

Araştırma Makalesi / Research Article

**THE TERMINATION OF HASHEMITE DOMINATION
BY SAUDI CONQUEST OF THE HEDJAZ AND
THE ATTITUDE OF BRITAIN ON THIS ISSUE AFTER
THE FIRST WORLD WAR***

Resul YAVUZ**

Abstract

The power struggle that started between the Hashemites and the Saudis in the Arabian Peninsula before the First World War resulted in the Saudis taking control of the administration as a result of the political preferences of the British after the war. During the First World War, England led to the emergence of an Arab revolt in the Middle East under the leadership of Sharif Hussein, the leader of the Hashemites to collapse the Ottoman Empire from within. During this revolt, the British were able to achieve unity between the two leaders so that the Saudis supported Sharif Hussein. However, England could not reconcile the two sides on the use of sovereignty in the Hejaz region after the war, despite making great efforts to prevent the conflicts that broke out between Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud. The British government wanted to consolidate its position in the region by signing some agreements with both the Saudis and the Hashemites in line with its political interests in shaping the Middle East after the war. However, Sharif Hussein would not come to an agreement with the British Government on the grounds that the promises made by the British during the war were not kept despite these efforts of England. Despite the intense diplomatic struggle of the British until 1924 for a treaty with Sharif Hussein, an agreement was signed. Thereupon, the British government would support the Saudis, which they pressured into not seizing the Hejaz region until 1924, to end the rule of Sharif Hussein by changing its political preferences. This was a situation that the leader of the Saudis, Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, had been waiting for years. With the British government declaring that it would at least remain neutral in 1924, the Saudis would seize the Hejaz region and permanently end Hashemite rule in the region.

Keywords: Hejaz, Saudis, Sharif Hussein, Ibn Saud, England, Arabian Peninsula.

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There is no study that would require the approval of the Ethical Committee in this article.

** Doç. Dr., Bandırma Onyedü Eylül Üni., İnsan ve Toplum Bilimleri Fakültesi, Tarih Böl., (ryavuz@bandirma.edu.tr), (Orcid: 0000-0002-7705-1020).

BİRİNCİ DÜNYA SAVAŞI'NDAN SONRA SUUDİLERİN HİCAZ'I ELE GEÇİREREK HAŞİMİ YÖNETİMİNE SON VERMELERİ VE BU MESELEDE İNGİLTERE'NİN TAVRI

Öz

Birinci Dünya Savaşı öncesinde Arap Yarımadasında Haşimiler ile Suudiler arasında başlayan güç mücadelesi, savaştan sonra İngiltere'nin politik tercihleri neticesinde Suudilerin yönetimi bütünüyle ele geçirmesi ile sonuçlanmıştı. İngiltere, Birinci Dünya Savaşı sırasında Osmanlı Devleti'ni içerden çökertmek amacıyla Haşimilerin lideri Şerif Hüseyin önderliğinde bir Arap isyanının Ortadoğu coğrafyasında ortaya çıkmasını sağlamıştı. Bu isyan sırasında İngilizler, Suudilerin Şerif Hüseyin'e destek vermesi için iki lider arasında zor da olsa birliği sağlamayı başarabilmişti. Ancak savaştan sonra İngiltere, Şerif Hüseyin ve İbn Suud arasında başlayan çatışmaları önlemek için yoğun çaba sarf etmesine rağmen iki tarafı Hicaz'da egemenliğin kullanılması noktasında uzlaştıramayacaktı. İngiliz hükümeti, savaştan sonra Ortadoğu'nun şekillenmesinde politik çıkarları doğrultusunda hem Suudilerle hem de Haşimilerle birtakım antlaşmalar imzalayarak bölgede pozisyonunu sağlamlaştırmak istemişti. Ancak İngiltere'nin bu çabalarına karşı Şerif Hüseyin savaş sırasında İngilizlerin verdiği sözlerin tutulmamasını gerekçe göstererek İngiliz Hükümeti ile anlaşmaya yanaşmayacaktı. İngilizler, 1924 yılına kadar Şerif Hüseyin ile bir antlaşma yapılması için yoğun diplomatik mücadele vermelerine rağmen bu anlaşma imzalanamayacaktı. Bunun üzerine, İngiliz hükümeti, politik tercihlerini değiştirerek 1924 yılına kadar Hicaz'ı ele geçirmemesi için baskıladığı Suudilerin Şerif Hüseyin'in yönetimine son vermesine yeşil ışık yakacaktı. Bu, Suudilerin lideri Abdülaziz İbn Suud'un yıllardır beklediği bir durumdu. 1924 yılında İngiliz hükümetinin en azından tarafsız kalacağını ilan etmesi ile Suudiler, Hicaz'ı ele geçirerek bölgede Haşimilerin yönetimine kalıcı olarak son vereceklerdi.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Hicaz, Suudiler, Şerif Hüseyin, İbn Suud, İngiltere, Arap Yarımadası.

