haifa, and in return France would allow Britain to use the Port of Iskenderun.<sup>442</sup> It was also agreed that the protection of Mesopotamia would cease and that Faisal I would become king of the new Kingdom of Iraq. Al-Hussein, the Sherif of Mecca, became the king of the Hijaz and Abdul Aziz bin Saud king of Najd. Both continued to receive financial support from Great Britain

### **3.2. Britain between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein, 1916–1921**

Before the First World War there were attempts from both the Ottoman Empire and Britain to win over Arab leaders as their allies. The Ottoman Empire was considered Ibn Rashid's strongest ally, but Ibn Saud, in the central region of Najd, could also support the state with a tribal army in addition to his ability to block the road bringing convoys and supplies from the east of the Arabian Peninsula. In 1916, the Ottoman Empire was keen to win the allegiance of Ibn Saud and they suspected the allegiance of Sharif Hussein to the Turkish State.<sup>443</sup> However, Ibn Saud explained that he and Sharif Hussein had a good relationship and it seems that Ibn Saud was aware that the Ottoman Government favoured his rival, Ibn Rashid. On the other hand, Ibn Saud had an alliance with the British Government, in addition to a profound hatred for the new Turkish Government, which incited division among Arabs.<sup>444</sup>

In 1915, Britain sought to attract Arab leaders to its ranks, including Ibn Saud, whom Sir Percy Cox offered to make King of the Arabs.<sup>445</sup> Ibn Saud refused the offer and directed him to extend it instead to Sharif Hussein. It seems that Cox made this offer to Ibn Saud on the advice of Shakespear, who believed that Ibn Saud was the most appropriate ally for the British Government. Ibn Saud refused because it wasn't clear who was the dominant force in the Arabian Peninsula, the British or the Ottomans, and preferred to remain neutral. Karsh argues

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<sup>442</sup> Goldstein Erik, *Winning the Peace* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991), p.87.

<sup>443</sup> Abedin, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud,' p.109.

<sup>444</sup> Al-Riḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p. 193.

<sup>445</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.273.

that the British Government preferred Sharif Hussein as an ally because he controlled the two holy sites (Mecca and Medina) and also because of Hijaz's proximity to the British consul in Jeddah and to the Red Sea, which was of economic importance for the British Government.<sup>446</sup> Karsh is correct in stating that the British Government, especially the Cairo Office, wanted to lead Sharif Hussein to this anti-Ottoman revolution. It would appear that Cox probably did make the offer to Ibn Saud on the basis of Shakespear's reports to Ibn Saud.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, India supported Ibn Saud, while Cairo supported Sharif Hussein.<sup>447</sup> There is no evidence, in the British or Saudi documents, that Sir Percy Cox asked Ibn Saud to carry out the Arab Revolt. Perhaps Cox agreed with the Western view of choosing Hussein bin Ali for this revolution. He remained discreet during negotiations with Ibn Saud, choosing not to discuss the MacMahon-Sharif negotiations.<sup>448</sup> Sharif Hussein instigated the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Turks in 1916-17, in agreement with Britain. It seems that the British Government chose Sharif Hussein because to them he was the most powerful ruler, governing two Muslim holy cities (Mecca and Medina). Therefore, his call for a war against the Ottoman Empire would guarantee the support of a large number of Muslims. Moreover, Sharif Hussein thought that the Turks were seeking to oust him.<sup>449</sup> In order to achieve his ambitious goal of establishing an Arab kingdom independent of the Ottoman Empire, Sharif Hussein himself sought to attract Arab leaders such as Ibn Saud and Mubarak al-Sabah to his revolution against the Ottoman presence in the region.<sup>450</sup> The aim of the Arab Revolt was liberation from Turkish rule. Hussein bin Ali, Ibn Saud and Mubarak al-Sabah

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<sup>446</sup> Karsh, Efraim and Inari Karsh, *Empires of the Sand: The Struggle for Mastery in the Middle East, 1789-1923* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), p.184.

<sup>447</sup> King Abdulaziz Foundation, Riyadh, German Report about Britain's relationship with the Arab countries (1017/101/41/5744); Townsend, *Proconsul to the Middle East*, p.148.

<sup>448</sup> Sir Arthur Henry MacMahon, 1862–1949, British High Commissioner of Egypt between 14/07/1915 and 30/03/1916. He was the author of famous correspondence with Hussein bin Ali, Sharif of Mecca, which aimed to carry out an Arab revolt against the Ottoman Empire.

<sup>449</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.163.

<sup>450</sup> Lubin, Alex, *Geographies of Liberation: the making of an Afro-Arab Political imaginary* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), p.68.

believed that Turkish rule harmed the Arab people. The correspondence between Arthur Henry MacMahon, the British High Commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussein ensured the success of the revolution because the British Government gave a promise to Sharif Hussein, through MacMahon, that following its success it would make him King of the Arabs. Ottoman Arab soldiers of low income and a number of people from the Arab Peninsula joined Sharif Hussein's army.<sup>451</sup> Britain aimed to overthrow the Turks and divide their regions between the British and French allies, as outlined in the infamous Sykes-Picot Agreement signed in 1916 (see the previous section).<sup>452</sup> The mission was led by British spy T. E. Lawrence, who was sent by Britain to help the Arabs in their war against the Turks. In return he pledged to obtain for Sharif Hussein control over the entire Arab region. However, Britain did not honour its pledge to Sharif Hussein and the Arabs, and the Middle East was instead divided by Britain and France in accordance with the Sykes–Picot Agreement.

Sharif Hussein bin Ali declared his revolt against the Ottoman State and began the separation of the Hijaz from the Ottoman Empire on 10 June 1916, by firing the first bullet at the Ottoman barracks in Mecca.<sup>453</sup> Britain provided support to Sharif Hussein, and British battleships started bombing Ottoman sites in Jeddah with the support of certain Hijazi tribes, and thus Jeddah became the first city abandoned by the Ottomans.<sup>454</sup> In response to the revolt of Sharif Hussein, the Ottoman Government ousted him from power and appointed Ali Haider

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<sup>451</sup> Franzen, Johan, *Red star over Iraq: Iraqi Communism before Saddam*, (London: Hurst, 2011), p. 9.

<sup>452</sup> The Sykes–Picot Agreement, 1916, was a secret agreement between France and Britain and approved by Imperial Russia, to divide the Arab world (Iraq, Jordan, Syria, and Palestine) between France and Britain after the implosion of the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. The negotiations were between the French Foreign Minister François Georges-Picot and the British Foreign Minister Mark Sykes.

<sup>453</sup> Mohs, Polly A., *Military Intelligence and the Arab Revolt: The first modern intelligence war*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2008), p.40.

<sup>454</sup> Al-Shebl, Abdulaziz, 'The Emergence and Demise of an Independent Arab State: The Kingdom of Hijaz, 1916–1925', Thesis, Los Angeles, University of California, 1988, p.59.

Pasha,<sup>455</sup> ruler of Mecca,<sup>456</sup> on 19 June 1916. Haider Pasha asked the people of Hijaz and the rulers of the Arabian Peninsula to stand with him in support of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>457</sup>

On 14 August 1916, Sharif Haider informed Ibn Saud about Sharif Hussein's plans to revolt against the Ottoman Empire and to bring enemies to Hijaz. He asked Ibn Saud to deter Sharif Hussein.<sup>458</sup> Ibn Saud relayed the message to Sir Percy Cox, to inform him and put pressure on the British Government after his ties with them had entered a cool phase.<sup>459</sup> This chill followed Ibn Saud's refusal to support Sharif Hussein in his war against the Ottomans, and his resolution to stay neutral for fear of the war failing.

On 13 November 1916, Sir Percy Cox met Ibn Saud in Uqair, and they discussed Arabian Peninsula affairs.<sup>460</sup> Ibn Saud then headed to Kuwait on 20 November 1916, and met Jabir Mubarak al-Sabah, emir of Kuwait,<sup>461</sup> and Sheikh Khazaal. He talked to them about the Turkish actions and their policy of double standards towards the Arabs. He also praised Hussein's revolt against the Ottomans.

It would seem to be the case that Ibn Saud's speech was diplomatically subtle; he knew that the meeting would be leaked to the British and to King Hussain. His words, therefore, aimed to maintain good relations with both Sharif Hussein and the British Government. Indeed, the news did reach Sharif Hussein, who praised and thanked Ibn Saud and sent him some money. He also asked him to join him in their battle against their mutual enemy, the Ottoman Empire.<sup>462</sup>

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<sup>455</sup> Sharif Ali Haider (1866–1919), who studied in Istanbul in a private school for the sons of Sultan Abdul Hamid II, joined the Sharifs of Mecca. He was appointed Emir of Mecca in 1916 (Stewart, George Marquis, *A Prince of Arabia: the Emir Shareef Ali Haider* (London: G. Allen & Unwin, 1948), p.53).

<sup>456</sup> Luke, Harry C. Joseph, *The Making of Modern Turkey* (London: Macmillan, 1936), p.173.

<sup>457</sup> FO/371/2781(195008), 10/10/1916, speech from Sharif Ali Haider to Hijaz people.

<sup>458</sup> FO/371/3047, 14/08/1916, from Sharif Ali Haider to Ibn Saud.

<sup>459</sup> FO/371/3047, 12/09/1916, from Ibn Saud to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>460</sup> FO/371/2769, 13/11/1916, from Sir Percy Cox to Department of Foreign Affairs of India.

<sup>461</sup> Jabir Mubarak al-Sabah (1860–1917) ruled Kuwait after his father (1915–1917) and was a close friend of Ibn Saud, Khaz'al, *Tārīkh al-Kūwayt*, p.176.

<sup>462</sup> FO/686/14, 29/11/1916, from Sharif Hussein to Ibn Saud.

Ibn Saud was outwardly neutral towards the Ottoman Empire, while in fact holding a grudge against it because of its stern attitude towards the people of Najd, demonstrated in its support for his opponent Ibn Rashid in the Battle of Bukairiya. On the other hand, Ibn Saud also wished to appear allied with Sharif Hussein in order to gain British trust, which would ensure their support in his quest to remain in control.

There is no doubt that Ibn Saud could neither remain in control of, nor establish the Saudi state without the support of the British Government. He was, therefore, concerned when he noticed that British support for Sharif Hussein outweighed their support for him. Ibn Saud was concerned by Sharif Hussein's developing relationship with the British Government, fearing that such support would help Hussein to take control of the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the British Government gave Sharif Hussein the title of King of Hijaz, which indicated that Ibn Saud, who sought to be independent, would be subordinate to him. However, Sir Percy Cox reassured Ibn Saud, in November 1916, that Sharif Hussein would not breach his sovereignty over his land and property, and that the British Government was still committed to the Treaty of Darin.

From the evidence available, the British Government was attempting to push Arab leaders along paths that served its own interests and those of its empire. The British were allied with Sharif Hussein in his revolt against the Ottomans, and offered him financial and military support to weaken the Ottoman Empire by triggering internal conflicts among the Muslims themselves. On the other hand, the British tried to win Ibn Saud's side to prevent a Bedouin attack on the British convoys in the east, and to keep him busy with his war against Ibn Rashid, who was an ally of the Ottomans. This would also have served to stop Ibn Rashid's interference in the regions which were allied with Ibn Saud, such as Kuwait.

It appears that the successful alliance between the Hashemites and the British emerged from their need for one another. Sharif Hussein's relationship with Turkey was ruined because

of the negative Turkish attitude towards the Sharif, but the British needed the religious power of Sharif Hussein as the Ottomans' jihad weakened. Although Hussein's revolt was launched, Britain did not completely fulfil its promises to him. Instead, it made a deal with Imperial Russia and France to sign the Sykes–Picot Agreement in 1916, without the knowledge of the Arab leaders.<sup>463</sup>

In 1917, the Sharif's son, Faisal, and Thomas Edward Lawrence led the Hijazi army to Aqaba after al-Wajh<sup>464</sup> had fallen to British warships in the Red Sea. As the campaign proceeded to the north, the Hijazi tribes allied themselves with the army in demonstration of their loyalty to Sharif Hussein. Awda Abu Tayi<sup>465</sup> was one of the most well-known figures to back the revolt. Lawrence also played a role in operating and planning for the army, and he repeatedly tried to cut the Hijazi railway, with Allenby, in order to hinder the transport of Turkish aid to Medina.

In the same year, the Arabs learned about the Sykes–Picot Agreement when the new Bolshevik Government broke with protocol and published the secret documents relating to the agreement.<sup>466</sup> Britain and France denied having such an agreement in order to maintain Arab loyalty. King Hussain, however, remained confident because the British had told him they were still committed to their agreement with him. Sharif Hussain could not give up on the Treaty with Britain because of his agreement with McMahon, which made him trust Britain. And he had lost Ottoman backing after revolting against them, so only Britain remained with him. Randal Baker believes that this is evidence that Sharif Hussein actually knew about the Sykes–Picot Agreement and the division of the Arab countries before it was made public.<sup>467</sup> Baker's

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<sup>463</sup> Alenazy, *Creation of Saudi Arabia*, p.80; Mordike, John Leonard, *General Sir Edmund Allenby's Joint Operations in Palestine, 1917-1918* (Fairbairn: Aerospace Centre, 2002), p. 12.

<sup>464</sup> A city in the Tabuk region on the Red Sea coast.

<sup>465</sup> Awda Abu Tayi (1858–1924) was the leader of the Howeitat, who lived around Ma'an. He played a major role in the operations during the Arab revolt through supporting the northern army that was led by Faisal (T. E. Lawrence, *Seven Pillars of Wisdom* (London: Black House, 2013), p.236).

<sup>466</sup> Barr, James, *A Line in the Sand: Britain, France and the Struggle for the Mastery of the Middle East* (London: Simon & Schuster, 2012), p.56.

<sup>467</sup> Baker, Randal *King Hussain and the Kingdom of Hijaz* (Cambridge: Oleander, 1979) p.186.

hypothesis would seem to be flawed, however, because Hussein's knowledge of the agreement would have been reason for him to refuse giving up Mesopotamia and the Levant to his sons as this was a kind of injustice to him and a marginalisation of his rule of the Arab countries. Furthermore, the war presented Sharif Hussein with a dilemma, as he infuriated the Ottoman Empire and ruined his relationship with the neighbouring Arabs. He then had no option but to clutch at the promises Britain made to him.

On 2 November 1917, Arthur Balfour<sup>468</sup> momentarily declared the establishment of a Jewish homeland in Palestine,<sup>469</sup> and Herbert Samuel<sup>470</sup> put forward the idea that Britain establish a British protectorate over Palestine near the Suez Canal, which would be an ally to Britain in the region.<sup>471</sup> There had been an earlier proposal to establish a Jewish homeland in Has'a, in the east of modern Saudi Arabia, instead of Palestine which was hypothetically an ancient Jewish homeland several millennia earlier. On 12 September 1917, Lord Francis Bertie, British Ambassador to France, received the proposal from Dr M. L. Rothstein, a Paris-based Russian Jew. Bertie explained to Foreign Secretary Balfour that Rothstein proposed that the Entente Powers should equip an army for the conquest of the Turkish province of 'El Hassa' (Has'a), to create a Jewish State on the Persian Gulf.<sup>472 473</sup> As a result, Rothstein asked the British Government to send forces to take control of Has'a, and these forces would then take part in eliminating the Ottoman Empire in the First World War. However, Balfour rejected the

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<sup>468</sup> Arthur James Balfour, 1848–1930, the Conservative Prime minister 1902 appointed Balfour to be his foreign secretary. After the war, Balfour served in the Lloyd George government as Lord President of the Council. (Schneer, Jonathan, *The Balfour Declaration: The Origins of the Arab–Israel Conflict* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2010), p.xiv.)

<sup>469</sup> Schneer, *Balfour Declaration*, p.150.

<sup>470</sup> Herbert Samuel, (1870–1963), was a British Liberal politician, the party leader from 1931–1935, and the first British high commissioner in Palestine (Huneidi, Sahar, *A Broken Trust, Herbert Samuel, Zionism and the Palestinians 1920–1925* (London: Tauris 2001), p.xi.)

<sup>471</sup> Defries, Harry, *Conservative Party Attitudes to Jews 1900–1950* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013), p. 64.

<sup>472</sup> FO 721/3074/w/44(5982), 03/10/1917, Letter from Francis Bertie to Arthur Balfour.

<sup>473</sup> <http://english.alarabiya.net/en/News/middle-east/2014/04/07/A-Jewish-state-in-Saudi-Arabia-New-British-document-reveals-1917-idea-to-do-so.html>, 6 April, 2014, by Kamal Kobeisi, accessed 03 April 2017.

proposal and instead announced his declaration to establish a Jewish homeland in Palestine two months later.<sup>474</sup>

At this time, the Ottomans seemed to appreciate Ibn Saud's neutral stance, as opposed to Sharif Hussein, whom they viewed as a clear opponent. An Ottoman historian pointed out that Ibn Saud took money from both the Turkish and the English, and stayed neutral in the war.<sup>475</sup> As a show of appreciation for Ibn Saud's stance, a high-level Ottoman delegation, which included Saleh Sharif<sup>476</sup> and Mohammed Akef<sup>477</sup>, arrived in the Arabian Peninsula with the aim of enhancing the Saud-Rashid understanding.<sup>478</sup> It would also appear to be the case that the visit aimed to explain the Ottoman Government's stance to Islamic public opinion in its empire, and to stress the idea of Islamic jihad to confront Sharif Hussein in Hijaz.

The Arab Revolt succeeded in expelling the Ottomans from Hijaz. Therefore, Britain achieved its two goals (expelling the Ottomans from Hijaz and establishing a Jewish home in Palestine). The two years that followed the Arab Revolt, from 1916 to 1918, witnessed a worsening dispute between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein due to British financial and military support of Sharif Hussein and his rise as a political figure in Hijaz. The conflict between both sides increased, yet remained behind the scenes. It seems that Ibn Saud could not match Sharif Hussein, who received great support from the British Government. In addition, Sharif Hussein asked the British Government to announce him as King of the Arabs, so that Ibn Saud would be subordinate to him. Their dispute was kept behind closed doors until it was clearly displayed after the First World War, which will be covered in the third section of this chapter.

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<sup>474</sup> King Abdulaziz Foundation, Report about Britain's relationship with the Arab State 1915–1937, Germany Document, N:5744/41(1017), File:13748(101), 11/09/1941.

<sup>475</sup> Qūrshūn, *Al- 'thmānīūn wa Al-sa 'ūd fī*, p.387.

<sup>476</sup> Saleh Sharif al-Hassani, a Tunisian scholar who obtained the permission of the two Holy Mosques, was commissioned by the Ottoman Empire with Mohammed Akef to improve the relationship between Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid, Mufrh, *Sīyasat Aldūlh Althmānīyh tjāh Almalk 'bdal z'z*, p.206.

<sup>477</sup> Muhammad Akef Pasha, who was Mutaserf Al Has'a. In 1891, one of the Ottoman Leaders met Ibn Saud to persuade him to make peace with Ibn Rashid. However, his attempt to achieve reconciliation failed (Mufrh, *Sīyasat Aldūlh Althmānīyh*, p.206).

<sup>478</sup> Kandemir, *Hisar Al-Madina*, pp. 336–337.

### 3.3. Mobilising new forces (the Ikhwan)

The *Ikhwan* (Brothers) are the nomadic tribesmen who used to travel between Kuwait, Mesopotamia, Jordan and the Arabian Peninsula during the grazing seasons.<sup>479</sup> They served as an unofficial army for Ibn Saud, and were religious fanatics. They were one of the major obstacles to achieving peace along the Saudi borders as they repeatedly raided tribes and towns that fell under the control of the British Government, such as Basra and Kuwait. Ibn Saud tried a new policy to settle these nomadic tribesmen, and offered them lands to farm. He also sent them religious men (*Matawa*) to teach them the correct Islamic Sharia.<sup>480</sup> The term Ikhwan is used for an Arab person nearby whose name is not known, or for a close friend. It is derived from the concept of a brotherhood under the name of one religion, and it is believed to be a bond stronger than that of the family or tribe.<sup>481</sup> Allah says in the Holy Quran, ‘And hold fast by the covenant of Allah all together and be not disunited. And remember Allah’s favour to you when you were enemies, then He united your hearts so by His favour you became brethren’.<sup>482</sup> The Ikhwan were distinctive for their costumes, as they wrapped a white turban around their *kaffiyehs* instead of putting on an *agal*.<sup>483</sup> It appears that there was a distinctive difference between the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt, that was founded by Hassan al-Banna in 1928,<sup>484</sup> and the Ikhwan in Najd. The Bedouins of Najd followed the Hanbali School, which Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab called for, after their ancestors forgot or distorted it. They were also influenced by the preachers and religious men who tried to convey the correct Islamic teachings as viewed by Muhammad ibn Abd al-Wahhab, through the Quran and Sunnah. Ibn Saud offered them money to leave the Bedouin life and settle in Hejara.

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<sup>479</sup> Al-Jazairi, ‘Saudi Arabia’, p.58.

<sup>480</sup> These Bedouins left the tents where they used to live, and moved to new settlements made of clay, Wahbah, *Jazīrat al-‘Arab*, p. 129.

<sup>481</sup> Al-Riḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.187; Yahyá, Muḥammad Kamāl, *Almuḥadon Alḡadad, Jamat Alkhwan fi Njed*, (Bīyrūt: Dār al-Kātib al-‘Arabī, 1989), p. 24.

<sup>482</sup> Holy Quran, Al-Omran, p.103.

<sup>483</sup> Al-Riḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.188.

<sup>484</sup> It was founded by Hassan al-Banna (1906–1949) in Egypt after a group of people suggested creating an Islamic group, after he ignited their enthusiasm with Islamic preaching and teachings to liberate the Arabs.

It seems that Ibn Saud used these Bedouins and their enthusiasm to play a role in eliminating many of his opponents, such as Ibn Rashid and Sharif Hussein. Ibn Saud used the name Hejar as derived from the Islamic term Hejara; thus, the Bedouins left their tents to settle in the small villages of Hejar.<sup>485</sup> In the years from 1902 to 1912, Ibn Saud relied on the tribes of Najd<sup>486</sup> to restore his ancestral property. These tribes were from al-Qasim, al-Aridh, al-Mahmal and Sudair, and they were considered more organized than the Badia tribes. They were established when Ibn Saud came to conquer Riyadh. The former tribes declared their allegiance to Ibn Saud, while the Badia tribes fluctuated, sometimes in support of Ibn Saud and at other times against him. Ibn Saud was aware that the allegiance of the Bedouin people was to their tribe, not to him, but he needed their help. He did not want to enter a new battle before he took control of the areas around Najd. He succeeded and obtained British support and formed a force of the people of Riyadh and Al-Qassim to get rid of the Ikhwan in 1918 which will be discussed in the following chapter.

Historians' opinions regarding the Ikhwan movement differ. According to Philby, Ibn Saud's primary goal was to consolidate the foundations of his rule by rooting religion in the Ikhwan's members, and urging them to fight (Jihad) and raise the banner of Islam.<sup>487</sup> His plan was to send educated men and Mutawa' to advise the Ikhwan not to kill one another and to become brothers in religion. Dickson, Habib and Helms believe that the Ikhwan were a political tool used by Ibn Saud; they were not as bloody, arrogant and violent as some wanted to believe.<sup>488</sup> Al-Rīḥānī views the Ikhwan as an extremist movement which sought to conquer, pillage and hoist the banner of religion while lacking the organisation required for building

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<sup>485</sup> Talal Al-Azma', 'The role of Ikhwan under 'bdul-'ziz Al-Sa'ud 1916–1934' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Durham University, 1999), p. 75.

<sup>486</sup> The tribes that were settled inside the towns and villages like Riyadh, Sudair and al-Qassim.

<sup>487</sup> Philby, Harry St. John, *Report on the Operation of the Najd Mission: October 29<sup>th</sup>, 1917 to November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1918* (Baghdad, Government Press, 1918), p. 16.

<sup>488</sup> Dickson, Harold Richard, *Kuwait and her Neighbours* (London: George Allen & Unwin 1956), p.56; Habib, John S., *Ibn Sa'ud's Warriors of Islam: The Ikhwan of Najd and Their role in the Creation of the Sa'udi Kingdom, 1910-1930* (Leiden, Brill, 1978), p.5; Christine Helms, *The Cohesion of Saudi Arabia: Evolution of Political Identity* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 127.

modern armies.<sup>489</sup> On the other hand, Wahba and Al-Azm' view it as a Jihadi organisation that was under the umbrella of Islam.<sup>490</sup> Vassiliev ruled out the possibility that Ibn Saud was the founder of the idea of the Ikhwan;<sup>491</sup> he believes that the founders were Abd Allah ibn Muḥammad ibn Abd al-Latif Al ash-Sheikh<sup>492</sup> and Sheikh Abdulkarim Al Maghribi.<sup>493</sup> According to Abedin, Ibn Saud did not support this movement.<sup>494</sup> Though some supported the Ikhwan and others opposed it, nobody could deny the significant role it played in supporting Ibn Saud and establishing his rule. Ibn Saud's men settled down in the city and returned to protect their properties, markets and land. They did not want to leave Najd, which meant that Ibn Saud needed other men who would accompany him to areas far from Najd. This is why Ibn Saud decided to form the Ikhwan.

Ibn Saud was therefore in need of courageous men who could move like the Bedouins. He could not turn the city men into a paramilitary force like the Bedouins because they were settled in the urban environment and now had commercial interests. Ibn Saud was interested in building them settlements. He wanted to guide them to the correct principles of religion, such as moderation, not to kill unjustly, obedience to guardians and so on, and use them as a human force in his wars for expansion. In 1912, the first settlement Ibn Saud built was al-Artawiyah,<sup>495</sup> for the Mutayr tribe. Overall, he built 200 settlements and, with the help of the Ikhwan, established a significant force in the middle of the Arabian Peninsula. The Ikhwan's principle

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<sup>489</sup> Al-Riḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p. 188.

<sup>490</sup> Talal Al-Azma', 'The role of Ikhwan', p.i; Wahbah, *Jazīrat al-'Arab*, p. 12.

<sup>491</sup> Vassiliev, *History*, p. 228.

<sup>492</sup> Abd Allah bin Muḥammad bin Abd al-Latif Al ash-Sheikh (1892–1977) was the judge of Riyadh and a descendent of Muhammad bin Abd al-Wahhab.

<sup>493</sup> Sheikh Abdulkarim Al Maghribi came from Iraq as a religious man, and was a judge in Has'a. He later settled in Alartwiyah and collaborated with Abd Allah Al ash-Sheikh to establish the Ikhwan.

<sup>494</sup> Abedin, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud', p.106.

<sup>495</sup> An oasis in the north of Najd, founded by Ibn Saud in 1912. It is a Hegir and settlement for the Mutayr tribe. It had a population of about 35,000. Its leader was Faisal Duweish, a prominent leader of the Ikhwan (Lauziere, Henri, *On the Origins of Arab Monarchy: Political Culture, Historiography, and the emergence of the modern Kingdoms in Morocco and Saudi Arabia* (unpublished master's thesis, Simon Fraser University, 2000), p. 31.

was ‘we are brothers of those who obey God’;<sup>496</sup> the settlements were called ‘Hejar’ because the word symbolised the transition from a life of disbelief to the life of Islam. It was used to attract people to move from the cities and follow the example of the Prophet Mohammed as he himself once left Mecca to travel to Medina.<sup>497</sup> It does seem to be the case that the Ikhwan were a fanatical fighting group. They were Ibn Saud’s soldiers who were originally Bedouin travellers, ignorant of true religious teaching. They were tough because of their life in the desert and intolerant (for example, a person who shaved his beard or smoked was considered an infidel).

Dickson is correct in stating that the Ikhwan were founded by Ibn Saud to fight his own battles, but they were initially unorganised soldiers, with neither salary nor training.<sup>498</sup> They were primitive but loyal fighters. Due to successive wars in the Arabian Peninsula and poverty, they had been forced into looting to survive. When Ibn Saud called for the protection of their people and lands, gave them money and donations in return for fighting with him, and called on them to stop stealing from others, they gave their loyalty to him. Motivated by religious ideas, all they cared about was to fight until they either died or emerged victorious from the battle.

The Ikhwan lived in settlements (*Hejar*) which Ibn Saud established. He also sent religious teachers and weaponry to help them to learn the right religion. The most important thing for Ibn Saud was to make his new men abandon the ‘ignorant’ and tribal customs while binding his followers together as brothers, regardless of their tribes and social origins.<sup>499</sup> In turn, they were obliged to give up tribal fighting, drinking, tobacco and other ‘sins’ which some of them had been involved in. Before the end of 1912, Ibn Saud had created a strong army he

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<sup>496</sup> This slogan means they are united under the name of one God, Allah, without any discrimination based on race, colour, or tribe.

<sup>497</sup> Commins, *Wahhabi Mission*, p. 81.

<sup>498</sup> Dickson, *Kuwait*, p.5.

<sup>499</sup> Kishk, *Al-su ‘ūdīyūn*, p.559.

could rely on in war. It appears that Ibn Saud created a new idea of social brotherhood, creating a sense of harmony among his followers, improving their economic conditions by assisting them in agriculture and trade where they settled, and sending Mutawa and teachers to teach them the true fundamentals of Islam. Ibn Saud hid the existence of the Ikhwan from the British for as long as possible because of their support for Sharif Hussein. Concealing the Ikhwan's rapid growth and military capacity served Ibn Saud's purpose to expand his rule.

During the period from 1912 to 1920, the Ikhwan played an influential role in the wars and political events in the Arabian Peninsula. They were brave fighters on the battlefield, motivated by religious enthusiasm and dedicated to spreading their religion and expanding territory. They were the main political and military tool that helped Ibn Saud to fortify and extend his authority over most of the Arabian Peninsula, such as his control of Asir, Ha'il, the Northern provinces, Hijaz and Jazan. They were also an influential political force that enabled him to consolidate his power during negotiations with neighbouring powers in the Gulf.<sup>500</sup> It can be said that the relationship between Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan remained strong until 1918, but some of their leaders, such as Faisal al-Dweish and Sultan bin Bajad, began to gain more influence. They questioned Ibn Saud for his attack on Ha'il instead of Hijaz, which is more important to all Muslims. However, Ibn Saud recognised the importance of Ha'il as he wanted to get rid of his former enemies from Al Rashid. He also knew that Hijaz was supported by the British, so he could not advance towards it at that time.

In 1919, having won a battle against Sharif Hussein, the Ikhwan began to demand their own political rule from Ibn Saud and take over the emirate of Taif and Medina.<sup>501</sup> The extremist brothers had become aggressive, that is, they would beat and excommunicate anyone who

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<sup>500</sup> Helms, *Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, pp. 225–226; Kostiner, Joseph, 'On Instruments and their Designers: the Ikhwan of Najd and the Emergence of the Saudi state', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 21.3 (Jul.1985), pp. 298–323; Wynbrandt, *Brief History*, p.170.

<sup>501</sup> Al-Riḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.190.

violated their beliefs or wore different clothes.<sup>502</sup> It seems that the Ikhwan's intolerance stemmed from their lack of understanding of orthodox Islamic teachings. Also, a large number of the brothers were uneducated and acted without having the necessary knowledge of Islamic studies. In 1919, Ibn Saud held a conference in Riyadh with the society of Ikhwan to advise and guide them in true Islamic law. At the end of the conference, a Fatwa was issued and signed by multiple Islamic scholars, indicating that most of the Ikhwan's behaviour was wrong. The scholars, therefore, asked Ibn Saud to send more scholars and tutors to Najd neighbourhoods.<sup>503</sup> During the 1920s, the brothers became a double-edged sword in the hands of King Abdul-Aziz. In other words, although he could benefit from them as a military force against his enemies, they became a source of real concern and danger to the unity of his country. Besides, they actively worked to mar relations between Ibn Saud and his neighbours. For instance, they attacked areas such as Kuwait and Basra without the permission of Ibn Saud. They believed that raiding such areas was their duty because their inhabitants were doing non-Islamic things like smoking and wearing casual clothes.<sup>504</sup> Ibn Saud knew that all his neighbouring countries from Kuwait to Aden, as well as Jordan and Mesopotamia, were under British protection. He therefore realised that if the brothers, particularly after the annexation of Hijaz, extended their influence to other countries, this would put Ibn Saud in an embarrassing position with the British Government. This is also why Ibn Saud decided to lead the Ikhwan himself, to ensure that no attacks took place on any city connected to the British mandate. It is clear that Ibn Saud was keen to maintain British support. When Ibn Saud took control of Mecca in 1924, the fanatical brothers destroyed some tombs and the house of the Prophet's wife, Khadija. They also forced people to quit smoking because they believed that smoking was forbidden.<sup>505</sup>

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<sup>502</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Policy of King Abdulaziz', p.94.

<sup>503</sup> Wahbah, *Jazirat al-'arab*, p.132; Vassiliev, *History*, p.229.

<sup>504</sup> Philby, Harry St. John, *Arabian Days* (London: Report Hale Limited, 1948), pp.221–222.

<sup>505</sup> Kostiner, 'On Instruments and their Designers', p.301

In Hijaz, the brothers were shocked by the use of modern technological tools such as watches, cars and bicycles, and considered them the work of Satan. Ibn Saud tried to convince them that such things were just tools to help humanity. This issue sparked a dispute between Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan, which will be discussed in the following chapters. Ibn Saud tried to strengthen his influence in Hijaz and other areas of Najd by appointing the grandsons of Sheikh Mohammed Ibn Abdul Wahab as judges. They were his ambassadors to gain the people's satisfaction and ensure their loyalty.<sup>506</sup> Ibn Saud also established an Advisory Council (Shura) to follow up with scholars and tribal leaders and have all state matters under his administration. In fact, the Ikhwan were managed by a co-ordinator, who was in direct contact with Ibn Saud. This way, Ibn Saud tried to exert control over the brothers. Nevertheless, the brothers raided each other from time to time without Ibn Saud's knowledge. From the above it is clear that the Ikhwan served two important purposes. First, they enabled Ibn Saud to take control of Najd. Second, Ibn Saud made settlements for the brothers to substitute their tribal loyalty with loyalty to the country.

According to Zedan, the British Government initially supported the Ikhwan against Ibn Saud in order to weaken and neutralise him.<sup>507</sup> This seems an unlikely hypothesis as, in fact, the British Government, keen to maintain its interests with the Ottoman Empire, was reluctant to enter into any commitment with Ibn Saud. However, the British Government did not interfere in the internal affairs of Najd in the beginning. No document has emerged to confirm that the British Government supported the Brothers, although they did later realise the danger the Brothers represented, and assisted Ibn Saud to uproot the movement.

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<sup>506</sup> Habib, *Ikhwan*, p.61; Abdein, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud', p.107.

<sup>507</sup> Zedan, Faysal M., *Political Development of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia* (California: Claremont University, 1981), p.95.

### 3.4. Tenuous Saudi–British relations in 1918

There were many political entities in the Arabian Peninsula after the end of the First World War. In the eastern regions, the emirate of Kuwait ruled by the Al Sabah, Qatar ruled by the Al Thani, and Bahrain ruled by the Al Khalifa, besides the Trucial States dominated by the Sultans of the Bu Saidis. In the central Arabian Peninsula, there was Najd, ruled by Ibn Saud. In the northern parts, there was the emirate of Ha'il controlled by the Al Rashid. In the western regions, there was the Kingdom of Hijaz administered by the Hashemites. In the southwestern regions, there was the Emirate of Asir controlled by the Al Adarisa, next to the Kingdom of Yemen and Aden. To the northwest, there was the emirate of Al-Jawf Al-Shaalan. In the south, the emirate of al-A'ad in Abha. Most of these powers were linked by political relations with Britain.<sup>508</sup>

The post-war period saw a clear British superiority in the Middle East after the defeat of the Ottoman Empire. Britain and France took control of some of the Ottoman provinces on the Asian side. Britain thus became the *de facto* sovereign of the Middle East, dominating the Eastern Arab region and surrounding most of the Muslim world.<sup>509</sup>

The last two years of the First World War (1916-1918) witnessed a high level of diplomatic activity between Britain and Ibn Saud as it sent many diplomatic missions to him. The purpose of these missions was to support Sharif Hussein bin Ali in his revolt against the Turks and prevent his lands from being subjected to any external threats from the ruler of Najd. Britain feared Ibn Rashid might attack the Hashemite forces in the Arabian Peninsula, as the Turks incited.<sup>510</sup> Ibn Saud urged military operations against the Al Rashid in Ha'il, so that Britain could implement its military and strategic plans in the region as agreed in the Sykes–

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<sup>508</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.119.

<sup>509</sup> Yesilyurt, Nuri, 'Collapse of Empire: Ottoman Turks and the Arabs in the First World War' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Cambridge, Wolfson College, 2005), p.36.

<sup>510</sup> Al-Zīdy, *Tārīkh Al-Mamlkah*, p.128.

Picot Agreement.<sup>511</sup> According to Troeller, Wingate saw the necessity of communicating with Ibn Saud.<sup>512</sup> He believed that providing assistance to Ibn Saud would achieve common goals in eliminating the authority of Ibn Rashid in Ha'il. Mark Sykes, Assistant Secretary of the British Ministry of War at that time, pointed out the importance of redefining British influence in the Middle East again in the light of recent developments in the region. The correspondence between Sir Percy Cox and Cairo led to an agreement pertaining to supporting Ibn Saud's operations against the Al Rashid in Ha'il. Such endorsement was to strengthen the British influence and presence in the region.

### **3.5. Ronald Storrs' mission to Riyadh in mid-1917**

The first British mission to Saudi Arabia took place in early May 1917, led by Ronald Storrs, a special secretary to the British High Commissioner in Egypt. Storrs went to Basra from Cairo, then went to Baghdad and met Sir Percy Cox.<sup>513</sup> Cox proposed that Storrs go directly to Ibn Saud. The goal of Storrs' mission was to ease Ibn Saud's relationship with Sharif Hussein. Ibn Saud had succeeded in attracting some of the tribes of Al Hussein. Consequently, Sharif Hussein urged the British authorities in Cairo to limit Ibn Saud's activities in Al Hussein's regions. It seems that Ibn Saud was not in a good position, financially. However the mission failed because Storrs suffered heatstroke, which forced him to return to Cairo on 7 November 1917.

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<sup>511</sup> Vassiliev, *History*, p.317.

<sup>512</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.106.

<sup>513</sup> Storrs, Ronald, *The Memoirs of Sir Ronald Storrs* (New York: G.P. Putnam, 1937), p.231.

### 3.6. Lieutenant Colonel R.E.A. Hamilton's mission to Riyadh in November 1917

The British Government continued its correspondence with Ibn Saud at the end of 1917. Robert Edward Archibald Hamilton was chosen to take this mission. The British Government began to pursue a policy towards Ibn Saud based on the following points.

- Ibn Saud was encouraged to expedite his attacks on Ibn Rashid.<sup>514</sup>
- Ibn Saud was to be relied upon to stop illegal trade activities, which might influence the economic embargo that Britain imposed on Kuwait in December 1917. Britain was afraid of any disturbances between Najd and Kuwait, which might end in a negative impact on the military operations of its forces in Mesopotamia. Britain wanted to appoint a Political Resident in Najd.
- Finally, Britain wished to develop a peaceful policy between Ibn Saud and the Arab tribes, especially the Ajman.

Hamilton presented to Ibn Saud the nature of his distinguished relations with Britain, especially after the Treaty of Darin in 1915. Then, Hamilton raised problems that concerned a number of Arab tribes in the region, such as the Ajman and Mutayr.<sup>515</sup> He wrote a report to his government on the conduct of his talks in Riyadh, urging it to accept Ibn Saud's suggestions. Also, he emphasised that these suggestions included Ibn Saud's desire to be treated in a similar manner to Sharif Hussein Ibn Ali. Moreover, Ibn Saud wanted the British Government to recognise him as the independent ruler in Najd as well as in the Middle East. Ibn Saud longed to have all the Arab tribes on the Arabian Peninsula under his sovereignty. Hamilton also discussed with Ibn Saud the issue of ensuring the safety of convoys on the internal routes from Karbala to Samawah, to Al-Khamisiyya to Al-Zubair, up to Kuwait. These routes should be secured in co-operation between Ibn Saud and the British Resident in the Arabian Gulf.