Introduction

The geography of the Middle East entered great transformation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. While the dominant actors in this transformation were western powers, the Ottoman Empire, which held the region, was the country most affected by the developments that took place. Within this transformation, the Arabian Peninsula has is particularly special. On the one hand, the fact that it borders the Red Sea, which gained importance with the opening of the Suez Canal, and on the other hand, the fact that it carries a region with a key strategic location such as the Persian Gulf, had made this peninsula the focal point of the imperial states searching for raw materials during the Industrial Revolution, especially England.

However, while the peninsula became the center of attention of external elements with this significance, many regions of the peninsula became conflict areas with the autonomous struggles of powerful Arab tribes among themselves. Among these Arab tribes, families such as the Shammars, Saudis and Hashemites came to the fore. While these struggles never ended with the domination of the Ottoman Empire in the region, the Ottoman administration supported some families during these struggles from time to time and tried to establish its dominance in the region by reconciling them. However, with the weakening of the Empire, these families acted against the central authority, fueling conflicts between the tribes. Certainly, for the Hashemites and the Saudis, the power struggle that took place at the beginning of the 20th century and the policy of British involvement in this struggle had a great impact on shaping the region that exists today.

It should not be forgotten that the Persian Gulf and the situation of Arabia, where Britain's control over the Indian colony played a critical role in the continuation of its political and military existence, were within the scope of Britain's plans for domination.¹ So much so that during the 19th century, the Arabian Peninsula was of strategic significance for the British Empire in terms of ensuring the safe flow of trade in the Gulf and the important ports surrounding the peninsula, especially on the road to India, and in preventing other states with which Britain was competing from accessing this region.² For Britain at the time, India's borders stretched far beyond the national borders that shape present-day India and South Asia. Its western borders reached the shores of the Persian Gulf, Arabia, the Red Sea and the Eastern Mediterranean. From this perspective, India

1 Nurcan Özkaplan Yurdakul, *İngiltere Ortadoğu'ya Nasıl Girdi?*, Kronik Pbl., İstanbul, 2018, p.19; When we look at the last period of the 19th century, it could be understood how important the Persian Gulf was for Britain when it was taken into account that more than 80% of all export trade of the region was made with British goods, and that 2,039 of the total 2,161 ferries entering and leaving the ports in the Gulf belonged to the British during this period. J. C. Hurewitz, *Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East: A Documentary Record: 1535-1914*, Vol. 1, Princeton 1956, No. 101, p.227.

2 Gray Troeller, *The Brith of Saudi Arabia*, Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, Newyork 2013, p.1.

was not just a piece of land, but an interregional Indian Ocean and Arab Empire consisting of colonies, local and vassal states, contracted sheikhdoms, consulates and intermediaries that were indirectly administered.³

However, the Hejaz region, which is in the heart of the Arabian Peninsula and was directly affected by many political, military and economic crises experienced by the Ottoman Empire during the 19th century, also entered the field of interest of the imperial states, especially Britain, with the strategic importance of the region introduced by the opening of the Suez Canal. With the increase of ship trade between India and the Red Sea, the Hejaz region became a military and strategic position on this route. Thus, the Hejaz region rose to an unshareable position between the Ottoman Empire and Britain.⁴ The region was administered within the privileges assigned to the Hashemite dynasty under Ottoman rule.⁵ The opening of the canal in 1869 had a positive effect on sea transportation and facilitated the connection between the places where Muslims lived within the Hejaz region. This situation influenced the international significance of the Emirs of Mecca from the second half of the 19th century, as well as the fact that Britain, which was trying to ensure the security of the Indian roads, began to attach importance to the Hejaz region.⁶

Britain, which gained the right to make preferential trade on Ottoman lands in 1838 with the Treaty of Balta Port, strengthened its connection between the Hejaz region and the Red Sea with the influence of the Suez Canal and established a close relationship with the Emir of Mecca from the Hashemite family. In addition, since the British had millions of Muslims, including the Muslims of India, in their possession, they saw themselves as a state with a larger Muslim population than the Ottoman Empire. Therefore, using this situation, the British Government began to attach great importance to contact with the Meccan emirs to exert influence over them. The efforts of the British in this direction would further increase with the reign of Abdulhamid II.⁷

Some of the activities of Abdulhamid II in India and the Middle East within the scope of his Islamic Union activities were not welcomed by the British. Moreover, while the British were concerned that these efforts would turn into a general uprising in India against them, they began to carry out some propaganda activities against the Ottoman administration in the Arab lands as

3 Michael Christopher Low, *İmparatorluk Mekke'si*, Transl. Yunus Babacan, Telemak Pbl., 2023, p.77.

4 Low, *Ibid.*, p.78.

5 İsmail Köse, *İngiliz Arşiv Belgelerinde Hicaz İsyanı*, Selis Pbl., İstanbul 2014, p. 41: The Bani Katada family had been in the Emirate of Mecca for nearly seven and a half centuries. After the rebellion of the Sharif of Mecca, Amir Hussein, against the Ottoman Government, the emirate remained in the family, but with the capture of the Hejaz by the Saudis in 1924, the emirate of the Bani Katade family ended. İsmail Hakkı Uzunçarşılı, *Mekke-i Mükerrerme Emirleri*, TTK Pbl., Ankara 1984, p.70.

6 Abdurrauf Sinno, *Osmanlı'nın Sancılı Yıllarında Araplar, Kürtler, Arnavutlar (1877-1881)*, Transl. D. Ahsen Batur, Selenge Pbl., İstanbul 2011, p.99.

7 Sinno, *Ibid.*, p.108.

a countermove. In these activities, they would try to establish contact with the Emirs of Mecca as well as with some secret Arab associations. Jeddah had a special place in the efforts to establish this contact. From the mid-19th century, the British began to make many investments, mainly in the postal services, in Jeddah, which was located on India's trade route with the West. As a result of these investments, Jeddah became a significant port city on the route of Bombay, Aden, Alexandria and Cairo. However, the British also used Jeddah as their headquarters to observe what developments took place in the Hejaz during the Saudi occupation to take a position.⁸ Although attacks were carried out on the British and French consulates in the city in June, 1858, the British managed to maintain their position in the city with the privileges granted by the capitulations.⁹ The British consuls had a great influence on this success. With these means, Britain also had the privilege of being able to come into direct contact with the Meccan Emirs. Moreover, in addition to the efforts of the British consul in Jeddah in this direction, the request that Britain should also influence the appointment of the Mecca Emirs before the Porte began to be conveyed to the London Government by the consular staff. According to them, the Ottoman administration should not have appointed the Emirate of Mecca without consulting Britain considering its Muslim population.¹⁰ This idea was shared by other British consuls serving in the region at the time. James Zohrab, the British Consul General in Jeddah, who took office in 1879, processed this idea in various reports he sent to the London Government and tried to create a perception both in the government and in public opinion.¹¹ Other British consuls appointed to Jeddah after Zohrab also considered it their duty to take care of the future of the Hejaz region.

The British consuls were not alone in their contradictory ideas about the Emirs of Mecca and the Caliphate. Even before Abdulhamid II came to power, Badger, one of the advisors of the British Foreign Office, stated in a report he had prepared, *"If the Arabs also recognize the Ottoman Sultan as caliph, his fame and population in the Islamic world will increase tremendously. The consequences of this may be to the detriment of Britain. Therefore, Britain should try to prevent the expansion*

8 Ulrike Freitag, *A History of Jeddah*, University of Cambridge Press, Cambridge, 2020, pp.51-52.

9 For detailed information on the reasons for the anti-western events that took place in Jeddah during this period see, Low, *Ibid.*, pp.91-102.

10 Sinno, *Ibid.*, p.111.

11 FO. 78/3131, No. E-342, "Zohrab's Report on The Necessity of a Consular Establishment in the Red Sea", Jeddah, 1 June 1881; In fact, the British administration's realization of the power of the caliphate over the Muslims of India and its work on this began during the reign of Selim III. The British had made some requests to Selim III to suppress the uprisings in India, and that the sultan make a request to the local Muslim leaders in India not to fight against them. Together with these, on the initiative of the British Foreign Office, twenty-nine reports on the power of the caliphate from various parts of the Islamic World reached London. Twenty of these reports belonged to British consuls. Azmi Özcan, "İngiltere'de Hilafet Tartışmaları", *İslam Araştırmaları Dergisi*, 2, Isam Pbl., Istanbul 1998, pp.50-51.

of Ottoman authority over the Arabs.”¹² His words summarized the objectives of the British administration’s policy regarding the Abdulhamid period. At a time when Britain was starting to deal with the status of the Caliphate and the future of the Arabs, many British activists, such as Blunt, who had close ties to both British government circles and the aristocratic section in London, came to the fore with their views and criticisms arguing that the Caliphate should be under the auspices of British patronage and the Emirs of Mecca.¹³ Blunt realized that the Caliphate was an important tool that enabled the Ottoman Empire to control its area of domination and submitted a report on the subject to the Gladstone government. With this influence of Blunt, the issue of the need to take the Caliphate from the hands of the Turks began to be discussed within British public opinion.¹⁴

As a result of all these efforts, the situation of the Hejaz-based Arabs based on the Caliphate issue began to be discussed among some politicians, journalists and scientists in England from 1877. A large part of the proponents of this idea consisted of retired statesmen who had served in India for a while. They claimed that Abdulhamid II was not the leader of the Muslims and therefore could not assume the Caliphate.¹⁵ In addition, these people, who believed that the problem would be solved by the caliphate being under the command of an Emir descended from the Quraysh, also claimed that the emirs of Mecca could easily be controlled by Britain because the Hejaz region was located on the roads of India.¹⁶ Although they raised these claims through the press, from time to time they were advised by some intellectuals against these ideas, especially by the Turkologist J. Redhouse, who expressed the baselessness of the claims made about the caliphate.¹⁷ An interesting point that emerged in these discussions was that both those who opposed and supported the Ottoman Caliphate had a common concern about the loyalty of Indian Muslims to the British Government. The concern of those who generally opposed it was that Indian Muslims were increasingly accepting the Ottoman ruler as a religious leader and were interested in the future of the Ottoman Empire.¹⁸

While Abdulhamid II closely followed the activities of the British in the Arabian Peninsula, he would implement a series of measures, particularly to

12 Özcan, *Ibid*, p. 51.