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<sup>514</sup> Al-Zaydī, *Tārīkh Al-Mamlakah*, p.130.

<sup>515</sup> FO/371/3389(225), November 1917, Report from Colonel Hamilton; Safūt, Najdat, *Al-jazīrah Al- 'rabiyyah fīy alwatha 'q al-Brūtānīah* (Almojalid Althalth, 1917–1918; Bīyrūt: Dār al-Sâqī, 1998), p.535.

Furthermore, Ibn Saud talked with Hamilton about the importance of financial support to build commercial ports in Has'a. In return, Ibn Saud would pledge not to enter into an agreement with any foreign country and, additionally, not interfere with the Arab tribes or any power related to Britain in the region. Assuming the above, Britain and Ibn Saud could reach a written agreement.

During the discussions, it appears clear that such proposals were put forward to bring Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein closer so that the British Government could implement its plans to eliminate the Ottomans. Therefore, the British Government sent Ibn Saud to hamper Ibn Rashid's movements towards Sharif Hussein or Basra. As for Ibn Saud, he did not like the British support of Sharif Hussein and their endorsement of him as King of Hijaz. As a result, the British Government sent some officials to Ibn Saud to explain to him that such support would not affect his interests in the region. Hamilton spent twenty-one days in Riyadh, after which he returned to Kuwait, and then to London. It was necessary for the British Government to send an envoy to Ibn Saud to achieve its interests. For that, Cox chose Philby to be the third envoy for Ibn Saud.

### **3.7. The mission of Harry St. John Philby to Riyadh in 1917–1918**

Philby arrived in Riyadh on 30 November 1917. Like his predecessors, he focused on two things: fighting Ibn Rashid and improving the relationship with Sharif Hussein. Ibn Saud stressed his firm support for the British Government and pledged not to attack Hussein Ibn Ali. According to Al-Zīydī, Philby was unable to persuade Ibn Saud to fight Ibn Rashid.<sup>516</sup> It seems that Philby was, however, able to extract a promise from Ibn Saud not to attack Sharif Hussein. Silverfarb asserts that the British Government supported Ibn Saud with 3000 rifles,

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<sup>516</sup> Al-Zīydī, *Tārīkh Al-Mamlkah*, p.136.

2500 rounds, four machine guns and a monthly stipend of £5000.<sup>517</sup> In exchange, Ibn Saud agreed to deploy 4000 men in Qassim to strangle Ibn Rashid. However, Vassiliev demonstrates that while Ibn Saud was moving towards Ha'il to eliminate Ibn Rashid, Sharif Hussein and Ibn Rashid signed a peace treaty.<sup>518</sup> Therefore, Cox stopped Ibn Saud's campaign in August 1918, which bothered Ibn Saud a great deal. The British wanted to maintain their economic and political interests. When they realised that fighting Ibn Rashid was purposeless, they stopped advancing towards Ha'il. Also, one of their interests was to keep Ibn Saud and Ibn Rashid busy so that neither one of them could think about their interests in the region. Silverfarb and Vassiliev are broadly correct in stating that Ibn Saud formed his campaign with the support of the British Government to fight Ibn Rashid. Al-Zīdy highlights Ibn Saud's refusal at first, but after gaining British financial and military support, Ibn Saud agreed to combat Ibn Rashid without hesitation.

On 4 March 1918, the British Government, through its representative, Philby, attempted to end the problem of Ajman, which in turn damaged the relationship between Sheikh Salem Al-Mubarak and Ibn Saud. The clash was over the Ajman tribe, which was supported by the Sheikh of Kuwait. Philby ended this issue by stopping Ibn Saud's hostile acts. At the same time, the Ajman tribe was expelled from Kuwait to the east of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>519</sup>

From the above, it appears that the British Government realised that continuous assistance to Ibn Saud might give him the confidence to expand in the region. Subsequently, the British Government limited its financial and military support to Ibn Saud.<sup>520</sup> The Germans and the Ottomans realized that British support for Ibn Saud could lead to the fall of their ally Ibn Rashid, so they sent 25 officers and 300 soldiers equipped with guns and supplies to Ibn

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<sup>517</sup> Silverfarb, Daniel, 'The Philby Mission to Ibn Saud, 1917–18' *Journal of Contemporary History*, 14.2 (April 1979), pp 269–286.

<sup>518</sup> Vassiliev, *History*, p.318.

<sup>519</sup> Zakat is a religious obligation for all Muslims who meet the necessary criteria. It is not a charitable contribution and is considered to be a tax or obligatory alms.

<sup>520</sup> FO 371/3390, 08/09/1918, from Reginald Wingate to Foreign Affairs.

Rashid.<sup>521</sup> That is why British officials desired to win Ibn Saud over to secure its interests in the Arabian Peninsula. As for Ibn Saud, he aimed to control the entire region; which required the support of the British Government. When the British Government stopped fighting Ibn Rashid, putting Ibn Saud in an embarrassing situation, relations cooled. As a result, Ibn Saud, lacking support, withdrew his forces and returned to Qassim.

During 1918, there were conflicting views between British officials in Egypt and their counterparts in India regarding the financial and military support for Ibn Saud.<sup>522</sup> Reginald Wingate, the British High Commissioner, refused to equip Ibn Saud with arms or money. In Cairo, the British authorities feared that Ibn Saud would use this aid to fight Britain's ally Sharif Hussein. Also, Wingate believed that Ibn Rashid was not as strong as Ibn Saud described. Wingate highlighted that Ibn Saud had received the necessary support, estimated at £20,000, from 1915 to 1917, along with a monthly salary of £5000.<sup>523</sup>

The issue of maintaining balance between Arabian leaders now emerged. Wingate asserted that Ibn Rashid could not hurt Britain. He believed that Ibn Saud only cared about Ibn Rashid.<sup>524</sup> Cox opposed this view and argued that Ibn Rashid was still a risk. In addition, he urged Ibn Saud to raid Ha'il because this issue was of capital importance. Cox listed a number of reasons why he wanted Ibn Saud to attack Ha'il. First, he rejected the idea of keeping an enemy to maintain balance between powers as this would simply prolong conflict in the peninsula. Also, such an idea would obligate Britain to support Ibn Saud with money and arms, as signed in the Treaty. Cox added that eliminating Ibn Rashid would stop the phenomenon of smuggling.<sup>525</sup> It appears from Cox's response that British India believed that an alliance with Ibn Saud was the most appropriate option. Indeed, Ibn Saud was supported financially and

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<sup>521</sup> L/P&S/10/387(1), 27/10/1916, from Sir Percy Cox to the British Political Resident in the Gulf.

<sup>522</sup> Hagar, 'Britain, her Middle East Mandates', p.45.

<sup>523</sup> IOR/R/15/1/747, 1917-18, Report on the Operation of the Najd Mission October 29th, 1917, to November 1st, 1918, Harry St. John Philby in Baghdad, pp.20-28; Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.112.

<sup>524</sup> FO 371/3389 No (4423), 08/01/1918, from Reginald Wingate to Foreign Affairs.

<sup>525</sup> FO 371/3389 No (10203), 17/01/1918, from Sir Percy Cox to the India Government.

militarily. Philby, as previously mentioned, had a very important role in persuading the British authorities. However, the British Government in Cairo was afraid to support Ibn Saud with arms and money, which might be utilised to attack Sharif Hussein. The British Government might have trusted Ibn Saud, but it did not trust the Ikhwan, who were insinuating to Ibn Saud from time to time to attack Hijaz. To substantiate this view, Harold Jacob, the Assistant Resident at Aden, believed that Ibn Saud wanted to move against the Turks, but lacked weapons and ammunition.<sup>526</sup>

On the other hand, the British officials in India, headed by Cox, believed that Ibn Saud was a loyal ally, especially since he had entered into a formal Treaty in 1915. Cox highlighted that Britain sought to eradicate the power of Ibn Rashid and keep that of Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein.<sup>527</sup> In this sense, the British Government in India had tried to keep two forces in the Arabian Peninsula. Cox saw Sharif Hussein as a strong ally. Also, it was believed that Ibn Saud could prevent the Bedouins and Ikhwan from harming British interests. So, too, he could deter Ibn Rashid and other tribes from attacking Hijaz or Basra, which were under the British mandate.

In January 1918, the British Government sent D. G. Hogarth, a British official in Egypt, to Jeddah to meet Sharif Hussein bin Ali. Philby and Colonel Bassett, a British deputy in Jeddah, accompanied him and held several meetings. However, their meetings failed to smooth Sharif Hussein's relationship with Ibn Saud<sup>528</sup> as Sharif Hussein refused to negotiate with Ibn Saud. He also declined British endeavours and demanded that they fulfil their promise to name him King of Hijaz. In fact, Sharif Hussein stopped Philby from crossing Hijaz to reach Ibn Saud and forced him to return to Egypt with Hogarth.<sup>529</sup> Philby succeeded in preparing Ibn

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<sup>526</sup> Al-Ziyādy, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa'ūd, p.135.

<sup>527</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.112.

<sup>528</sup> IOR/R/15/1/747, (29/10/1917-01/11/1918), Report on the Operation of the Najd Mission, St. John Philby in Baghdad, p.5.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid, p.46; Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.111.

Saud to fight Ibn Rashid. Also, Ibn Saud promised not to harass Sharif Hussein in future. Philby left Riyadh with the strong impression that Ibn Saud was the most prominent figure on the Arabian Peninsula.

After the arrival of Philby in Baghdad, the British Government told him to return to Al Riyadh to represent Britain there and to express his government's desire for Ibn Saud to take decisive action against Ibn Rashid.<sup>530</sup> At this stage, Britain had foreseen the near collapse of the Ottoman Empire on the Arabian Peninsula, especially when Allenby cut off the Hijaz Transjordan Railway. This prompted British politicians to reconsider their position toward Ibn Saud, regarding military and financial support, to prepare to fight Ibn Rashid in Ha'il.<sup>531</sup> Ibn Saud agreed and requested a loan of £20,000. He also asked for military supplies to carry out this task.<sup>532</sup> Moreover, he demanded that the British Government guarantee that it would not let Sharif Hussein attack any of the regions under his control and that it would resolve his border disputes with Kuwait.<sup>533</sup>

Ibn Saud was able to take advantage of the British Government's request to fight Ibn Rashid because this would keep him from fighting Sharif Hussein. He provided the British Government with his own conditions for wiping out Ibn Rashid. On the other hand, the British Government sought to prevent Ibn Rashid from attacking the areas under the control of the British Government, such as Basra and Baghdad. Despite the defeat of Ibn Rashid's main ally, the Ottoman state, Ibn Rashid would be able to gather the Bedouins from the northern area and lead them to areas under the control of the British Government, which would threaten the British Government's interests in the Gulf. On the other hand, Ibn Saud became jealous when the British Government responded to Sharif Hussein and granted him the title of King of Hijaz

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<sup>530</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.188.

<sup>531</sup> Hagar, 'Britain, her Middle East Mandates', p.47.

<sup>532</sup> Ibid, p.47; IOR/R/15/1/747, (29/10/1917-01/11/1918), Report on the Operation of the Najd Mission by St John Philby in Baghdad, p.23.

<sup>533</sup> Hagar, 'Britain, her Middle East Mandates', p.48.

in 1916. This provoked him to send letters to the British Government seeking to be its ally; his aim was to control the region of the Arabian Peninsula, where the legacy of his ancestors lay.

It is evident from the above that there was a contradiction in Indian policy towards the Arabian Peninsula. The Indian Office in Mumbai, represented by Sir Percy Cox and Philby, showed support to Ibn Saud, unlike the Arab Office in Cairo under the Foreign Ministry in London, represented by Wingate and Lawrence of Arabia. This is clearly shown in Philby's commendation to Ibn Saud, pointing out that Hussein Ibn Ali, Sharif of Mecca, was not fit to carry the responsibility of ensuring an Arab union. He claimed that Sharif Hussein was interested only in expanding his wealth, without showing any kind of love or respect to the people of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>534</sup> On the other hand, Lawrence saw Ibn Saud as a mischievous man lacking a clear vision, who adhered excessively to the Quran. The Ikhwan tended to destroy the best of the Arab arts and, if were left to act as they chose, would lead the Arabian Peninsula to its demise.<sup>535</sup> Perhaps Lawrence adopted such an attitude because Hijaz had direct contact with Cairo, where the British representative was. This made contact easier than with the area of Najd. Also Hijaz's strategic location contributed to isolating the Ottoman forces in the west of the Arabian Peninsula. This reduced the potential risk to the British navy in the Red Sea.

On 23 March 1918, the General Conference of British Intelligence Officers was held in the Middle East in Cairo, headed by Wingate, the British High Representative, and Colonel Wilson, the representative of the British Government to Sharif Hussein. Wilson was assigned to support Sharif Hussein and to confront Sir Percy Cox, who represented the Government of India and who defended Ibn Saud, claiming that 'Britain will never find a devoted person who

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<sup>534</sup> Howarth, *Desert King*, p.88; Brown, Malcolm, *T.E. Lawrence in War and Peace: An Anthology of the Military Writings of Lawrence of Arabia* (London: Greenhill, 2005), p.143.

<sup>535</sup> Anderson, Scott. *Lawrence of Arabia: War, Deceit, Imperial Folly and the Making of the Modern Middle East* (New York : Anchor Books, 2014), p.212.

can be led as easily as Abdul-Aziz bin Saud regardless how many agents Britain has. That's why we have to end Sharif Hussein from Hijaz and we must provide him with financial and military support to occupy Ha'il and to eliminate the tribes of Shamar and Al-Rashid.' Wilson replied to Cox, 'We want to keep on Sharif Hussein taking advantage of both.'<sup>536</sup> Apparently, British policy had a dual perspective when dealing with Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein. The Government of India believed that Ibn Saud was the best ally to the British Government since he would comply in return for money, while the representative of Cairo believed Sharif Hussein was the best ally because he had led the Arab Revolt. In fact, it seems that the Indian Government, represented by Sir Percy Cox, was influenced by Philby's commendation to Ibn Saud after meeting him, and by Philby's conflict with Sharif Hussein after preventing him from crossing Al Hijaz to meet Ibn Saud in Najd in 1918.

It is worth noting that the attitude of the Ottoman Government towards Ibn Saud near the end of the First World War was one of appreciation of his attitude to the war, as opposed to Sharif Hussein, who opposed them, especially when Britain placed extreme pressure on the Ottoman forces. According to al-Rīḥānī, Ibn Saud took money from both parties, the English and the Turks, yet remained neutral during wartime.<sup>537</sup> According al-Fā'i ' , Fakhri Pasha,<sup>538</sup> the governor of Medina, was aware that King Abdul-Aziz awaited a proper opportunity to attack the Sharif of Mecca.<sup>539</sup> Also, Tahseen Ali,<sup>540</sup> in his diaries,<sup>541</sup> said that Fakhri Pasha wanted to hand Medina over to Ibn Saud; he sent him a message asking him to stand with him against Sharif Hussein. In fact, tension and conflicts over the villages of Turba and Kharma

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<sup>536</sup> Ibid, p.161.

<sup>537</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.217.

<sup>538</sup> Fakhri Pasha (1868–1948) was commander of the Ottoman army in Mosul during the First World War in 1914, and was called in 1916 to be Governor of Medina (Peters, F.E., *Mecca: A Literary History of the Muslim Holy Land* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.375.

<sup>539</sup> Al- Fā'i ' , *al- 'Alāqah bayna al-Malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz wa al-Malik al-Ḥusayn bin '* , p.119.

<sup>540</sup> Tahsin Ali (1890–1970), is a military figure who received many positions in the Ottoman army (Tahsīn Alī, *Modhkrāt Tahsīn Ali* ( 'mmān, Almw'rasah al'rabih lilnasher, 2004), p.10).

<sup>541</sup> Ibid, p.64.

between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein led to an armed clash between the two parties. This will be addressed in detail in the next chapter.

### **3.8. Hijaz gate (Al-Kharma, Truba Disputes), 1918-1920**

The way Britain looked at Sharif Hussein as the best representative of the British policy in the Arab countries shifted after the First World War as Ibn Saud emerged as the strongest force in the region. Sharif Hussein wanted to return Ibn Saud's border to where it had been before the war, which only included the regions of Najd and Has'a. Thus, Sharif Hussein ignored Britain's support of Ibn Saud and his rise as a military force in the region after the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>542</sup> In light of the ongoing disagreements between the Sharif and Ibn Saud, the dispute between them developed into an armed clash, which began in 1918 over Kharma<sup>543</sup> and Turba.<sup>544</sup> The two towns are located in al-Nujud, near Najd, but the Sharifs of Hijaz were in control of both.<sup>545</sup> Al-Kharma has great economic and strategic significance, as the meeting point of two important routes connecting the central Arabian Peninsula with Mecca and the Red Sea coast. The first route extends from Al-Washm and Al-Aridh, while the other extends to Al-Qassim until it reaches Kuwait on the coast of the Arabian Gulf to the east. Taking control of this region, especially the areas where the Otaibah tribe lived,<sup>546</sup> was therefore of great importance.

However, Safran argues that the Kharma crisis was the turning point of Najdi-Hijazi relations, because it was the beginning of the armed conflict between them.<sup>547</sup> In addition, the fighting took place near the main cities of Hijaz, Mecca, and Medina.

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<sup>542</sup> Timothy J. Paris, *Britain, the Hashemites and Arab rule 1920–1925: the Sherifian Solution* (London, Frank Cass, 2003), p.346.

<sup>543</sup> Al-Kharama is located to the north-east of Taif, approximately 230 km away, and inhabited by the tribe of Subea and Al Sharifs (Al- Fā'ī', *Al- 'lāqh bīn al-malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz uww al-malik*, p.121).

<sup>544</sup> A town inhabited by the tribes of Baqum and some of Al Shraf, located approximately 95 km to the south-east of Taif. Mount Hadhan separates it from the city of Taif.

<sup>545</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.250.

<sup>546</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p. 251; Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p.117.

<sup>547</sup> Safran, Nadav, *Saudi Arabia* (New York: Cornell University Press, 1988), p.42.

According to al-Nuwaysar, Sharif Hussein insisted on his ownership of al-Kharma and Truba because they were close to Hijaz, and also because most of its population was from the Sharifs.<sup>548</sup> He argued that the Badia tribes separated the boundaries between Najd and Hijaz, so al-Kharma and Turba were considered part of Hijaz.

On the other hand, Ibn Saud believed he had the right to control the cities because they were under the rule of the first Saudi rulers, and because their inhabitants were from the tribe of Sabi<sup>c</sup> al-Najdiyin. Philby believed that Kharma was independent of Najd and Hijaz.<sup>549</sup> The problems started in the summer of 1917, when the Sharif decided to change al-Kharma's Wahhabi judge, who had been in service for a long time. He wanted to have him replaced with a judge from Hijaz. This decision was met with strong opposition from the people of Al-Kharma, headed by Khaled bin Luay, the prince of al-Kharma.

The new Hijazi judge was not allowed to take his position, which irritated the Sharif, who later sent troops to force al-Kharma to enforce his decision. Hence, the dispute was a struggle for political power. Wingate was surely correct in the document he sent to Foreign Affairs, which stated that the main point of the disagreement was that Sharif Hussein believed that Ibn Saud opposed his sovereignty over and right to unite the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>550</sup>

Philby sent a report to the British Government in December 1918 pointing out that the conflict around Al-Kharma was based on the fact that each tribe submitted to either Hussein or Ibn Saud. He suggested that political borders be established to allow Hussein to rule at a distance, not far from Al-Kharma. He expressed his view on the reality of the conflict over the Al-Kharma oasis by asserting that Abdul-Aziz Al Saud was not ready to abandon any part of Al-Kharma territory in favour of Hussein because the area belonged to Najdi tribes. Al-Kharma

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<sup>548</sup> Al-Nowaiser, 'Saudi-British Relations', p.103.

<sup>549</sup> IOR/R/15/1/747, (29/10/1917-01/11/1918), Report on the Operation of the Najd Mission by St. John Philby in Baghdad.

<sup>550</sup> Al-Semmari, Fahd, *A History of the Arabian Peninsula* (London: Tauris, 2010), p.195; FO 371/3389 (121208), 09/07/1918, from Reginald Wingate to Foreign Affairs.

was still being attacked by Hussein, under which circumstances a solution could not be reached, so that a firm decision should be taken to stop Hussein's attacks on the oasis.

Philby's report<sup>551</sup> was in favour of fulfilling Ibn Saud's plans, essentially because he admired him. However, on 13 December 1918, the British Government issued a warning to Ibn Saud, ordering him to withdraw his troops from the Khurma oasis, to pledge not to attack the Hashemites or the Hijazi territories, and not to allow his followers to advance towards the West; otherwise, the monthly aid the British Government provided would be cut off.<sup>552</sup>

Philby tried to ease the tension and sent a report confirming his belief that Abdul-Aziz Al Saud would not move towards Mecca or any Hijazi city, and that Britain's position should be based on two principles: warning Ibn Saud not to take any hostile steps in al-Khurma, and putting Sharif Hussein's son, Faisal, in charge of communication between his father and the British Government to calm the situation down.<sup>553</sup>

Despite Philby's attempt to influence British policy in favour of Ibn Saud, British policy continued to support Sharif Hussein bin Saud in the Najdi-Hijazi conflict. Britain feared that the military superiority of Ibn Saud would threaten the Hijazi region, so it tried to stabilise the situation for its own sake. British policy fluctuated between Ibn Saud and Sharif.

Britain believed that Sharif was the person who could be used to help it achieve its goals and control the Arab region. Britain was willing to grant him some of what it had promised so as not to appear insincere to Arabs. On the other hand, Britain did not have any great interest in Ibn Saud, other than standing up to Ibn Rashid to prevent him from advancing into areas controlled by the British Government. The British Government did not want the tension between the two rivals to increase. For the sake of its interests in the region, Britain had to ease the tension between the two rivals. Britain's true interest can be seen clearly in a

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558 FO 371/4144, 13/08/1918, Report from Philby to Foreign Affairs.

552 FO 371/4144, 04/01/1919, from Reginald Wingate to Foreign Affairs.

553 Al-Zaydi, Hussein, 'Saudi-British Diplomatic Relations, 1918-1920: The Khurma dispute' (unpublished doctoral thesis, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio, 1989), p. 11.

letter by Wingate to Foreign Affairs. In it he stated that the tense relationship between Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud was escalating, which would affect British interests. Wingate believed that a warning should be sent to both parties to stop their rivalry.<sup>554</sup>

However, it seems that Ibn Saud was waiting for the opportunity to control Hijaz with the support of the Ikhwan, who were eager to control Hijaz for its religious status. According to al-Zaydī, Sharif Hussein wanted the British Government to wage war against Ibn Saud in return for his support for Britain in its war against Turkey.<sup>555</sup> This appears unlikely, as the British Government did not want to lose Ibn Saud, who was standing against Ibn Rashid from the north. Britain wanted to maintain a carefully balanced relationship between the two allies.

Khalid bin Luay joined Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan army, which had a deleterious effect on Sharif Hussein. Khalid bin Luay sent a letter to Ibn Saud informing him that the Sharif abused them. He asked for support from Ibn Saud,<sup>556</sup> which motivated Ibn Saud to seize Al-Kharma. This also strengthened Ibn Saud's position. The reason Khalid bin Luay joined Ibn Saud is worth discussing because he was appointed by Sharif Hussein and was a follower of Hijaz. The ancestors of Khalid bin Luay had lived in Al-Kharma since the nineteenth century. Khalid bin Luay abandoned his fealty to Hussein Ibn Ali, the Sharif of Mecca, and joined Al Saud due to disagreements between him and the Sharifs. In addition, he adopted the reformed Salafist doctrine that was popular among the tribes of those entities since the first Saudi era.<sup>557</sup> In fact, Khalid bin Luay's Salafist and Najdi tendencies were known to the Sharifs even before he joined Ibn Saud and abandoned them. His ancestors had also had a good relationship with Al Saud.<sup>558</sup> In fact, it is impossible to identify a single direct reason to justify Khalid bin Luay's

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<sup>554</sup> FO 371/3389, No (239), 09/07/1918, from Reginald Wingate to Foreign Affairs.

<sup>555</sup> Al-Zaydī, *ʿAbd al-ʿAziz al-Saaʿūd*, p. 138.

<sup>556</sup> FO 371/4145, 05/12/1918, from Khalid bin Luay to Ibn Saud.

<sup>557</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.131; Al-Fāʿi, *Al-lāqḥ bīn malik ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz*, p.124.

<sup>558</sup> FO 371/3393(166604), 30/09/1918, Summary of the Hijaz revolution.

separation from the Al-Sharifs. Several, combined, are likely to have pushed him to disobey Sharif Hussein and join Ibn Saud.

To counter the argument of those who claim that Khalid bin Luay joined Ibn Saud because of a dispute that erupted between him and Abdullah Ibn Hussein, the fact should be mentioned that Abdullah Ibn Hussein did not refer, in his memoir, to the reason for the disagreement between himself and Khalid bin Luay, who left Medina because of him.<sup>559</sup> In fact, he did not mention that Khaled left Medina at all. Few Hijazi sources refer to this dispute, except Al-Fā'i', who points out that the reason for the dispute was that Khaled bin Luay joined Wahhabism and that he expelled the Kharma Judge.<sup>560</sup>

Al-Rīḥānī points out that Hussein had previously imprisoned Khalid bin Luay in Mecca due to a dispute between them.<sup>561</sup> Khalid pretended that he had forgotten the insult, but Abdullah hit Khalid after another dispute between them in Medina, which made Khalid leave for Al-Kharma. Al-Zirikli, 'Atar and Baker<sup>562</sup> agree with Al-Rīḥānī, but most primary resources, including Abdullah Ibn Hussein memoir's, al-Fā'i', Troeller and Teitelbaum, do not mention this incident.<sup>563</sup> They appear to be right, although there are some incidents that refer to Khaled and Abdullah's disagreement.

Nahas mentions that a disagreement erupted between Khalid bin Luay and Abdullah bin Hussein regarding Lawrence: 'You are fighting the Turk because the Germans have taken over the Turk. This happened because you followed Lawrence.'<sup>564</sup> It seems the dispute began years earlier, however. In 1915, Khalid bin Luay and some others visited Ibn Saud in Has'a.

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<sup>559</sup> Nḥās, Mustafa, *Mothakerat 'Abd Allāh Ibn Al-ḥussayn* (al'hlīah lil nasher, 'mmān, 1996), p.98.

<sup>560</sup> Al- Fā' i', *Al- 'lāqḥ bīn malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz*, p.125.

<sup>561</sup> Burckhardt, John Lewis, *Notes on the Bedouins and Wahābys: collected during his travels in the East* (London: Henry Colburn, 1831), p.168.

<sup>562</sup> Al-Ziriklī, Khayr al-Dīn, *Shibḥ al-Jazīrah fī 'Ahd al-Malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz* (5th printing, Beirut: Dār al- 'Ilm lil- Malāyīn, 1992), p.339; 'Atṭār, Ahmad, 'Abd al-Ghafūr'. *Ṣaqr Al-jazīrah*. 3 vols. [Al-Qāhirah:] Iṣtāndārd lil- Ṭībā' ah al- 'Arabīyah, 1946, p.424; Baker, *King Hussain*, p.261.

<sup>563</sup> Nḥās, *Mothakerat 'Abd Allāh*, p.144; Al- Fā' i', *Al- 'lāqḥ bīn malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz*, p.127; Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p.131; Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*, p.220.

<sup>564</sup> Nḥās, *Mothakerat 'Abd Allāh*, p.144.

Ibn Saud not only showed them respect, but honoured them and gave them money and weapons. This irritated Sharif Hussein.<sup>565</sup> Later, Abdullah bin al-Hussein and his father, Sharif Hussein, scolded Khalid bin Luay and condemned the visit. It seems that Sharif wanted to punish Khalid, but the time was not right, because he was waiting for the opportunity to carry out his revolt against the Ottoman state.

That visit would appear to have been the first time Khalid bin Luay thought seriously about joining Ibn Saud. Al-Fā'i' reports that Ibn Saud and Khalid bin Luay communicated continually.<sup>566</sup>

It is clear that several factors resulted in Khalid bin Luay's departure from Abdullah Ibn Al Hussein's camp in Medina and his return to al-Kharma, where he announced his separation from Hussein Ibn Ali. Those reasons were:

- the intellectual and doctrinal differences between the Sharifs represented by Hussein bin Ali and Khalid bin Luay;
- the intentional humiliation, abuse and imprisonment Khalid bin Luay suffered from Sharif Hussein and his son, Abdullah, while he was celebrated and honoured by Ibn Saud;
- and Khalid bin Luay's ambitions, which he felt Ibn Saud could help him achieve.

Whilst al-Fā'i' and Al-Zaydi's claim, that the direct reason for the dispute between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein was not because Khalid bin Luay joined Ibn Saud<sup>567</sup> make sense, it surely accelerated the already raging conflict between them.

The conflict was inevitable, but Khalid bin Luay's separation from the Al-Sharifs triggered it, which resulted in a change of the political map of the Arabian Peninsula several years later. Philby predicted this in his report: 'Al-Kharma was one incident in a bigger

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<sup>565</sup> Al- Fā'i', *Al- lāqh bīn malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz*, p.128.

<sup>566</sup> Ibid, p.129.

<sup>567</sup> Ibid, p.130; Al-Zīyādy, *'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.139.

inevitable conflict.’<sup>568</sup> It is clear that the dispute between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein was so deep that neither of them trusted the other despite the exchange of correspondence between them and the compliments they paid to one another. Hussein’s ambitions were equivalent only to the ambitions of Ibn Saud; thus, their interests were bound to clash one day.

Najd and Hijaz are geographically close and cannot dispense with one another: Najd had economic ties with Hijaz, through which trade routes from the Gulf, Mesopotamia and Persia passed, in addition to passing convoys during the pilgrimage season. On the other hand, Hijaz was a good market for Najdi products, and its markets supplied whatever goods Najdis needed. Hijaz was also the destination of pilgrims from Najd, and because of its sanctity and Islamic status, all these factors made the relationship between the two parties complementary and interrelated. However, when two ambitious forces meet, conflict is inevitable.

It is worth mentioning that Sharif Hussein had previously attacked Najd in 1910 preventing Najdi merchants from entering Hijaz. He hosted the sons of Mohammed Ibn Faisal, cousins of Ibn Saud, and then prevented Najdi pilgrims from entering Mecca and claimed control of some of the tribes living within the Najdi tribes, such as the Otaibah and Sabi’ tribes.<sup>569</sup> It is likely that Ibn Saud had not forgotten these things, but pretended he did because he was focusing on completing the unification of Najd. He later headed to Has’a and was preoccupied with his wars with Ajman.

According to Linabury, in July 1918, Hussein prepared military forces to occupy the Al-Kharma oasis.<sup>570</sup> He made his son, Abdullah, leader of these forces. When Abdullah arrived at the tribal area between Mecca and al-Ta’if, he held several meetings with the elders of the region and put together a plan to subjugate the area’s tribes to Hashemite rule in Hijaz.

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<sup>568</sup> Philby, ‘Report on the Operation of the Najd Mission’, p.26.

<sup>569</sup> Al- Fā’i’, *Al- lāqḥ bīn malik ‘Abd al- ‘Azīz*, p.131.

<sup>570</sup> Linabury, George Ogden, *British-Saudi Arabia relations, 1902–1927* (New York: Columbia University, 1970), pp.172–173.

When Ibn Saud was informed of these developments, he in turn informed the British Government of the ambitions of Hussein in Al-Kharma. Britain was quick to send instructions to the Commissioner in Jeddah, Wilson, ordering him to advise Hussein to be moderate, to stop making trouble with Ibn Saud, and to order his army to return to Al-Ta'if immediately.<sup>571</sup> Also, Britain agreed to try to calm the situation and lay the foundations of mutual understanding between him and Ibn Saud as soon as possible.

Hussein kept insisting on claiming the Kharma oasis and reinforced his forces there with two military campaigns to discipline the Kharma residents. However, they failed to achieve their goals.<sup>572</sup> In the meantime, Britain was closely monitoring the developments in the region between its allies, Hussein and Ibn Saud, after Ibn Saud repulsed Hussein's attacks on Al-Kharma. There is a discrepancy between the opinions of the Offices of Cairo and India regarding the policy to be taken after Najd's military success over Hijazi forces. There were fears among the British circles in Cairo of Ibn Saud's attempt to advance westward towards the Hijaz lands.<sup>573</sup>

The British Foreign Office was embarrassed after the First World War, although it confirmed its adherence to Hussein as the representative of the Arabs. The British Office in Cairo thought Hussein's ambitions in seizing Al-Kharma would compensate for his losses of Arab lands after Britain did not keep its end of the agreement. The British Office in Cairo even considered sending urgent military reinforcements to Hussein in order to defend Al-Kharma oasis and to respond to the Najdi forces.<sup>574</sup> However, the Ministry of War objected to this step on the pretext of the impossibility of transferring soldiers, luggage and military equipment to Hijaz due to the absence of suitable ships, forcing the Foreign Office to abandon the idea.<sup>575</sup>

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<sup>571</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al- 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.122; FO 608/80, 14/06/1919, Cable from General Edmund Allenby to Foreign Affairs.

<sup>572</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al- 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.122.

<sup>573</sup> FO 371/4144 (5815), 07/01/1919, Report from the Ministry of India on the relation between Najd and Hijaz.

<sup>574</sup> FO 371/3390 (210939), 23/12/1918, from Reginald Wingate to Foreign Affairs.

<sup>575</sup> FO 371/4144 (4533), 08/01/1919, from the Ministry of War to Foreign Affairs.

The Foreign Office decided to form a committee to discuss the dispute over Al-Kharma oasis, with the participation of Lawrence, Philippe and Lord Curzon. The first Middle East Conference took place in London on 10 March 1919,<sup>576</sup> to solve the problem of Al-Kharma, and it two points of view emerged.

The first was led by the Cairo Office and asserted Hussein's right to discipline Ibn Saud's followers and take control of Al-Kharma. The second was led by the Office of India and stressed non-intervention in the crisis on the pretext that if Hussein took control of Al-Kharma, the Najdis would resent not Hussein but Britain who supported him.<sup>577</sup> Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, supported the Cairo Office's view of the need to pursue a policy of appeasement towards Hussein.<sup>578</sup> The Cairo Office informed Ibn Saud that the British Government was angry with his policy against Sharif Hussein. It asked him to stop all military operations against the Hashemite and to abandon his ambitions to take control of Al-Kharma. It also warned him that Britain would cut off the financial aid it provided him if he disobeyed orders. However, Ibn Saud ignored these threats and was determined to stand against the encroachment of Hussein on his territory. The British Government did not rule out the outbreak of conflict between its allies. This was noted by Lord Curzon's reference to the meeting of the State Department's Eastern Committee, where he indicated that a conflict would probably take place between the two parties, and something should be done to solve it.

Sharif Hussein was unhappy with the Najdi presence in Al-Kharma, and there was no room for reconciliation unless Al-Kharma gave its full loyalty to Sharif. This is demonstrated by the statement given by Hussein's son, Faisal,<sup>579</sup> during his visit to the Ministry of India in

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<sup>576</sup> FO 371/4144 (20437), 14/01/1919, Minutes for the Middle East Conference in London.

<sup>577</sup> Baker, *King Hussain*, p.158.

<sup>578</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p.259.

<sup>579</sup> Faisal I of Iraq (1882–1933) was the third son of Hussein bin Ali. He was born in Tai'f in 1882 and moved to Istanbul with his father. He then returned to Hijaz in 1908. He became a prince and then king of Syria from 1918–1920. He was nominated by Britain for the throne of Iraq. He was crowned in 1921. He died in Switzerland in 1933. (Tucker, Spencer, *The Encyclopedia of the Arab-Israeli Conflict* (California, ABC-CLIO, 2008), p.353.

London on 27 December 1918. He explained to the British officials his father's insistence on annexing Al-Kharma to his land, even if it led to the resumption of attacks on followers of Ibn Saud.<sup>580</sup>

### **3.9. The battle of Truba and the Najdi superiority over the Hijazi forces on 25 May 1919**

The decision of the committee of the Middle East Conference pleased Sharif Hussein. The committee decided to give Al-Kharma to Hussein. It also threatened to cut off Ibn Saud's supplies, but Ibn Saud did not respond to the British decision.<sup>581</sup> He began to move his forces in preparation for any new developments. At the same time, he sent a letter to the British authorities in Baghdad, informing them of the movements of Hussein's army and his hostile intentions towards the people of Al-Kharma. The British response was lukewarm. Britain claimed that the news Ibn Saud had received was inaccurate and baseless.<sup>582</sup>

In the meantime, Hussein decided to continue his incursion into Najdi lands. He sent his son, Abdullah, with people from Hijaz to Tarbah. He entered it without fighting in May 1919. He planned to move toward Al-Kharma and then continue his march in Najdi lands until reaching Has'a on the coast within two months, and thus eliminate the Najdi state once and for all.<sup>583</sup>

The British Government quickly sent Hussain Affendi Rouhi, the British Secretary General, to Jeddah, to meet Abdullah in his camp and inform him that Britain had previously advised Hussein not to pursue war against Al Saud, who had a power that could not be ignored. He suggested that Hussein follow political wisdom to solve his problems with Al Saud.<sup>584</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.129.

<sup>581</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.335; Hagar, 'Britain, her Middle East mandates', p.51.

<sup>582</sup> FO 686/18, 06/05/1919, from Ibn Saud to Norman Bray.

<sup>583</sup> Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*, p.259.

<sup>584</sup> FO 686/17, 09/04/1919, from Hussain Rouhi to Sir Arnold Wilson.

Primary resources provide different estimates of the number of losses. Al-Rīḥānī and Toni suggest that Abdullah's army numbered approximately 5000 men, while the Ikhwan army, led by Khalid bin Luay, had 1100 men.<sup>585</sup> Holden and Johns agree with Al-Rīḥānī and Toni, but claim that the Ikhwan army was led by Sultan Ibn Bijad.<sup>586</sup>

Al-Zīyḍī said that the number of the Najdi army was as many as 25,000 soldiers from the tribes of Mutair, Otaibah, Harb, Aldawasir and Qahtan under the command of Khalid bin Luay. The Hijazi army, on the other hand, had only 1300 men. It seems that Zaidi overestimated the number of the Najdi army, since the Otaibah and Sbai' tribes were the only ones who participated in the battle of Terbah, as pointed out by some historians of Najd and Hijaz, such as Kushk, Al-Rīḥānī and al-Fā'i'.<sup>587</sup>

It appears that Al-Zīyḍī took his information from Nhas's book, a memoir of Abdullah bin Hussein, who justified his defeat by claiming that the number of the Najdi army exceeded the number of the Hijazi army. The number might have been overlooked after the defeat of Abdullah's army. The British Commissioner in Jeddah mentioned that the number of the Najdi army after its victory in the battle of Truba was about 20,000 men who were near Ta'if,<sup>588</sup> so perhaps Al-Zīyḍī thought that that was the number of the Najdi army in the battle of Truba.

However, a more likely opinion is presented by Holden and Johns. Why would Abdullah go to a battle unprepared, with a small number of fighters, after being defeated three times? This is illogical. In addition, Sharif Hussein had taken over Medina and gained troops and money. After controlling Medina, Abdullah and Shaker bin Zaid led a large army of Hijaz forces to Truba.

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<sup>585</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.252; Jaques, Tony, *Dictionary of Battle and Sieges: Volume 3* (London: Greenwood Press, 2007), p.1044.

<sup>586</sup> Holden and Johns, *House of Saud*, p.71.

<sup>587</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.252; Kishk, *Al-su'ūdīyūn*, p.395; Al-Fā'i', *Al-lāqḥ bīn malik 'Abd al-'Azīz*, p.165.

<sup>588</sup> FO 686/17, 15/04/1919, from Sir Arnold Wilson to Sir Lee Stack.