13 Tufan Buzpınar, *Hilafet ve Saltanat*, Alfa Pbl., İstanbul 2016, pp.103-104.

14 Taha Niyazi Karaca, *Türklere Veda*, Timaş Pbl., İstanbul, 2022, p.183.

15 Buzpınar, *Ibid.*, pp.128.

16 Özcan, *Ibid.*, p. 54; In the meantime, for information about the work of Captain Sir Home Popham in England in 1800 to get the support of local administrators, especially the Emir of Mecca, against the French within the scope of liaison efforts, see Low, *Ibid.*, pp.79-80.

17 Buzpınar, *Ibid.*, pp. 128-129; Özcan, *Ibid.*, pp. 53-55; In addition, for detailed information about a domestic and foreign literature evaluation related to the Caliphate in the Ottoman Empire, see Ş. Tufan Buzpınar, “Osmanlı Hilafet Meselesi: Bir Literatür değerlendirmesi”, *Türkiye Araştırmaları Literatür Dergisi*, Vol. 2/ 1, 2004, pp.113-131.

18 Buzpınar, *Ibid*, p.107.

establish garrisons in the cities to make the central authority in the Hejaz more effective. These measures would continue throughout the Second Constitutional Period, which would disturb the Emirs of Mecca, who from the beginning did not want the strengthening of the central authority in the Hejaz. This discomfort would become even more pronounced under Sharif Hussein and would turn into an open rebellion.¹⁹

On the eve of this process leading to a rebellion in the Arabian Peninsula, the British, while trying to implement their political ideas on the ground, established contact with the Emirs of Mecca as well as with many leading Arab tribes in Yemen, Aden, Muscat, Bahrain and Kuwait, and especially with the Saudis in Central Arabia, and managed to sign various treaties with them before the First World War.²⁰ The status and position of the Saudis in these families was of particular significance to Britain.

The family of Ibn Saud, who had been under the influence of the religious teachings of Abdul Wahhab since the middle of the 18th century, started to gain strength in the Najd region since the beginning of the 19th century. The prominent leaders of the Saud family, taking advantage of the situation of the Ottoman Empire, continued their commercial activities and thereby expanded their authority along both the Central Arabia and Basra coasts, attracting the attention of the British. As a consequence of such activities by the Saudis, British authorities considered establishing compulsory contact with the Saudi leaders from the beginning of the 19th century to ensure the security of the Indian trade route.

The Saudis, who gained strength in Central Arabia, attempted to invade Mecca in 1805 to capture the city. However, the Ottoman administration resorted to asking for help from the Egyptian Governor, Mehmet Ali Pasha, to prevent this invasion attempt and to restore authority in the region. The Egyptian Governor, who sent the armies under the command of his sons Tosun and İbrahim Pasha, cleared Mecca of the Saudi invasion and re-established Ottoman sovereignty in the region.²¹

During his reign in the Hejaz, Mehmet Ali Pasha strengthened his position in the region, with Jeddah as the center, while continuing to struggle with the Saudis in Central Arabia.²² However, the Saudis took advantage of the problems between Mehmet Ali Pasha and the Ottoman administration, made use of the resulting authority gap in the region as of the 1830s and declared their emirate in Riyadh under the leadership of Turki bin Abdullah. Subsequently, the Saudis

19 M. Talha Çiçek, "İttihatçılar ve Şerif Hüseyin, Mekke İsyanının Nedenleri Üzerine Bir Değerlendirme", *Tarih ve Toplum Yeni Yaklaşımlar*, İletişim Pbl., 41, Summer 2013, p. 45.

20 For more information see, B.C.Busch, *Britain and The Persian Gulf, 1894-1914*, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1967, pp.24-26.

21 Zekariya Kurşun, *Necid ve Ahsa'da Osmanlı Hakimiyeti, Vehhabi Hareketi ve Suudi Devleti'nin Ortaya Çıkışı*, TTK Pbl., Ankara, 1998, p.58.