Abdullah was aware that if he was defeated in this battle, the results would be devastating. There is a document which indicates that Abdullah had a regular army of 60 officers, 770 soldiers, ten guns and 20 sub-machine guns, although it seems that this document only refers to the Ottoman power that Abdullah brought out of the city, which he referred to as ‘The regular army’.<sup>589</sup> This force might have been joined by the people of Hijaz in addition to some of the Hijazi tribes that participated with Sharif. The Najdi forces were able to inflict a severe defeat on the army of Abdullah bin Sharif, who fled to Ta’if.<sup>590</sup>

The defeat of Abdullah and his followers paved the way for Ibn Saud to take the road west towards Ta’if and the rest of the other Hijazi cities.<sup>591</sup> Abdullah bin Hussein believed that the Ikhwan could control Hijaz within three weeks.<sup>592</sup> Najdis, out of religious zeal, asked Ibn Saud to go to Ta’if and Mecca and control these areas. However, Ibn Saud did not respond to their wishes and asked them to return to Najd after he told the British Government of his plans.<sup>593</sup>

Ibn Saud’s retreat was at the request of the British Government, which threatened him with the loss of all the privileges granted to him, if he refused to obey orders. It also warned him that they would terminate the 1915 Treaty.<sup>594</sup>

He had no choice but to submit to the orders of the British Government to achieve his ambitions, so he returned to Najd. Nevertheless, it appears that Ibn Saud’s reluctance to approach Hijaz was motivated by other reasons. He realised that this step might lead to a confrontation with Sharif Hussein, which would sour his relationship with the British Government. Ibn Saud was also planning to eliminate Ibn Rashid, so he needed British support.

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<sup>589</sup> Foreign Office, FO 371/4146(91521), 04/06/1919, Memorandum from Herbert Garland from Arab bureau about the Khurmah dispute.

<sup>590</sup> Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*, p.271.

<sup>591</sup> El-Edroos, Syed Ali, *The Hashemite Arab army, 1908–1979* (Amman: Publishing Committee, 1980, p.198.

<sup>592</sup> FO 686/17, 03/06/1919, from Abdallah bin Husain to Faisal bin Husain.

<sup>593</sup> Al-Zīdy, ‘*Abd al - ‘Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.129.

<sup>594</sup> FO 686/17, 03/06/1919, from Her Majesty the British to Abdulaziz bin Saud.

He also feared the reaction of Muslims around the world if he took over the holy sites in Medina and Mecca. Moreover, he knew that Britain had secured Hijaz with aircraft against any possible attacks on it, as the British Commissioner in Jeddah pointed out.<sup>595</sup>

However, Ibn Saud was able to restore British confidence in him after he wrote a letter to the British commissioner telling him that he was a servant of the British Government. He claimed he was ready to carry out Britain's orders and arrange the return of his army to Najd.<sup>596</sup> He also said he accepted the British Government's decision on the dispute over Al-Kharma and Truba.

It could be wondered why Britain did not eliminate Ibn Saud, especially when he crossed the borders of Najd, when it had enough equipment and power to end his rule easily.<sup>597</sup> Even Sharif and his sons had repeatedly called on the British Government to intervene militarily and end Ibn Saud's presence in the region. From the correspondence exchanged between British officials, Britain's policy towards Ibn Saud fluctuated. Philby and Wilson saw in Ibn Saud Britain's strategic ally in the region, while the Cairo Office saw that there was an agreement with Sharif Hussein and they should abide by it.

The British Government had begun to see Ibn Saud as Britain's strongest ally, especially given his policy in the battle of Truba after his return to Najd, and his decision not to enter Hijaz. In addition, his ability, to control the Ikhwan's ambitions and keep them where they could not harm anyone, was clear.

Fikri explains how politicians in London were satisfied by Ibn Saud's obedience and his promise not to attack Hijaz again.<sup>598</sup> It was therefore necessary for Britain to ease the conflict between Sharif and Ibn Saud, and send a delegate to negotiate with Ibn Saud on this

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<sup>595</sup> FO 686/17, 04/06/1919, from Sir Arnold Wilson to Sharif Husain.

<sup>596</sup> FO 686/17, 18/06/1919, from Abdulaziz to Sir Arnold Wilson.

<sup>597</sup> FO 371/4146(108194), 08/07/1919, from Sharif Faisal bin Husain to Edmund Allenby.

<sup>598</sup> FO 371/4146, 09/07/1919, report from the Ministry of India.

issue. Britain sent Philby to negotiate with Ibn Saud on this matter and to make sure he would not attack Hijaz again.<sup>599</sup>

The King objected to sending a delegation to Ibn Saud. He believed that correspondence was sufficient to end the conflict and that the timing was inappropriate for arbitration between Ibn Saud and Sharif, especially after Ibn Saud appointed a prince to Truba supported by military force. He did not want to sever the relationship with Ibn Saud. The King believed that as long as Ibn Saud had left for Najd, Philby's delegation was futile. The negotiations should continue via correspondence. On the other hand, Allenby saw that sending the delegation to Ibn Saud was necessary to end the crisis and to reach an understanding with Ibn Saud on this matter.<sup>600</sup>

The British Government took the advice of certain British politicians and cancelled Philby's delegation, believing it to be useless at that time.<sup>601</sup> However, Sharif Hussein did not want arbitration because he believed that the two oases were his. This provoked the British Government which, in a report to the Ministry of India, reported how important it was for the British Government to keep supporting Ibn Saud,<sup>602</sup> abandon the policy of absolute support of Sharif Hussein and establish a friendlier relationship with Ibn Saud, without causing prejudice that would threaten the balance of powers in the region in favour of Hussein in the future.<sup>603</sup>

Britain was watching the developments on the Arabian Peninsula between Hussein and Ibn Saud, but its aim, as mentioned previously, was to fulfil some of its promises to the Hashemites with the need to maintain their support to serve their strategic interests in this region. This made Britain stand with Hussein against Ibn Saud. The other reason for Britain's support for Hussein at this stage lies in its ignorance of the roots of the conflict between the two leaders, on the one hand, and its emergence from the war saturated with the ideas of the

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<sup>599</sup> FO 686/17, 20/06/1919, from Sir Arnold Wilson to Ibn Saud.

<sup>600</sup> FO 686/17, 20/06/1919, from Edmund Allenby to Foreign Affairs (London).

<sup>601</sup> FO 371/4146 (104682), 16/06/1919, Cable from the Ministry of Colonial to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad.

<sup>602</sup> FO 371/4146, 09/07/1919, Report from the Ministry of India.

<sup>603</sup> Al-Zīdy, *'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.130.

Cairo Office on the other. Lawrence, who stood in full support of Hussein, believed that Ibn Saud did not have the characteristics of a good leader and had no military potential. He described the defeat of Hussein in Truba as a coincidence.<sup>604</sup>

Philby proposed that his government resolve the dispute between the two sides by dividing the disputed areas between them by returning Truba to Hussein and Al-Kharma to Ibn Saud.<sup>605</sup> But the British Government ignored his proposal and continued to adhere to the policy of supporting Hussein, in his demand for the two areas, until the second conference of the Middle East circles in September 1919.

Hussein's policy against Ibn Saud and his failure to respond to the British demands were due, first, to his conviction that the emergence of Ibn Saud as a leader would prevent him from extending his rule on the Arabian Peninsula, as long as Ibn Saud remained disobedient to the Hashemite rule. Second was the contradictory policy of the British Government towards him, in which it followed a flexible policy of expansion at the expense of Najdi lands, while his position in political circles in London and Cairo declined because he was rarely needed after the war ended. This can be seen through the decline in aid provided to him by the British Government: at the beginning of 1919 this amounted to approximately £225,000 sterling, but decreased between April and August 1919 to approximately £120,000 sterling.<sup>606</sup>

Some British politicians, such as Kirzon and Shackburgh, were obviously angry at Hussein. He refused arbitration and continued to put pressure on Britain to implement the promises they made him. He warned them he would leave politics and abdicate the throne.<sup>607</sup> Despite their resentment of Sharif Hussein, the British did not want him to disappear or

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<sup>604</sup> Anderson, *Lawrence of Arabia*, p.323.

<sup>605</sup> Philby, Harry St. John, *Arabia of the Wahhabis* (London: Frank Cass, 1977), p.101.

<sup>606</sup> FO 371/4189 (17617), 06/06/1919, Memorandum about equipment and subsidy for Hijaz by George Hogarth.

<sup>607</sup> FO 686/17, 17/06/1919, from Sir Arnold Wilson to Sharif Husain.

abandon the throne during that period due to post-war settlement issues with the French and the Arabs, and the Peace Conference.

The Al-Kharma dispute, the subsequent events that occurred between Al Saud and the Hashemites from 1918 to 1919, and Britain's endeavours to reconcile both of them, all uncovered a blatant truth: the predominance of Al Saud's military power in the aftermath of Hussein's defeat. The military operations revealed the weakness of the Hashemite forces in battle, which led Britain, especially the British Foreign Office, to reconsider their views of Al Saud's power and position.

Following the Al-Kharma dispute, the British Government sent an official invitation to Al Saud asking him to send a delegation to discuss the political situation with British officials. In September 1919, Abdul-Aziz Al Saud sent his 13-year-old son, Faisal, accompanied by a delegation that included Ahmed ibn Thanyan,<sup>608</sup> Al Saud's consultant for foreign affairs, to negotiate with the British. Philby followed the delegation on their arrival to London, trying to act as a broker between his government and the Najdi delegation.<sup>609</sup> This visit had several goals on both sides. The Saudi delegation tried to take advantage by improving their relationship with Britain, especially after the Hijazi–Najdi disputes. Abdul-Aziz Al Saud also wanted to congratulate the allies, especially Britain, for their victory in the First World War.<sup>610</sup> In addition to that, Abdul-Aziz Al Saud wanted Britain to change its view of Al Saud following their significant victory in the Al-Kharma dispute against the Hashemites. In trying to do so, Abdul-Aziz Al Saud tried to get close to the British authorities in London at the expense of Hussein. Another important goal was to discuss future political borders between Najd and Hijaz. Additionally, Abdul-Aziz Al Saud was preparing his son to take charge of their foreign affairs,

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<sup>608</sup> Ahmed bin Thanyan was born in Istanbul, Turkey. He learned French and English, and took foreign affairs positions for Al Saud. He was ambassador to Uqair in 1915, to London in 1919, and to Al-Mahmara in 1922. He died in Riyadh 1923. Al-Zirikli, *Khayr al-Dīn, Al-a' lām: qāmūs tarājīm li-ash'har al-rijāl wa-al-nisā' min al-'arab wa-al-musta'ribīn wa-al-mustashriqīn*, Vol. 5 (Bīyrūt, Al-ṭab'ah al-thālithah. 1969), p.365.

<sup>609</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.279.

<sup>610</sup> Kishk, *Al-su'ūdīyūn*, p.622.

and wanted him to gain experience in the political and diplomatic fields. In 1930, Faisal assumed the Office of Foreign Minister. On the other hand, Britain wanted Al Saud to realise Britain's modern military technology as well as its urban development, in an attempt to influence Al Saud and to prevent him from taking any action against Britain and its allies' interests in the region. This is obvious from the letter expressing admiration for military and urban sites sent by Faisal ibn Abdul-Aziz Al Saud to Edwin Montagu, Under Secretary of State for India, on his return from the visit.<sup>611</sup> Lord Curzon met with Faisal. However, the meeting was too general and did not cover any political or military concerns. Curzon seems to have ignored Faisal because he was too young. Although Faisal stayed in Britain for six months, the meeting did not bring about any fruitful outcome regarding Al-Khurma and the borders.

During Britain's successive efforts to end the Najdi-Hijazi conflict, Allenby managed to reach Jeddah to solve this matter and, on 7 January 1920, was able to meet Sharif Hussein, who tried to belittle the importance of Al Saud. Allenby suggested holding a meeting between him and Al Saud, but did not receive an answer.<sup>612</sup> In February 1920, Abdul-Aziz Ibn Saud met Dickson in Has'a and expressed his displeasure at the unlimited support of the English for the Hashemites in Syria and Hijaz. He then addressed the issue of Hajj and repeated his demands to allow the people to perform Hajj and to ensure their safety. As for the meeting with Sharif Hussein, he said he did not expect it to succeed if held in Hijaz. Instead, he suggested that it be done in Baghdad or Pompeii.<sup>613</sup> Then he was able to meet with British Ambassador Sir Percy Cox, the new British High Commissioner in Iraq, in the port of Uqair in August 1920. He was accompanied by Philby and Dickson, while the Najdi delegation included Dr. Abdullah

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<sup>611</sup> L/P&S/10/803, 24/12/1919, from Faisal bin Abdu Aziz to Edwin Montagu.

<sup>612</sup> FO 371/4147 (176615), 15/01/1920, from Edmund Allenby to Lord Curzon.

<sup>613</sup> L/P&S/10/803, 10/02/1920, from Harold Dickson, Political Agent in Bahrain, to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad.

Damluji,<sup>614</sup> Foreign Affairs Adviser. Sir Percy Cox expressed the British Government's discomfort at the attack on Hijaz, while Abdul-Aziz bin Saud spoke of how the people of Najd regarded Sharif for preventing them from going on the Hajj. Sir Percy Cox expressed to Abdul-Aziz bin Saud the sincere desire of the British Government to have him as a powerful leader in the central Arabian Peninsula.<sup>615</sup> Al- Fā'i' says that Sir Percy Cox discussed the British Government's desire to appoint a member of the Hashemite House as the King of Iraq and that they were nominating Faisal for the post.<sup>616</sup> However, he said that the government did not take any decisive action on this matter, seemingly in an attempt to take the pulse of Abdul-Aziz bin Saud. In return, Ibn Saud raised the issue of Ibn Rashid and the extent to which the British Government could contribute to removing Gertrude Bell from the political scene, referring to the discussions between Ibn Rashid and Bell.

Regarding the risks, Curzon sent a letter to Allenby in Cairo, telling him that Sharif Hussein agreed to meet him again to discuss the matter concerning Abdul-Aziz bin Saud, which included the arrangements for Lord Harding to facilitate pilgrimage for Najdis. A meeting between the two leaders was held based on Lord Harding's proposals for Hussein's financial difficulties; Curzon authorised Allenby to grant £30,000 sterling in return for his commitment to a good policy towards his neighbouring tribes and to support his control of his tribes.<sup>617</sup>

In general, the 1920s witnessed a calm that dominated the Najdi–Hijazi relations, with the exception of some tribal disputes near Medina.<sup>618</sup> Neither Ibn Saud nor Sharif Hussein were able to clash in that year. Sharif Hussein's military power waned following the Al-Kharna dispute, his preoccupation with the events in Syria with the French, and the strained relations

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<sup>614</sup> Abdullah Beg Al Damluji (1890–1971) was born in Mosul. He graduated from the college of medicine in Istanbul and joined the army. He took part in the Balkan Wars, became Ibn Saud's private doctor in 1916, and was later assigned director general of foreign affairs. (Al-Ziydiy, *Abd al-'Aziz al-Saa'ūd*, p.137).

<sup>615</sup>, L/P&S/10/391, 10/02/1920, from Harold Dickson, Political Agent in Bahrain, to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad.

<sup>616</sup> Al- Fā'i', *Al-lāqḥ bīn malik 'Abd al-'Azīz*, p.183.

<sup>617</sup> FO 371/5062(E8300/9/44), 17/07/1920, from Lord Curzon to Edmund Allenby.

<sup>618</sup> Al- Fā'i', *Al-lāqḥ bīn malik 'Abd al-'Azīz*, p.184.

with the British following his refusal to end the dispute with Ibn Saud. On the other hand, Ibn Saud was preoccupied with his disagreement with Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah on the border between the two,<sup>619</sup> along with the problem of Ajman, which broke out under the instigation of Sheikh Salem Al-Sabah. The situation calmed down after the death of Salem al-Sabah, with Sheikh Ahmad Al-Jaber assuming power in Kuwait. Ibn Saud then besieged Ha'il to retake control of it.<sup>620</sup> Despite this relative calm, there were still concerns. The most important of these was the arrival of Faisal and Abdullah, sons of Sharif Hussein, in the Kingdom of Iraq and Eastern Jordan and the expansion of Ibn Saud's rule with his control of Ha'il and Asir.

After the events of Al-Kharma in 1919, Sharif Hussein continued to pressure Ibn Saud and the Najdis by forbidding the pilgrims from performing Hajj. Wahbah refers to this as happening in 1921,<sup>621</sup> while the vast majority<sup>622</sup> of historians say it happened in 1920. It is obvious that all agree on the date AH 1338, but when converting AH to AD, Wahbah makes it 1921. There is no evidence that Najdis could perform pilgrimage (Hajj) after 1919.<sup>623</sup> According to Vassiliev, Sharif Hussein prevented Najdis from performing Hajj because of Ibn Saud's annexation of Asir in 1920.<sup>624</sup> It seems that Sharif Hussein was afraid that the Ikhwan may take control of Mecca. However, this ban from Hajj was not the first. Sharif Hussein had also prevented Najdis from performing Hajj in 1912.<sup>625</sup>

Sharif began to use Hajj as a means to apply pressure on Ibn Saud and the British Government, sometimes determining the number of Najdi pilgrims allowed to perform Hajj and at other times rejecting their coming on land, while asking them to come unarmed under

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<sup>619</sup> Mikaberidze, Alexander, *Conflict and Conquest in the Islamic world: a Historical Encyclopedia*, Volume 1 (California, ABC-CLIO, 2011), p.803.

<sup>620</sup> Hdhlūl, *tārīkh mlūk Al-S'ūd*, p.110.

<sup>621</sup> Wahbah, *Jazīrat al- 'arab*, p.209.

<sup>622</sup> Al-Azma', 'the role of Ikhwan', p.167.

<sup>623</sup> Al- Fā'ī', *Al- 'lāgh bīn malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz*, p.187.

<sup>624</sup> Vassiliev, *History*, p.345.

<sup>625</sup> Al-Rīhānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.255.

the leadership of a responsible person.<sup>626</sup> According to Al- Fā'ī', Sharif Hussein was afraid that civil war might break out in Mecca,<sup>627</sup> while Wahīm thinks he wanted to put pressure on Ibn Saud to return to the borders of Najd.<sup>628</sup> It seems most likely that Sharif Hussein's goal was to pressure Ibn Saud into solving the issues of the Al-Kharmah and Al-Truba, in addition to pressuring the English to return the aid that was cut off in March 1920.<sup>629</sup> The British mediation between the two parties did not succeed, but Sharif Hussein continued to prevent the Najdi pilgrims in 1921, which infuriated the Ikhwan, leading them to carry out raids on some areas of the Hijaz.<sup>630</sup> It seems that Ibn Saud was waiting for the right time to attack Sharif Hussein, but his fear of the British Government's reaction prevented him from doing so, despite the support of some British leaders, such as Sir Percy Cox and Philby. However, the other British leaders thought that they had an alliance with Sharif Hussein and his sons that was difficult to break, in addition to the common interests to keep with Sharif Hussein and his sons in the Middle East.

In early 1921, David Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, decided to end the traditional rivalry between the two foreign ministries in India and London.<sup>631</sup> In doing so, he appointed Winston Churchill as Secretary of State for the Colonies and founded the Middle East Department with John Shackburgh<sup>632</sup> as its head. His mission was to supervise the Gulf area, the Arabian Peninsula and Persia.<sup>633</sup> Following this, the Indian ministry grew less interested, while Churchill invited all British politicians and military leaders concerned with

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<sup>626</sup> FO 371/5062 (E8206), 08/07/1920, from Edmund Allenby to Lord Curzon; National Archive, Foreign Office, FO 371/5062 (E7829), 04/07/1920, from Lord Curzon to the Civil Commissioner in Baghdad.

<sup>627</sup> Al- Fā'ī', *Al- lāqih bīn malik 'Abd al- 'Azīz*, p.188.

<sup>628</sup> Wahīm, Ṭalb. *Mamlakat Alhijāz 1916–1925* (al-Baṣrah: Manshūrāt markz alkhaliġ al' rabī, 1982), p.321.

<sup>629</sup> Bnuww Mishān, *'bdullaziz al-S'ūd*, p167.

<sup>630</sup> FO 371/6237 (E300/4/91), 11/01/1921, from Foreign Affairs to Faisal bin Hussein.

<sup>631</sup> Lloyd, David George, *War Memoirs of David Lloyd George: 1916–1917* (North Western University: AMS Press, 1934), p. IV.

<sup>632</sup> John Shackburgh (1877–1953) joined the service of the Ministry of India in 1900. Between 1921 and 1942 he worked in the Colonial Ministry.

<sup>633</sup> Tuson, Penelope, and Anita Burdett, *Records of Saudi Arabia: Primary Documents 1902–1960*, Volume 3, 1918–1926 (Oxford: Redwood Press Ltd, 1992), p.378.

Middle East affairs to attend a conference in Cairo on 21 March 1921.<sup>634</sup> The conference had two aims: to reduce the burden on the British Treasury by minimising spending in the Middle East, and secondly to assess British policy towards Iraq, while working on a decision regarding the establishment of a monarch there, with a candidate chosen for power.<sup>635</sup> The conference focused on the issues of the Middle East and the nature of British policy towards them. Churchill suggested reducing the volume of expenses in Iraq and confirming that Britain's support for the Hijaz policy was dictated by Britain's higher interests in the Arab region.<sup>636</sup> The agenda of the conference raised the issue of the establishment of a government in Iraq, and how to choose a ruler, presenting a long list of candidates for this position, including Ibn Saud, or one of his children, whose nomination was supported by followers of the Indian Office in Iraq.<sup>637</sup> However, the conference did not agree with the idea of nominating Ibn Saud or one of his sons to take power in Iraq, fearing the loss of the principle of political balance between the ruling families in the Arabian Peninsula and the fear of the establishment of an Arab union, in addition to religious reasons that prevented the emergence of a Najdi leadership in Iraq, namely, Al Saud's Wahhabi principles, which were not welcomed among the Iraqis.<sup>638</sup> In conclusion, it was agreed to nominate Faisal to rule Iraq.

Britain thus divided the Kingdom of Iraq and East Jordan between the sons of Sharif Hussein bin Ali, Faisal in Iraq and Abdullah in eastern Jordan, allowing Britain to establish a national government in Iraq, thereby easing people's anger towards the British Government.

According to Al-Rīḥānī, Ibn Saud was not affected when he learned of Britain's intention to establish two Hashemite kingdoms in Iraq and eastern Jordan,<sup>639</sup> but this is unlikely

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<sup>634</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 166.

<sup>635</sup> Graham, Michael, Erik Goldstein and Richard Langhorne, *Guide to International Relations and Diplomacy* (New York: Continuum, 2002), pp.200–201.

<sup>636</sup> Tuson and Burdett, *Records of Saudi Arabia*, pp.378–380.

<sup>637</sup> FO 371/6349, January 1921, from the minutes of the Cairo Conference.

<sup>638</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.149.

<sup>639</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.277.

because the emergence of the Hashemites on the borders of Najd must have raised concerns for him. This is clear from the memorandum prepared by Ibn Saud's Ministry of War<sup>640</sup> on the appointment of King Faisal in Iraq, which shows that Ibn Saud was indeed concerned and would not stand by.

It seems that Britain was aware of Ibn Saud's anxiety and was afraid that he might stir up problems with the Hashemites, especially that he was expanding on the Arabian Peninsula against Ibn Rashid. Therefore, the British Government wanted to establish a lasting peace between the competing parties. This is supported by Churchill's 1921 increase in financial aid to Arab leaders in the region in order to gain their support for British policy. Churchill suggested that his government increase the aid allocated to Ibn Saud to £100,000 sterling per annum, especially to have Ibn Saud prevent the Ikhwan from attacking the borders of Iraq. This money was to be paid in the form of monthly instalments provided to maintain peace among Ibn Saud, the Hashemites and the al-Sabah in Kuwait.<sup>641</sup>

The British diplomats at the Cairo conference did not agree. With Britain granting the Hashemites the Kingdom of Iraq and Eastern Jordan, Ibn Saud found himself, in the next few years, surrounded by his traditional adversaries from Hijaz, Jordan, and Ha'il. Such developments led to the emergence of an unexpected force in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula under the leadership of Ibn Saud, which eradicated the Hashemite presence in Hijaz. In late 1925, Britain was forced to reconsider its policy in the region.

### **3.10. Summary**

Britain endeavoured to continue its relations with the Arab leaders by dispatching repeated diplomatic missions to Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud with the aim of bridging the gap between

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<sup>640</sup> FO 371/6238, 17/02/1921, 'Memorandum prepared by the Ministry of War about designating Faisal King of Iraq'.

<sup>641</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 165.

these two rulers in the region. Through these efforts, it was able to protect the Arab Gulf sheikhs from the ambitions of Ibn Saud. This is made clear in a letter from Lord Curzon, British Foreign Secretary, to Sir Percy Cox: ‘You have accomplished your mission for 18 years with all nobility. You have made yourselves kings of the Persian Gulf. Once the war is over, we will promote the rule of the Kingdom. No one will dare take the crown off your heads.’<sup>642</sup>

British policy towards Al Saud witnessed a conspicuous development during the First World War, despite the fact that Britain failed to convince Ibn Saud to join the war. The relationship between Britain and Ibn Saud was affected by Britain’s bias towards Sharif Hussein. As a result, tensions between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein grew more severe, especially after the declaration of Sharif Hussein’s revolt against the Turks in June 1916. Sharif Hussein saw in himself a leader of Arabism. This feeling was crystallised after he was promised to be made King of the Arabs. On the other hand, Ibn Saud felt that Sharif Hussein did not have the right to be king, and so grew the dispute between them.

A divergence of ideas emerged between the two leaders. Sharif Hussein worked on the basis of building an independent Arab state, while Ibn Saud focused on consolidating his rule in Najd and confronting his opponents in the region.<sup>643</sup>

The year 1921 witnessed the emergence of a new phase of relations between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein, where there was a change in the balance of alliances in the Arabian Peninsula with Ibn Saud managing to eliminate Ibn Rashid in Ha’il, and connecting the borders of Al Saud with Iraq directly in the northern regions. This meant the demise of a power upon which Sharif Hussein relied heavily and took as a political ally in the face of Al Saud.<sup>644</sup> At the same time, a crisis broke out in the Emirate of Al-Ayid.<sup>645</sup> The people appealed to Ibn Saud for

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<sup>642</sup> Al-Ziydī, ‘*Abd al - ‘Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.112.

<sup>643</sup> Al-Riḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.278.

<sup>644</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 167.

<sup>645</sup> Al Ayid is a family whose head is Ayid ibn Mer’i. Their emirate is located in Abha. Ayid inherited the emirate from his Uncle Ali bin Majthal. (Al-Ziriklī, Khayr al-Dīn, *Al-wajīz fī sīrat al-malik ‘abd al-‘azīz* (Al-ṭab‘ah al-thānīyah. Bīrūt, Dār al-‘Ilm lil-Malāyīn, 1972), p.67.

relief from the tyranny of their emir, Hassan Al-Ayid, who responded by calling for a military campaign against Abha under the leadership of his cousin Abdul-Aziz bin Musaed bin Jalawi, who managed to take control of the emirate in 1921.<sup>646</sup> The attack infuriated Sharif Hussein, who in turn demanded that the British Government stop Ibn Saud stealing land, and to leave it as it was during the Turkish rule.<sup>647</sup>

It seems that British policy towards the rule of Faisal and Abdullah raised the concern of Ibn Saud, causing him to hold a conference in Riyadh attended by military leaders, religious scholars and tribal sheikhs in Najd. During this conference, Ibn Saud was made Sultan of Najd, with his offspring as successors. On 26 July 1921 Britain officially recognised Ibn Saud as the new Sultan of Najd and its surrounds, as well as his heirs after him.<sup>648</sup>

Thus, despite the efforts exerted by Britain through its various channels in the diplomatic field to purify the atmosphere between its allies, Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud, no convergence of the views of the two parties could be achieved during the period of disagreement from 1916 to 1921. Among the reasons for this are the different ambitions of both parties. The following chapter describes how Ibn Saud was able to achieve his ambitions at the expense of the competing forces in the region, especially the Hashemites.

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<sup>646</sup> Al-Mukhtâr, *Târikh Al-Mamlkah*, p.132.

<sup>647</sup> Al-Riḥānī, *Târikh Najd*, p.278.

<sup>648</sup> FO 371/6242, 26/07/1921, from the British High Commissioner in Iraq to the Minister of Colonial.

## Chapter Four: Saudi–British Diplomatic Relations, 1922–1925

### 4.1. Introduction

British policy in the period 1922–1925 aimed to keep good relations with Ibn Saud and maintain his superiority over Hussein. Britain also preferred to keep backing both the Saudis and the Hashemites, putting itself in a dominant position to control their external affairs. According to Al-Zīyādī, British official George Rendel unveiled the role of his government with regard to solving the Hijaz–Najd conflict during this period.<sup>649</sup> He wrote in one of his reports that the rivalry between the Saudis and the Hashemites made it almost impossible to create close relations between the regions both families controlled, adding that the British policy aimed to maintain balance between both sides.<sup>650</sup>

Britain had been keen to strengthen its economic power in the Gulf region since the seventeenth century, and Basra gained commercial and political importance in the Arab Gulf region, becoming the main centre for the transmission of British communications between the Gulf and Aleppo, and then to Europe. The British had full influence in Iraq, with three consulates, in Basra, Baghdad and Mosul, and strong economic advantages, gained from controlling the country at the end of the First World War. However, local authorities resisted this occupation and the Battle of Al-Shuaiba was fought in April 1915 to prevent British encroachment into Iraqi territory.<sup>651</sup> Britain imposed taxes on the Iraqi people and forced them to pay tributes to improve the economic situation, which led to the October 1920 revolution against the British occupation. This made Britain reconsider its position and seek a stronger relationship with Bin Saud to protect its interests in the Gulf region.<sup>652</sup>

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<sup>649</sup> Al-Zīyādī, *Tārīkh al-mamlakah*, p.153.

<sup>650</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p. 211.

<sup>651</sup> Ali A Alawi, *Faisal of Iraq* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2014), p.324.

<sup>652</sup> Peter Sluggett, *Britain in Iraq. Contriving King and Country*, (Columbia University Press, 2007), p.143.

In any case, after the founding of the Hashemite Kingdom in Iraq and the Hashemite Emirate of Transjordan, Ibn Saud found himself surrounded by Hashemite thrones, which would change his strategy to one of expanding his control over neighbouring powers.<sup>653</sup> Al-Rīḥānī mentions that Abdulaziz bin Saud told him what he thought about Britain and the Hashemites,<sup>654</sup> saying: ‘People think we take large sums of money from the English. In fact, they paid us only some money for the work we did during and after the war. We won’t break faith with them until they do, and we will keep our Treaty with them even if it is against us and against our interests. The English owe us but what is their policy now that they are conspiring against me, and surrounding me with enemies. They are establishing entities around me, making my enemy kings, and offering them financial and political help. Sharif Hussein is in the Hijaz, his son Abdullah is in Transjordan, and his son Faisal is in Iraq. I am Ibn Saud, a friend of the English, but they treat me like the Bedouins in their policy’.<sup>655</sup>

These words show how angry and disappointed Ibn Saud was with the British policy after the Cairo Conference and the emergence of the British-backed Hashemite kingdoms around his northern and western borders. As a result of the British policy, Ibn Saud called for a conference in Riyadh on 22 August 1921. Military leaders, religious scholars, and sheikhs of the tribes in Najd attended the conference, and they pledged loyalty to Ibn Saud and pronounced him Sultan of Najd and its dependencies. Later on, Britain officially recognized that title for him and for his heirs.<sup>656</sup> The relations between Hussein and Ibn Saud were very strained between 1922 and 1925. The two leaders also showed their different perspectives, as Hussein worked to establish an independent Arab state, while Ibn Saud was more focused on stabilising his rule in Najd and facing his enemies in the region, like Ibn Rashid. On the other hand, Hussein sought to extend his power over the neighbouring countries although he had no

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<sup>653</sup> Morris, James, *The Hashemite Kings* (London: Faber, 1959), p.87.

<sup>654</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p. 212.

<sup>655</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, Amīn. *Mulūk al-‘arab* p. 112.

<sup>656</sup> FO/371/6242, ‘British High Commissioner in Iraq to the Colonial Secretary’, 26/07/1921.

legitimacy to do so. Ibn Saud believed that these areas, the land of Ibn Rashid and Hijaz, were a legitimate right of his from the days of his ancestors, when they took control of the Hijaz and Ha'il, in the first period of Saudi rule. He also considered the leaders of the Arabian Peninsula enemies, and looked for any opportunity to take them down.

Britain was seeking, through Ibn Saud, to eliminate Ha'il as an independent emirate because of its loyalty to the Turks. Al-Zīyḍīy believes that Ibn Saud launched a military campaign against Ha'il because he feared an alliance between the Hashemites and Ibn Rashid against him, due to the designation of Faisal in Iraq and Abdullah in Transjordan at the Cairo Conference in March 1921.<sup>657</sup> However, Ibn Saud wanted to control Ha'il before the Ashraf's force allied itself with Rashid against him, added to the fact that he could draw on British support in his campaign.

The year 1921 witnessed the beginning of a new phase in the relations between Hussein and Ibn Saud. There was a change in the balance of alliances in the Arabian Peninsula when Ibn Saud sent a military campaign which took down the Al Rashid family in Ha'il in the autumn of 1921, thereby annexing the region for himself. Ibn Saud's army arrived in Ha'il in November 1921 with 10,000 fighters. The people of Ha'il surrendered without a fight. Al Rasheed believes that the reason for this was the economic siege imposed by Britain and Ibn Saud against Ha'il between 1918 and 1921.<sup>658</sup> This prevented people from going to Has'a or Iraq for trade, which rendered the population weak and poverty-stricken. I agree with Al Rasheed that economic pressure more than military intervention was an important factor in Ibn Saud securing control of Ha'il. In addition, the disputes within the family of Rashid weakened them and made them scattered. The result of Ibn Saud's campaign meant that his northern borders were now

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<sup>657</sup> Al-Sa' dūn, Khālid Maḥmūd, *'Al-alaqat bayn Najd wa al-Kuwait, 1902-1922'* [Najd-Kuwait relations, 1902-1922], (Al-riyāḍ: Dārat al-Malik 'Abd al-'Azīz, 1983), p. 64.

<sup>658</sup> Al Rasheed, *History of Saud Arabia*, p. 28.

connected to the Iraqi borders, thus a family that Hussein relied on and considered a political ally against Ibn Saud was eliminated.<sup>659</sup>

In the same year, 1921, the crisis of Al Ayidh<sup>660</sup> emerged, as the people appealed to Ibn Saud to relieve them from the tyranny of their Emir Hassan al-Ayidh. Ibn Saud responded by calling for a military campaign against Abha under the leadership of his cousin Abdulaziz bin Musa'ed bin Jalawi,<sup>661</sup> who managed to take control of the emirate. Nonetheless, it was not long until Hassan Al Ayidh restored his control, so Ibn Saud ordered his son, Faisal, to lead an army in 1922 in a new military campaign on Abha. Faisal managed to take control over Abha and Al-Aridh, up to the Hijaz borders in the north, in 1923. Although Hussein backed the Emir of Al Ayidh to confront Ibn Saud, in an attempt to stop the expansion of Ibn Saud's power in the region,<sup>662</sup> Al Ayidh was badly defeated by the powerful army of Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud's army was stronger than its regional rivals because it had gained numbers following the successful campaign against Ha'il and the accession of many people in the north to Ibn Saud's side. In addition he also had British support. Hence, Ibn Saud could expand his rule to the south of the Arabian Peninsula.

The ban on Najd Muslim pilgrims from performing the Hajj pilgrimage for two consecutive years was a reason why the people in this region supported Ibn Saud, as visiting Mecca and performing the Hajj was for them a religious ritual that could not be denied. The British Government tried to find a solution to this problem, and suggested that Hussein negotiate with Ibn Saud to reach a solution. However, Hussein informed the British Government of his refusal to receive the Najd pilgrims in that year unless Ibn Saud gave up his

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<sup>659</sup> FO 371/7711, 13/08/1921, from Abdulaziz to Clive Daly, the British Political Resident in Bahrain.

<sup>660</sup> Al Ayid was a family whose head was Ayid Bin Mer'i. Their emirate was located in Abha. Ayid inherited the emirate from his uncle Ali Bin Majthal (*Al-Zirikli, Al-wajiz fi sirat al-malik 'abd al-'aziz*, p.67).

<sup>661</sup> Abdulaziz bin Musa'ed bin Jalawi (1885–1977) was born in Riyadh and was an ally of Ibn Saud in his wars. He was also a delegate of Ibn Saud's in many treaties and wars. He was the Emir of Al-Qassim and Ha'il. He died in Riyadh in 1977 (*Al-Zirikli, Al-a'lam*, p.425).

<sup>662</sup> FO 371/7715 (11585), 23/10/1922, from Sir Percy Cox to the Minister for the Colonies.

control over the regions he seized in the north of the Arabian Peninsula, such as Al Jawf, Bisha, Ranyah, and more recently Truba.<sup>663</sup> Despite the British pressure on Hussein, he insisted on denying the pilgrims that year, and on receiving them the next.

#### **4.2. The Muhammara Conference, 1922**

After the fall of Ha'il in 1921, the Ikhwan attacked the northern regions of the Arabian Peninsula up to the borders with Transjordan and Iraq to hunt down fugitives from the Shamar tribes. They did not stop until they were confronted by British forces. These interventions by the Ikhwan led to the conclusion of the Treaty of Muhammara.<sup>664</sup> After the Ikhwan incidents along the Iraqi borders, the British Government, represented by its High Commissioner in Iraq, Sir Percy Cox, sought to bring the two conflicting parties to the negotiating table to find final solutions for the Najd, Kuwait, and Iraq problems.

The idea of holding a conference to establish the borders of Najd, Kuwait and Iraq was evidently important for the British Government, as Sir Percy Cox saw Ibn Saud's expansion of power in 1922 and his control over Al Jawf up to Transjordan as a reason for this step. The point of setting the borders was to secure the Hashemite Kingdom of Iraq and to find solutions for the problems of the Bedouin tribes.<sup>665</sup> According to Al-Zīydīy, Britain recognised that tension could not continue to risk peace, and it was in Britain's interest to establish recognised boundaries between the influential kingdoms: Hijaz, Transjordan and Iraq on one side, and Ibn Saud's regions on the other.<sup>666</sup> Therefore, the reasons for demarcating the borders increased and the British role in the region grew. Britain saw that there had to be a clear line to define

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<sup>663</sup> FO 371/8936, 19/12/1922, From Sir Percy Cox (as High Representative in Iraq) to the Minister for the Colonies.

<sup>664</sup> Zamiska, Donna L., 'The Ikhwan of Saudi Arabia: Past and Present' (unpublished MA thesis, McGill University, Montreal, 1993), p. 72.

<sup>665</sup> Gertrude Bell, *The Letters of Gertrude Bell*, Volume 2 (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1927), p.513.

<sup>666</sup> Al-Zīydīy, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd, p. 253.

the boundaries between Iraq and Najd so that each would know their borders and would not exceed them in the future. It also determined the tribes' political alliance.<sup>667</sup>

A conference to discuss these issues was held in Muhammara (in Persia), with the presence of Sheikh Khaz'al bin Jabir, on 3 June 1922. The conference was attended by an Iraqi delegate, Subaih Amin,<sup>668</sup> and the Najd delegates, Ahmed Al Thunayan<sup>669</sup> and Abdullah Beg Al Damluji. The ruler of Kuwait, Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah, also attended, along with Bernard H. Bourdillon,<sup>670</sup> private secretary to the British High Commissioner in Iraq. Cox had already planned the borders between Iraq and Najd, and informed Ibn Saud in a telegram he sent him on 3 April 1922. He pointed out that the dividing line would start from Kharja, in Hafar Al-Batin city, and run from Moqer to Sakakah. It seems that Britain created this map to establish what are called 'political boundaries' for the first time between people of the same region, neglecting the historical, national and cultural bonds they shared.

According to Wahbah, Cox's plan was unfair in Ibn Saud's opinion, as it did not include the grazing rights to the Najd tribes in the region.<sup>671</sup> Al-Rihani believes that Ibn Saud refused this demarcation of boundaries because it did not grant him all of the territory that he claimed.<sup>672</sup> Muir suggests that it was no longer possible for Britain to leave the deserts of northern Arabia to local rulers and to the Turks.<sup>673</sup> It would appear that the British were trying to calm the situation between the neighbouring regions (Ibn Saud, Kuwait and Iraq) in order to face the advancing Wahhabis towards the Iraqi borders. Cox asked Ibn Saud to invite Faisal al Duwaish and the leaders of the Ikhwan to Najd, and to keep them under his protection until the

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<sup>667</sup> FO 371/9998, 04/04/1924, From George Knox to the Minister of the Colonies.

<sup>668</sup> Sabeeh Bick Nashaat Amin (1883-1929) was representative to Iraq in many treaties, such as the Treaty of Muhammara and Uqair, and served as Minister of Transport and Works.

<sup>669</sup> Ahmed Al Thunayan Al Saud was an advisor to Ibn Saud, who relied on him for correspondence and foreign diplomatic missions. Ibn Saud assigned him a number of official missions, the last of which was the Muhammara Conference. He died in Riyadh in 1923.

<sup>670</sup> Linabury, *'British-Saudi Arabia Relations'*, p.217.

<sup>671</sup> Wahbah, *Jazirat al-'arab*, p.212.

<sup>672</sup> Al-Rihani, Ameen, *Ibn Sa'oud of Arabia* (Abingdon: Kegan Paul, 2002), p.124.

<sup>673</sup> Richard Muir, The Iraq-Kuwait border dispute: still a factor for instability? *Journal Asian Affairs*, 35.2, 2004, pp.147-161.

end of the conference. Ibn Saud responded to Cox's orders to stop the Ikhwan from attacking the Iraqi borders, and he urged the British Government to prevent any hostilities from the Iraqi Government on his borders until the negotiations were over.<sup>674</sup>

Ibn Saud's delegate delivered his government's demands in the conference: the return of the Najd tribes who moved to Iraq, such as Shammar, 'Amarat, Ruwala, and Dhafir.<sup>675</sup> The negotiating parties came to an agreement on these issues, and they signed the Muhammara Conference on 5 May 1922. Subaih Amin, Ahmed Al Thunayan and Bourdillon signed on behalf of Iraq, Najd and Britain, respectively. The main points of the conference were the return of the tribes of Al-Muntafiq, Dhafir and 'Amarat – who had fled from Najd to Iraq after the fall of Ha'il – from the Iraqi Government, and the return of the Shammar tribe to Najd. Ibn Saud demanded their return, but the representative of Ibn Saud admitted that these tribes were originally from Iraq. Both parties also agreed to protect pilgrims and secure their passage, and to form a joint committee to settle disputes over lands and wells, under British supervision.<sup>676</sup>

Faisal I of Iraq sent a letter to Ibn Saud to express his pleasure over the agreement between Najd and Iraq, and to wish that it could be a good start to strengthening their relations.<sup>677</sup> However, Ibn Saud refused to ratify the Muhammara Conference, making the excuse that his delegate did not commit to his instructions. He stated that he would not accept the suggested boundaries because they deprived the Najd tribes, which it was planned would be subject to Iraq, of their right to seek pasture. He also believed that these tribes should be subject to him, and suggested the issue be reconsidered. He expressed his frustration at his delegate, and informed the British Government that he did not approve the convention.<sup>678</sup> Ibn Saud's refusal to ratify the convention stopped its implementation, disappointing both the

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<sup>674</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saud Arabia*, p.178.

<sup>675</sup> Sa'īd, *Tārīkh al-dawlah al-su'ūdīyah*, p.102; FO 371/9996, 18/12/1923, from George Knox to High Representative in Iraq.

<sup>676</sup> IOR/R/15/1/559, 07/05/1922, from High Commissioner, Baghdad to Secretary of State for the Colonies.

<sup>677</sup> Al-Zīydy, *'Abd al-'Aziz al-Saa'ūd*, p.255.

<sup>678</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p.282.

British and the Iraqi Governments. It also left the issue of the boundaries between Iraq, Najd, and Kuwait unresolved, which would encourage more British endeavours, through Sir Percy Cox, to convince Ibn Saud and Faisal I of Iraq to resume negotiations in Uqair by the end of 1922.

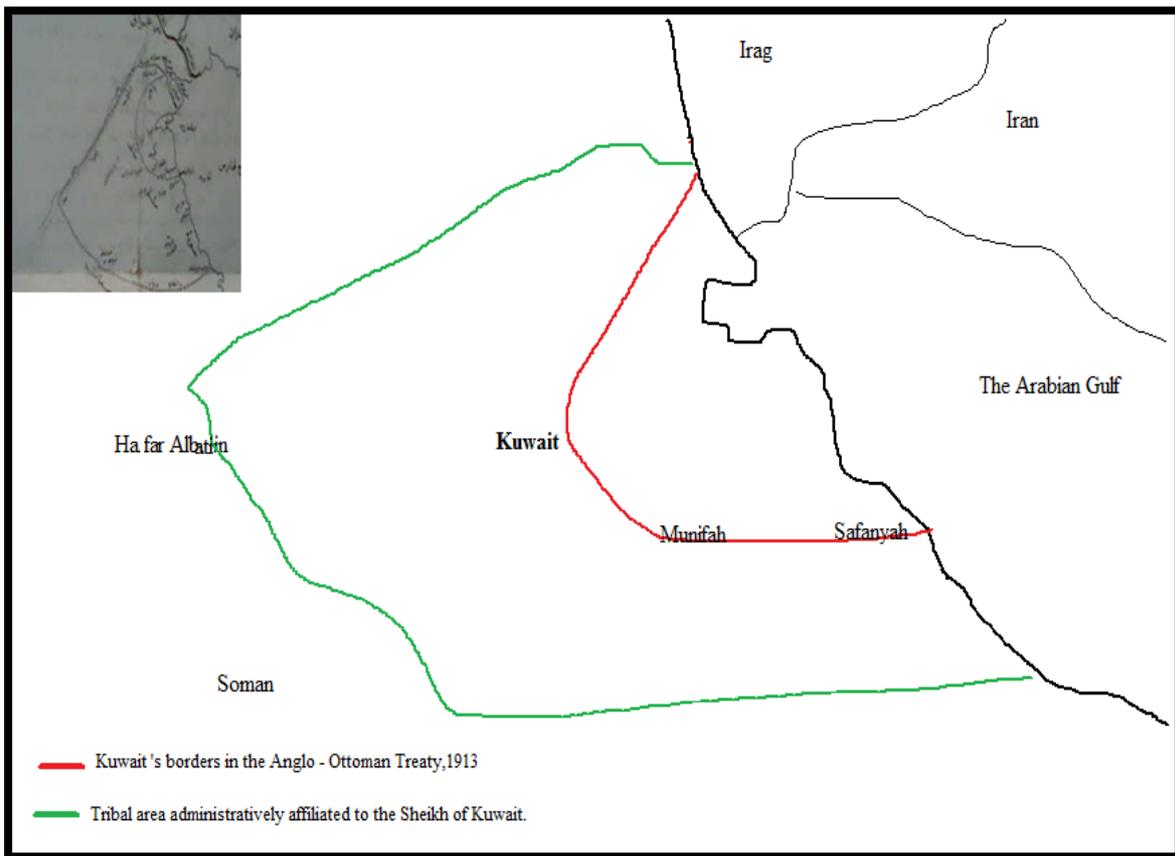
The Muhammara Conference did not satisfy Ibn Saud as he did not accept the outcomes agreed upon with Kuwait or Iraq. As a result, he terminated the mandate of the delegate, Ahmed Al Thunayan, after the conference and he was not allowed to participate in any other political acts.<sup>679</sup> Kuwaiti sources mention that Sheikh Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah, ruler of Kuwait, attended the Muhammara Conference, along with Sheikh Abdullah Al-Saalem, and that he clung to his land boundaries, stretching from his existing border to Safaniya and from Manifa in the south to Samman, refusing any other suggestions.<sup>680</sup> Nonetheless, the British documents available to this research do not mention the name of the Kuwaiti Sheikh who attended the conference.<sup>681</sup> It is unlikely that Sheikh Salim attended the conference, as he is not mentioned in any of the British documents. The British Government's evident focus in the conference was the establishment of the boundaries between Najd and Iraq, in order to stop the Ikhwan from advancing. This is what the documents show, as nothing bears the signature of the Sheikh of Kuwait. The convention was between the delegates of Najd and Iraq, and the British delegate. Later on, the Uqair convention demarcated the borders between Najd and Kuwait.

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<sup>679</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.255.

<sup>680</sup> Khalid Al-S'dūn, *Al- 'alāqāt byn Najd wa al-kūwyt* (Kwūt: Dhāt al-Salāsīl, 2015), p.272.

<sup>681</sup> IOR/R/15/1/559, 20/05/1922, Iraq–Najd Frontier, Text of Muhammara Treaty.



Map 1: Kuwaiti borders until the Treaty of Muhammara 1922, data taken from Khalid Al-Sa‘dūn, *al-‘alāqah bayn Najd wa al-Kuwayt*, p. 272.

### 4.3. Uqair Conference, November–December 1922

Communications between Britain and the Governments of Iraq and Najd continued in order to reach an agreement on the issues of boundaries and tribes. The demarcation of borders was not, in fact, a simple issue, as the region had not had any borders since it first emerged and most of its areas were vast deserts where Bedouin tribes lived. These tribes were known for moving from one place to another for pasture, and each tribe had its wells and pastures that were known by experience and inherited tradition.<sup>682</sup> Therefore, these tribes did not have the notion of a home as we now define it, as they belonged to the place where they could settle to find pastures

<sup>682</sup> Philby, *Sa‘udi Arabia*, p.284.

for their animals. As a result, we could rarely say that a specific tribe belonged to a particular ruler in perpetuity.<sup>683</sup> Hence, it was not easy for these tribes to accept the idea of political boundaries that did not consider their inherited tribal customs. In addition, these regions did not have easily distinguishable landmarks, like rivers or mountains, to separate them. Some British agents became aware of this, such as Harold Dickson, the British political agent in Bahrain, who wrote to the British High Commissioner in Iraq suggesting demarcating the boundaries between Najd and Kuwait based on identifying the tribes that belonged to each party and their wells. Then each tribe and the lands it used for pasture would belong to the party they were loyal to. Dickson warned that any attempt to resolve the problem following the European style would lead to continual tribal battles, as the tribes would never follow resolutions that deprived them of their inherited rights.<sup>684</sup>

There is no agreement among the sources on who called for the Uqair Conference. According to Khaz'1, Sir Percy Cox invited Ibn Saud to the conference in September 1922, but he kept delaying his response until November and finally accepted after many letters between him and Dickson.<sup>685</sup> Philby, on the other hand, believes that Ibn Saud was the one who introduced the idea of the conference to Cox in order to have the chance to discuss the controversy over the Muhammara Conference, that is, the return of the 'Amarat and Dhafir tribes to Iraq.<sup>686</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, who accompanied Ibn Saud at the conference, agrees with Philby that Ibn Saud was the one who called for the conference. Yet Al-Rīḥānī disagrees with Philby about the reason behind the conference; Philby believes it was for the return of the 'Amarat and Dhafir tribes to Najd, while Al-Rīḥānī mentions that Ibn Saud said, 'we invited Sir Percy Cox to Uqair to discuss two points: Sharif and his sons; and the Turks who plan to take over

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<sup>683</sup> Al-S' dūn, *Al- 'alāqāt*, p. 271.

<sup>684</sup> Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, p. 285.

<sup>685</sup> Khaz'1, Ḥussīn, *Tārīkh al-jazīrah al- 'rbīyah* (Bīyrūt: Mṭba' t Dār al-kitāb, 1968), p. 133.

<sup>686</sup> Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, p. 285.

Mosul. The ‘Amarat and Dhafir issue does not necessitate coming here.’<sup>687</sup> It seems clear, however, that Cox was the one who invited Ibn Saud, as Al-Rīhānī, Khaz’l and some British documents point out.<sup>688</sup> It seems that Ibn Saud was trying to please and win over the British Government so that Britain would overlook his takeover of Hijaz.

Ibn Saud arrived at Uqair on 26 November 1922. The delegates were from three regions: Najd, Iraq, and Kuwait, represented by Ibn Saud, Subaih Amin (Minister of Works and Transport) and Major John More, a British Political Agent (on behalf of the Sheikh of Kuwait), respectively. What is remarkable about the conference is the uneven levels of representation of the participants. One region was represented by its ruler, the other by its minister, and the last by an officer from the country that colonised it. Cox played the role of a judge.<sup>689</sup> On 1 December 1922, the parties discussed the boundaries between Iraq and Najd. Ibn Saud demanded that the Euphrates be the boundary between the two countries, but Cox declined the suggestion. He so skilfully managed the conference that he forced Ibn Saud to give up his demands on the tribes in Iraq and the northern borders. Cox pledged to settle the demarcation of boundaries himself, and Ibn Saud approved that.<sup>690</sup> Ibn Saud demanded that the borders be demarcated based on the tribal limits, while Cox wanted to demarcate them following the European style, i.e. draw the borders according to the latitude and longitude as Cox viewed them.<sup>691</sup> They vehemently disagreed, so much so that the negotiations were almost terminated, but Cox resolved the matter when he talked to Ibn Saud separately and convinced him to give up his demands, by offering to give him Al-Jouf in exchange for leaving the clans of ‘Amarat and Dhafir to Iraq. The region of Qurayt al-Malh within the area of Al-Jawf was

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<sup>687</sup> Al-Rīhānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p. 309.

<sup>688</sup> FO 371/7715 [E 11061], 12/10/1922, from Sir Percy Cox to the Colonial Secretary.

<sup>689</sup> Dickson, Harold Richard, *The Arab of the Desert: A Glimpse into Badawin Life in Kuwait and Saudi Arabia* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1972), p. 547.

<sup>690</sup> Al-S‘dūn, *Al-‘alāqāt*, p. 275.

<sup>691</sup> *ibid*, p. 275.

also to be affiliated to Najd.<sup>692</sup> Cox then announced that he would be in charge of demarcating the boundaries himself.<sup>693</sup>

The British diplomacy, represented by Sir Percy Cox, succeeded in demarcating the boundaries between Najd and Iraq, and Najd and Kuwait. Cox opened a map of the Arabian Peninsula and drew a line with a red pen from the Arabian Gulf to Unaizah Mountain, near the Transjordan border. Thus, he gave Iraq a great part of the regions that Ibn Saud demanded and considered part of Najd, and gave Najd two thirds of the Kuwaiti lands. The areas to the south and west of Kuwait became two neutral zones: the Kuwaiti Neutral Zone and the Iraqi Neutral Zone.<sup>694</sup> The reason behind the neutral zones was to facilitate the movement of Bedouin tribes, who were subject to the respective countries, to find water and pasture for their animals.<sup>695</sup>

Ibn Saud could not but accept the step. It seems he agreed to this decision in order to ensure that the British Government stood by his side against his rival Sharif Hussein, especially after the banning of Najd pilgrims from the pilgrimage.<sup>696</sup> Cox also ruled that tribes had the right to enter the other party's land to reach wells and pastures, and he prohibited any of the two parties from building castles and forts along the border line separating the two countries, as it was a neutral zone that could not be used for building.<sup>697</sup> This appears to have been a concession from Cox to win over Ibn Saud after he had forced him to accept the demarcation.

This shows Britain's desire to win the support of Ibn Saud, because it saw his emerging power in the Arabian Peninsula, and he was someone with whom Britain could achieve its interests in the region. In addition, Ibn Saud would be a strategic ally to confront the power of the Ikhwan and to stop them from reaching the lands that belonged to the British Government.

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<sup>692</sup> Rihani, *Ibn Sa'oud*, p. 79.

<sup>693</sup> Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, p. 290.

<sup>694</sup> Dickson, *Arab of the Desert*, p. 548.

<sup>695</sup> Christie, Kenneth & Mohammad Masad, *State Formation and Identity in the Middle East and North Africa* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), p. 96.

<sup>696</sup> FO 371/8936, 02/12/1922, from Abdulaziz Bin Saud to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>697</sup> Abedin, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud', p. 163.

However, Britain did not show complete favouritism to Ibn Saud, but it dealt with him and Sharif Hussein in a way that served its interests in the region without bias to either of them. This British endeavour was undertaken because it had interests with each of the two rulers. In relation to Sharif Hussein, the British Government was trying to win his and his sons' support as he represented the legitimate ruling power in the region, and Britain was keen to avoid accusations of betrayal for not fulfilling what it had pledged to him, i.e. the kingship of Hijaz. In addition, Sharif Hussein played an important role with his fight against the Turks, an enemy of Britain. In Ibn Saud, Britain saw an emerging power that achieved significant gains by getting a number of Bedouin tribes, including the Ikhwan army, on his side. Thus, he led a great force that helped him take over some regions and eliminate his rivals. The British Government considered him a tool to suppress the revolutionaries on the Arabian Peninsula, like Ibn Rashid and al Idrisi, who posed a considerable danger to British interests in the Gulf region.

It looks like Ibn Saud was aware of the circumstances that surrounded him, especially after the Hashemites established kingdoms around his country in Hijaz, Iraq and Transjordan. According to Al-Rīḥānī, Ibn Saud said, 'The English surrounded me by my enemies,'<sup>698</sup> which shows his understanding that stubbornness in his position would turn the English, who supported the Hashemites, against him.<sup>699</sup>

On 2 December, Ibn Saud and Cox drafted an agreement on the demarcation of the borders between Iraq and Najd, signed by Al Damluji from the Najd side, and by Subaih Amin from the Iraqi side. On the same day, Cox sent a telegram to Winston Churchill, then Minister of the Colonies, telling him that Ibn Saud requested that Qurayat Almilh, an area in Al Jawf, be under his rule, and showing his support for the idea.<sup>700</sup> Cox gave Ibn Saud Qurayat Almilh

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<sup>698</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd* p. 310.

<sup>699</sup> Glubb, John Bagot (Glubb Pasha), *War in the Desert: An R.A.F. Frontier Campaign* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1960), p. 36.

<sup>700</sup> Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, p. 285.

to satisfy him in return for including the ‘Amarat and Dhafir tribes under Iraqi control. Cox managed to draw a map of the Arabian Peninsula in that conference,<sup>701</sup> and for the first time in the history of the region, Iraq and Najd were separated by a border. However, the issue of the border between Najd and Kuwait was not discussed in the conference, as the Kuwaiti delegate, John More, who was supposed to defend Kuwaiti interests, did not say a word during the conference.<sup>702</sup>

From the above, it can be seen that the Uqair Conference was primarily controlled by Sir Percy Cox, while none of the other parties had the opportunity to express their opinions or opposition. It seems Cox and the British Government did not like the disagreement over borders at the Muhammara Conference. However, the Uqair Conference did not provide a final solution to the issues of borders or tribes that was satisfactory to all parties. This can be seen by the continuous tension over the boundaries between the tribes when it came to pastures and wells.<sup>703</sup> This also shows that the convention did not set clear rights and rules for the neutral zones, so each region believed they were the property of their own people, which triggered problems among the tribes.<sup>704</sup>

According to Glubb, Cox’s diplomacy was intended to give Britain a major part in the politics of the region.<sup>705</sup> It is clear that Britain believed that peace between the Arab governments was in its interests, so it exerted efforts to settle the disputes regardless of the historical rights when demarcating the boundaries. Ibn Saud was not satisfied with the agreement as it unfairly took areas which he considered to be his property, like ‘Amarat and Dhafir, and annexed them to Iraq. However, Cox forced Ibn Saud to accept and approve the convention, and he had no other choice. It seems that he granted Iraq a large part of the lands

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<sup>701</sup> Al-S‘dūn, *Al-‘alāqāt*, p. 275.

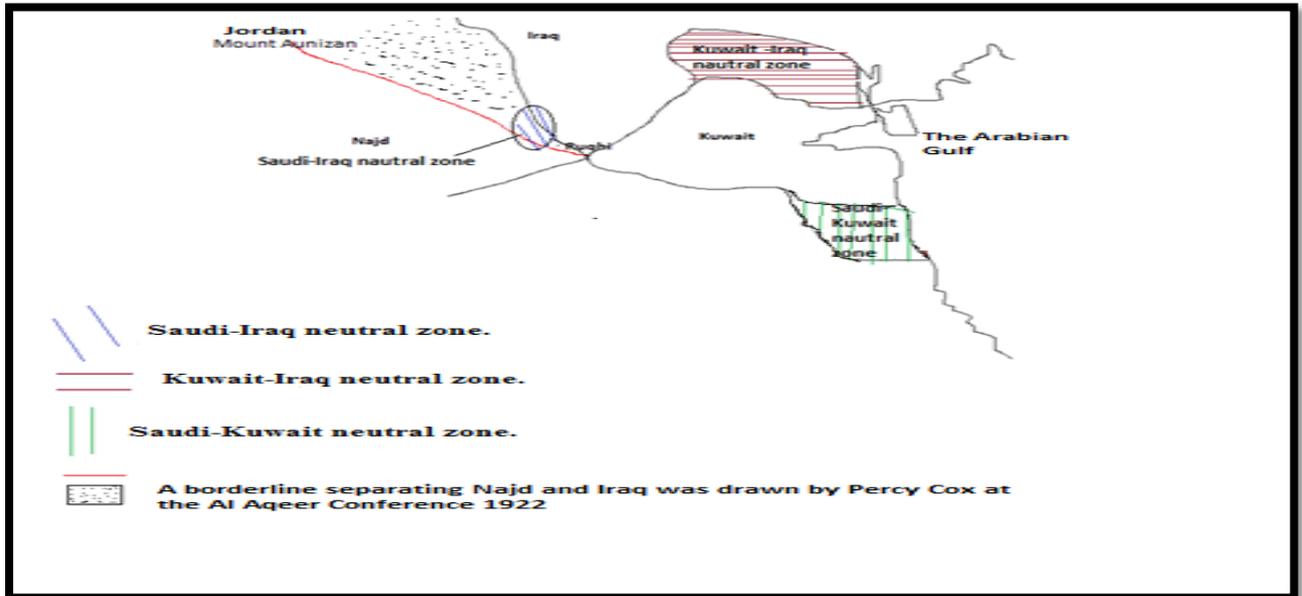
<sup>702</sup> *ibid*, p. 276.

<sup>703</sup> IOR/R/15/5/28, 10/10/1922, from Ibn Saud to Major John More.

<sup>704</sup> Wiegand, Krista, ‘Resolution of Border Disputes in the Arabian Gulf’, *The Journal of Territorial and Maritime Studies*, 1.1, (Jan. 2014), pp.33-48.

<sup>705</sup> Glubb, *War in the Desert*, p. 141.

of Najd to protect it from the Ikhwan attacks, and there is a possibility that there were plans for oil agreements with Iraq.<sup>706</sup> In addition, Cox drew the borders of Kuwait to separate Najd and Iraq.<sup>707</sup>



Map 2: Uqair Conference 1922.<sup>708</sup>

It seems clear that the Uqair Conference was a British intervention to serve its interests in the region, aimed at ensuring stability and security in the region to that end. Britain did not support Ibn Saud because it liked him, but rather to gain his support against its enemies. In the Treaty of Darin of 1915, Najd became a British protectorate by mutual interest. Britain wanted Ibn Saud to be a powerful ally in the region to face the Ottoman interests, while Ibn Saud had to accept what Britain dictated to him because he could not trust the Ottomans, due to their continuous support for his adversary Ibn Rashid. By the end of the First World War, and the fall of the Ottoman Empire, the British Government had two powerful allies in the region, Ibn

<sup>706</sup> Fathī ‘Afifī, *Mushkilat Alhadod Alseeah fi Shihb Algazerah Alarabia* (Al-qahīrah: mṭbat al-Ahrām, 2000), p.121.

<sup>707</sup> Al-S‘dūn, *Al-‘alāqāt*, p. 278.

<sup>708</sup> Data taken from: Philby, *Sa’udi Arabia*, p.291.

Saud and Sharif Hussein, in addition to Mubarak Al-Sabah. Yet still, Britain saw Ibn Saud as a better ally than Sharif Hussein, who did not stop insisting that the British Government fulfil its promise to give him the title of King of the Arabs. This was not acceptable to Britain, because it would put its interests in the region at greater risk than with the region divided into small entities (as in Transjordan and Iraq), as Sharif Hussein would then have a powerful army that it may not be able to control. Making him King of the Arabs in this way would undoubtedly have given him greater strength than making him King of Hijaz, as he later became.

It is remarkable that the Uqair Conference cut 160 miles off the Northern Kuwaiti border to create a neutral zone with Iraq, in addition to including many of its tribes under the control of Najd. Sir Percy Cox explained that Kuwait was weaker than it was under the rule of Ahmad Jaber Al-Sabah, and it was better that the territory be taken by the pen than the sword, implying that more land stood to be lost to the forces of Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan.<sup>709</sup> Ahmad Mubarak had no other choice but to yield to the decisions. He, however, was not the only party to feel the injustice of the agreement; Ibn Saud himself believed that a significant part of his lands were given to Iraq. The problems persisted, so that Britain had to hold another conference in Kuwait in an attempt to reconcile the conflicting parties.

#### **4.4. The Kuwait Conference, 1923–1924**

The British Government invited Najd, Iraq, Hijaz and Transjordan to settle the border dispute in a conference in Kuwait, headed by George Knox. The venue was doubtless chosen because of its location between Iraq, Najd and Transjordan, and because of the neutral stance of Sheikh Ahmad Mubarak towards the conflicting parties participating in the conference. The motive for organising the conference seems to have been the British interest in restoring balance on the Arabian Peninsula after the successes of Ibn Saud against Al Rashid in 1921 and Al Ayid

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<sup>709</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.258.

in Asir in 1922. In addition, Britain aimed to fulfil its promises to the Hashemites,<sup>710</sup> and to emphasise British influence over the Middle East through addressing the political boundaries and the issue of the tribes between Iraq and Transjordan, and Iraq and Najd. Troeller states that Knox wanted to prove himself in the eyes of the British Government as an influential figure in the region by solving one of the main issues Britain was facing, and doing what Cox could not achieve in Uqair in 1922.<sup>711</sup> On the other hand, Helms believes that the British officials sought a comprehensive agreement between all parties.<sup>712</sup> They deemed that Abdullah I of Jordan should give up the towns of Kaff and Al Jawf to Ibn Saud, while in return Ibn Saud should give up Al Kharma and Truba to Sharif Hussein. Ibn Saud, they believed, should also give up his claims to Sirhan Valley,<sup>713</sup> Aqaba,<sup>714</sup> and Ma'an,<sup>715</sup> and should leave them and their dependencies from Hijaz to Transjordan under the control of Abdullah I of Jordan.<sup>716</sup>

Knox sent a telegram to Ibn Saud informing him of the British intention to hold a conference in Kuwait to discuss the issues between him, Iraq, Transjordan and Hijaz, and to overcome the misunderstanding between him and the Hashemites.<sup>717</sup> Ibn Saud agreed to attend the conference, provided that the Iraqi delegate did not join the governments of Hijaz and Transjordan in the joint talks, and that the issues between Najd and each of the governments be discussed separately.<sup>718</sup> It is clear from this condition that Ibn Saud was worried that these

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<sup>710</sup> Troeller, *The Birth of Saudi*, p.189.

<sup>711</sup> *ibid*, p.196.

<sup>712</sup> Helms, *Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, p. 219.

<sup>713</sup> This valley is in the north-west of the Arabian Peninsula, 300 km long, 500 m high and with an area of 9000 km<sup>2</sup> (Al-Zīyḏīy, ' *Abd al -'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.280).

<sup>714</sup> Aqaba is a port in the south-west of Transjordan, annexed to Hijaz from 1917 to 1925 and then restored to Transjordan (Peterson, *Historical Dictionary* p.123).

<sup>715</sup> Ma'an is one of the largest cities in Jordan, located in south-eastern Transjordan, and was a point of disagreement between Ibn Saud and the Ashraf (Bidwell, Robin, *Dictionary of Modern Arab History* (Abingdon: Kegan Paul, 1998), p.3).

<sup>716</sup> FO 371/8949 [10968/6/8/91], 18/11/1923, from Minister of Foreign Affairs to British Resident in Jeddah.

<sup>717</sup> Mansour, Moudi, *King Abdul-Aziz and the Kuwait Conference 1923-24* (London: Saqi Books, 2000), p.115.

<sup>718</sup> *ibid*, p.115.

governments may unite against him and that he may not be able to confront them alone. Knox accepted the condition.<sup>719</sup>

The first session of the conference was held on 17 December 1923, attended by the delegates from Najd, Hamza Ghouth, Abdullah Beg Al Damluji, Hafiz Wahaba, Abdulaziz Al-Gosaibi, and Hashim Al-Rifai,<sup>720</sup> the Transjordanian delegates (headed by the Minister of Education Ali Khalqi), and the Iraqi delegate, the Minister of Works and Transport Subaih Amin.<sup>721</sup> There were no delegates from Hijaz, which irritated the British Government and delayed the conference for a week until the Hijaz delegate arrived. Knox saw the conference as an opportunity to end the dispute between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein, but the latter believed that the conference was held to settle the border disputes between Najd and Iraq, and Najd and Transjordan.<sup>722</sup>

On 23 December 1923, the delegate from Transjordan presented a memorandum with the demands of his Government.<sup>723</sup> The demands included that the Najd Government give up Al Jawf, Sakakah and their dependencies to Amir Nuri Shaalan, leader of the Ruwala, and that these places be under the supervision of the Government of Transjordan. In addition, Transjordan demanded the appointment of commissioners to reside in the capitals of Najd and Transjordan, and that communication be through them. One of the demands was that both governments be committed to not invading one another's property, and if any attack took place, the aggressor would give back what its tribes looted and pay blood money.<sup>724</sup> The memorandum also stated that neither of the two governments could have any direct contact with the other's people or tribes, other than friendly communication. The Transjordanian

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<sup>719</sup> Al-Ziyādi, *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa'ūd*, p. 260.

<sup>720</sup> IOR/R/15/5/69, 27/11/1923, from Abdulaziz bin Saud to George Knox. IOR/R/15/1/594, 18/12/1923, from Arthur Trevor in Bushire to Colonial Office, London.

<sup>722</sup> IOR/R/15/1/594, 20/12/1923, from Colonial Office to Baghdad (No: 587).

<sup>723</sup> Moudi, *King Abdul-Aziz*, p. 116.

<sup>724</sup> Blood money: money obtained at the cost of a life; received by a murderer for killing someone or as a reward for betraying somebody who is to be put to death. (*Holy Quran*, sūrat Al-nas ā, 92).

delegate finally demanded that the Najd Government pay blood money for 30 people whom it killed a year and a half before when an army from Najd was sent to Transjordan.<sup>725</sup>

On 26 December 1923, the Najd delegation responded to the Transjordanian demands, saying that the Transjordanian delegate had no right to speak on behalf of Amir Nuri Shaalan, who was a citizen of Najd. Furthermore, they stated that the Transjordanian Government was trying to take part of the Najd Kingdom, Al Jawf, Sakakah and their dependencies, so the Najd delegate refused the Transjordanian demands, and stated that Transjordan's offer did not represent the basis of an agreement to settle the dispute. The Najd delegation then put forward the following points: the Transjordanian delegate should speak on behalf of their government, without interfering in the others' affairs, and the points of dispute between Najd and Transjordan should be identified.<sup>726</sup>

In the session of 27 December 1923, the Najd delegation presented further demands. They stated that the regions of Sirhan and Al Jawf were under Najd control since the first Saudi state, then came under the control of the Emirate of Ha'il, and finally came under Ibn Saud's control. They also demanded that Qurayat Almilh be evacuated as it was part of Al Jawf. They demanded that the borders of Najd be connected to the Syrian border to secure Najd trade, making this demand a basis for the agreement with Transjordan. One of the other demands was that the tribes that inhabited the Al Jawf and Sirhan Valley region, like the Shararat, Hawarim, Banu Atiyah, and part of the Howeitat, belong to Najd. And if any of the Najd tribes trespassed on Transjordanian lands, or vice versa, the aggressed-against government would apply its internal laws on the trespassing tribes. The last Najd demand was that Transjordan pay the blood money for the victims of the raids of Auda Abu Tayi, leader of the Howeitat,<sup>727</sup> and return the items looted in these raids. From the above, it can be seen that the Najd delegation

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<sup>725</sup>IOR/R/15/5/69, 27/12/1923, from George Knox (Kuwait) to Colonial Office (No: 40).

<sup>726</sup> Moudi, *King Abdul-Aziz*, p.119.

<sup>727</sup> Al-Ziyādy, *'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p. 260.

made demands that were similar to that made by the Transjordanian delegation, in order to imply that Ibn Saud's regions had been through raids just like Transjordan. It seems Ibn Saud tried to convey a message that his raids were just a response to similar raids done by some of Transjordan's tribes, as Al-Zīydīy points out.<sup>728</sup>

On 2 January 1924, the Transjordanian delegate read out a memorandum of response that Al Jawf, Sakakah and their dependencies belonged to Transjordan, inferring that this was a condition for any agreement. He then suggested the formation of a committee between the two parties to return what was looted from both sides and to pay the blood money. He also stated that the borders of Najd were the borders that were agreed upon in the Najd-Britain agreement in 1915.<sup>729</sup> As the Transjordanian delegate finished reading out the memorandum, Knox announced that Iraq and Transjordan had no right to speak on behalf of Hijaz or Al Rashid, and that one of the conditions the British government imposed in order for Najd to participate in the conference was that none of the participating governments had the right to discuss the issues of other governments.<sup>730</sup> The conference sessions were suspended without any results because of the divergent views of the parties, and the delegates returned to their countries.

Arthur Trevor, the British resident in the Gulf, informed Ibn Saud that Sharif Hussein had agreed to send his son, Zeid, to attend the conference on his behalf, and asked Ibn Saud to send one of his sons to meet Zeid. He also conveyed the British intention to resume the conference in March 1924. However, Ibn Saud refused to send one of his sons, and was content with sending his delegates to represent the Najd Government.<sup>731</sup> The second session took place on 25 March 1924, and the only Transjordanian delegates were Ali Khalqi and Ibrahim

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<sup>728</sup> *ibid*, p. 260.

<sup>729</sup> IOR/R/15/5/71, 24/03/1924, from George Knox, Kuwait to Colonial Office.

<sup>730</sup> Moudi, *King Abdul-Aziz*, p. 120.

<sup>731</sup> IOR/R/15/5/71, 30/03/1924, from George Knox, Kuwait to Colonial Office; Al-Zīydīy, '*bdual*' *ziz Al-Sá ūd*, p. 261.

Pasha,<sup>732</sup> who offered the same demands as in the session of 2 January 1924, that Al Jawf and Sirhan Valley be returned to the control of Transjordan. But the Najd delegate reiterated their rejection of these demands. At that moment, Knox intervened saying that the controversy had gone on without a result, and suggested one of the following solutions: asking the people of Sirhan Valley; dividing Sirhan Valley into a southern part attached to Najd and a northern part to Transjordan; or making the Sirhan Valley an independent area.<sup>733</sup>

On 26 March, the Najd delegation accepted the idea of asking the people of Sirhan Valley, provided that this also be applied in the disputed regions between Najd and Hijaz.<sup>734</sup> On 9 April 1924, the Transjordanian delegate declined the suggestion of a poll because Sirhan Valley was part of the Syrian lands and no people inhabited it, while Al Kharma and Truba were part of the Hijazi lands, so the suggestion was not acceptable. The delegate also objected to the second suggestion since Al Jawf and Sakakah were part of Amir Shaalan's lands, which belonged to Transjordan. Then the Transjordanian delegate suggested that Al Jawf, Sakakah and Sirhan Valley be neutral zones, and demanded that the roads between Egypt, Palestine and Transjordan be under the supervision of the Transjordanian Government. Finally, the delegate proposed that the Najd Government return the emirates of Ha'il and Al Ayid in Asir, and give up all the Hijaz lands in the region.<sup>735</sup> The Najd delegate completely rejected all the Transjordanian demands, and the conference ended on 12 April 1924 without any positive results.

The Kuwait Conference did not succeed in finding an agreement regarding the borders between Najd and Transjordan, because each party insisted on their demands in all sessions. Ibn Saud insisted on keeping Al Jawf and Sirhan Valley under his control, and the

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<sup>732</sup> IOR/R/15/5/71, 22/03/1924, from George Knox, Kuwait to Ibrahim Beck.

<sup>733</sup> IOR/R/15/5/71, 26/03/1924, from George Knox, Kuwait to Colonial Office.

<sup>734</sup> IOR/R/15/5/71, 02/04/1924, from the Transjordanian representative to the British Representative at the Kuwait Conference.

<sup>735</sup> IOR/R/15/5/71, 30/03/1924, from George Knox, Kuwait to Colonial Office.

Transjordanian delegates insisted on staying in Kaff. It is also clear that the Transjordanian delegates did not only speak on behalf of their government, but rather they demanded the rights of Hijaz and Al Rashid, which made Ibn Saud angry as he had made it a condition of his participation in the conference that no delegation would interfere in the others' affairs. It seems that the continuous raids between the tribes of Najd and Transjordan made reaching a solution that satisfied both parties complicated.

It is worth discussing here the reason why Sharif Hussein did not send his son Zeid who was supposed to attend the conference. In fact, the conference was held on the basis of the presence of a representative from Sharif Hussein's side. According to Moudi, Sharif Hussein had chosen to send Zeid to represent him in the conference, provided that Ibn Saud would send one of his sons, one of the same rank as his son Zeid.<sup>736</sup> However, Ibn Saud refused to send any representatives other than the delegation he had sent before, showing trust in the Najd delegates. From the above it can be seen that Sharif Hussein did not want to send representatives on his behalf as the conference was held without consulting him, which had a negative impact on him as he saw himself as an obedient follower of the British Government. In addition, the British Government declined Sharif Hussein's proposal to relocate Ibn Saud's borders to their pre-1919 line.<sup>737</sup> According to British documents, Ibn Saud seemed to refuse to send one of his sons because he felt that Sharif Hussein was preparing and mobilising an army near his borders. Ibn Saud sent a letter to the British political agent in Bahrain to find out if that was the case.<sup>738</sup> It seems that Sharif Hussein was worried about the relationship between Britain and Ibn Saud, believing that Britain was starting to take Ibn Saud's side, especially as it had not fulfilled its promise to make him King of Hijaz.<sup>739</sup>

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<sup>736</sup> Moudi, *King Abdul-Aziz*, p. 122.

<sup>737</sup> *ibid*, p. 122.

<sup>738</sup> FO 686/21, 03/01/1924, from Ibn Saud to Major Clive Daly the British Political president in Bahrain.

<sup>739</sup> FO 371/10003, 23/01/1924, from Gibert Clayton to Herbert Samuel.

Historians argue about the reasons behind the failure of the Kuwait Conference. According to Sa'īd, Sharif Hussein was the reason, as he insisted on his demands and he turned a deaf ear to the advice he was offered to narrow the gap between him and Ibn Saud.<sup>740</sup> Hafiz Wahbah agrees that Sharif Hussein was the main reason behind the failure, adding that Sharif Hussein and the tribes of Iraq saw Ibn Saud as nothing but a tribal sheikh, who was neither to be feared nor negotiated with.<sup>741</sup> Timothy, on the other hand, believed that Sharif Hussein was not the reason, as the conference sessions aimed to discuss the boundaries between Iraq, Najd and Transjordan.<sup>742</sup> It does seem that the Kuwait Conference was the starting point for Ibn Saud's attack on Hijaz, as he showed Britain his approval for all solutions that would improve his relations with Sharif Hussein. It is also likely that, if Sharif Hussein had sent his representative to attend the conference, discussed with Ibn Saud the issues of the Ikhwan, continuous raid, and Hajj pilgrims, and accepted the possible solutions, it would have been for his own benefit. Yet still he insisted on not sending a representative, which changed British policies towards him. This made Ibn Saud appear as the one looking to achieve peace, and reflected the stubbornness of the Hashemites.<sup>743</sup> One of the main results of the conference for Ibn Saud was the delay over the matter of the borders; had the borders been agreed it would have made it difficult for him to enter Hijaz.

There appear to be many reasons for the failure of the Kuwait Conference. These include the absence of a representative for Sharif Hussein, the alliance between the delegates of Iraq and Transjordan against Ibn Saud, and their interference with the affairs of Ibn Rashid and Hijaz, despite Ibn Saud's condition that no delegation would interfere in the others' affairs. An additional reason was the Bedouin raids, as the Iraqi tribe of Shammar raided Ibn Saud's

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<sup>740</sup> Sa'īd, *Tārīkh al-dawlah al-su'ūdīyah*, p. 143.