22 Freitag, *Ibid.*, p.50.

continued their expansion and had the opportunity to expand their dominance to Basra by capturing Ahsa, Hufuf and Katif. The fact that the sovereignty of the Saudis reached the Basra coastlines attracted the attention of the British and they eventually began to closely follow the activities of the Saudis. Upon the withdrawal of the Egyptian Army from the Hedjaz and Najd regions from 1838 as a consequence of the problems encountered with the Ottoman administration, the Saudis became the dominant power in Central Arabia, particularly in Riyadh and in the Najd region. This situation led to the rage of the struggle within the tribes in the region, particularly within the Shammar tribe.²³

Since the efforts of the Saudis attracted the attention of the British until the middle of 19th century, the British Government assigned Colonel Lewis Pelly to Riyadh in 1865 to contact the Saudis. Colonel Pelly was assigned to meet the Saudi Leader Faisal bin Turki to attempt to reach an agreement of ensuring commercial security in Basra. Considering the Indian trade, Basra was of great significance to the British. The British-Saudi cooperation, which was initiated by Colonel Pelly, gradually developed and consequently a series of agreements were signed between the parties, particularly on trade and security issues.²⁴ These activities of the Saudis certainly attracted the attention of the Ottoman administration. Throughout this period, the Ottomans tried to prevent the Saudis' activities in the region using both political and military activities. Although the military expeditions carried out towards this region in the 1870s for this purpose limited the penetration of the Saudis for a short time, the political depression faced by the Ottoman Empire thereafter strengthened the Saudis in Arabian lands. As a matter of fact, the dominance of the Saudis in Arabia had reached a level just before the World War I that could not be ignored. The British Government closely followed the rise of the Saudis through Captain William Shakespeare, who was appointed to Kuwait in 1909. Captain Shakespeare was in constant contact with the Saudi Leader, Abdulaziz Bin Saud, under the directives of the British representative in Basra, Sir Percy Cox, at the time. Therefore, the British Government not only followed every activity of the Saudis in Basra and Central Arabia but also made the Saudis dependent. The attitudes of the British were also valid for all Arab tribal chiefs who were influential on the coasts of Basra, Aden and Yemen.²⁵

World War I brought with it developments that could change all the balances in the Arabian Peninsula, just like in the rest of the world. The positioning of the Ottoman Empire in an anti-British bloc in this war caused Britain to engage in a series of anti-Ottoman activities throughout the entire Middle East, particularly in the Arabian Peninsula. The relations with Ibn Saud

23 Resul Yavuz, *Ortadoğu Şekillenirken*, İdeal Kültür Pbl., İstanbul, 2020, p.32.

24 J.B.Kelly, *Eastern Arabian Frontiers*, London, 1964, pp.68-71.

25 Jacob Goldberg, "Captain Shakespear and Ibn Saud: A Balanced Reappraisal", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 22. No. 1 January 1986, p.75-79.

and the Amir of Mecca, Sharif Hussein, constituted particular importance in these activities. The British established a contact with the Amir of Mecca to trigger an Arab revolt in Hedjaz and strengthened relations with Ibn Saud, with whom it had been in deeper and more serious contact for a long time to internally undermine the Ottoman Empire.

In the meantime, the Committee of Union and Progress, which took power during the Second Constitutional Period, closely followed the activities of Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud in the Hejaz region. In many reports sent from the region to Istanbul, warnings were given that these two leaders were in contact with the British. The Unionists, who were carefully watching Sharif Hussein because he was the emir of Mecca, were trying to narrow Sharif Hussein's sphere of influence by strengthening the central authority in the region.²⁶

Sharif Hussein was an extremely important figure in Britain. He was subjected to compulsory residence in Istanbul for many years by Abdülhamit II – due to friction between his family in the Hejaz – but after the 1908 revolution, he was appointed to the Hejaz as the Emir of Mecca.²⁷ The key figure who played a role in his appointment – revealed as Karaca in his latest work – was Grand Vizier Kamil Pasha, although there were different opinions on this issue.²⁸ Pasha attracted the resentment of the Unionists because he had a close relationship with the British. Although the Unionists did not want Sharif Hussein to be the emir of Mecca, Hussein was appointed emir through the work of Kamil Pasha and with the approval of Abdulhamid II. In a report sent by the British Ambassador to Istanbul, Lowther, to the British Foreign Secretary, Edward Gery, on 24 November, 1908, he stated that the appointment was made at the request of Kamil Pasha and referred to the closeness that had developed between Hussein and England. According to Lowther's report, when the issue of the Emirate of Mecca was not yet on the agenda, he sent a message to him a few days before his appointment expressing his gratitude to Britain for their support for the constitutional revolution of 1908.²⁹ In addition, Sharif Hussein, again through Lowther, declared his loyalty to the British government and made it clear that he would make efforts to ensure that the Arab leaders in the Hejaz remained loyal to Britain.³⁰

Based on this information, Britain was able to take advantage of the depressed environment of the 1908 revolution with a policy that revealed the

26 For information on the relations between Sharif Hussein and the Committee of Union and Progress during this period see, Küleyb Süüd Fevvez, *Şerif Hüseyin ve Osmanlılar Arasındaki Yazışmalar (1908-1918)*, Transl. Ebu Bekir Dilli, Selenge Pbl., İstanbul, 2022; Hasan Kayalı, *Jön Türkler ve Araplar (1908-1918)*, Transl. Türkan Yöney, Türkiye İş Bankası Pbl., İstanbul, 2018; Çiçek, *Ibid.*, pp.43-56

27 For Sharif Hussein's activities in Istanbul see, Taha Öztürk, "Şerif Hüseyin'in Mekke Emirliğine Atanma Sürecinde Ailesiyle İstanbul'da Geçirdiği Yıllar", *Vakanüvis*, Mart 2017, Vol. 2, No.1, p.153-165.