<sup>741</sup> Wahbah, *Hāfīz. Jazīrat al-'arab*, p. 284.

<sup>742</sup> Timothy, *Britain, the Hashemites and Arab Rule 1920-1925*, p. 335.

<sup>743</sup> L/P&S/10/1034, 30/03/1924, from George Knox to the Colonial Office.

borders and Faisal al Duwaish responded with a raid on Iraq, weakening the chances of the conference's success.<sup>744</sup>

#### **4.5. Ibn Saud's advance on Taif, 1924**

In 1924, Ibn Saud decided to move on Hijaz, taking into consideration threats to his forces by Sharif Hussein's sons in Iraq and Transjordan. He therefore stationed some of his troops on the borders with Iraq and Transjordan, with his main forces marching towards Hijaz.<sup>745</sup> Meanwhile, Ibn Saud called for a conference in Riyadh attended by senior scholars and tribal leaders. The purpose of this conference was to discuss the affairs of pilgrims and to take a decision that Sharif Hussein would no longer be able to administer the holy places after he prevented the Najd pilgrims from performing Hajj, deciding to use force against the Hashemites in Hijaz.<sup>746</sup> In the early days of September 1924, the Najd forces moved on Truba and captured it. They then proceeded to al Hawiyah near Taif, defeating the Hashemite forces, and entered Taif on 7 September 1924.<sup>747</sup> Sharif Hussein believed that the British Government would help him, and would stand by his side as it did before. On 25 September 1924, he sent a telegram to Reader Bullard, the British Consul in Jeddah, requesting that his government urgently come to the rescue and save him from Ibn Saud, especially after what that latter did in Taif. He expressed hope that his government would take a quick decision in this regard.<sup>748</sup> In a telegram to his Government in London, Bullard conveyed Hussein's demands.<sup>749</sup> On 28 September 1924, the Government responded by insisting on a policy of non-interference in internal affairs, especially on religious issues. Therefore, the British Government did not interfere in the dispute over the Muslim holy sites. It only wished that the conflict between the

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<sup>744</sup> Glubb, *War in the Desert*, p. 110.

<sup>745</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.158.

<sup>746</sup> Baker, *King Husain*, p.200.

<sup>747</sup> Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p.131.

<sup>748</sup> FO 686/21, 25/09/1924, from Sharif Hussein to British Delegate in Jeddah.

<sup>749</sup> FO 371/10014, 25/09/1924, from Reader Bullard to Foreign Affairs.

leaders of the Arabian Peninsula over these holy places would not develop, only ensuring that it would seek to guarantee the safety of foreign nationals in the country.<sup>750</sup> According to Linabury,<sup>751</sup> the British Government justified its policy of neutrality by the existence of its Treaty with Ibn Saud, preventing it from taking a hostile position. On the other hand, it had good relations with the Hashemites in Hijaz, which did not give room for support of their rivals. The British Government neither encouraged Ibn Saud to attack Hijaz,<sup>752</sup> nor did it prevent him from doing so, as in 1919.

Following the entry of Ibn Saud and his forces into Taif, members of the National Party of Hijaz (composed of the Ashraf of Mecca and Jeddah) wrote to Sharif Hussein on 23 November 1924 asking him to relinquish the rule of Hijaz to his son Ali (1881–1935). Conceding, Sharif Hussein decided to depart Hijaz for Aqaba in the southeast of Western Jordan with his family, leaving Ali as King of Hijaz.<sup>753</sup> Hussein's abdication was one of many implications of the collapse of the Hashemite rule in Hijaz. Other examples include the low morale of the army and Sharif Hussein's realisation that he had lost his allies abroad, such as Britain, as well as his allies within Hijaz, such as chiefs of the country and the army. Hijaz was subjected to a severe blockade, which prompted Sharif Hussein to support his son Ali while confronting Ibn Saud. He sent volunteers, soldiers and money to him. Ibn Saud was angry as a result, writing to that Britain remove Hussein from Aqaba or he would attack him there.<sup>754</sup>

Britain, at least according to Maisel and Shoup, had asked Hussein to leave Aqaba in 1925, since it was part of the British Mandate.<sup>755</sup> He was therefore sent to Cyprus where he remained until 1930, returning to Amman only to die on 4 June 1931, although Majali believes

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<sup>750</sup> FO 686/21, 28/09/1924, from Foreign Affairs to Reader Bullard.

<sup>751</sup> Linabury, *British-Saudi Arabia Relations*, p.243.

<sup>752</sup> Metz, Helen Chapin, *Saudi Arabia: a country study* (Washington: Library of Congress, 1993), p.24.

<sup>753</sup> FO 371/10015 (E9344/7624/91), 04/10/1924, Report from National Party of the Hijazi.

<sup>754</sup> Al-Zīdy, *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.170.

<sup>755</sup> Maisel, Sebastian, and John Shoup, *Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Arab States Today: An Encyclopedia of Life in the Arab State*, Volume 1 (London: Greenwood, 1970), p.406.

that he died in Cyprus.<sup>756</sup> McNamara believes that Ibn Saud was the one who asked the British Government to exile Sharif Hussein from Aqaba, because of his support for his son, supplying him with money and weapons.<sup>757</sup>

According to Al-Rīḥānī, Britain realised that the Hashemite presence in Hijaz could create great obstacles, especially since it had assigned two members of the Hashemite family as rulers in Iraq and Transjordan, and given that, unlike Ibn Saud, Sharif Hussein had no ability to control the Arab tribes under his rule.<sup>758</sup>

In order to preserve its interests better in the region, Britain seems to have realised the need to establish improved relations with Ibn Saud – especially after the change in the political and military atmosphere in the Arabian Peninsula and the emergence of Ibn Saud as a strong character – abandoning Sharif Hussein and drawing attention to Ibn Saud instead. Not taking sides in the conflict between Ibn Saud and Hussein, Britain gave Ibn Saud an opportunity to pursue his ambitions by controlling Hijaz and establishing the Saudi state at the expense of his Hashemite rivals.

There are several reasons why the British Government was neutral, including the desire not to interfere in the religious affairs of the two parties. Britain perceived the question of the two holy mosques as a religious matter that it could not take a stance on. As a result of Sharif Hussein's mistreatment of his citizens and residents, the Ashraf communicated with Ibn Saud, while British nationals asked for protection from the British Government.<sup>759</sup> Sharif Hussein also prevented Najd pilgrims from performing Hajj for several years, which motivated the Ikhwan – the Najdi power-base of Ibn Saud – to destroy Sharif Hussein for the sake of performing Hajj.

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<sup>756</sup> Majali, Abdul Salam, Jawad Anani, and Munther Haddadin, *Peacemaking: the inside story of the 1994 Jordanian–Israeli treaty* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2006), p.1.

<sup>757</sup> McNamara, Robert, *The Hashemites: The Dream of Arabia* (London: Haus, 2009), p.97.

<sup>758</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.343.

<sup>759</sup> Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p.136.

Among the significant reasons for abandoning Sharif Hussein was that he neither attended the Kuwait Conference nor sent a delegate to arrive at an understanding with Ibn Saud, which made the British Government certain that he did not desire a reconciliation. In addition, Sharif Hussein insisted that the British Government crown him as the king of the Arabs. This insistence angered the British Government – it knew very well that making him king of the Arabs might help restore the Islamic Caliphate once more, a goal it had fiercely fought against following the fall of the Ottoman Empire. Furthermore, having Sharif Hussein as king would stir disputes with other Arab rulers such as Ibn Saud and Sayyid al Idrisi. Britain wanted to keep the Hashemite rule in Iraq and Transjordan to maintain the balance of power between the ruling families of the Hashemites and of Al Saud.<sup>760</sup> Also, one cannot turn a blind eye to the dispute that had grown between Britain and Sharif Hussein in the years prior to removing him from power. With Sharif Hussein turning 66 years of age, Britain saw that he was too old to rule, and his presence in power was a reminder of Britain's betrayal and failure to keep its promises with him.<sup>761</sup>

Meanwhile, a French document shows that Britain stirred up Muslim princes against Ibn Saud in order to get him to accept peace with the Ashraf.<sup>762</sup> Perusal of these documents, leads to the conclusion that Britain's main goal was to achieve its political ambitions in the Gulf. It did not matter who ruled, so long as they did not expand at the expense of the British Mandate territory. Also, Britain sought to stop Ibn Saud's expansion towards Hijaz, but it did not want to support Sharif Hussein directly because of their differences.<sup>763</sup> Therefore, Britain incited the princes of Yemen, Asir and Egypt against Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud's supporters seized control of Hijaz nonetheless. If Britain had wanted to stop Ibn Saud's advance, it clearly could have done so. However, it did not want to overturn its policy of non-interference in religious

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<sup>760</sup> Al-Rīḥānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.343.

<sup>761</sup> Alangari, *Struggle for Power in Arabia*, p.98.

<sup>762</sup> 18686(S-L/1044), 18/05/1925, Report on the relationship between Ibn Saud and Britain.

<sup>763</sup> 18673(S-L/1044), 01/05/1925, Report on the relationship between Ibn Saud and Britain.

affairs among the Arabs. Also, Britain might have acted in that way to indicate to Ibn Saud that his ambitions could not go beyond Hijaz. Although Britain was an ally of Ibn Saud, it feared Ibn Saud's progress beyond the Hijaz and that the Ikhwan might move to areas under the British Mandate. The British were able to get rid of the inconvenience of Sharif Hussein by using Ibn Saud, and were then able to stop the march of Ibn Saud by provoking local princes against him. The goal of Britain in all of this was only to achieve its interests. Out of concern for its citizens' well-being, Britain informed Ibn Saud that the safety and protection of its citizens were of primary concern for the British Government.<sup>764</sup>

When Ibn Saud took control of Taif, he sent a telegram to the Persian Gulf Residency confirming obedience to the British Government and promising to protect British nationals in the region.<sup>765</sup> This communication must have given the British Government a good impression about the alliance, especially following Sharif Hussein's weak position in addition to his differences with the British Government. The British newspaper, *The Times*, reported on 16 October 1924 that the British Government was not committed to the protection or support of Sharif Hussein and his sons but rather to the maintenance of peace and security in the region. The newspaper further reported that in return for helping Britain during the First World War, the British Government had crowned Sharif Hussein (and his sons) kings in Hijaz, Transjordan and Iraq respectively, and that they had enjoyed the support they needed. However, the Anglo-Hijaz draft Treaty, which was never signed, did not hold in any way that the British Government pledged any kind of support for Sharif Hussein against Ibn Saud. Britain had a role in mediation between the two rulers. The newspaper concluded that following the latest events that resulted in the annexation of Hijaz to Ibn Saud's territory, British policies should

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<sup>764</sup> FO 371/10016 (10286), 03/10/1924, from Abdulaziz bin Saud to Political Resident in the Gulf.

<sup>765</sup> FO 371/10016 (10286), 23/09/1924, from Ibn Saud to Political Resident in the Gulf.

be reconsidered.<sup>766</sup> This change in British policies would only indicate that Ibn Saud was the new ally in the region.

The opportunity had now come to Ibn Saud's door to pursue his ambition of controlling Hijaz and establishing his own state at the expense of the Hashemites. With his forces entering Taif, the way was clear for him to control the rest of Hijaz's cities, and so he did. Ibn Saud's forces swept into Mecca under the leadership of Khalid bin Loiy and Sultan bin Bajad Al-Otaibi, with the former becoming Mecca's emir. Seeking to prevent bloodshed in the holy places, Sharif Ali bin al Hussein and his forces withdrew from Mecca to Jeddah.<sup>767</sup> He believed the British Government would intervene in the conflict, especially after his father's abdication of power. So he sent a telegram to the British Government asking them to send arms, aircraft and money to help him, but Britain replied that the conflict was religious, and that Britain's policy had been to avoid interference in religious disputes.<sup>768</sup>

Several attempts were made to settle the dispute between Ibn Saud and Sharif Ali bin Al Hussein by figures such as St. John Philby, Talib al-Naqib and Amīn Al-Rīḥānī. Ibn Saud refused all attempts to settle the dispute without Sharif Ali bin Al Hussein leaving Hijaz, claiming that Muslims – especially pilgrims – had been mistreated by the Ashraf.<sup>769</sup> Ibn Saud stayed for several months in Mecca and then marched to Medina, besieging it for about ten months until it surrendered to him on 5 December 1925.<sup>770</sup> Following Mecca's fall, Ibn Saud marched with his forces to Jeddah where Sharif Ali was based, imposing a siege on the city for a whole year. Ibn Saud stated that he maintained the siege for such a long period because he did not want to shed blood.<sup>771</sup> According to Darlow and Bray, the siege on Jeddah continued

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<sup>766</sup> FO 371/10015, 16/10/1924, Report from *Times* newspaper.

<sup>767</sup> Wynbrandt, *Brief History*, p. 182.

<sup>768</sup> *ibid*, p. 182.

<sup>769</sup> Howarth, *Desert King*, p. 137.

<sup>770</sup> Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p. 134.

<sup>771</sup> Wahbah, Ḥāfīz. *Khamsūn 'āman fī jazīrat al- 'arab* (Al-Qāhirah: Maktabat wa-Maṭba'at Muṣṭafā al-Bābī al-Ḥalabī wa-Awlādihī, 1960), p.151.

non-stop, with the Hashemites running out of financial, military, and logistical resources.<sup>772</sup> After the situation in Jeddah deteriorated, Sharif Ali bin Al Hussein found himself forced to end the fighting under the mediation of the British Consul, recognizing Ibn Saud as ruler of Hijaz on 17 December 1925. Both parties agreed that Sharif Ali should abdicate and hand Jeddah to Ibn Saud in return for the latter's commitment to the safety of Jeddah's civilian and military population. Other terms included allowing Sharif Ali to leave Hijaz with his companions and to declare amnesty for everyone.<sup>773</sup> On 24 December 1925, Ibn Saud was able to enter Jeddah after he captured all Hijaz's cities – encompassing them under his rulership.

#### **4.6. Annexation of Hijaz, 1925**

British-Hijazi relations were most tense when Hussein refused to attend the Kuwait Conference, with the British Government thus blaming him for its failure. He also drew British ire when he refused to allow pilgrims from India to perform pilgrimage and did not respond to Britain's request to allow them to do so.<sup>774</sup> Moreover, there was his repeated demand to be made King of the Arabs. On the other hand, Ibn Saud was emerging as an obedient force for Britain.

According to Teitelbaum, the British considered that Sharif Hussein had made his own problems with Ibn Saud and his arrogant behaviour made Britain abandon support for him.<sup>775</sup> Anqari argues that as the British had two allies and it was difficult to continue to support them both with money and arms. They chose Ibn Saud because they believed he was best placed to achieve their interests in the Gulf.<sup>776</sup> Overall, it seems the British Government gave up Sharif

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<sup>772</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p. 307.

<sup>773</sup> 18781(E-Lev.18-40/Arab-hedj/26), 17/12/1925, Text of agreement between Ibn Saud and Sharif Ali under the mediation of Britain.

<sup>774</sup> FO406/52[E129/11/91], 17/01/1924, from Foreign Affairs to the British Office in Jeddah.

<sup>775</sup> Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*, p.117.

<sup>776</sup> Anqarī, Hayfā, *'Sulṭah fī al-Jazīrah al-'Arabīyah, Ibn Sa'ūd, Ḥusayn, Barīḥāniyā, 1914-1926*, (London: Saqi Books, 2017), p.215.

Hussein because it had achieved what it was seeking, namely the revolution against the Ottomans. They were also continuously concerned by his demand to be made King of the Arabs and his threat to resign as ruler of Hijaz. Britain also feared an alliance between Sharif Hussein and the Ottomans against Britain.

In 1922 the British Government began to reduce support for Sharif Hussein<sup>777</sup> forcing the Sharif to impose taxes on traders coming to the Hijaz in an attempt to improve the economic situation. Britain did not deliver on its promises to Sharif Hussein. After he began to cause it problems with its ally Ibn Saud and claim the right of Arab leadership, Britain went to Ibn Saud in order to ally with him and support him to achieve its interests in the region. So Britain further derogated from its obligations to Sharif Hussein, leaving him alone in his conflict with Ibn Saud. It blocked any military or material supplies his sons Abdullah I and Faisal in Iraq and Transjordan could provide.<sup>778</sup> Due to a failure by Hussein to enter into dialogue with his enemy Ibn Saud, the British thought Hussein was the cause of most of his own woes. Consequently, Lord Curzon considered the former British ally to be a nuisance, who was not only troublesome, but also spoilt. Additionally even his sons, especially Faisal and Abdullah completely distanced themselves from him. Faisal's deviance was motivated by his success while Abdullah was affected by the disaster at Truba. Therefore, Ali, the eldest son, though remaining at his father's side, was quite convinced that his father was increasingly becoming detrimental to the Arab cause and that his unpredictable temperament was doing more harm to him by isolating him from the others.<sup>779</sup>

Hussein's troubles were worsened by the ravaging consequences of the Truba defeat as well as by the worsening financial crisis. As a result, Hussein had been completely dependent on British aid and subsidies since 1916. However, these subsidies, instead of alleviating and

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<sup>777</sup> FO 406/46, 16/04/1921, from Churchill to Lawrence.

<sup>778</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.164.

<sup>779</sup> *ibid*, p.166.

mitigating the financial strains, made matters worse for Hussein, who spent the better part of them on bribing the tribes, thus creating an illusory and deluding belief that such largesse would not come to an end. These bribes did not solve the rising discomfort but only bought a temporary reprieve and loyalty.<sup>780</sup> Moreover, the British reduced the its funding, throwing Hussein's ability to maintain influence among the tribes into disarray, particularly in Hijaz and other regions of Arabia.<sup>781</sup>

This move made Hussein look frantically for avenues to maintain his lavish lifestyle, such as taxing the traders and merchants of Mecca and Jeddah, costing him support in those areas. This is because the Ottomans had always distributed money to the people, thus creating a culture of receiving. At the height of the war, the British used to give Hussein over £120,000 a month.<sup>782</sup> By mid-1920, the British had reduced this subsidy to around £30,000 in gold a month.<sup>783</sup> In August 1920, the British requested that Hussein sign both the Treaties of Versailles and Sèvres, in which the British agreed to continue the aid on conditions laid down at San Remo the previous April. This request was turned down by Hussein. The British, however, did not relent and for the next four years, the British tried to coerce Hussein through bilateral talks and treaties. In July and August 1921, the British sent Lawrence as an envoy to try to persuade Hussein to accept friendly ties with the British as well as its terms. Lawrence, however, met a difficult and contradictory reception from Hussein, which made him remark that Hussein was a very conceited, stupid but friendly old man who protested about anything British.<sup>784</sup> The truth is that Hussein was convinced deep down that the British betrayed him by going back on their post-war agreement, as well as by exacerbating the conflict between him and Ibn Saud. Even with the many entreaties by Lawrence, Hussein remained adamant and

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<sup>780</sup> Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*, p. 131.

<sup>781</sup> Ibid.

<sup>782</sup> FO 371/4189 [10420], 16/01/1919, from Reginald Wingate to Foreign Affairs.

<sup>783</sup> FO 882/22, 29/08/1920, from Sharif Hussein to British authorised agent in Jeddah.

<sup>784</sup> FO 406/46, 16/04/1921, from Winston Churchill to Colonel Lawrence.

refused to sign any treaty until the British had recognized his superiority and kingship over Iraq and Palestine, as well as all other rulers in Arabia. Lawrence eventually gave up and returned to England. This refusal made the British impose sanctions on Hussein. Moreover, Hussein's refusal was considered myopic and a fatal move. This is because Hussein had a plethora of challenges such as military failure as well as poor governance, which made his kingdom vulnerable to attack, especially by his long-time foe, Ibn Saud, who had created a strong military and a cohesive state.<sup>785</sup>

Having met its objectives from the alliance with Sharif Hussein during the First World War, thus strengthening its foothold in Iraq and Palestine, Britain felt that Sharif Hussein had no place on the map of British influence in the Middle East, and that his presence was only temporary under its colonial post-war policy. Britain therefore began to change its traditional strategy of supporting the Hashemite rule in Hijaz, declaring that its new policy regarding the Hijaz-Najd dispute between 1924 and 1925 was neutral and impartial to any party – thus allowing Ibn Saud to eliminate the leadership of Sharif Hussein bin Ali and the Hashemite Kingdom in Hijaz.<sup>786</sup> Najd-Hijaz relations had come to a crucial point when the armed conflict erupted in late 1924. It seems that Ibn Saud's delay in defeating the forces of Hijaz was due to the military preparations necessary to the success of such a move, which he failed to make. In particular, he did not learn what Britain's reaction would be. Ibn Saud did not forget Britain's position following the Truba events in 1919, when it had supported Sharif Hussein. According to Al-Zīydy, the situation changed in 1924: the political, military, and economic factors all encouraged Ibn Saud to accelerate his takeover of Hijaz from the Hashemites.<sup>787</sup> All told, there would seem to be a number of reasons why Ibn Saud moved to conquer Hijaz.

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<sup>785</sup> Teitelbaum, *Rise and Fall*, p. 132.

<sup>786</sup> Leslie McLoughlin, *Ibn Saud: founder of a Kingdom* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993), p. 75

<sup>787</sup> Al-Zīydy, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.165.

Following the failure of the Kuwait Conference in 1923–24, Ibn Saud was able to move on the Hijaz, where he knew that Britain had abandoned Sharif Hussein, as he had not attended the conference. Ibn Saud's goal was to reach the shores of the Red Sea and expand his domain.<sup>788</sup> Sharif Hussein's declaration on 7 March 1924 – that he had become the new Muslim Caliph following the fall of the Ottoman Caliphate – had its impact on Muslims. Ibn Saud saw himself as equal in power to Sharif Hussein and his position was strengthened as many Muslims rejected Sharif Hussein's Caliphate, especially those in Egypt and India.<sup>789</sup> The taxes imposed on Muslims in these two countries and the economic pressure<sup>790</sup> they had endured encouraged their position. In light of this situation, Ibn Saud saw an opportunity to attack Hijaz. According to Hosein, Sharif Hussein believed that he was a direct descendant of the Prophet and that he was more entitled than anyone else to protect the two holy mosques, and that therefore Ibn Saud should be under his authority.<sup>791</sup> Meanwhile, Ibn Saud felt that he was even more worthy of the rule and protection of the two holy mosques, especially since his grandfathers had ruled Hijaz during the reign of Abdulaziz bin Mohammed bin Saud. Not only did Sharif Hussein lose his status and popularity among the people of Hijaz,<sup>792</sup> but the country's economic and security conditions also worsened, partly as a result of the decrease in the number of pilgrims coming to Mecca, as well as Britain's withholding of annual aid. In turn, the economic situation was reflected in the absence of the gifts which Sharif Hussein used to be able to give the Bedouin tribal leaders in return for supporting the Hijaz army in its defence of Hijaz against the Najd attacks. The absence of this support now made it easier for Ibn Saud to advance.

With Britain cutting off Ibn Saud's financial aid in March 1923, Ibn Saud felt there would be nothing to lose if he marched on Hijaz and invaded it. Ibn Saud seems to have

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<sup>788</sup> Philby, *Triumph of the Wahhabis*, p.308.

<sup>789</sup> Wagner, *Creation*, p.55.

<sup>790</sup> Āl Fā' i', *Al- 'lāqah bīn al-malik*, p.230.

<sup>791</sup> Hosein, N. Imran, *The Caliphate, the Hejaz and the Saudi-Wahhabi Nation–State*, (New York: Masjid Darul Qur'an, Long Island, 1996), p.18.

<sup>792</sup> FO406/52[E129/11/91], 17/01/1924 from Foreign Affairs to the British Office in Jeddah.

understood that cutting off aid to him as well as to Sharif Hussein<sup>793</sup> meant that Britain had abandoned both, unwilling to interfere in the affairs of the region. This move further encouraged Ibn Saud to move on Hijaz. Because Sharif Hussein did not attend or send a delegate on his behalf to the Kuwait Conference and because he no longer received aid, Ibn Saud felt that Britain was unhappy with Sharif Hussein, especially after the Lausanne Conference. In that conference, Naji al-Asil (representing of Hijaz)<sup>794</sup> said that if Turkey recognized Sharif Hussein as King of the Arabian Peninsula, the latter would use all his influence in the Arabian Peninsula to support Turkey against Britain and was ready to enter into an alliance with it, for offensive campaigns and defence.<sup>795</sup> It appears that Sharif Hussein did not take this action until he realised that the British Government had betrayed him, and had failed in fulfilling its obligations to him as promised in the Sykes–Picot Agreement of 1916. The relationship between Britain and Sharif Hussein had also grown tense when the latter refused to sign the Treaties of Sèvres and Versailles in 1920, and then later the Treaty of San Remo. Therefore, the British Government sought to find another ally in the region who would prevent Turkey from intervening again in the Arabian Peninsula. Another reason was Sharif Hussein’s occasional threats to the British Government that he would give up the rule of Hijaz to one of his sons if the British Government did not fulfil its promises to him.<sup>796</sup> These reasons would definitely serve to make Ibn Saud excited about controlling Hijaz, and aware that the relationship between the British Government and Hussein had become ineffective.

On the one hand, the victories of Ibn Saud during the period from 1921 to 1924 had strengthened his position in the eyes of the British Government: he ended Ibn Rashid’s rule in Ha’il 1921, defeated Al Ayid in Abha 1922–1923 and destroyed Al Jawf’s emirate in 1924 in

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<sup>793</sup> FO 371/8937, 18/04/1923, from Foreign Minister to the Viceroy of India.

<sup>794</sup> He was a member of the Arab Army during the Arab Revolt of 1916. He was of Iraqi origin and a friend of Sharif Hussein and his representative in signing a treaty with Britain in 1923.

<sup>795</sup> FO 371/8937, 27/03/1923, Report from the Secret Intelligence Department about Turkish–Arab Relations, Al-Semmari, *History*, p. 249.

<sup>796</sup> FO 371/6245, 02/12/1921, from Hussein to British delegate in Jeddah.

the northern areas. Ibn Saud's expansion at the expense of the Hashemites and his influence had given him the confidence to march on Sharif Hussein's Hijaz. On the other hand, Howarth and Clayton believe that economic motives and Hijaz's strategic location caused Ibn Saud to take control of the region.<sup>797</sup> It had commercial ports on the Red Sea. These two reasons are indeed plausible, especially since Ibn Saud was keen to have two commercial ports – one on the Arabian Gulf and one on the Red Sea – to improve his country's economy, which was dependent on British support. Controlling Hijaz meant that he would benefit from the pilgrimage trade in Mecca, which would add an important element to the country's economy. However, there is a further reason for Ibn Saud's eagerness to control Hijaz: he wanted to add a religious image to his rule as the custodian of the two holy mosques in the eyes of the Muslim world.

Before discussing Ibn Saud's entry to Hijaz, some clarification of the British position with respect to the Hijaz–Najd conflict, and its reasons for choosing Ibn Saud over Sharif Hussein, is needed. The relevant official documents, show that Britain had interests in the region. Britain's policy therefore changed according to its interests. A German document supports this position.<sup>798</sup> Britain never paid attention to Sharif Hussein's interests. Indeed, when he demanded that Britain fulfil its promises, it sought to find a power to oppose his, and Ibn Saud was Britain's choice. Britain also realised that Hussein's idea of the Islamic Caliphate no longer satisfied the majority of Muslims because of their distrust of Sharif Hussein as a result of his mistreatment of pilgrims, in particular. Instead, Muslims sought the Ottoman caliph himself, as pointed out by Major Arthur Moore in his lecture to the Central Asian Assembly on 10 October 1922, 'Britain and Islamic Asia'. He said that Britain was keen to have the support of a family well regarded in the Islamic world to get over the 'Islamic

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<sup>797</sup> Howarth, *Desert King*, p.141; Clayton, *Arabian Diary*, p.40.

<sup>798</sup> King Abdulaziz Foundation (German document), 1017(5744/41), 11/09/1941, Report from Office of Foreign Defence to the Department of Foreign Armies in the East.

Caliphate' problem.<sup>799</sup> The presence of holy mosques in Mecca and Medina under Sharif Hussein's rule gave him a religious character as the custodian of these two holy mosques. In times of crisis however, Muslims would look to the Ottoman Sultan in Istanbul, as they still did not recognise any true successor in the Islamic world. Therefore, the problem of the Caliphate did not concern Britain in terms of its own position in the Arabian Peninsula, which confirms the idea of Britain's double standards. That is to say, Britain chose Sharif Hussein during the Arab Revolt because he was a descendant of the Prophet and of the Hashemite family, whose religious status among the Arabs was high, and a large number of Arabs would join him. When the war between Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud broke out, the British Government refused to intervene to stop Ibn Saud's invasion of Hijaz. It justified its stance by claiming it was a religious matter with which Britain could not interfere.<sup>800</sup> Al-Zīdy said that Britain encouraged Ibn Saud indirectly when it cut off aid to him during his conflict with Sharif Hussein. Cutting off the aid meant that Ibn Saud had no other income and therefore was forced to control Hijaz. Ibn Saud did have some sources of income from taxes, tributes and the like, but that was not in any way enough for his army. In addition to Al-Zīdy's explanation, Britain must have cut off aid to Ibn Saud to prevent Wahhabism from spreading to Iraq, as he would not be able to pay the dues and gifts to them.<sup>801</sup> A British document shows that the British Government was in favour of Ibn Saud's attack on Hijaz, but it cared most about British nationals in the region.<sup>802</sup> In light of the given details, it is obvious that the British Government saw in Ibn Saud a better ally than Sharif Hussein.

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<sup>799</sup> Moore, Major Arthur, 'Britain and Islamic Asia', *Journal of the Royal Central Asian Society*, 10.1, 1923 - Issue 1 (published online: 25 Feb 2011, accessed, 21 November 2017), pp. 3–24.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/03068372308724822>

<sup>800</sup> FO 371/10014 (E 8361/7624/91), 30/09/1924, from Foreign to Naji Al-aseel (Delegate of the Hijaz in London).

<sup>801</sup> FO 686/20, 12/12/1923, from George Knox to John Shuckburgh (Assistant Undersecretary of the Colonial Ministry).

<sup>802</sup> FO 686/20, 11/09/1924, from Ministry of Foreign to Reader Bullard, British Consul in Jeddah.

The problem of Najd pilgrims was revisited in 1922. Ibn Saud sent a letter to the British High Commissioner in Baghdad telling him that he did not want the number of Najd pilgrims restricted this year.<sup>803</sup> On 28 January 1923, the British Political Agent in Jeddah asked Sharif Hussein to enter into talks with Ibn Saud to solve the problem.<sup>804</sup> However, Sharif Hussein rejected this proposal and wrote to the British Government that he would not receive the Najd pilgrims unless Ibn Saud abandoned the northern regions of Al Jawf and Khaybar,<sup>805</sup> returning to the borders of his country during his father's days. This request was not to be fulfilled; Ibn Saud would never return to his initial position no matter what, especially after he gained control of Ha'il and Asir. Still, he would appear conciliatory and tolerant to the British Government. Despite the British pressure on Sharif Hussein to change his position and to allow the Najd pilgrims to enter, it nonetheless failed to reconcile its allies in the region. Ibn Saud understood the futility of diplomatic solutions with Hussein, and decided that there was no other choice but to fight. This was clear in Ibn Saud's letter to Sir Percy Cox in 1924, where he wrote, 'I have the right to follow the policy I want and to determine my fate the way I see fit. That is what I am doing now.'<sup>806</sup>

#### **4.7. Annexation of Aqaba and Ma'an, 1925**

Ibn Saud's expansion angered the British Government, let alone the other problems on the borders with Transjordan and Iraq. British-Saudi relations became more complicated, especially when Ibn Saud refused to give Reader Bullard, the British Consul in Jeddah, special status – considering it an interference in his internal affairs. Britain therefore considered it perfect timing to discuss these problems with Ibn Saud. The prime concern of Britain was to

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<sup>803</sup> FO 371/8936, 02/12/1922, from Abdulaziz bin Saud to Sir Percy Cox.

<sup>804</sup> FO 371/8937 (E2480), 30/01/1923, from Fouad Al-khateeb (Foreign Ministry) to British delegate in Jeddah.

<sup>805</sup> FO 371/8937 (E 2480), 30/09/1924, from Ministry of Foreign to Naji Al-aseel (Hijaz Delegate in London).

<sup>806</sup> FO 371/10016 (E 10286), 01/09/1924, from Abdulaziz bin Saud to Sir Percy Cox.

ensure its control over Ma'an and Aqaba in Transjordan and to prevent Ibn Saud from threatening the emirate of Abdullah bin Hussein.

During the Arab Revolt, Sharif Hussein captured Ma'an and Aqaba from the Ottomans. He and his son Faisal therefore claimed their right to the region.<sup>807</sup> Ma'an and Aqaba was a disputed area between Najd and Transjordan. In 1922, Sharif Hussein transferred Ma'an to Abdullah I, according to Al Saud.<sup>808</sup> On 8 November 1923, Britain indicated to Knox that it wanted to incorporate Ma'an and Aqaba into Transjordan.<sup>809</sup> Clive Leatherdale said, 'At the Kuwait Conference, it was on the agenda to recognise the authority of Transjordan over Aqaba and Ma'an. If Hussein objected to this arrangement, he would be offered compensation for it from Al Kharma and Truba located on the Hijaz–Najd border, which were under the control of Ibn Saud in 1918.'<sup>810</sup>

The failure to hold the conference led to a delayed settlement of the Aqaba and Ma'an affair. In March 1924, Hussein took over the Ma'an administration, which was ruled from Mecca, without Britain objecting to this situation.<sup>811</sup> Thanks to Sharif Hussein's presence in Aqaba from October 1924 after his expulsion from Hijaz and the Saudi threat to the region, the British Government was prompted to show increasing interest in resolving the border dispute. According to Troeller, the British Government regarded Transjordan as extending to a point south of Ma'an on the Hijaz railway, and therefore Abdullah had to call his brother Ali in order to return the Ma'an region to Transjordan immediately.<sup>812</sup> On 20 October 1924, Major Daly, the Political Agent of Bahrain, informed Ibn Saud of Britain's desire to rejoin the southern border to Transjordan. Ibn Saud said that this issue had never been raised and that it was not

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<sup>807</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 222; McLoughlin, *Ibn Saud*, p.77.

<sup>808</sup> Al-Saud, Khalid, 'Britain-Saudi Relations 1922-1932' (unpublished MA dissertation, Exeter University, 1990), p. 86.

<sup>809</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 222.

<sup>810</sup> Leatherdale, Clive, *Britain and Saudi Arabia, 1925-1939* (London: Frank Cass, 1983), p. 43.

<sup>811</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p. 43.

<sup>812</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 222.

the subject of discussion during the Kuwait Conference.<sup>813</sup> In spite of Britain's refusal to allow Ibn Saud's takeover of Ma'an and Aqaba, it allowed him to take the Sirhan Valley and Al Jawf nonetheless.<sup>814</sup> It seems that Britain did not object to Ibn Saud's capture of these two areas so he in turn would not attack them. The British Government had warned Ibn Saud against attacking Ma'an.<sup>815</sup> However, Ibn Saud attacked Aqaba in October 1924 so that he could expel Sharif Hussein, who had settled in Aqaba and supplied his son Ali with weapons and money.<sup>816</sup> Ibn Saud used to claim his right to Aqaba and Ma'an, asking for their revenue as he captured Hijaz. However, the British authorities considered Aqaba a strategic base for transport between the port of Haifa in the north and the Red Sea in the south,<sup>817</sup> as well as to control Palestine and Transjordan. By extension, Ibn Saud's capture of Aqaba meant his capture of the Negev south of Palestine, and the closure of the only Jordanian port in the future. According to Al-Zīdy, the Foreign Ministry sent its political agent in Jeddah, Bullard, a telegram confirming its intention to protect the 'lands' of Transjordan on 20 October 1924. In the telegram, the British Government expressed willingness to provide military and financial support to Abdullah I against any attack on Aqaba and Ma'an, considering any attack against these areas an attack on Britain that would require it to act in self-defence. Here, it is obvious that the British Government meant to prevent any possible advance to Aqaba and Ma'an by Ibn Saud's forces. In this sense, it perceived any threat to the region as a threat to the British Government itself – vouching to bear all aid and supplies to Abdullah I to defend these two areas. The British Government was well aware of Ibn Saud's strength, and that the Ikhwan would threaten British interests in the Middle East. That is why the British Government once again returned to support Sharif Abdullah I, in its own interests, by stopping Ibn Saud's encroachment on these areas. In

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<sup>813</sup> *ibid.* p.223; Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p. 87.

<sup>814</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 223.

<sup>815</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p. 44.

<sup>816</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.88.

<sup>817</sup> Al-Zīdy, *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.239.

response, Ibn Saud eased the pressure on this region so as not to lose his alliance with Britain. Instead, he focused on expanding his emirate's borders in the region of Asir.

The Ikhwan attacked Aqaba on another occasion in May 1925. On 27 May, Bullard, the British Political Agent in Jeddah, sent word to Ibn Saud that this region fell within the borders of Transjordan and that any attack on it would be an infringement of Britain's authority. He then asked that Ibn Saud send a representative to solve the problems regarding the border between Najd, Transjordan and Iraq.<sup>818</sup> On 13 July 1925, Bullard sent a letter to Ibn Saud outlining an end to the dispute over the Aqaba and Ma'an region. He noted that the British Government had received a proposal from Sharif Ali to resolve the dispute over the two regions, to which it was sympathetic, and asked Ibn Saud to accept it.<sup>819</sup> To settle the dispute, the proposal stated that each of the two parties would appoint a political representative to maintain peace. The proposal was never made because it would be embarrassing to receive British representatives in Mecca or Medina, which were two of the most sacred places for Muslims, and to which non-Muslims were denied entry.<sup>820</sup>

Britain did not care much about Ibn Saud's complaints and demands in these two areas. It rather welcomed Transjordan's declaration that Aqaba and Ma'an were now formally annexed to the emirate on 18 July 1925, recognising them as an integral part of its territory.<sup>821</sup> Britain seems to have realised back then that keeping the two areas under Transjordan's rule would be better for it. This is what the Secretary of the Colonial Ministry confirmed in his letter to the High Commissioner in Palestine. Ibn Saud could not attack these areas anymore, as they had now become part of a territory under British Mandate.<sup>822</sup> Bullard pointed out that Ibn Saud's claim to Ma'an and Aqaba would be settled in the forthcoming conference and that the

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<sup>818</sup> L/P&S/10/1144/16811, 27/05/1925, from Foreign Office to Reader Bullard (Jeddah).

<sup>819</sup> L/P&S/10/1144/2810, 13/07/1925, from Reader Bullard (Jeddah) to Ibn Saud.

<sup>820</sup> Al-Zīdy, ' *Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p.240.

<sup>821</sup> Troeller, *the Birth of Saudi*, p. 227.

<sup>822</sup> Wilson, Mary, *King Abdullah, Britain and the Making of Jordan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 100.

British Government was waiting for Ibn Saud to find a place of his own choosing to hold the conference and a delegate to represent him.<sup>823</sup> Only after the Jeddah Treaty was signed in May 1927, between Britain and Ibn Saud, did the latter recognise Aqaba and Ma'an as part of Transjordan.

#### **4.8. The Agreements of Bahra and Hadda, 1925**

Following the annexation of Aqaba and Ma'an to Transjordan, Britain favoured a return to the policy of neutrality between the Saudis and the Hashemites. When Ibn Saud was about to win, Britain debated the poorly defined border between the Aqaba and Ma'an region and the British Mandate countries. The real reason behind that was, on the one hand, Britain's fear that Ibn Saud might advance further to the north following his annexation of Hijaz. On the other hand, Ibn Saud wanted to seize the opportunity and force Britain to settle the Aqaba and Ma'an affair with Faisal and Abdullah I regarding the border with Iraq and Transjordan.<sup>824</sup> According to Leatherdale, Ibn Saud was the one to initiate negotiations and the British Government had appointed Gilbert Clayton as its representative regarding this issue.<sup>825</sup> Clayton arrived in Jeddah on 9 October 1925,<sup>826</sup> and he was charged to settle the boundaries between Najd and Transjordan, including other problems between Iraq and Najd that were unresolved at the Kuwait Conference.<sup>827</sup> Discussions began on 11 October, when the British Government offered to give the Kaff in eastern Transjordan to Najd in return for the areas to the south. Meanwhile, Ibn Saud's view was to break the ground connection linking Iraq to Transjordan as they would control the northern border, depriving him of direct contact with Syria.<sup>828</sup> Clayton therefore

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<sup>823</sup> L/P&S/10/1144/3223, 12/08/1925, from Reader Bullard (Jeddah) to Ibn Saud.