28 For these different views see, İsmail Köse, *İngiliz Belgelerinde...*, pp.47-49.

29 Karaca, *Ibid.*, p.276.

30 Karaca, *Ibid.*, p.277.

importance of playing a role in the appointment of the Meccan emirs, as stated in the reports sent by the Jeddah Consulate by 1880. After this date, although Sharif Hussein attracted the reaction of the Ottoman Government in almost all his actions in the Hejaz, his dismissal only came after the Arab revolt under his leadership during the years of war. By this time, the British further strengthened their links with Sharif Hussein to gain momentum for the separatist Arab movement, especially on the eve of the war.³¹

During the years of war, Britain provided all kinds of support to Sharif Hussein, despite Ibn Saud, for an Arab uprising against the Ottoman Empire to take place. The British administration considered Sharif Hussein to be the most suitable person to start the rebellion as a member of the Hashemite family because he was the Emir of Mecca, he was appointed to the post by the Ottoman administration himself, he was a loved person throughout the Hejaz, and his emirate was considered legitimate in the Islamic world. There was no hesitation in almost all of the British political officials who served on the ground in this regard. Although at times some political chiefs, especially Cox, regarded Ibn Saud as a true Arab leader, Sharif Hussein was the only leader agreed upon to lead the rebellion. Although Ibn Saud also mentioned in his letters that he should be taken advantage of against Ottoman rule, the British seemed to have foreseen that a plundering and invading family with Wahhabi teachings would not be accepted in the Islamic world.³²

Although this policy was implemented in the Arabian Peninsula during the years of war, the problems between Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud forced the British to follow a careful policy with these two key leaders. Ibn Saud regarded himself and his family as the true leaders of the entire Arabian Peninsula. Sharif Hussein, on the other hand, was anxious with Ibn Saud's presence and hostile policies, and he was also seriously worried about the extremely tolerant attitudes of the British towards Ibn Saud. Although these hostile attitudes of the two sides towards each other brought both sides to the brink of a war before and during World War I, the British did not allow a war to break out at the time. The British not only mobilized all their means to prevent Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud from clashing with each other at this stage, but they also succeeded in signing agreements with Ibn Saud in 1915 and with Sharif Hussein in 1916 through mutual correspondence. These agreements enabled the two sides to fight a serious struggle against the presence of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East

31 For detailed information on Britain's relations with Sharif Hussein, both before and during the war years see, C. Ernest Dawn, "The Amir of Mecca Al-Ḥusayn Ibn-'Ali and the Origin of the Arab Revolt", *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, Vol. 104, No. 1, 15th, February 1960, pp. 11-34; Bülent Özdemir- Eftal Irkışatal, *İngiliz Arap Büro Raporlarında Arap Ayaklanması, Bir İsyanın Kodları*, Yitik Hazine Pbl., İzmir 2011; Bruca Westrate, *The Arap Bureau: British Policy in the East: 1916-1920*, Penn State University, Pennsylvania 1992, p. 351; Elizer Tauber, *The Arab Movements in World War I*, Frank Cass and Co. Ltd London, 1993; Timothy J. Paris, *Britain, The Hasminets and Arab Rule*, Frank Cass Publishers, London, 2005.

32 For more information see, Yavuz, *Ibid.*, pp. 171-217.

throughout World War I.³³ The attitude and activities of Sharif Hussein within the scope of this struggle are of particular importance. As of June 1916, the British consequently pressured 200 Arab tribal leaders, particularly Ibn Saud, to provide support to Sharif Hussein for the success of the Arab revolt initiated against the Ottoman Empire under the leadership of Sharif Hussein. Ibn Saud supported Sharif Hussein, whom he saw as his mortal enemy, albeit unwillingly, in this process.³⁴ During the years of war, the British also established connections with secret Arab societies that had sprouted in Ottoman lands to support Sharif Hussein. In meetings with the leaders of this society in Cairo, it was stated that all kinds of support would be provided for the emergence of a rebellion under the leadership of Sharif Hussein.³⁵

Despite careful British efforts, the British strategy of not pitting these two Arab leaders against each other throughout the war ended with the Battles for Hurma Village and Turaba, which took place after World War I. Although the war between the two leaders that started in 1919 was ended after mediation by Britain, the British administration had already realized that the peaceful environment in the Arabian Peninsula would not last long. Therefore, the British Government engaged in an intense struggle to ensure permanent peace in the lands of the Middle East that were separated from the Ottoman Empire at the Paris Peace Conference that convened after World War I. Accordingly, Britain wanted to sign an agreement with Sharif Hussein to ensure Britain's dominance over the Arabian Peninsula and the Middle East, but Sharif Hussein refused to sign such an agreement, citing the failure of the enforcement of the promises made to him during the war and the British policies with Ibn Saud created thereafter. Although the British Government made great efforts to sign such an agreement with Sharif Hussein between 1920 and 1924, it was not successful. This situation caused the British Government to reconsider its policy with Sharif Hussein.³⁶ British authorities wanted to impose on Sharif Hussein and his sons a map of the Middle East divided into several spheres of influence that emerged as a result of their negotiations with the French after the war. This was the main reason for the financially backed diplomatic negotiations with Sharif Hussein between 1920 and 1924. On the other hand, Sharif Hussein, who claimed to be the leader of all Arabs, would not agree to a treaty with the British because

33 Yavuz, *Ibid.*, pp.184-224.

34 IOR/L/PS/18/B251, pp.9-11.

35 Tauber, *Ibid.*, p. 85; Also for the secret Arab Societies and their activities during the war years see, Karaca, *Ibid.*, pp. 199-201; Reşid Rıza, *İttihad-ı Osmanî'den Arap İsyanına*, 2. Baskı Tercüme ve İnceleme, Özgür Kavak, Klasik Pbl., İstanbul, 2013; Zeine N. Zeine, *The Emergence of Arab Nationalism*, 3rd Edition, New York, 1978; George Antonius, *Arap Uyanışı*, Transl. Mehmet Ali Koç, Muhammed Karakuş, Selenge Pbl., İstanbul, 2021; Ömer Osman Umar, *Osmanlı Yönetimi ve Fransız Manda İdaresi Altında Suriye (1908-1938)*, ATAM Pbl., Ankara, 2004; Ömer Kürkçüoğlu, *Osmanlı Devleti'ne Karşı Arap Bağımsızlık Hareketi (1908-1918)*, AÜSBF Pbl., Ankara, 1982.

36 IOR/L/PS/10/881, File; 488/1920, Pt 3 "Hedjaz Relations Between H.M. Gov.& King Hussein, questions of Subsidy, Negotiations for Conclusion of a Treaty", No: 5.

he did not allow the establishment of a single Arab Confederate State in Arab-dominated lands.

In the days when Britain's problematic relations with Sharif Hussein continued framework, Ibn Saud expanded his dominance to the borders of Iraq, Syria, Jordan and Kuwait, which were established after World War I. Frequent violations with regard to the borders caused these states to encounter problems with the Saudis, so much so that even the events that sometimes broke out between the parties on the grounds of the violation of the pastures along the borders and were considered as a minor issue caused the parties to clash with each other, even for a short time. Although the British Government mediated a series of important meetings in Uqair and Kuwait in 1922 to resolve the border problems between these states and the Saudis, it was not successful.³⁷ The problems, which could not be negotiated between the Saudis and these states regarding the borders, had disturbed the relevant parties, particularly the British, for many years. Meanwhile, Britain made a few more attempts to reconcile Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud while trying to resolve the aforementioned problems; however, these attempts did not yield the desired results.³⁸

Even after World War I, the British Government tried to maintain its diplomatic initiatives for the sake of ensuring a peaceful environment in the Middle East, which it tried to reshape by prioritizing and protecting its own interests. However, the uncompromising attitude of Sharif Hussein caused the British Government to maintain a certain diplomatic policy until 1924. Britain never recognized Sharif Hussein as the King of the Arab lands, but considered it appropriate to recognize him only as the King of Hedjaz and to maintain official relations at this level. However, the British Government never gave up on looking for ways to impose the Middle East order that emerged after World War I on Sharif Hussein through diplomatic negotiations. Sharif Hussein, on the other hand, was in favor of concluding a treaty with Britain on the grounds of the principles agreed upon during the War and he did not hesitate to express it at every opportunity. This attitude of Sharif Hussein, which was considered by the British Government to be "irreconcilable", caused a change in political attitudes towards Sharif Hussein after 1924. Britain was deciding on whether to proceed with Sharif Hussein, who began to act against its interests in the Hejaz-based Arabian Peninsula. This change of attitude served Ibn Saud, who had been waiting for many years for an opportunity to drive a wedge between Sharif Hussein and Britain. This opportunity convinced Ibn Saud that it was the right time to take action to seize Hijaz as a whole.³⁹

37 For detailed information about these conferences see, H.R.P. Dickson, *Kuwait and Her Neighbours*, Allen&Unwin Pbl., London, 1956.