<sup>824</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p. 92.

<sup>825</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p. 50.

<sup>826</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574, 10/10/1925, from Acting Consul, Jeddah to High Commissioner, Baghdad.

<sup>827</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574, 04/09/1925, from Foreign Office to Stanley Jordan in Jeddah.

<sup>828</sup> Troeller, *Birth of Saudi Arabia*, p. 227.

acknowledged Ibn Saud's right to the Kaff.<sup>829</sup> Najd and Transjordan arrived at an agreement, which was adopted by the British Government as a mandate power. The agreement is known as the Hadda Agreement<sup>830</sup> and was signed on 2 November 1925.<sup>831</sup>

The most important results of the conference between Najd and Transjordan were as follows. First, the region from Wadi Sirhan to the Kaff was defined as belonging to Najd, with Amir Nuri Shaalan, of the Bedouin Ruala tribe subject to the rule of Ibn Saud.<sup>832</sup> This area became a dividing line between Ibn Saud's territory and Transjordan. Second, the two sides agreed to stop tribal raids between the two emirates, especially by Najd, provided that they form a committee from the two parties to consider the claims by the tribes in the area as a result of looting and raids. Here, it appears that the British Government was worried about the Ikhwan's advance into the territories under the British Mandate. Another important result of the conference between Najd and Transjordan was that Ibn Saud was able to send merchant caravans through Transjordan to Syria and vice versa under Britain's protection.<sup>833</sup> This move helped facilitate his trade in the Levant, allowing his economy to prosper – not only in Najd, but also in the Arabian Peninsula as a whole – through commercial exchange between the two regions.

Having concluded the aforementioned agreement, the British Government seems to have been able to turn the border of Transjordan into a dividing line, thus preventing Ibn Saud from pursuing his ambitions in Syrian territory. It would seem that the conference also gave Ibn Saud an opportunity to consolidate his rule by conquering other areas in Hijaz. Ibn Saud was able, in 1926, to conquer Asir and its surrounding areas. During the conference the British

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<sup>829</sup> *ibid.*, p. 228.

<sup>830</sup> One of the villages located between Mecca and Jeddah; it was a military fortress (*Al-Zīdyī, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p. 245).

<sup>831</sup> L/P&S/10/1144/1881, 02/11/1925, Agreement with Sultan of Najd regarding certain questions relating to Najd–Transjordan, Hadda Agreement.

<sup>832</sup> *Al-Zīdyī, 'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p. 246.

<sup>833</sup> L/P&S/20/G3/12, 02/11/1925, Correspondence relating to the Hadda Agreement.

Government did not address Ibn Saud's control over Hijaz, leaving the destiny of the Peninsula in his hands. Thanks to Clayton's political experience, an agreement between the two parties was successfully reached in a short time despite a divergence of views, which – according to Al-Zīdy<sup>834</sup> – strengthened his standing before the British Government. He was later selected as his government's representative to negotiate with Ibn Saud during the Jeddah agreement of May 1927. In light of this analysis, it is clear that this agreement shares similarities with the 1923 Uqair Agreement. Britain gave itself the right to act as a custodian of Transjordan and hence negotiated a serious and sensitive issue that affected the security and existence of the country without it referring to its ruler. In addition, Britain placed its own interests above all while signing the agreement between the parties under its mandate.

Clayton succeeded in signing the Bahra Agreement between Ibn Saud and the British Government on behalf of the Iraqi Government to define the border between the two regions, organising tribal matters and raids between Najd and Iraq in November 1925. According to Al-Zīdy, one of the most important motives for signing the Bahra Agreement was that the Ikhwan used to raid Iraqi tribes in Iraq under the leadership of Faisal al Duwaish.<sup>835</sup> The British forces therefore bombarded them and caused them great losses. The Ikhwan did not stop their campaign, but rather carried out other consecutive campaigns. To maintain the security and stability of Iraq, the British Government called for a conference to resolve the problems between Najd and Iraq. However, there were several other factors which led the British Government to call for this conference between the two countries. Among these factors was Britain's concern about the Hashemites and the Saudis arriving at a stalemate, not to mention Ibn Saud's rising power in the region, which could threaten British interests in the region from

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<sup>834</sup> Al-Zīdy, *'Abd al - 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p. 247.

<sup>835</sup> *ibid*, p. 267.

the Persian Gulf to the Red Sea. In this sense, a settlement to the dispute between Iraq and Najd had to be made.

The British Government sent a delegation to Ibn Saud, headed by Gilbert Clayton. The delegation included figures such as George Antonius and Tawfiq al-Suwaidi<sup>836</sup> representing the Government of Iraq. The mission arrived at Bahra, thus starting a series of meetings on 10 October 1925, with Ibn Saud, Yusuf Bin Yassin<sup>837</sup> and Hafez Wahba<sup>838</sup> representing the Najd side. One of the most important terms of the Bahra Agreement was the extradition of the tribal perpetrators from the Najdi Shammar tribe, who had taken refuge in Iraq. The tribe used to launch incursions into Najd territory and return to Iraq, where Ibn Saud could not chase them. Ibn Saud wrote in January 1925 that these disputes could only be resolved through the ratification of special agreements to prevent raids and the extradition of tribal offenders as proposed by representatives at the Kuwait Conference.<sup>839</sup>

The Iraqi Government's view was that such raids should not justify the extradition of the perpetrators. The British Government supported this position, while Ibn Saud insisted on his position as one of his basic demands. Clayton informed Ibn Saud that he could either give up this demand in particular or else negotiations would come to a dead end. Clayton also said that Iraq was taking serious steps to transfer the Shammar tribe from the area bordering Najd to northern Iraq.<sup>840</sup> Clayton was eventually able to convince Ibn Saud to extradite ordinary criminals, but not political ones.<sup>841</sup> Britain and Iraq seem to have opposed the extradition of politicians as they were the leaders of the tribe, and their fall as top of the pyramid would lead to the fall of the tribe itself. Tribes such as Shammar and Anza were in the front line against

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<sup>836</sup> Iraqi politician, studied law and worked as an adviser to the Iraqi government 1921–1927 (*Al-Ziyādiy*, ' *Abd al- 'Aziz al-Saa ūd*, p. 268).

<sup>837</sup> He worked in the Royal Court and then the Foreign Ministry, and held many political posts.

<sup>838</sup> *Al-Riḥānī*, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.419.

<sup>839</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p. 95.

<sup>840</sup> *ibid*, p. 95.

<sup>841</sup> L/P&S/10/1144/119/26, 01/11/1925, from Ibn Saud to Gilbert Clayton, Bahra Agreement.

the Ikhwan, an adequate reason for Britain and Iraq not to give up on the leaders of the Shammar tribe. Without them, Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan would feel emboldened to attack Iraq another time.

Thanks to the Hadda and Bahra agreements, Britain and Ibn Saud were able to arrive at an understanding, and they determined the northern border of Najd as well. It seems that Ibn Saud emerged victorious from these two agreements, as he was able to establish his border with Transjordan and Iraq. The three countries also stressed that tribal raids would come to a halt, and criminals would be punished. In addition, Ibn Saud's control over the Sirhan Valley was a strategic advantage.

#### **4.9. Summary**

During the period 1922–1925, Britain experienced difficulty reconciling the two rivals, Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein. Both had ambitions they would not give up on. Ibn Saud feared that Britain would recognise Sharif Hussein as king of the Arabs. That is why he sought to set the borders with Transjordan and Iraq, calling for conferences such as the Muhammara, the Uqair, and the Kuwait conferences. Meanwhile, Ibn Saud was keen on attracting British support, and he was able to make the most of his religious and military powers combined. He was also able to satisfy the Ikhwan's enthusiasm and preoccupation with pilgrimage, while expanding territorially to other regions. Furthermore, he won Britain's loyalty for his own interests by gaining financial and political support, taking advantage of the dispute between Britain and Sharif Hussein. Indeed, Ibn Saud had grown as a strong political personality in the region, avoiding dispute with Britain as he could not match its military might.

This period witnessed a major development in British–Saudi relations, as the British policy became supportive of Ibn Saud instead of Sharif Hussein, who had proved no longer useful to Britain. British-Saudi relations had been friendly most of the time, regardless of the

tension that had mounted before and during the Kuwait Conference. In March 1922, as tensions between Najd and Iraq rose, Ibn Saud responded to Britain's desire to hold a conference to settle the differences between the two neighbouring countries. The British Government appreciated Ibn Saud's response. In August 1922, tension in British-Saudi relations surfaced when the Ikhwan marched a mile inside Amman. Tension increased as a result of border problems between Ibn Saud and his Hashemite opponents, raising British concerns. Accordingly, Britain tried to organise a conference to resolve serious problems between Najd on the one hand and Transjordan, Iraq and Hijaz on the other. Moreover, Ibn Saud's proposal in November 1923 to postpone the Kuwait Conference angered Britain. While the policy of British neutrality in the face of the Saudi expansion towards Hijaz helped Ibn Saud to annex it, the British Foreign Office and the Ministry of Colonies agreed that Sharif Hussein had become an obstacle to British interests in the Arab world. This situation reinforced Ibn Saud's position and encouraged him to keep going. Certainly, Ibn Saud benefited from the poor relationship between Britain and Sharif Hussein, which caused Britain to follow a policy of neutrality, and to later lean on Ibn Saud to compensate for Sharif Hussein's disappointing position. It is also clear that Britain agreed to Ibn Saud's goal so that it could remove Hussein. Furthermore, the annexation of Aqaba and Ma'an to Transjordan did not end British-Saudi relations, while the Hadda and Bahra agreements served them both and strengthened their relationship. This period ended with Ibn Saud being called Sultan of Najd and King of Hijaz, with the Arabian Peninsula witnessing one of the most important historical events. This development had an impact on British-Saudi relations, as will be shown in the next chapter.

## Chapter Five: Saudi British Relations, 1926–1932

### 5.1. Introduction

This chapter shows how Ibn Saud was able to consolidate his rule between 1926 and 1932 through the wars he fought against the neighbouring forces in Ha'il, Hijaz and Asir. His overall policy tended to be cautious regarding external action. Therefore, his foreign communications focused mainly on the British Government so as not to be distracted by external problems, the better to manage internal affairs. His main interest was in the British Government because of its position as a world power at the time, in addition to its strategic position in the Middle East and its interests in the Arabian Peninsula. As a result, there was no independent diplomatic apparatus for Ibn Saud in the Najdi Government, as Ibn Saud was managing his own foreign affairs, communicating to a lesser extent with other foreign governments, receiving their replies, meeting official figures, and negotiating with them, with a view to developing good relationships. However, he appointed responsible men with experience to handle his correspondence and foreign communications, such as Ahmed Ibn Thunayan, Abdullah Damluji, Hamza Ghouth and Hafez Wahba. However, the Najdi diplomacy had borne fruit in the form of treaties and agreements, as well as the demarcation of borders with most of the neighbouring states and forces. After Ibn Saud's capture of Hijaz in 1925, he organised his country's foreign relations with other countries by establishing a special department to regulate foreign relations. Founded at the beginning of 1926, the department was called the Directorate of Foreign Affairs.<sup>842</sup> It was necessary to establish this diplomatic body after the expansion of the Najdi state, whose territory extended from the Arabian Gulf in the east to the Red Sea in the west. Relations and the level of communications between the countries had increased greatly and it became incumbent on Ibn Saud to entrust the management of foreign affairs to

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<sup>842</sup> Al-Zīdy, 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Sa'ūd, p.170.

an independent diplomatic body, thus assigning Abdullah Damluji as Head of the Directorate.<sup>843</sup>

This chapter demonstrates that Britain supported Ibn Saud because he represented the largest force in the Arabian Peninsula after the annexation of Hijaz, which made him a focus of world attention. The step also had an impact because Hijaz enjoyed diplomatic relations with other countries. Thus a new formula for Saudi-British relations was created. This showed Ibn Saud's ingenuity and intelligence in making use of suitable conditions to achieve his goals and expand his territory, and paved the way for a new agreement, the Treaty of Jeddah, in 1927. In turn, the British Government had no choice but to consider Ibn Saud as the ruler of Hijaz and Najd.

This chapter also discusses the problems Ibn Saud encountered during the period of his unification of the country. The most important of these problems was the Ikhwan Movement in 1927, when the Ikhwan caused numerous problems on the Iraqi-Najdi borders and carried out a number of raids inside Iraq. The British considered these attacks a violation of the Iraqi state's sovereignty and carried out air strikes inside Najd, targeting their hideouts. However, the Ikhwan continued their attacks on Iraq, which was under British administration. Ibn Saud was infuriated by the Ikhwan's actions and explained that he was not responsible for these attacks since the Ikhwan carried them out without his knowledge. In addition, the Ikhwan made political demands of the government of Ibn Saud. To limit these demands and to prevent the Ikhwan from destroying his relationship with Britain, Ibn Saud considered eliminating the Ikhwan.

In addition, this chapter explains how relations developed between Ibn Saud and Britain after the Treaty of Jeddah. In 1929, diplomatic representation began with the establishment of the Hijaz-Najd embassy in London. Meanwhile, in 1930, King Faisal bin Abdulaziz became

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<sup>843</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.188.

the Minister of Foreign Affairs and Deputy King of Hijaz.<sup>844</sup> Thus, the new state established its status in a number of other countries, such as the Soviet Union, the Netherlands and Turkey through appointing commissioners.<sup>845</sup> So, it became clear that British-Saudi relations occupied a prominent role after the takeover of the Hijaz. In 1932, Britain, the Soviet Union and other countries recognised the new state, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The Soviet Union was particularly interested in building a trade relationships with Ibn Saud in order to foster its commercial interests in the Gulf.

## **5.2. The British position on the Saudi border disputes**

In 1926, the name ‘Sultanate of Najd and its dependencies’ changed to ‘Kingdom of Hijaz and Najd’. The diplomatic exchange and political channels between Ibn Saud and Britain were divided into three channels in the Arabian Peninsula after 1926. The first was the India Office, represented by the Political Resident in Bushier (Iran), then the political agents (Muscat, Kuwait and Bahrain). The second was the Colonial Office represented by the two political agents (Baghdad and Jerusalem), and the third was the Foreign Ministry represented by the High Commissioner in Cairo and the Political Bureau in Jeddah. There were therefore various channels of communication available for Ibn Saud and Britain to discuss the many solutions for the problems they faced,<sup>846</sup> through the political bureau in Jeddah. In September 1926, Faisal bin Abdulaziz visited Britain, aiming to develop the diplomatic relationship between the two sides. This visit was a success, as it led to developing the relationship between Ibn Saud and Britain as well as stressing the British position in support of Ibn Saud. The visit was a golden chance for Ibn Saud to convince the British Government to sign a new Treaty with him. Therefore, the Treaty of Jeddah was signed and supplanted the Treaty of Darin. On the other

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<sup>844</sup> Clive Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.67.

<sup>845</sup> *Ibid*, p.87.

<sup>846</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106, 12/03/1926, Conference held at the Colonial Office to discuss matters arising out of Gilbert Clayton’s report on his mission to Ibn Saud.

hand, Ibn Saud tried to respond to Ali bin Mohammed al-Idrissi's request to help him against the Imam of Yemen at that time. The al-Idrissi family ruled the Asir, which was facing harassment by the Imam of Yemen, Yahya Muhammad Hamid al-Din, who, taking advantage of Ali al-Idrissi's political and administrative inexperience, attacked and seized many of the coastal areas. The ruler of Asir, Emir al-Idrissi, who realised that he could not defeat the Yemenis alone,<sup>847</sup> chose to seek assistance from Ibn Saud, whom he considered to be the greatest force in the Arabian Peninsula, especially after the capture of Ha'il in 1921, then Hijaz in 1925.

According to Al-Khatrash, Hassan al-Idrisi, who usurped power from his nephew, Ali, considered that Britain had failed him during his struggle with Imam Yahya.<sup>848</sup> The British Government maintained its previous position and had no interest in engaging with internal conflicts. This resulted in an agreement between al-Idrissi and Ibn Saud: the Mecca Agreement signed on 21 October 1926, by which Ibn Saud protected the country of Asir from the Imam of Yemen.<sup>849</sup> It appears that one of the most important results of the Mecca Agreement was that the Kingdom of Hijaz and Najd extended over a very large part of the Arabian Peninsula. It reached the borders of Transjordan and Iraq in the north, and Yemen, the Aden Protectorate and the south coast in the south-west. It also reached Oman and its coast in the south-east, and the coast overlooking the Red Sea in the west. It extended to the borders of Kuwait in the east, and finally to Bahrain and Qatar in the south.<sup>850</sup> The Treaty represented a rift between Ibn Saud and Imam Yahya in Yemen, and tensions remained between the two sides. In addition, the Treaty showed that the Kingdom of Hijaz and Najd was capable of protecting the Asir region as soon as it came under its protection. The signing of the treaty on January 29<sup>th</sup> amounted to

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<sup>847</sup> Al-ʿAqīlī, Muḥammad ibn Aḥmad, *Tārīkh al-mikhḷāf al-sulaymānī*. Vol. 2. Al-ṭabʿah al-thānīyah mazīdah bi-fuṣūl jadīdah wa-tanqīḥāt wa-wathāʾiq (Al-Riyāḍ: Dār al-Yamāmah, 1982), p.25.

<sup>848</sup> Futūḥ ʿAbd al-Muḥsin Khatrash, *al-ʿAlaqaṭ al-Saūdiyyah al-Yamaniyah* (Kwūūt: Dār Dhāt al-Salāsīl, 1974), p.88.

<sup>849</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.160.

<sup>850</sup> Stephen Longrigg, *The Middle East: a social geography* (London: Duckworth, 1963), p.154.

Asir's annexation of Adrissia, because the treaty prevented Hassan al-Idrissi from entering into negotiations with other states. It also precluded him from granting economic privileges, declaring war or making conciliations or waivering any land he owned without Ibn Saud's approval. Furthermore, Ibn Saud pledged to protect the Emirate of Adrissia from both internal and external aggression, on condition that Asir was affiliated with Ibn Saud. Hassan al-Idrissi was appointed commissioner by Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud, meanwhile, became known as King of Hijaz and Najd and its dependencies. Britain's position on the Mecca Agreement was that it considered Asir a vital location, as it contained two military bases of strategic value to Britain overlooking the Red Sea: in Qumran Bay and the Farasan Islands.<sup>851</sup>

Italy's role was also significant. The nineteenth century had seen Italian interest in the Middle East, especially the regions along the Red Sea and Yemen, as Italy occupied Eritrea.<sup>852</sup> Italy aimed to use Yemen as a way to the Arabian Peninsula for economic and strategic reasons, in opposition to British interests. Yahya Muhammad Hamid ed-Din, Imam of Yemen, had taken the Italian side to achieve his goal of a Greater Yemen, extending from Asir to Dhofar in Oman.<sup>853</sup> Meanwhile, Ibn Saud was also trying to achieve his goal of taking over Asir, which would align with British interests of preventing Italian expansion and control over the Middle East. So, Imam Yahya Muhammad Hamid ed-Din and Italy were on one side, facing Ibn Saud, Britain and al-Idrisi, who refused to surrender to the rule of Imam Yahya.<sup>854</sup>

Ibn Saud was well aware of British interests in the political future of Asir and the nature of its regime, as they sought to prevent Italy from taking control of the Red Sea coast and the Emirate of Asir.<sup>855</sup> In June 1926, Ibn Saud sent a message to the British Consul in Jeddah, informing him that the leaders of Asir, especially al-Idrisi, had asked him to take over the

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<sup>851</sup> These 84 islands lie off the Red Sea coast. The largest island, Farasan, belongs to the region of Jazan (Fiore, Massimiliano, *Anglo-Italian Relations in the Middle East, 1922-1940* (London: Ashgate, 2010), p.23).

<sup>852</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.168.

<sup>853</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.179.

<sup>854</sup> *ibid*, p.179.

<sup>855</sup> Kishk, *Al-su 'ūdīyūn*, p. 403.

government. He added that, for security reasons, related to his country's southern borders and to maintain the balance between Asir and Yemen, he had ordered his troop commander to occupy the area that al-Idrissi asked for – the northern region of Asir – in order to restore peace and security in the region.<sup>856</sup> The British Government studied the case regarding the Mecca Agreement 1926, the Treaty of Darin between Britain and Ibn Saud in 1915, and the British Treaty with al-Idrisi in 1917. It then decided to consider the Treaty of Darin as having achieved its purposes, as it guaranteed British protection for Ibn Saud. Prior to the signing of the 1926 Mecca agreement with Ibn Saud, Al-Idrissi had asked the British Government to fulfil the promises made in its 1917 Treaty and pledge to protect him from the Imam of Yemen. During the signing of the Mecca Agreement in October 1926, Britain and Italy held a meeting in Rome to discuss their mutual interests in the Red Sea, where Italy demanded control of the Emirate of Asir as a country in the areas of its influence near the coast.<sup>857</sup> When the Italian Government learned of the Treaty signed between al-Idrisi and Ibn Saud, the Italian Foreign Minister rushed to inform the head of the British delegation. He indicated that this news was a disaster to his country. According to one British document, the arrival of the news about the Treaty, during the talks, increased the concerns of the Italian delegation about their interests in the region.<sup>858</sup> Moreover, Britain, according to Kishk,<sup>859</sup> and to contemporary British documents,<sup>860</sup> did not recognise the Mecca Treaty formally, since, as was explained to the Italian delegation, it was not its policy to become involved with internal Arab affairs and this was a border Treaty between two Arab countries.

The 1917 agreement, which guaranteed Britain's protection of al-Idrisi against any aggression,<sup>861</sup> obliged Britain to protect al-Idrisi from Yemen and Britain remained committed

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<sup>856</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign policy of King Abdulaziz', p.234.

<sup>857</sup> IOR/ L/P&S /12/2064, 21/09/1930, from Foreign Affairs.

<sup>858</sup> IOR// L/P&S /12/2064, 21/09/1930, from Foreign Affairs.

<sup>859</sup> Kishk, *Al-su 'ūdīyūn*, p.404.

<sup>860</sup> IOR// L/P&S /12/2064, 21/09/1930, from Foreign Affairs.

<sup>861</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.160.

to protecting al-Idrisi. It also appears that the Mecca Agreement did not affect Britain's actual situation in Asir. A British report also discussed Britain's willingness to take into consideration the sovereignty of Ibn Saud over Asir due to the friendship between them. According to R.J. Gavin,<sup>862</sup> the Italian interest in Imam Yahya's affairs increased, as Italy provided him with the necessary weapons and supplies and pledged to protect him from any external aggression.<sup>863</sup> Moreover, Italy was able to form an alliance with Imam Yahya. It also seems that Imam Yahya took refuge with the Italians because of Britain's support for al-Idrisi, while Italy was keen to achieve its interests in the Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. Given what happened, the efforts and communications made by Italy in Yemen mark a new stage, confirming the presence of Italy as a strong competitor to Britain, which forced Britain to reconsider its relationship with Imam Yahya. After that, Britain was keen to get Imam Yahya on its side, by establishing an agreement with him and preventing him from making an alliance with any other power that would be considered a threat to its interests. Therefore, Britain sent Gilbert Clayton to Sana'a in 1926 to negotiate with Imam Yahya in order to settle the border disputes regarding its area of influence in the south.

However, this mission did not achieve its goals because Imam Yahya was determined to impose his sovereignty on the leaders and tribes in the Aden Protectorate, in addition to his refusal to evacuate parts of the Protectorate that he occupied. He also rejected some of the pledges regarding the borders.<sup>864</sup> Britain did not accept that, and Imam Yahya allied himself with Italy against Britain. Imam Yahya clearly wanted an ally that recognized the independence of Yemen under his rule and stood with him against his enemies. Italy seemed to be the desired state, as it recognised Imam Yahya and welcomed an opportunity to compete with Britain

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<sup>862</sup> Gavin, R.J., *Aden under British rule 1839-1997* (London: Hurst, 1975), p.258.

<sup>863</sup> Linabury, *British-Saudi Arabia Relations*, p.291.

<sup>864</sup> Fiore, *Anglo-Italian Relations*, p.24.

politically and commercially in the region. There is no doubt that this Italian-Yemeni alliance infuriated Britain, which wanted to be the only dominant power in the Arabian Peninsula.

Furthermore, the Italian-Yemeni alliance provoked Ibn Saud, as it threatened him and his rule, and because Ibn Saud and Britain were taking the side of al-Idrisi against Imam Yahya. According to Zaidi, Ibn Saud asked Clayton whether Britain was aware of Italy's support for Imam Yahya in the implementation of a hostile policy against Ibn Saud in the Hijaz.<sup>865</sup> Ibn Saud needed to clarify that he was facing an Italian-Yemeni joint front which was a threat to his presence along the western coast overlooking the Red Sea. In seeking to defend his own territory, he was also protecting Britain's strategic interests. However, it seems clear that Britain always sought to achieve its interests in the region, wanted to be the leading power in the Middle East, and was not satisfied with the Italian presence in the region of Yemen, but it could not express this because of the risk of weakening the relationship between the two countries. Therefore, Britain was content to support Ibn Saud, during this period, and encourage him to annex the Asir region, stand up to Imam Yahya and settle his borders with him.

These events demonstrate that British support for Ibn Saud furthered its interests in the Arabian Peninsula. By stopping Imam Yahya's power, Italy's influence was weakened, since both Britain and Italy had previously agreed not to intervene in internal Arab affairs.<sup>866</sup> If its interests were achieved, Britain would show Italy that it did not interfere in internal Arab affairs, such as the conflict between Ibn Saud and Imam Yahya, and between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein. But if things went in the opposite direction, Britain would impose its control according to its policy and interests in the region. It seems that Britain, after Ibn Saud's achievements in the Arabian Peninsula, did not want to get involved with him in a dispute over his influence in Asir. The reason could perhaps be that the increasing influence of the Imam of

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<sup>865</sup> Al-Zīyāḍī, 'bdual' ziz Al-Sá ūd, p.287.

<sup>866</sup> Armstrong, *Lord of Arabia*, p.203.

Yemen over Asir and the south-western regions of the Arabian Peninsula could have disastrous consequences for Britain, especially if there was a dispute with Ibn Saud on the southern border, which could disturb peace and security on the Arabian Peninsula. In fact, this could lead to Italian competition for British interests in the region. In addition, it was in line with the traditional British policy of non-interference in internal Arab affairs, to support Ibn Saud's take-over of the Emirate of Asir, thus increasing its influence due to its distinct relationship with Ibn Saud.

In 1927, Britain realised that Ibn Saud was the dominant force in most parts of the Arabian Peninsula, making him an important strategic ally. Supporting him and ensuring his loyalty furthered British interests. This is evident in Clayton's letter to Chamberlain, in which Clayton indicated that Turkey, the Soviet Union, Italy and France had tried to get Ibn Saud on their side and sign agreements with him, but Ibn Saud still owed allegiance to the British Government.<sup>867</sup> This undoubtedly made Britain keen to protect Ibn Saud and benefit from the regions of the Arabian Peninsula economically, especially after oil concessions were granted to the British company, Eastern and General Syndicate. The border dispute between Ibn Saud and Transjordan was not resolved by the 1925 al-Hada Agreement. In addition, the Treaty between Ibn Saud and Clayton in 1927 was a temporary solution because of the increasing conflict between the two countries, which followed tribal raids on both sides of the border, threatening the lives of the tribes in an unprecedented manner. The border problems were supposed to be settled once an agreement regarding their demarcation was reached. However, these events proved that the treaties had failed to solve the problem and fulfil the interests of the signatories, which left the problem of the borders still unresolved. This forced Britain to move at all levels to correct the situation. Thus, it established a court to settle the challenges

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<sup>867</sup> FO 371/12245, 09/06/1927, from Gilbert Clayton to Austen Chamberlain.

originating from the tribal attacks, and to evaluate the resulting losses.<sup>868</sup> The court's first meeting was held on 4 February 1927. The Transjordan delegation believed that the terms of reference of the committee should begin from the signing of the al-Hada Agreement. However, the Najd delegation believed that the starting point should be from Al Jawf's annexation in 1921.<sup>869</sup> The President of the Court's opinion was identical to that of the Transjordan delegation, but he left the matter to be negotiated between the two sides, and the court was postponed until the delegation of Transjordan agreed that the starting point should be the annexation of Al Jawf, as the Najd delegation demanded. It is noteworthy to say that Ibn Saud reached Qurayyat after the annexation of Al Jawf, but the al-Hada Agreement retreated the border between Ibn Saud and Transjordan to the extent reached at the annexation of Al Jawf.<sup>870</sup> According to one British document, the court faced challenges from the beginning.<sup>871</sup> For instance, the delegates who attended did not have the authority to discuss the demands and express their opinion about them, especially the delegation of Najd, whose only role was to present the demands of its Government, to which it had to refer on every issue. Thus, the court was postponed more than once. Meanwhile, another document considered that among the challenges that led to the failure of the court was that the views of other were disrespected and other party's demands rejected.<sup>872</sup> The Najd Government responded to Transjordan that its demands remained unsatisfactory and had no basis. In addition, it considered its insistence on the exact same demands a lack of seriousness from the delegation of Transjordan, and as a result, in its view there was no point in continuing court meetings. It seems that the Najdi side

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<sup>868</sup> Al-Ziyādy, 'bdual' ziz Al-Sá'ūd, p.287.

<sup>869</sup> After the fall of Ha'il, Nuri al-Shaalan (the sheikh of al-Rawla) managed to gain control of Al Jawf and install Amer Al-Mashourb as his deputy. However, the people of Al-Jawf, led by Raja Bin Muwaysher, rebelled against him. Nuri al-Shaalan prepared a force to recapture Al-Jawf. At that time, in 1921, Ibn Saud was in Ha'il to be included under Nuri's rule. Raja Bin Muwaysher asked Ibn Saud for his help. In 1921, Ibn Saud sent a force led by Assaf al-Hussein to help Ibn Muwaysher to annex the Jouf under Ibn Saud's rule, and return Nuri Shaalan to Damascus. (Facey, William, *Riyadh, The Old City: From its Origins until the 1950s* (London: Immel, 1992), p.244.)

<sup>870</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106, 13/05/1927, from the District Nablus to the Chief Secretary for Palestine.

<sup>871</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106, 13/05/1927, from the District Nablus to the Chief Secretary for Palestine.

<sup>872</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106, 10/05/1927, from Ibn Saud and Sabri Asali to William Webb.

was not convinced about the demands of Transjordan, such as punishing members of Banu Atiyah, who attacked the tribes of Najd, and punishing the accused tribal sheikhs. Banu Atiyah, who had previously been with Transjordan, went over to Ibn Saud when a court was formed following the Hud'a agreement on the settling of the border. Najd was in favour of continued looting and Ibn Saud requested looting in return. Transjordan, meanwhile requested the punishment of Banu Atiyah. This led the Najdi delegation to reject the request because it was not convinced that the accusations were real.<sup>873</sup> Therefore, the court's proceedings stopped due to lack of trust and put the biggest burden of blame on the Najdi delegation, which attended the court lacking the necessary delegation of powers. The failure of the court came after its inability to reconcile the two parties, and it was postponed to give Ibn Saud sufficient time to assess the claims of Transjordan.<sup>874</sup>

According to Taiyb, the Saudi side said that the reasons behind the failure of the court lay in the way it worked.<sup>875</sup> For instance, it did not specify the means by which the court would be held, leaving the matter to the agreement of the two governments involved in each problem, without specifying a timeframe for each issue. Kishk believes the most important reason for the failure of the court was the failure to bring witnesses, identify and restore stolen items, and arrest and interrogate the accused.<sup>876</sup> It can be seen that the lack of seriousness in proving the facts and dealing with the accused led to the failure of the court, which encouraged the Bedouins to carry out further attacks. The British Government, in order to achieve its interests, had to demarcate the borders, and established the Transjordan Border Force. Therefore, it assigned guards and observers to protect the borders from the attacks<sup>877</sup> in order to protect the

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<sup>873</sup> Al-Rihānī, *Tā'rikh Najd*, p.276.

<sup>874</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106, 13/05/1927, William Webb President of Haddis Tribunal to the Chief Secretary for Palestine.

<sup>875</sup> Taiyb Shbīyah, *Al-'arab wa al-siyāsīyah al-bryṭānīyah fi alhrb al-'ālalīyah al-ūlā* (Beirut: Dār Al-thqāfh, 1970), p.29.

<sup>876</sup> Kishk, *Al-su'ūdīyūn*, p.328.

<sup>877</sup> IOR/R/15/1/563, 20/05/1927, from George Stewart Symes to Leo Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies.

mandated area, especially from the Wahhabi attacks. Moreover, this force was not under Transjordan's control, but it was under the supervision of the High Commissioner in Palestine. This was to protect the area by mandate and aimed to use Palestine as a line of defence, in which Palestinian Jews participated.<sup>878</sup> Nonetheless, this did not stop the Ikhwan attacks as they infiltrated the border on camels, benefiting from their experience in the desert. These attacks raised concerns in the region and spread more chaos, which forced Ibn Saud to try to stop them from making such raids on other borders. He was concerned about his relationship with the British Government, and various other issues to be discussed in the concluding chapter. Ibn Saud then decided to stop the rebellion of the Ikhwan from spreading chaos along the border.

### **5.3. The Treaty of Jeddah 1927**

In November 1925, Ibn Saud asked the British Government to sign a new treaty with him as he had grown more powerful than he was when the Treaty of Darin was signed in 1915, and new developments required consideration. In addition, Ibn Saud no longer felt the obligation to accept further restrictions on his state's independence.<sup>879</sup> His authority had broadened because he had defeated his powerful enemy, the Ottoman state. Furthermore, his land widened after the annexation of Hijaz, to include the two sacred cities, Mecca and Medina, and he understood the importance of establishing diplomatic ties with other countries.<sup>880</sup> The representatives of the British Government realized that signing the agreement was necessary to their interests in the Gulf region. The Treaty of Jeddah is considered one of the most important treaties Britain signed in the Arabian Peninsula region, because it set the basis of understanding and mutual friendship and built up the political relationships on new definitions,

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<sup>878</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106, 13/05/1927, Webb President of Haddis Tribunal to the Chief Secretary for Palestine.

<sup>879</sup> Silverfarb, Daniel, 'The Treaty of Jeddah of May 1927', *Middle Eastern Studies*, 18.3 (Jul., 1982), pp.276-285.

<sup>880</sup> *Ibid*, p.276.

including the British recognition of the new state founded by Ibn Saud on the Arabian Peninsula. It also recognised Ibn Saud's independence and legal rights in establishing diplomatic relationships with other countries.<sup>881</sup> Both primary and secondary sources indicate that there were important events driving the signing of the Treaty. Changes in the region after 1925, including the takeover of Hijaz by Ibn Saud, the diminishing of the Hashemite presence there, the takeover of Asir, and finally the ambition of Ibn Saud to extend his power in the north, meant that it was imperative for Britain to sign the Treaty and cement its friendship with Ibn Saud, to further its own interests. Furthermore, Britain realised that Ibn Saud's new-found position made the Treaty of Darin obsolete.<sup>882</sup> On the other hand, Britain was concerned about protecting the Trucial Sheikdoms and its strategic base in Aden from Ibn Saud's threats. Indeed, Colonel Lionel Haworth, the British resident in the Arab Gulf (1927–1928), sent a message to the India Office, raising concerns that British air bases on the eastern coast of the Arabian Peninsula would be disturbed if Ibn Saud interfered in the affairs of the Trucial Sheikdoms.<sup>883</sup> Britain also realised that Ibn Saud's lands and territories lay near the oil fields it supervised in Persia and Iraq: another reason for maintaining its friendship with him.<sup>884</sup>

According to Hagar, Britain sought definitive solutions to the points of difficulty with Ibn Saud, especially relating to foreign privileges in Hijaz, which had not yet been formally cancelled, and solving the issue of the Arab slave trade in his country.<sup>885</sup> Britain also seemed to be afraid of the developments in Hijaz after Ibn Saud took control of the Muslim sacred places, which could stir up Muslim feeling against British nationals in India. Therefore, Britain wanted to secure the flow of pilgrims into the sacred places and ensure the safety of the pilgrimage route. It was also concerned with keeping safe the interests of its Muslim subjects,

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<sup>881</sup> Philby, *Saudi Arabia*, p.112.

<sup>882</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia* p.125.

<sup>883</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574(D80) 61/16, 21/05/1927, from Lionel Haworth, Political Resident in Bushire to Colonial Office.

<sup>884</sup> Linabury, '*British-Saudi Arabia Relations*', p.292.

<sup>885</sup> Hagar, '*Britain, her Middle East Mandates*', p.154.

who composed a significant proportion of the British Empire.<sup>886</sup> Al-Nowaiser believes that Britain rushed to sign the treaty with Ibn Saud because it was afraid that not meeting Ibn Saud's desire to revoke the Darin Treaty of 1915 would push him into signing treaties with Italy and the Soviet Union, which was the first to recognise Ibn Saud as governor of Najd and Hijaz. The Soviets also wished to foster alliances with countries which were under British influence, in order to separate them from Britain. It appears that this is possible, since Ibn Saud had expanded his influence and taken over a large area of the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, every state sought to achieve its interests and protect its privileges in the Arab Gulf region.

As for Ibn Saud, he wanted to negotiate with Britain to replace the Treaty with one that would better serve his ambition of independence in managing his foreign affairs.<sup>887</sup> In particular, he wanted to gain international recognition for his new state and full control over its foreign affairs. Ibn Saud's desire to build new relations with Britain is evidenced by his talks with Clayton in Bahrah in 1925, as is the British Government's concurrence with his wishes.<sup>888</sup> A British document highlights that the representatives of the Colonial Office, Foreign Office and India Office compiled the following set of issues to be included in the Treaty with Ibn Saud at a meeting in London.<sup>889</sup> Firstly, Britain wanted to make sure that Ibn Saud would not interfere in the affairs of the Trucial Sheikdoms. Secondly, Britain aimed for a guarantee from Ibn Saud to protect and secure the routes of those Muslim pilgrims who were British subjects. Furthermore, Ibn Saud and Britain would cooperate to abolish the Arab slave trade, and give the slaves the right to free themselves in his territory. Finally, Ibn Saud should recognise the foreign privileges that Britain had acquired from the Ottoman Empire (since Ibn Saud inherited the lands that were previously part of that empire).

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<sup>886</sup> Al-Nowaiser, 'Saudi-British Relations', p.111.

<sup>887</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.125.

<sup>888</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106, 06/04/1926, from Gilbert Clayton to the Foreign Office.

<sup>889</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574(D80)61/16, 26/03/1926, Enclosures in Colonial Office, Covering Letter No. CF5129/26.

The last point was a matter of discussion between senior British officials; the Viceroy of India warned the Government of interfering in the Holy Lands and believed the Treaty should be signed with Ibn Saud without any conditions related to the Hijaz.<sup>890</sup> He sent his proposal through the India Office to the decision-making centre in London, and he believed the Treaty should be a personal one between Ibn Saud and Britain. This he believed would ease the resentment of Indian Muslims to the development of relations with Ibn Saud. Stanley Jordan (Acting British Consul) and George Antonius, based in Palestine,<sup>891</sup> were chosen and a discussion took place between Ibn Saud and Jordan on a number of proposals, most notably the issue of foreign privileges in the Hijaz. However, Ibn Saud strongly rejected Jordan's claims about the privileges, and emphasised that the inclusion of this issue in the proposed Treaty would be to the detriment of the relations between the two countries. This led to a clear change in the stance of the Foreign Office regarding the privileges and it gradually began to turn back to the position previously adopted by the India Office, and supported by Jordan, and that did not face objection by the Colonial Office. Accordingly, the decision was made in November 1926 not to raise the issue of privileges with Ibn Saud.<sup>892</sup>

It seems that the British plans collided with Ibn Saud's insistence on preventing Britain from interfering in the affairs of the holy places and to dismiss the foreign privileges. Therefore, Jordan did not see any other option but to suspend the negotiations, especially after Ibn Saud rejected the idea of privileging British citizens over those in the Hijaz, while no privileges would be granted to the Hijazi and Najdi citizens in Britain. Ibn Saud rejected this matter and emphasised the equality of all Muslims whether they were in the Hijaz, Najd or any other land

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<sup>890</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.104.

<sup>891</sup> George Habib Antonius was born in Deir al-Qamar, Lebanon. In 1927, he became the Secretariat of the Palestine Government. In 1931, he became an unofficial authority for native affairs to British diplomats in Palestine. (Boyle, Susan Silsby, *Betrayal of Palestine: The Story of George Antonius* (Colorado: Westview, 2001), p.102.)

<sup>892</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574(D80)61/16, [E 6118/180/91] 03/11/1926, from Colonial Office to Foreign Office.

within his country's borders.<sup>893</sup> Jordan submitted a report on his mission to his government, which, in turn, discussed the issue and decided, on 13 December, to drop the privileges from the treaty completely.<sup>894</sup> When the efforts of Jordan to reach an agreement with Ibn Saud failed, the latter refused to continue the negotiations with Jordan until the end of 1926. Common ground could not be achieved, as Jordan insisted on interfering with Islamic affairs and getting privileges in the Hijaz, which Ibn Saud declined.

In February 1927, the talk between Britain and Ibn Saud resumed, with the claim that Britain was keen on reaching an agreement and building strong relations with Ibn Saud, and it conceded some of its demands to ensure the success of the talks. According to a British document,<sup>895</sup> these concessions were due to British fears about any Soviet presence on the Arabian Peninsula. After long negotiations between Ibn Saud and Gilbert Clayton, an agreement was reached. Clayton mentioned that the British Government did not ask Ibn Saud to stop the Arab slave trade, but asked for cooperation to put limits on it. Clayton, on his behalf, declined some points proposed by Ibn Saud, such as a British guarantee to collect endowments for the two holy mosques from the Islamic countries. Clayton, however, confirmed that the British Government would support Ibn Saud's arms deals to further strengthen and boost his army.<sup>896</sup>

The negotiations took place in Jeddah on 9 May 1927, when Ibn Saud received Clayton and his companions.<sup>897</sup> Clayton represented Britain, while Faisal bin Abdulaziz represented his father, Ibn Saud. The negotiators entered frank discussions on the second day, especially concerning foreign privileges in the Hijaz. Ibn Saud put forward many issues during the negotiations, such as the British recognition of his elite position on the eastern coast of the

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<sup>893</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574(D80)61/16, [E 477/119/91], 26/01/1927, from Stanley Jordan and George Antonius to Austen Chamberlain.

<sup>894</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574(D80)61/16, 13/12/1926, Report from Consul Jordan.

<sup>895</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574(D80)61/16, 04/02/1927, Draft minutes of Interdepartmental Conference held at the Colonial Office to discuss the objections raised by Ibn Saud to Stanley Jordan.

<sup>896</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106 [E 2582/116/91], 06/06/1927, from Gilbert Clayton to Austen Chamberlain.

<sup>897</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.113.

Arabian Peninsula, as it was in Hijaz and Najd. He also demanded that the Treaty include a British pledge to collect the endowments for the two holy mosques from Muslims in Egypt, Palestine, Iraq and India. In addition, Ibn Saud demanded that Britain pledge not to hinder or prevent the supply of weapons and military equipment to his army. He also called upon Britain to recognise his ownership of the Hijaz Railway as the sole heir to the Ottoman Empire, and his control over the regions where the railway passed, up to the borders of Palestine and Transjordan. Ibn Saud considered the Hijaz Railway to be Muslim property, so it was clearly the responsibility of the Hijaz.<sup>898</sup> According to Linabury, Britain sought a clear recognition of its special status in Palestine from Ibn Saud during his negotiations with Jordan in November 1926.<sup>899</sup> Jordan tried to offer a Treaty whereby Ibn Saud would recognise the British status in Palestine and the other regions that were under the British mandate in Iraq and Transjordan. This was important to the British Government because it recognised that Ibn Saud was the strongest force on the peninsula and that failure to gain its recognition would impede its expansion and disrupt their interests in the Gulf. Rihani believes that Ibn Saud did not offer any recognition regarding Palestine or the British mandate of Transjordan and Iraq.<sup>900</sup>

According to one British document, Ibn Saud refused a treaty that recognised the occupation of Palestine, but did not oppose the British mandate of Transjordan and Iraq.<sup>901</sup> Clayton and Jordan mentioned not discussing the issue of Palestine with Ibn Saud due to the sensitive nature of the topic.<sup>902</sup> It is likely that Ibn Saud could not afford to lose his position in the eyes of the Islamic world on this issue, especially after becoming the Custodian of the two holy mosques. It can be concluded from the above that Britain was keen to surmount its differences with Ibn Saud, while he was keen to grab official recognition from the British

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<sup>898</sup> *ibid*, 114

<sup>899</sup> Linabury, *British-Saudi Arabia Relations*, p.310.

<sup>900</sup> Al-Rihānī, *Tārīkh Najd*, p.312.

<sup>901</sup> IOR/R/15/5/106[E 2582/116/91], 06/06/1927, from Gilbert Clayton to Austen Chamberlain.

<sup>902</sup> Hagar, *Britain, Her Middle East Mandates*, p.174.

Government of his achievements in previous years, and of his current power and control over most regions of the Arabian Peninsula.<sup>903</sup>

On 20 May 1927, Ibn Saud and Britain agreed to sign the Treaty of Jeddah between Gilbert Clayton and Faisal bin Abdulaziz.<sup>904</sup> The most notable items of the treaty included the explicit British recognition of Ibn Saud's complete independence as the King of Hijaz and Najd and its dependencies. The two sides pledged to maintain their relations of peace and friendship, and Ibn Saud pledged to facilitate pilgrims from the British Empire on their route to Mecca and Medina, as with other pilgrims. Britain also recognised the Hijazi-Najdi citizenship of all the people of Najd, Hijaz and their dependencies while they were in Britain or one of its protectorates. In addition, Ibn Saud pledged to maintain peaceful relations with Kuwait, Bahrain, the Trucial Sheikhdoms, Muscat and Oman, which were signatories to treaties with the British Government. The Treaty also stated that these countries would cooperate to eliminate the Arab slave trade in Hijaz.<sup>905</sup> According to Al-Semmari, Ibn Saud asked Clayton to supply any weapons and military requirements the government of Hijaz and Najd needed.<sup>906</sup> Ibn Saud also managed to negotiate with Clayton to lift the restrictions imposed by the convention on the arms trade (1919–1925), which banned the supply of weapons to certain regions, including the Arabian Peninsula. Al-Kahtani argues that the treaty limited Ibn Saud's expansion to the Trucial Sheikhdoms, stopped him from marching towards the British protectorates, and paved the way for discussing the demarcation of borders between Hijaz and Transjordan.<sup>907</sup> This would seem to be correct, as Ibn Saud's main goal was to replace the

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<sup>903</sup> Low, Michael Christopher, 'Empire of the Hajj: Plagues and Pan-Islam under British Surveillance, 1865-1926' (unpublished thesis, Georgia State University, 2007), p.167.

<sup>904</sup> Linabury, '*British-Saudi Arabia Relations*', p.310.

<sup>905</sup> IOR/R/15/1/574(D80)61/16, [E 2583/119/91] 06/06/1927, from Gilbert Clayton to Austen Chamberlain.

<sup>906</sup> Al-Semmari, Fahd Abdullah, 'Saudi Arabian – German Political and Economic Relations 1926-1939' (unpublished Ph.D thesis, University of California, 1989), p.35.

<sup>907</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Policy of King Abdul-Aziz', p.133.

Treaty of Darin with the Treaty of Jeddah, to gain British recognition of his complete control as well as British assistance.

The Treaty of Jeddah came into effect when it was approved by George V on 17 September 1927, and both sides were obliged to abide by it for a renewable period of seven years.<sup>908</sup> Thus began a new phase of relations, based on mutual understanding and peace, and gave the Kingdom of Hijaz and Najd new political weight. It also gave benefits to both sides. The naming of Ibn Saud as King of the independent Hijaz and Najd, and its dependencies, represented a considerable achievement, considering that surrounding Arab countries were still under British control. Furthermore, the revocation of the 1915 Treaty of Darin removed issues of protection and dependency, and eased heavy restrictions on Ibn Saud. The Treaty of Jeddah, in contrast to the Treaty of Darin, also showed the status of Ibn Saud, who could stand up to the British Government and negotiate until he managed to gain British concessions, including the supply of weapons, one of the most important benefits of the treaty.<sup>909</sup> He was no longer so greatly in need of British support and protection that he had to accept a disadvantageous treaty. After the Treaty of Jeddah, Ibn Saud had full freedom to engage in diplomatic relations with other countries. The Treaty of Jeddah revoked all the foreign privileges that the Europeans enjoyed in the Hijaz, especially in the areas of judiciary and criminal and civil laws, which were prejudicial to the sovereignty and independence of the state. So, the Treaty of Jeddah established a new basis of judicial equality among all races and minorities in the Hijaz.

The Treaty of Jeddah made the British Foreign Office a communication channel between Britain and Ibn Saud in addition to the India Office, and the activity of the Colonial Office was gradually limited in the Arabian Peninsula, until all its responsibilities were assigned to the Foreign Office.<sup>910</sup> It served Britain by ensuring peace along the eastern coast<sup>911</sup>

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<sup>908</sup> Hagar, 'Britain, Her Middle East Mandates', p.175.

<sup>909</sup> Silverfarb, 'Treaty of Jeddah', p.277.

<sup>910</sup> Silverfarb, 'Treaty of Jeddah', p.279.

<sup>911</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.114.

and in the holy places, as mentioned above. It meant the British Government was the first to take Ibn Saud onto its side, before he could sign any protection agreements with Britain's rivals in the Persian Gulf, such as the Soviet Union or Italy. The Soviets had fewer diplomatic contacts in the Gulf than Britain, but sought good relations with Ibn Saud. Evidence for this was given by Ibn Saud when he revealed to Clayton that the Soviet Consul in Jeddah had offered Faisal bin Abdulaziz a visit to Moscow in return for recognising Ibn Saud as ruler of Hijaz and Najd.<sup>912</sup> Italy had also tried to lure Ibn Saud to its side in an attempt to expand its regional influence. However, it was only Britain which was capable of giving Ibn Saud support by virtue of its power within the region. It is worth mentioning that the Treaty of Jeddah raised certain difficulties for Ibn Saud, and served British interests, as it widened the gap between him and the Ikhwan groups who were against his policies. They considered the Treaty of Jeddah to be invalid, islamically speaking, as the English were not Muslims and Muslims were not allowed to cooperate with them.<sup>913</sup> Britain exploited this dispute between the Ikhwan and Ibn Saud, especially when the Ikhwan marched to the borders of Iraq and Transjordan, which were British protectorates. The British Government demanded Ibn Saud stop their attacks and eliminate them. This is elaborated on this in the next section.

#### **5.4. Britain's policy towards the Ikhwan Movement**

Chapter Three discussed the establishment of the Ikhwan Movement, its name and its power. It was the main power that Ibn Saud relied on in his wars and conquests in the Arabian Peninsula. The British political representatives realised that power and warned the British Government of its danger.<sup>914</sup> As previously mentioned, Britain was worried when the Ikhwan crossed the borders of Iraq, Transjordan, and Kuwait. This period was characterised by both

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<sup>912</sup> FO 371/12245, 09/06/1927, from Gilbert Clayton to Austen Chamberlain.

<sup>913</sup> Wahbah, *Arabian Days*, p.166.

<sup>914</sup> Habib, *The Ikhwan movement*, p.9.

political pressure and military intervention against the Ikhwan. After the annexation of Hijaz, the Ikhwan started to feel like a powerful, unchallengeable force. Thus, a dispute began between them and Ibn Saud,<sup>915</sup> the main points of which were discussed when the two sides met in Artawiyah in early 1926. As discussed in Chapter Three, there was much antagonism between Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan. One of the reasons for this was that the Ikhwan objected to Ibn Saud's sons travelling to London or Egypt, which they considered to be contrary to religious teachings.

In addition, the Ikhwan were opposed to the use of modern inventions in Najd, like cars and telephones, the imposition of taxes by Ibn Saud on the Hijaz and Najd, and allowing the Bedouins of Iraq and Jordan to graze livestock in Muslim lands. They also demanded that trade with Kuwait be ended because it had abominable morals, and they called for forcing the Shia Muslims in Has'a and Qatif to follow the Sunni denomination.<sup>916</sup> In other words, they were religious zealots. Based on the claims of the Ikhwan, Ibn Saud decided to hold the conference of Riyadh with the leaders of the Ikhwan in January 1927. According to Al-Azm',<sup>917</sup> Ibn Saud accepted some of the Ikhwan's demands, such as banning the Egyptian caravan from entering Mecca, banning the telephone and telegraph, and cancelling taxes. Clearly, Ibn Saud approved these demands to ensure national political stability<sup>918</sup> and gain the loyalty of the Ikhwan as they were a considerable power. He also aimed to avoid any of their raids on the British protectorates. However, the Ikhwan raided the Iraqi tribes along the borders, which irritated the British Government. It seems that the political dispute, which provoked the irritation of the British Government and Ibn Saud against the Ikhwan, was because of the Ikhwan attacks on the tribes on the Iraqi borders threatening the residents of the region. It is worth mentioning the reasons behind the tensions along the borders between Iraq and the Kingdom of Hijaz.

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<sup>915</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.159.

<sup>916</sup> Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p.143.

<sup>917</sup> Al-Azm', 'The role of the Ikhwan under 'bdual- 'aziz', p.194.

<sup>918</sup> Lauziere, 'On the Origins of Arab Monarchy', p.36.

According to Abedin, the British Government had established 23 precincts along the Iraqi-Syrian borders to the Iraqi-Kuwaiti borders to maintain security and order along the borders of Iraq.<sup>919</sup> Ibn Saud strongly opposed this move as it violated the Treaty signed between the two sides in 1925, and demanded that Britain not allow Iraq to erect any buildings along his borders. Nonetheless, the Iraqi Government continued its endeavours, ignoring Ibn Saud's demands, and built a precinct in Busaiyah, inside the Iraqi borders, following instructions given by the British Government. Ibn Saud considered the precinct as a fort in the desert that would be used as a centre for raiding his country in the future. In November 1927, Faisal Duweish and his cousin Naif bin Mazyad Duweish raided al-Nasiyah precinct and killed six Police Officers. This incident infuriated the British Government and British aircraft were launched over Busaiyah towards the Najdi-Iraqi neutral zone to follow the Ikhwan groups, which fled over the Najd borders.<sup>920</sup> A British document indicates that Ibn Saud was responsible for following and eliminating the Ikhwan, and compensating their families, to put an end to any similar future attacks.<sup>921</sup>

The Ikhwan attack cast a shadow on relations between Ibn Saud and Britain, so Ibn Saud offered his help to the British Government to eliminate the Ikhwan and limit their attacks on the Iraqi borders. This came as a response from Ibn Saud to the British representative in Bahrain disclaiming any responsibility for the Ikhwan's raids on Iraq, and considering the incidents a challenge to his sovereignty. He emphasised his willingness to keep the British Government updated with their movements and gatherings.<sup>922</sup> Ibn Saud also mentioned that

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<sup>919</sup> Abedin, 'Abdul Aziz Al-Saud', p. 189.

<sup>920</sup> Rossiter, Ash, 'Britain and the Development of Professional Security forces in the Gulf Arab States, 1921-71: Local Forces and Informal Empire' (unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Exeter, 2014), p.55.

<sup>921</sup> IOR/R/15/2/89[1/18], 17/011/1927, from Cyril Barrett, Political Agent, Bahrain to 'Abd al-'Azīz, King of Hijaz and Najd.

<sup>922</sup> IOR/R/15/1/578[D 46 61/14], 08/12/1927, from 'Abd al-'Azīz, King of Hijaz and Najd to Cyril Barrett, Political Agent, Bahrain.

the Government of Iraq was one reason for the attacks as it had violated the agreement they signed in Uqair by erecting a building on the border. He demanded that the British Government be fair to him, as it was to the Iraqi Government. From the above, it can be seen that Ibn Saud knew about the Ikhwan's attack on the Iraqi borders. This was clear in the strongly-worded letter from the British representative that asked Ibn Saud to provide compensation for those killed and injured, and to put an end to the raids, considering him the responsible party. As Wahba indicates, it seems that Ibn Saud did so to stop the building of the border precinct.<sup>923</sup> He had turned a blind eye to the activities of the Ikhwan because the Iraqi Government had neglected his warnings for more than ten months. On the other hand, Helms believes Ibn Saud encouraged the Ikhwan raids along the borders to spread Wahhabism and expand his rule.<sup>924</sup> Leatherdale and Habib believe Ibn Saud did not know about the Ikhwan attacks against Iraq and could not control them because of their rebellious and combatant nature.<sup>925</sup> Overall, it appears that Ibn Saud did not know about the Ikhwan attacks on the Iraqi borders because he would not have risked destabilising his relations with Britain – which was aware of his ambitions in the Arabian Peninsula. This makes sense because British interests and those of Ibn Saud coincided. Ibn Saud required the elimination of the Ikhwan, once he had maximised his interests from them, because they turned against Ibn Saud's policies and threatened to cause trouble with neighbouring countries. It was also in Britain's interests to eliminate the Ikhwan and to expand Ibn Saud's territories on the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the Saudi-Hashemite hostility would prevent him from taking part in the attacks. It seems that Ibn Saud was increasingly concerned as the Ikhwan attacks continued against British protectorates because he could not rely on continued British protection if the situation in Iraq continued to deteriorate. His recently improved relations with Britain could be threatened if the Ikhwan raids changed

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<sup>923</sup> Wahbah, *Arabian Days*, p.137.

<sup>924</sup> Helms, *Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, p.251.

<sup>925</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.162; Habib, *Ikhwan movement*, p.226.

British policy towards him, which would jeopardise his ambitions to rule over the Arabian Peninsula without British support.

In order to maintain good relations with Britain, Ibn Saud pledged to the British authorities in Baghdad that he would prevent the Ikhwan from crossing the borders of Najd and Iraq. This was clear in the letter sent by the High Commissioner in Iraq to the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs on 12 January 1927.<sup>926</sup> The High Commissioner expressed pleasure and hope that this pledge would improve relations between Iraq and the Kingdom of Hijaz. Accordingly, the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs called for the British air force to be sent to face any aggression by the Ikhwan on the Iraqi borders.<sup>927</sup> Based on what is mentioned above, it is even more unlikely that Ibn Saud played a role in inciting the Ikhwan to raid the borders of Iraq and Transjordan in 1927 for a number of reasons.

First, it had only been a few months since the Treaty of Jeddah was signed between Ibn Saud and Britain, on 20 May 1927, where Ibn Saud pledged to maintain peace with Transjordan, Iraq and the Trucial Sheikdoms. Second, Ibn Saud was aware that Iraq and Transjordan were under British mandate, which meant they were under Britain's full protection in terms of their sovereignty and territorial integrity. Therefore, he would not take part in any attack against them. Finally, it was not of any interest to Ibn Saud to spark any clashes beyond the Arabian Peninsula, as he needed both British military and financial support, and internal stability and peace to maintain his country. The Ikhwan attack on the Iraqi tribe of Bani Hujaim, which killed more than 59 men, had irritated the British Government, which, as indicated by a letter from the High Commissioner in Iraq to King Faisal, was prepared to take the necessary measures, including the aforementioned work on the precinct of Busaiyah in violation of the

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<sup>926</sup> IOR/R/15/2/89[1/18], 12/12/1927, from High Commissioner in Baghdad to Secretary of State for Colonies, London.

<sup>927</sup> IOR/R/15/2/89[1/18], 14/12/ 1927, from Secretary of State for Colonies, London to High Commmissioner in Baghdad.

protocol of Uqair.<sup>928</sup> Following the death of a member of the Royal Air Force, shot down by Ikhwan forces,<sup>929</sup> the British Government realised the necessity of signing an agreement to put an end to the Iraqi-Najdi border issues, which the Treaty of Jeddah fulfilled. Arguably, Ibn Saud was in an embarrassing situation as he could not announce his inability to fight against the Ikhwan or publicly ask for British help, because the tribes that had helped him gain his powerful position would perceive it as a failure. Nonetheless, occasional Ikhwan raids continued against the British mandate regions, and they also attacked Kuwaiti lands. This forced Ibn al-Sabah to ask the British air force for help to stop the Ikhwan.<sup>930</sup>

Ibn Saud was not able to control the Ikhwan's rebellion. The British Government realised that and decided to use the military force. However, Ibn Saud did not want to get into a militarised inter-state dispute with the Ikhwan due to their previous role in his conquests. He also knew he could not start a war against Iraq and Britain as the Ikhwan wanted. According to Commins and Al Saud, Faisal, King of Iraq, was helping the rebels against Ibn Saud, aiming to topple him.<sup>931</sup> Some British documentary evidence also suggests that, in 1929, King Faisal of Iraq supported the Ikhwan in its struggle against Ibn Saud.<sup>932</sup> Helms agrees that King Faisal played a role in supporting the Ikhwan financially and morally to eliminate Ibn Saud's rule in Najd.<sup>933</sup> It would seem that that King Faisal found it useful to spark border unrest to weaken Ibn Saud and keep the British Government busy. This might be attributed to the historical rivalry between the two families, especially after Ibn Saud took control of Hijaz.<sup>934</sup>

The big question here is why the Ikhwan did not declare a rebellion against Ibn Saud. At first, the Ikhwan believed that Ibn Saud would support them to expand their influence,

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<sup>928</sup> Al-Azm', 'The role of the Ikhwan under 'bdu'al-'aziz', p.196.

<sup>929</sup> IOR/R/15/5/31 [file 10/4], 14/03/1929, from Gilbert Clayton.

<sup>930</sup> Al-Zīdy, 'bdu'al' ziz Al-Sā'ūd, p.294.

<sup>931</sup> Commins, *Wahhabi Mission*, p.87; Al-Saud, *Britain-Saudi Relations*, p.155.

<sup>932</sup> IOR/R/15/5/34, [file 4/10], 21/10/1929, from Hubert Young to Sidney Webb, Lord Passfield.

<sup>933</sup> Helms, *Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, p.239.

<sup>934</sup> IOR/R/15/1/580, [File: IV (D48 61/14)], 06/02/1928, from Abdul Aziz bin Abdur Rahman as-Saud to His Britannic majesty's Political Agent, Bahrain.

collect Zakat and spread Wahhabism.<sup>935</sup> They also knew that Ibn Saud had popularity in Najd and Hijaz, and he was supported by most residents, so a rebellion might have meant their elimination. Later on, when the Ikhwan realized that Ibn Saud was at peace with Britain and did not support them, they rebelled and fought against him. From the above, many reasons can be elicited that pushed Ibn Saud to fight the Ikhwan. These could be divided into political and economic. Politically speaking, the Ikhwan wanted to be named emirs in Medina, Mecca and Has'a, as they believed Ibn Saud should show his gratitude for their help that had enabled him to reach his position, and he had to pay them back by offering them these privileges.<sup>936</sup> Nevertheless, Ibn Saud knew they did not have enough experience to rule because of their religious extremism. Economically speaking, the Ikhwan had a lifestyle based on looting before the period of Ibn Saud's wars against the neighbouring regions. When Ibn Saud started stabilising and developing his country, they felt that their source of income was at risk as wars ended. One of the main reasons that made Ibn Saud launch a war against them was their extremist stance towards the country's development by opposing the use of the telegraph and cars, the travel of Ibn Saud's sons to the non-Muslim countries, and the presence of non-Muslims in Arab countries, as mentioned earlier. In the end, Ibn Saud's stance against the Ikhwan raids on the borders of Iraq and Transjordan in 1927 irritated the Ikhwan leaders. The British air strikes on the Ikhwan and the losses they suffered added insult to injury, so they rebelled against Ibn Saud.

Ibn Saud did not stop trying to dissuade them and he held another conference in Riyadh, on 6 December 1928,<sup>937</sup> to which he invited Bedouins, religious scholars, and people from the urban regions. A large number of leaders attended, except for the leaders of the Ikhwan, Faisal Ad-Duweish, leader of the Mutayr tribe, Sultan bin Bajad Al-Otaibi, leader of the Otaibah tribe,

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<sup>935</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.164.

<sup>936</sup> Habib, *Ikhwan movement*, p.227.

<sup>937</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p. 337.

and Dhaydan bin Hithlayn, leader of the Ajman tribe. Their absence was a blatant challenge to Ibn Saud.<sup>938</sup> At the conference, Ibn Saud talked about his achievements and mentioned that the Ad-Duweish raids on the Iraqi borders strained the relations with Britain. He asked the delegates to elect whoever they saw fit to end the bloodshed, and they saw Ibn Saud as their best option.<sup>939</sup> At this moment, Ibn Saud decided to put an end to the Ikhwan attacks on the borders after he got British support to fight against them. Faisal Ad-Duweish, leader of the Ikhwan, did not stop the acts of rebellion against Ibn Saud, and he organised a campaign consisting of a number of tribes and marched to Al-Qassim, in central Najd. He confronted Ibn Saud's forces in Artawiyah, near Al Zulfi. The so-called battle of Sabilla, which was more like a massacre, took place on 30 March 1929, between Ibn Saud on one side, and the Ikhwan on the other, led by Faisal Ad-Duweish and Ibn Humaid.<sup>940</sup> The Ikhwan had only camels and traditional rifles, while Ibn Saud's forces had modern weaponry, including machine guns. Ibn Saud defeated the Ikhwan forces, Faisal Ad-Duweish was wounded, and Sultan bin Bajad bin Humaid fled to Ghatghat,<sup>941</sup> but was later captured and imprisoned. Faisal Ad-Duweish was critically wounded. He fled to Artawiyah, and sent a delegation of his family to ask Ibn Saud to pardon him. Ibn Saud granted the pardon out of mercy, especially as Ad-Duweish was wounded, and he sent his private doctor to treat him.<sup>942</sup> However, when Faisal Ad-Duweish recovered, he resumed raiding the Iraqi lands. Then he joined Dhaydan bin Hithlayn in the east, and they declared a rebellion against Ibn Saud. In June 1929, Ibn Saud prepared a military force and marched towards the rebels, while the rebels had already expanded their activity near Riyadh. Still, the battle was not decisive and did not eliminate the Ikhwan. On 18 July, the Ikhwan asked Harold Dickson, the British representative in Kuwait, if there was a chance of

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<sup>938</sup> Commins, *Wahhabi Mission*, p.76.

<sup>939</sup> IOR/R/15/5/31, 18/11/ 1928, from Political Agent, Bahrain, to Resident, Bushire.

<sup>940</sup> Kheirallah, *Arabia Reborn*, p.144.

<sup>941</sup> Joseph Kechichian, *Succession in Saudi Arabia* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), p.93.

<sup>942</sup> Commins, *Wahhabi Mission*, p.76.

signing an official agreement with Britain on condition that friendly relations would remain with Kuwait and Iraq, and that Britain would stop its air strikes against the Ikhwan.<sup>943</sup> They received no response from Britain, however, because of the agreement that Kuwait and Iraq already had with Ibn Saud.<sup>944</sup>

In August 1929, the Ikhwan forces carried out raids against some tribes, like Shammar and Anazzah, to force them to give up on Ibn Saud.<sup>945</sup> Within the same month, the Battle of Umm Radh'ma took place between the Ikhwan, under the command of Abdulaziz bin Faisal Ad-Duweish, and Ibn Saud. The forces of Ibn Saud defeated those of the Ikhwan and Abdulaziz bin Faisal Ad-Duweish was killed.<sup>946</sup> When Faisal Ad-Duweish learned about the death of his son, he felt severe grief and loss.<sup>947</sup> Ibn Saud realised that he would not eliminate the Ikhwan forces without the support of Britain, and the alliance between Iraq and Kuwait, especially in the border areas. Britain therefore provided Ibn Saud with four aircraft.<sup>948</sup> On 20 November 1929, Ibn Saud started tracking the Ikhwan, forcing them to flee towards Kuwait. The British air force followed them and they had to surrender on 30 January 1930, on condition that they would not be handed over to Ibn Saud. Faisal Ad-Duweish himself surrendered on 10 January 1930. After consultations and discussions with Ibn Saud, the British Government handed the prisoners over to Ibn Saud in return for his guaranteeing to protect and not harm them. Faisal Ad-Duweish was therefore imprisoned until he died in 1932.<sup>949</sup> Thus, Ibn Saud eliminated the biggest problem that would have triggered issues with his neighbours and the British Government. Undoubtedly, the British Government played an important role in weakening the

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<sup>943</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.171.

<sup>944</sup> Helms, *Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, p.267.

<sup>945</sup> *ibid*, 276.

<sup>946</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.171.

<sup>947</sup> Helms, *Cohesion of Saudi Arabia*, p.267.

<sup>948</sup> IOR/R/15/5/31, 02/06/1929, from Government of India, Simla, to British Agent, Jeddah.

<sup>949</sup> IOR/R/15/1/59 [field D 76 61/14] 25/01/1932, Report from Andrew Ryan to Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

rebels and providing Ibn Saud with weaponry to eradicate them, in addition to the role of the Royal Air Force.

### **5.5. British recognition of the rule of Ibn Saud**

After the Treaty of Jeddah and with Ibn Saud's new status, Britain started to consider appointing a consul in Jeddah, who would confine their interests to consular issues. Otherwise, if they were in charge of diplomatic issues, they would interfere in the issues of the Colonial Office.<sup>950</sup> The Foreign Office recognised that it was not suitable to appoint a British representative to Ibn Saud to be responsible for consular affairs only. On the other hand, Ibn Saud had put continuous pressure on Britain in this regard, which pushed Britain to go for diplomatic representation with him.<sup>951</sup> In August 1928, Ibn Saud asked that all communication with Britain be done through Jeddah.<sup>952</sup> In June 1929, he suggested the exchange of diplomatic representation by inaugurating the Hijaz embassy in London, and elevating the consulate in Jeddah to an embassy.<sup>953</sup>

The British Foreign Office did not favour the idea of opening an embassy in Jeddah, as the workload was not sufficient and the British Government did not want to elevate the number or rank of the diplomatic delegations to embassy level.<sup>954</sup> Furthermore, the region of Hijaz did not yet have sufficient political experience to open an embassy.<sup>955</sup> The Foreign Office agreed to put pressure on the India Office and the Colonial Office to elevate the consulate of Jeddah to a legation. In May 1930, Sir Andrew Ryan was appointed the first British Minister in Hijaz, and in October John Baggot Glubb was appointed Lieutenant General in Transjordan.<sup>956</sup> In

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<sup>950</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.137.

<sup>951</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.86.

<sup>952</sup> Al-Jazairi, 'Saudi Arabia', p.159.

<sup>953</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.86.

<sup>954</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Policy of King Abdulaziz', p.186.

<sup>955</sup> Wahba, *Arabian Days*, p.143.

<sup>956</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Policy of King Abdulaziz', p.186.

turn, Ibn Saud appointed Hafiz Wahba the first Saudi Minister in London.<sup>957</sup> In December 1930, Ibn Saud reorganised the Foreign Office, appointing his son, Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs, in addition to his position as Deputy King of the Hijaz. By the end of 1930, Britain, the Netherlands, Iran, Turkey and the Soviet Union had legations in Jeddah. The legations of Britain and the Soviet Union were headed by ministers, while the other legations were headed by *chargés d'affaires*.<sup>958</sup>

On 22 December 1930, Ibn Saud met with King Faisal and discussed the issue of security in the Arabian Peninsula,<sup>959</sup> and they agreed to settle the issue of borders, exchange diplomatic representation and hand over prisoners.<sup>960</sup> This period featured good relations between Najd and Iraq. On the other hand, Ibn Saud felt a sense of alienation from Abdullah I bin Al-Hussein, ruler of Transjordan. According to Al Saud, Ibn Saud wanted to expand his influence to reach Transjordan, but was concerned about the British stance, so he stopped pursuing his goal.<sup>961</sup> Hagar argues that there was another reason for Ibn Saud's ambition, which was Abdullah I bin Al-Hussein's support for the Idrisid Emirate against him.<sup>962</sup> Hagar is correct that Ibn Saud was worried about the support the Idrisid received from Abdullah I bin Al-Hussein in his ambition to control the southern region of Ibn Saud's country.

Although acts of rebellion stopped, the waves of violence continued along the borders of Transjordan for years.<sup>963</sup> According to Leatherdale, in autumn 1930, an arbitration meeting, headed by Mr. M. MacDonnell was held in Oman to settle the dispute between Najd and Transjordan.<sup>964</sup> The arbitration board resolved that all demands related to the former raids be

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<sup>957</sup> Shafi Aldamer, 'Saudi British Relations', 1939-1953 (Durham University, 2001), p. 27.

<sup>958</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relation', p.141.

<sup>959</sup> IOR/R/15/1/59 [filed E2795/2/25 (D 76 61/14)], 28/05/1931, from High Commissioner for Iraq to Lord Passfield.

<sup>960</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.167.

<sup>961</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi relation', p.175.

<sup>962</sup> Hagar, 'Britain, Her Middle East Mandates', p.377.

<sup>963</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.167.

<sup>964</sup> *Ibid*, p.167.

cancelled for both sides.<sup>965</sup> In February 1931, the British Government issued a letter to Ibn Saud with the implied threat of a British invasion to supervise Wadi Sirhan.<sup>966</sup> Ibn Saud believed that was related to Ryan's policy towards him. Wahba believes that Ryan had exceeded his authority by offering refuge to a dependent of Ibn Saud's without informing him.<sup>967</sup> This upset Ibn Saud and convinced him that Ryan was not serious about improving Britain's relationship with him. Ibn Saud sent the British Government a memorandum to this effect.<sup>968</sup> However, the British insisted that Ryan was the right person to represent them in the Hijaz and refused to replace him.<sup>969</sup> Ibn Saud therefore had no other option but to accept Ryan, because was it not in his interest to allow a deterioration in relations with Britain to occur during the critical period of regime stabilisation and trying to expand his influence to Asir. Ibn Saud was also still trying to fix the border issues with his neighbours, Iraq and Transjordan, which were under British patronage. In addition, he believed he would lose his position on the Arabian Peninsula if he lost British support.

In May 1932, the Hijaz-Transjordan borders were disturbed by the movement of a group of exiled Hijazi citizens towards Hijaz through Transjordan. This made Ibn Saud fear another rebellion,<sup>970</sup> as Abdullah I bin Al-Hussein, King Faisal, Yahya Muhammad Hamid ed-Din, and Fuad I of Egypt conspired to support these exiled citizens to revolt against Ibn Saud.<sup>971</sup> King Abdullah convinced one of the Hijazi oppositionists, Husain al-Dabbagh, who fled Hijaz after Ibn Saud took control of it, to form a secret anti-Saudi party to expel Ibn Saud from Hijaz. They called it the Hijazi Liberal Party and assigned Husain's brother, Tahir al-Dabbagh, leader. Hamid bin Salim bin Rifada<sup>972</sup> was also a member of the party. The party aimed to

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<sup>965</sup> Hagar, 'Britain, her Middle East Mandates', p.404.

<sup>966</sup> Darlow and Bray, *Ibn Saud*, p. 364.

<sup>967</sup> Wahba, *Arabian Day*, p.98.

<sup>968</sup> Al-Kahtani, 'Foreign Policy of King Abdulaziz', p.186.

<sup>969</sup> *ibid*, p.187.

<sup>970</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.178.

<sup>971</sup> IOR// L/P&S /12/2096, (filed 30/6). 13/07/1932, from Hijaz-Nejd (Najd), Andrew Ryan to Foreign Affairs.

<sup>972</sup> Hamid bin Salim bin Rifada led a rebellion against Ibn Saud aiming to topple his rule in Hijaz. The revolt was supported by King Abdullah in Transjordan. (Wahba, *Arabian Days*, p.182.)

divide the urban coalition that supported Ibn Saud, and to strip Ibn Saud of the allied tribes. King Abdullah backed this party. 600 exiled Hijazi citizens, commanded by Hamid bin Salim bin Rifada, had fled to Egypt and started a revolt in northern Hijaz, but were defeated by Ibn Saud's forces.<sup>973</sup> According to a British document, the British Government provided Ibn Saud with money and weapons to eliminate this revolt.<sup>974</sup> Later on, the British Minister in Hijaz, Ryan, managed to reconcile Ibn Saud with King Abdullah in April 1933, as they signed a mutual peace agreement.

On 30 November 1934, Ibn Saud managed to annex the south-west of Asir along with the west of Hijaz, the centre of Najd, the east of Has'a, and Ha'il in the north. Al-Idrisi remained ruler of Asir under Ibn Saud.<sup>975</sup>

## **5.6. Creating the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia**

On 22 September 1932, the Kingdom of Hijaz and Najd and its dependencies was named the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and King Abdulaziz Al Saud appointed his son, Saud, Crown Prince, and his other son, Faisal, Minister of Foreign Affairs. Ibn Saud was also able to join the League of Nations.<sup>976</sup> According to Leatherdale, Ibn Saud's coalition with the Bedouins played a considerable role in the unification and emergence of the Saudi state.<sup>977</sup> He argues that Ibn Saud's Bedouin forces, especially the Ikhwan at the beginning of his rule, greatly helped him take control of the country, such as in the annexation of Hijaz and Ha'il. Ibn Saud noted that and appreciated their efforts in bringing the country together.<sup>978</sup> Nonetheless, the Bedouins were not the only force Ibn Saud had, as he had urban forces like Al Washm, Al-Qassim, Al-

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<sup>973</sup> Hagar, 'Britain, her Middle East Mandates', p.414.

<sup>974</sup> IOR// L/P&S /12/2096, (filed 30/6, J 1882/92/16), 17/07 -23/07 1932, Extract from the Egyptian Press.

<sup>975</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.168.

<sup>976</sup> Odah, Sultan, 'Saudi-American Relations 1968-1978: A study in Ambiguity', Phd Thesis, University of Salford, 1988, p.18.

<sup>977</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.187.

<sup>978</sup> Kishk, *Al-su 'ūdīyūn*, p. 423.

Aridh and Sudair, who provided military support. As mentioned above, Britain played a role in eliminating the Ikhwan rebel forces because of its mutual interests with Ibn Saud on the Arabian Peninsula. Both Britain and Ibn Saud needed each other to maintain the stability of the Arabian Peninsula,<sup>979</sup> and secure proper conditions in Hijaz for the pilgrims. In fact, Britain favoured the stability of Saudi rule within the borders it had set.

From 1929 to 1930, Britain's pledges to Ibn Saud were clear, and it played an active role in backing his creation of a new state that served its interests and was under its protection. This support was clear when the British Government backed Ibn Saud in taking control of the south of the country and supported him against the Imam of Yemen. In addition, when the Iraqi-Najdi borders were exposed to the Ikhwan rebellion, which would have a negative impact on British interests in the region, Britain offered Ibn Saud significant support to put an end to that threat. Therefore, Britain's policy towards the Arabian Peninsula was to stabilise the kingdoms of Iraq and Transjordan. An agreement with Ibn Saud was necessary to get rid of the nuisance. This became crystal clear when the Ikhwan rebellion emerged. The British commitment towards Ibn Saud reached its peak when Britain handed over the Ikhwan prisoners to him, which put an end to the Ikhwan attacks. The Soviet Union was the first state to recognize the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, followed by Britain, the Netherlands, France and Turkey. Subsequently, diplomatic relations improved and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia exchanged diplomatic representatives with these countries.<sup>980</sup> As the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia emerged, it was deeply in debt because of its wars in the south of the country, especially with Yemen, and did not have a source of income to help the country's development until oil was discovered in commercial quantities in 1938.<sup>981</sup>

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<sup>979</sup> Al-Saud, *Britain-Saudi Relations*, p.187.

<sup>980</sup> Wynbrandt, *Brief History*, p.186.

<sup>981</sup> *ibid*, 187.

## 5.7. Summary

Given the developments on the Arabian Peninsula generated by the conquest of Hijaz in 1925, British-Saudi relations were reconsidered, with Ibn Saud then trying to win the British Government's recognition. In 1926, Ibn Saud managed to bring together the lands of Najd and Hijaz, and the British Government declared its intention to grant wider representation of Ibn Saud through its Colonial Office and the Foreign Office. Britain recognised the new political situation on the Arabian Peninsula through signing a comprehensive and amended treaty, the Treaty of Jeddah, with Ibn Saud. The British Government was very keen to sign this treaty for two reasons;. The first was Britain's desire to improve British-Saudi relations, so as to safeguard the interests of its protectorates and the Trucial Sheikdoms. The second was to secure Britain's position in the Middle East by means of established agreements. The recognition was a matter of discussion within the British Government between the India Office, which wanted to delay the recognition, and the Foreign Office, which stressed the importance of the immediate recognition of Ibn Saud's full independence. In the Treaty of Jeddah 1927, Ibn Saud was recognised as King of Hijaz and Najd and its dependencies.

In 1928, however, the Ikhwan's rebellion against Ibn Saud weakened the latter's relationship with the British Government as their attacks continued on the Iraqi border. Therefore, Ibn Saud organised his forces with the help of the British Government to eliminate this rebellion. Britain only helped Ibn Saud because he had become a vital element in Britain's vision for the region. The second half of 1929 witnessed the British consensus on establishing full diplomatic relations with Ibn Saud. In November 1930, Ibn Saud sought to annex Asir, with Britain's approval, in order to break the Italian progress towards the south of the Arabian Peninsula. Thus, Asir came under Ibn Saud's control along with Hijaz, Najd and Has'a. Moreover, Ibn Saud kept al-Idrisi's position as a ruler of Asir under his banner. The year 1930 was important regarding the internal developments in Saudi Arabia, since Ibn Saud was able

to suppress the rebellion of the Ikhwan in January. Later on, the use of radio communications spread all over the territories under Ibn Saud's rule.<sup>982</sup>

During 1926 to 1932, Britain's policy was shaped almost entirely by external considerations, exerting efforts to keep Italy away from interfering in the Arabian Peninsula's internal affairs. Britain's interest in maintaining a good relationship with Italy was due to the importance of the Red Sea, as Italy controlled one of the international waterways essential for British ships. The British strategy was to prevent any country from taking full control of the islands in this waterway.<sup>983</sup> Britain was mainly concerned with keeping Italy away from these islands, so it was a relief for Britain to see Ibn Saud's takeover of Asir. On the other hand, Ibn Saud sought to improve his relations with other powers in the region, such as Italy, the Soviet Union and Germany, and he was keen to appoint diplomatic representatives for them. These countries were also quick to recognise the rule of Ibn Saud, who, in turn, wanted to build relations with them because of their high status and power, and because he wanted to have a means by which to put pressure on Britain in case it abandoned him.<sup>984</sup> In February 1932, Ibn Saud signed a friendship agreement with Italy as he sought to build a good relationship with it, considering it a power parallel to Britain.<sup>985</sup> According to Al-Jazairi, the Soviet Union was also keen to create a political and commercial agreement with Ibn Saud, with the latter agreeing to lift the trade embargo between them.<sup>986</sup> The political relationship between the two sides also improved after Faisal bin Abdulaziz's visit to Moscow in 1932.

From the above, it can be seen that Britain sought to demarcate a border between Ibn Saud's territories and Transjordan in order for British interests to be protected in the region. Thus, in 1932, Britain began to establish a connection between King Abdullah and Ibn Saud,

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<sup>982</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.185.

<sup>983</sup> Leatherdale, *Britain and Saudi Arabia*, p.146.

<sup>984</sup> Al-Saud, 'Britain-Saudi Relations', p.188.

<sup>985</sup> *ibid*, p.189.

<sup>986</sup> Al-Jazairi, 'Saudi Arabia', p. 167.

both eventually recognising each other. Therefore, Britain was able to eradicate the hostility between the Saudis and Hashemites and to put an end to the danger they both posed in the effort to stabilise the Arabian Peninsula. On 22 September 1932, Ibn Saud was able to form a vast territory internationally recognised by governments, one after the other. He then inaugurated a number of important ministries and started reforming the country's internal affairs, especially after oil was discovered in commercial quantities. The new state was named the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and its ruler was entitled King.

## **Conclusion**

### **Introduction**

Ibn Saud ruled from 1902 to 1952, was able to form his country by winning British friendship, although there was competition within the Arabian Peninsula between Ibn Saud, Sharif Hussein and Ibn Rashid. However, he managed to control the region, and be the only leader. Although he started as a ruler in a desert area, he managed to court major global powers like Britain, the Soviet Union and the United States of America in a short period of time, encouraging them to build good relations with him. Ibn Saud stabilised his rule, utilising both politics and religion, thereby strengthening the bond between religious belief and national loyalty. He also continued to create a distinctive state and society by melding social and religious reform with political authority. This was done primarily by settling the nomadic Bedouins, establishing schools, and organising the army. Therefore, Ibn Saud was able to take control over the larger part of the Arabian Peninsula in the name of Islam, with the help of the Ikhwan.

This dissertation is an attempt to correct some common misconceptions about Ibn Saud's vision and motives to expand his rule. For example, in the context of this research, it has been shown that the challenges Ibn Saud faced in maintaining his rule, expanding the army, and offering inducements to his supporters, meant that the Saudi expansion was less tied to Wahhabi ideology and more a result of the necessity to preserve political and economic security. The research also leads to the conclusion that the British support for Ibn Saud was a result of their own concerns about competitors and regional security. In addition, Britain aimed to maintain its political interests in the Gulf region, to ensure access to economic resources in the region, and to take control over the Gulf waterways. Therefore, Britain was forced to build good relations with the dominant political figure in the region, Ibn Saud.

This dissertation also answers the question about Britain's relinquishing of its association with Sharif Hussein and its promise to name him king of Arabs. Continued support for Hussein would have irritated Ibn Saud, who ruled over the east of the Arabian Peninsula and effectively protected its interests. Furthermore, Sharif Hussein was too demanding, which ultimately weakened his relationship with the British. This led the British Government to turn a blind eye to (and thus effectively support) Ibn Saud's assumption of control of the Hijaz in 1925, as it came to see him as a rising ally in the Middle East.

When Ibn Saud took on the responsibility of restoring his ancestors' rule and an Arab-controlled polity, he had concerns over his own position, regional security and the economic development of his fledgling state. He also had goals to aspire to, including finding resources to sustain the state and building good relations with neighbouring powers. He realised that his relationship with the British was one of the keys to his success. Therefore, this research has sought to analyse and discuss British-Saudi relations in the years 1902-1932. The first chapter discussed the emergence and geopolitical balance of the new state. The second chapter revolved around the rise of Ibn Saud on the political level and the signing of the first Treaty with the British Government in 1915. It also discussed how he managed to get rid of Ottoman control in the east of the Arabian Peninsula, and the emergence of his political independence and subsequent economic development. The third chapter handled Ibn Saud's relations with neighbouring powers, especially Ibn Rashid and Sharif Hussein, the formation of the Ikhwan army and its political role. The fourth chapter focused on Ibn Saud's new treaties with Kuwait, Iraq and Transjordan, to demarcate their respective borders. He then took over Hijaz in an attempt to gain economic resources and political and religious expansion. He also continued expanding his rule over the north of the Arabian Peninsula, and signed the treaties of Ma'an and Aqaba with Transjordan. The main focus of the fifth chapter was British interests with Ibn

Saud, the final demarcation of borders, and crucial British support for Ibn Saud in eliminating the Ikhwan and establishing the new state in 1932.

### **Summary of results**

This dissertation focuses on British-Saudi relations, beginning with the period 1902-1909, with the emergence of Najd and the neighbouring areas and the relative independence of the small state. At this time, Ibn Saud aimed to achieve a strategic balance between the main powers, Britain and the Ottomans, in order to establish his state. He had no intention of making any alliances that would be detrimental to this ambition. He also aimed to avoid the dangers facing Najd, especially as he did not have basic political and economic stability at this stage and had not yet formed the Ikhwan force. This was also a reason why Britain did not see an advantage in signing any treaties with Ibn Saud at this stage as it knew this could change its relations with the Ottoman Empire which still regarded the Arabian Peninsula as part of its own domain. As a result, that period was characterised by local consolidation around Najd, where Ibn Saud took control of some areas. However, it was a proof of Ibn Saud's local power in Najd and its surroundings that areas like al-Qassim, Shaqraa and Sudair had come under his effective rule before 1909. In the years 1910-1916, this study shows that Britain avoided any treaties or communications with Ibn Saud until 1913, and every party worked in its own interests. Britain was also committed to its relations with the Ottoman Empire that secured the British routes to India.

Ibn Saud was still keen on restoring the lands of his ancestors and was faced by certain difficulties as Britain showed no interest in having formal communications with him. When he annexed Has'a in 1913, he created vital strategic access through the Arab Gulf and thus proved his importance in the wider Arab region. At this point, the Indian Government made direct contact with Ibn Saud, but still not in an official form. Mubarak al-Sabah played a vital role in

improving British-Saudi relations when he backed Ibn Saud's march on Najd to restore the Saudi lands from Ibn Rashid. Prior to this, Al-Sabah had aimed to embroil Ibn Saud with Ibn Rashid, as his relations with the latter were strained and he wanted to eliminate him as an opponent. On the morning of May 9, 1913, Ibn Saud resolved to restore Has'a, building on his strong position in Najd. He equipped the army and marched on Has'a, as far as the walls of the capital Hofuf, which he besieged. Some of Ibn Saud's forces managed to climb the walls and take control of the Turkish garrison. The Turkish men were sent to Iraq. Furthermore, Ibn Saud managed to send military forces secretly to Qatif, so that the annexation took place without resistance. Ibn Saud managed to eliminate Ibn Rashid and expand his rule to take control over Has'a and crush the Ottoman influence on the Arabian Peninsula, signing the Treaty of Darin in 1915 with the British Government. Ibn Saud could take advantage of the strained relations, state of insecurity and bureaucratic conflict between the Ottomans and Britain to sign the Treaty of Darin for his own interests. The Ottomans also considered having an agreement with Ibn Saud during that period to protect their interests and ensure his loyalty as he controlled the east of the Arabian Peninsula. This study also shows the significant roles of British officials like Shakespear, Philby and Dickson in encouraging the British Government to sign treaties with Ibn Saud.

Through British documents, this research explains how Ibn Saud managed to build good relations with the British Government and pledged to protect British interests in the Gulf region in return for its support in establishing his state. The period before the First World War was characterised by Ibn Saud's external policies as he managed to get British protection without any hostility from the Ottoman Empire (although during the war Britain and the Ottomans became enemies).

This section of the thesis also discusses the changes in British-Saudi relations through a series of communications and difficulties related to internal and external factors, such as the

local tribal combats, changes in the relations with Mubarak al-Sabah, and the conflicting roles of the Ottoman Empire in the region. This period witnessed an improvement in British-Saudi relations, specifically from the British side.

The dissertation also discusses the main outcomes of regaining Has'a for Ibn Saud, as his name spread through the Arabian Peninsula and he was appreciated by many emirs in the region. It also triggered the interest of the India Office representatives, who did not hesitate to contact him to promote their political project of rebelling against the Ottomans. Nonetheless, Ibn Saud declined the offer as he believed it was a risky step that would drag his fledgling state into unknown consequences. He feared that taking the side of any of the two parties would make him the biggest loser if that party lost to the other. Therefore, he preferred to remain neutral during the First World War, as he needed the support of the more powerful side (i.e. whichever side was to be victorious in the war), to help stabilise his state. In addition, his main objective was to restore the Arabian Peninsula and unite it by ending the chaos and conflicts, so he prioritised the organisation of his state, as it would be the base for uniting the whole of the Arabian Peninsula.

### **Unique contributions of the study**

This dissertation examines 30 years of Saudi history, focusing on Ibn Saud's efforts to stabilise his state and the role of British-Saudi relations in that period. It focuses on this period intensely and demonstrates the importance of certain personalities, such as Shakespear, Philby and Cox, who played a vital role in supporting Ibn Saud and changing British policies to build good relations between the two countries. It also focuses on the places and the battles which had a significant role in the development of the relationship between Ibn Saud and Britain, including Jarrab, Rawdat Muhana, Sabilla and others. It also examines those treaties that played a major role in the growth of Ibn Saud's policy, such as the treaties of Uqair, Muhammara and Jeddah.

The study shows how British-Saudi relations changed depending on the different circumstances of Ibn Saud in his journey to establish his state. The factors that positively affected British-Saudi relations include Ibn Saud's annexation of Has'a and Hijaz, his neutral stance during the First World War, and his war against the Ikhwan. The British relationship with Ibn Saud was restricted at first to avoid affecting its relations with the Ottoman Empire. The British relationship with Ibn Saud remained relatively cold even after he annexed Has'a, as they still considered Sharif Hussein the most important ally in the region in leading the Arab Revolt. However, this tendency changed after Ibn Saud took control of Hijaz and expanded his influence. The purpose of this study is not only to provide a historical analysis of British-Saudi relations, but also to study the factors that led to building this strategic relationship, based on British, Ottoman and Saudi documents, comparing them with secondary sources. Thus, it is concluded that the mutual relations were based on political and economic foundation. Politically speaking, Ibn Saud needed the British support to help him protect and establish his state. Meanwhile, Britain needed to protect its economic interests in the Gulf region. Therefore, the relations were based on mutual interests.

This research also compares Arabic and European writings, and refers to other documents to corroborate certain opinions in case of disagreement. The views and opinions of writers on Saudi history differ in their analysis of events. Saudi writers were more accurate regarding the names of places, dates and local events, especially Ibn Saud's local wars, whereas the writings of European authors were more analytical, critical and realistic. In this dissertation, it is emphasised that international relations are primarily based on mutual interests, as Britain did not cooperate with Ibn Saud until he had proven that he would serve its interests on the Arabian Peninsula. This was clear in its manipulative political endeavours and relations with the different powers in Najd, like Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein, to ensure the safety of its interests. Undoubtedly, the British Government embroiled the Arabs in internal conflicts to

gain political and economic goals. Ibn Saud, on the other hand, believed approaching the British Government was the only way to get rid of the Ottoman influence in the region.

### **Research limitations**

This research has studied British-Saudi relations from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century until the establishment of the Saudi state in 1932. It has discussed the phases through which this relationship went, reaching its finest form as Ibn Saud established his state and exchanged diplomatic representation with Britain. It is worth mentioning that certain events are only pointed out in the secondary sources, with no clues about them in the extant primary sources. Therefore, a researcher must be careful in coming to the correct conclusion. Other limitations include the confidentiality of the Saudi Government, which has made it hard to gain access to official documents from the Foreign Ministry as well as other potential sources. However, the King Abdulaziz Foundation for Research and Archives (Darrah), an archive for Saudi history, has been a helpful source that has been used for some Arabic, British, Dutch, French and German documents.

In addition, the topic was of a sensitive nature to some Saudi officials, who preferred not to discuss issues that could reignite hard feelings from some tribes against the Saudi Government. These include the Ikhwan issue and the British support that Ibn Saud relied on to establish his state. The use of Turkish documents has also been limited, as access to authentic information from them has required costly translation services to translate them into Arabic. Further research is needed on the economic factors that pushed Britain to interfere in Middle East affairs, and on the role of British diplomats in shaping British-Saudi relations. Moreover, studies could usefully be undertaken on the social life of the Gulf region in the writings of travellers like Dickson and Shakespear, and in the rich Turkish archives.

This study makes an important contribution to knowledge in this area because it demonstrates that there were two important variables in British-Saudi relations prior to the First World War. This was particularly true following the break-up of the Ottoman Empire, as a result of the 1912-1913 Balkan War. British-Saudi relations are generally viewed as being part of the geopolitical dynamics emerging from the First World War, when a tentative relationship between the two countries developed. This thesis sheds new light on the development of Britain's relationships with the forces in the Gulf Peninsula, as a result of the changes in Ottoman-British and Ottoman-Arab relations, in the light of the challenges posed by the war. A major contribution of this thesis is that it demonstrates the significance of local events in how the British-Arab relationship developed, particularly after Ibn Saud's expansion into Has'a.

The second variable is the change, following the First World War, from Britain's emphasis on large-scale dynamics to a greater concern with what was occurring locally, particularly with the changes in the central region of the Arabian Peninsula. Britain used local issues to spread its influence and further its own interests. This thesis shows the importance of Ibn Saud's dominance in the region, since his superior power, once it exceeded that of Sharif Hussein, led Britain to make an ally of him. This was particularly true after Ibn Saud's annexation of Hijaz in 1925, which strengthened his relationship with Britain. He was able to extend his borders and make new treaties, imposing his changes on Britain, as he developed the large country which was to become Saudi Arabi.

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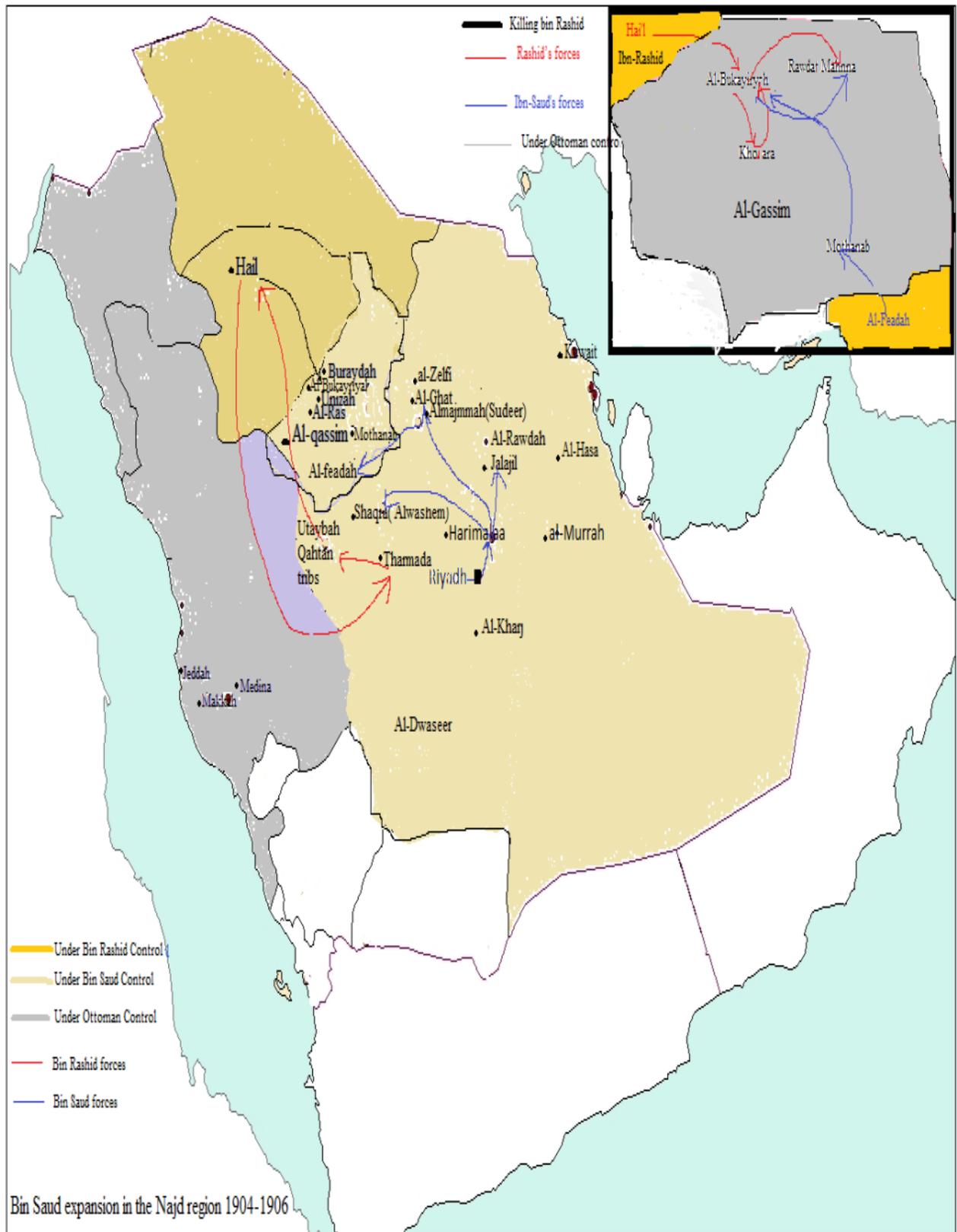
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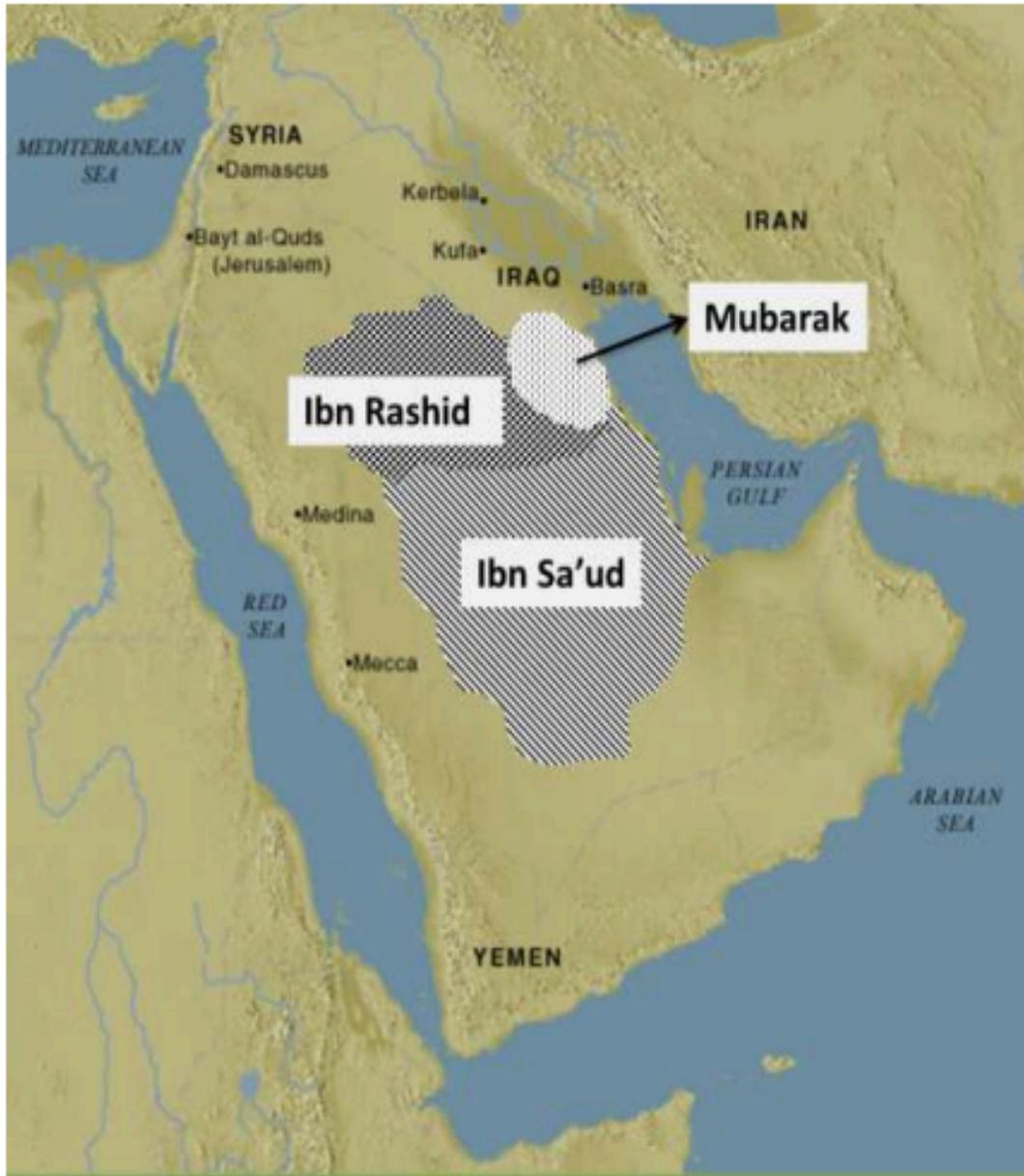
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## Appendices

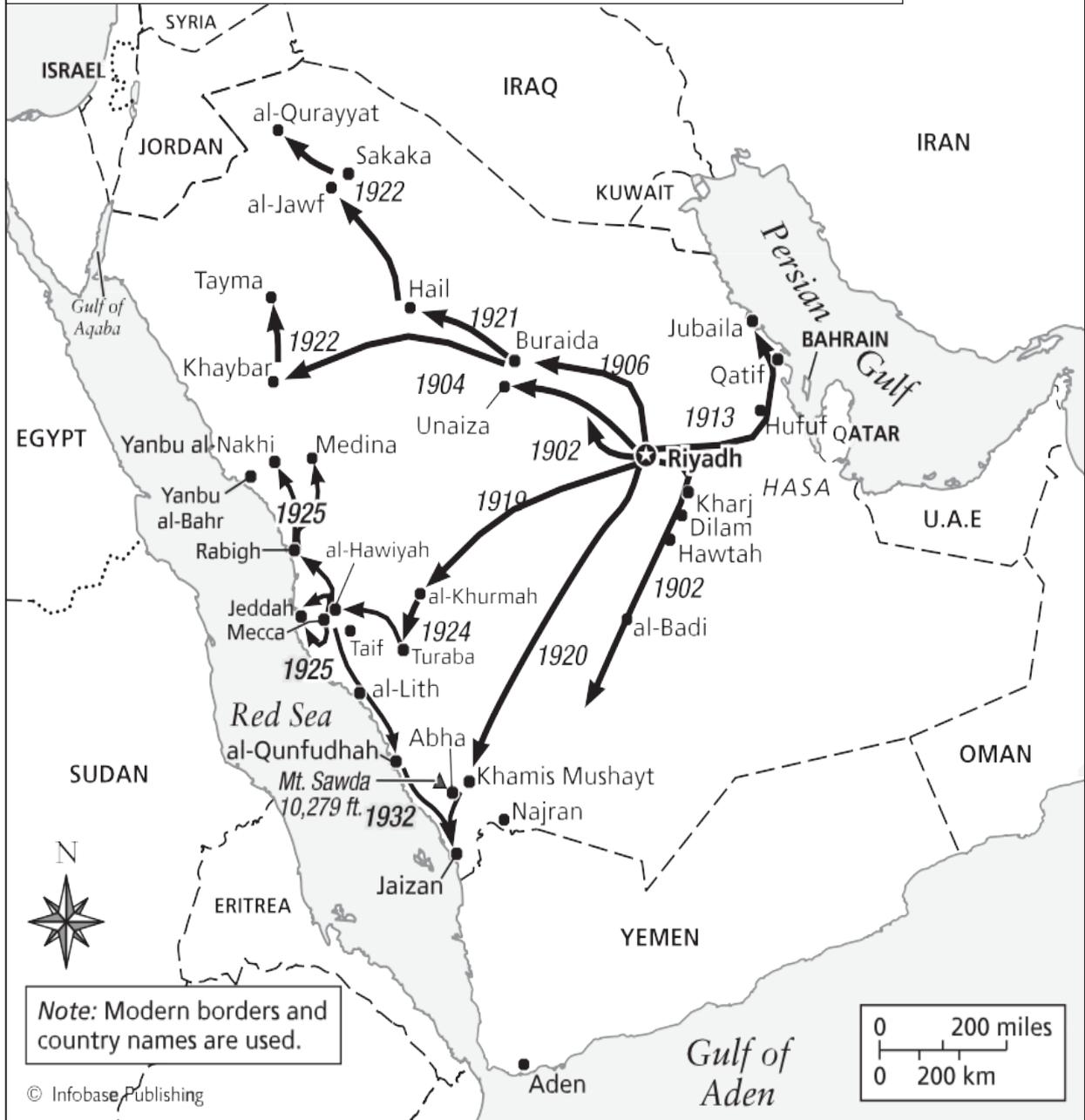


Map (1), Ibn Saud control of Najd, the battles that were between bin Saud bin Rashid in Qassim during the period 1904-1906.



**Map 2:** An illustration of the approximate areas of control under the main local leaders during the period of this study (1902-1914), This map is adapted from Google Images.

## Ibn Saud's Campaigns of Conquest, 1902–1932



Map 3: Ibn Saud's campaign of conquest, 1902-1932

Britain's Financial and military support for Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud 1915-1921.<sup>1</sup>

Financial support to Bin Saud	Military Support to Bin Saud	Subsidies to	To Hussain		
December 1917	30,000\$ + £5,000	September 1915	300 rifles	From October 1916 until March 1917	£125,000 Monthly
April 1918	\$154,000	December 1916	4 mechanical guns + 250,000 cartridge	From April 1917 until January 1918	£145,000 Monthly
July 1918	\$10,000	December 1916	1000 calibre rifles 303 + 2000 rifles	From February 1918 until April 1919	£225,000 Monthly
October 1918	\$70,000	April 1917	Two guns	From April 1919 until August 1919	Reduction of subsidies to £120,000 Monthly
Other subsidies from December 1915 until December 1917.	£42,500 + £5,000 gifts.	July 1918	1000 ordinary rifles + 1000 automatic rifles	From August 1919 until October 1919	£100,000 Monthly, £75,000 Monthly
Other subsidies from December 1917 until October 1918.	£110,000	August 1918	250,000 cartridge	From November 1919 until April 1920	£125,000 Monthly
Total (1)	\$264,000, + £5,000	October 1918	1000 ordinary rifles	From April 1920 until March 1921	Total subsidies during this period £27,000
Total (2)	£157,500,				
Final Total	£264,000 + £162,500			Final total between 1916-1921 to Sharif Husain	11 million Pounds.

<sup>1</sup> Table 3: Britain's Financial and military support for Sharif Hussein and Bin Saud 1915-1921, data taken from Kishk, *Al-su'ūdīyūn*, p. 428.

\* There is no accurate census of the British military payments to Sharif Hussein, because of the participation of Hussein in World War I along with Britain in the Arabian Peninsula, so he received huge military aid can not be counted.



Ibn Saud with the weapons that he had plundered from the Ottoman Empire after the surrender of the Emirate of Ha'il on 1 January 1922

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ibn\\_Saud#/media](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ibn_Saud#/media)



جلالته يوم دخوله مدينة جدة في عام ١٩٢٥، ويبدو إلى يمينه الشيخ عبد الله علي رضا.

H.M. in Jeddah in 1925. To his right appears Sheik Abdallah Ali Ridha.

S.M. à Djeddah en 1925. À sa droite parait le cheikh Abdallah Ali Ridha.

The photo was taken in 1925 by a photographer hired by Abdullah Rida

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ibn\\_Saud#/media/File:Ibn Saud In Jeddah.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Ibn_Saud#/media/File:Ibn_Saud_In_Jeddah.jpg)



In 1930, Khabari Wadhha, during the meeting of the commander of the British Air Force with Ibn Saud during the handover of the leader of the Ikhwan to Ibn Saud

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Group of Al Sabah and Al Saud - British Political Agency- Kuwait

(Abd al-Aziz Al Saud sits on the left, facing front, unsmiling; Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait sits in the centre, with Sa'd bin Abd al-Rahman standing at his shoulder; Muhammad bin Abd al-Rahman sits to the right)

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category>



Sir Percy Cox with the founder of Saudi Arabia, 1916, the Arabian desert

<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category>



Ibn Saud's army during the opening of Ha'il, 1920

<https://www.alarabiya.net>



Ibn Saud with his sons in 1913

Taken from <https://www.arabnews.com>



Bedouin watering at al-Hinnah, just north-east of Thaj, Saudi Arabia

(Photo by William Shakespear / Royal Geographical Society)

<https://www.arabnews.com>



Bedouin women at al-Hinnah wells, near Thaj (just north-east of Thaj), Saudi Arabia

(Photo by W.H.I. Shakespear)

<https://www.arabnews.com>



Watering camels, Saudi Arabia

(Photo by W.H.I. Shakespear / Royal Geographical Society)

<https://www.arabnews.com>

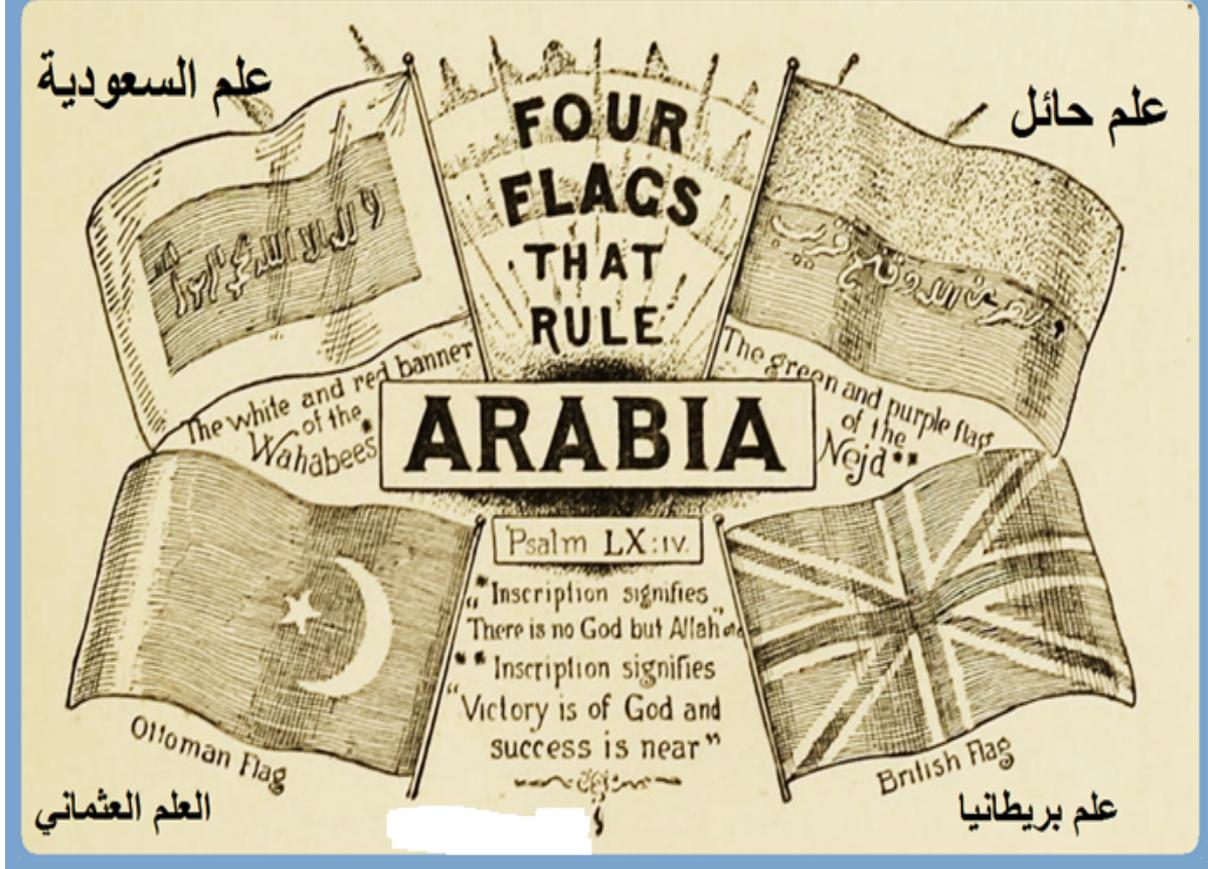


Mid-day halt for coffee in the desert, Saudi Arabia, 28 November 1909

(Photo by W.H.I. Shakespear / Royal Geographical Society)

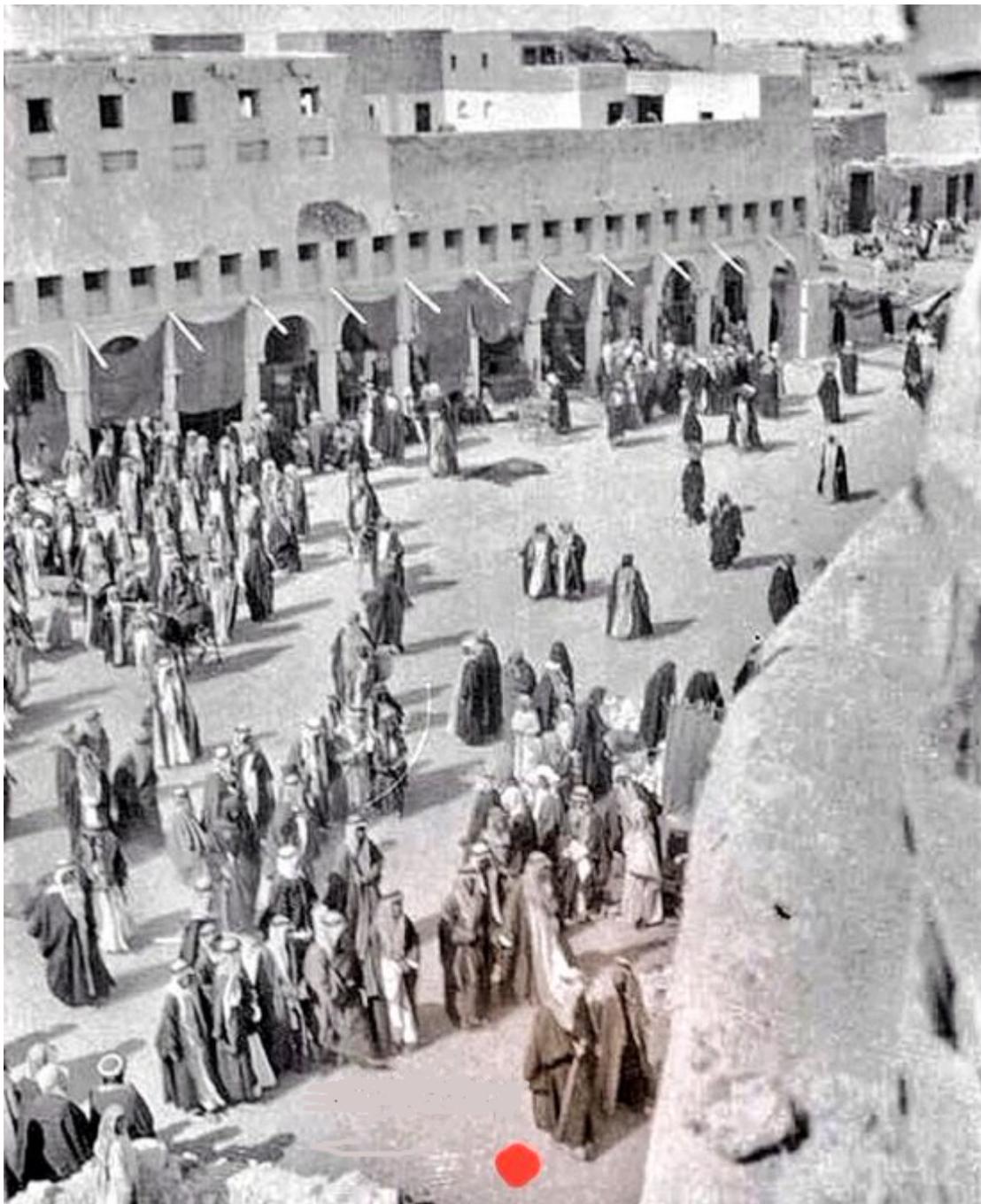
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الأعلام المنتشرة في الجزيرة العربية عام ١٩١٧م أثناء الحرب العالمية الأولى



Flags of the Arabian Peninsula in 1917, during the First World War

(King Abdulaziz Foundation, reproduction permitted)



A rare picture showing King Abdul Aziz and next to him Prince Abdullah bin Jalawi near the gate of the wall of Kut district of Hofuf in Has'a (at the red point below the picture)

(King Abdulaziz Foundation, reproduction permitted)



The first car to enter the Arabian Peninsula is the car that entered Ha'il in 1915. It was a Mercedes, which was donated by the Ottoman Sultan Mohammed Rashad to Prince of Ha'il Saud Al-Rasheed, and remained parked until the brothers (Ikhwan) destroyed it after they entered Ha'il, believing it was magic and jinn.

(King Abdulaziz Foundation, reproduction permitted)



Pilgrimage in Mecca in 1908

(King Abdulaziz Foundation, reproduction permitted)



Pilgrimage in Mecca in 1928

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