38 IOR/L/PS/10/937, File 7251/1920, Pt. 2-3, "Arabia: Nejd-Iraq and Nejd- Kuwait Bounderies Situation Policy", pp.94-96.

39 Antonius, *Ibid.*, pp.262-263.

1. Abdication of Sharif Hussein in the Face of Pressure by Ibn Saud and the Saudi Capture of Taif and Mecca

During the Kuwait Conference, Ibn Saud planned an effective attack on Hijaz. However, he could not predict the exact the reaction of Britain in the case of such an attack.⁴⁰ In April 1924, after the failure of the conference, Ibn Saud engaged in intense intelligence activity to learn about the severity of this reaction. He drew attention to Sharif Hussein as the main culprit for the failure of the conference and further increased the dosage of severe insults against Sharif Hussein. The British, who conveyed observations that were compiled through their representatives in the field, particularly by their political representatives in Bahrain and Kuwait, seemed sure that Ibn Saud would launch a sudden attack on Hedjaz in the early autumn using this issue as an excuse and they constantly warned London about it. However, the colonial office did not consider these plans and did not place the possible strategies for Hedjaz on its agenda in the case of a possible Saudi attack.⁴¹

Throughout April to August 1924, when British authorities continued to negotiate with the parties to avoid re-igniting a Hashemite-Saudi conflict, Ibn Saud hinted at Ikhwan⁴² raids to attack the Iraqi and Jordanian lands. As might have been expected, the British responded to the attacks of the Ikhwan raids with fighter airplanes to protect both borders. In a report dated 17 August, the British representative in Amman reported how the Ikhwan raids were dispersed by British aircrafts while providing details of an attack on Amman. Similar reports were also published regarding Iraq.⁴³

Although Ibn Saud explicitly opposed Britain in these attacks, he thought that the British reaction would be much different when considering an attack on Hedjaz. The invasion of Hedjaz was different from the invasion of Hail or Ahsa. The eyes and ears of all Muslims around the world turned to this region. The invasion of Hijaz had consequences that could have changed the character of the kingdom that Ibn Saud tried to establish.⁴⁴ In light of these thoughts, Ibn Saud held a meeting on 5 June 1924 in Riyadh, under the leadership of his father Abdurrahman, and with the participation of the ulema and Ikhwan leaders. In this meeting, not only was an intense anger expressed against the declaration of

40 Alexi Vassiliev, *The History of Saudi Arabia*, Newyork University Press, Newyork, 2000, p.261.

41 Timothy J., Paris, *Britain, The Hasminets and Arab Rule*, Frank Cass Publishers, London,2005, p.340.

42 It is a religious and military organization formed as a result of the settlement of Bedouin raids by Abdurrahman bin Saud in the settlement areas under the name of Hucer. By virtue of this organization, the Saudis not only dominated the Bedouin raids but also created a rather effective military organization under the name of Imams. This organization, over time, has been influential in the birth of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Said Tekeboğan, İbn Reşid Ailesi ve Şammar Emirliği (1839-1918), Unpublished Master's Thesis, İstanbul, Marmara University, Institute of Turkish Studies, 2016, p.96

43 IOR/L/PS/10/1125, File: 3665/1924, Pt-2-4, "Hejaz- Nejd Situation", pp.413-443.

44 David Howarth, *The Desert King Ibn Sa'ud and His Arabia*, McGraw- Hill Book Company, London, 1964, p.145.

Sharif Hussein as the Caliph of the Islamic World but a strong consensus was also built among the meeting participants that the occupation of Hedjaz was necessary.⁴⁵ Wahhabi clergy and Ikhwan leaders insisted that the years during which the pilgrimage was hindered by Sharif Hussein constituted sufficient justification for capturing Hedjaz. They also believed that Sharif Hussein, whom they saw as solely responsible for the failure of peace in the region, caused illegitimacy, bribery and corruption in Mecca and Medina. This government had already lost its legitimacy.⁴⁶ Another decision taken at the meeting was to prepare a declaration regarding the necessity of the conquest of Hedjaz and to convey it to the representatives of Islamic countries. In this way, Ibn Saud wanted to raise the perception that the occupation of Hedjaz was a move that would be realized not only by the initiative of the Necids but via the consent provided by the entire Islamic World. Ibn Saud also planned to minimize any British reaction to the occupation.⁴⁷

In the meantime, revealing Sharif Hussein's views and expectations about the situation that emerged with the abolition of the sultanate in Türkiye was also important in terms of evaluating the process leading to his separation from Ibn Saud and Britain. Sharif Hussein saw it as an opportunity for Vahdettin to invite him to Jeddah after Vahdettin left the country after the abolition of the sultanate based on his claims to the Caliphate.⁴⁸ While criticizing the developments in Türkiye, the al-Qibla Newspaper, the publication organ of Sharif, also started to publish articles about the fact that the Caliphate should belong to the Arabs when Vahdettin accepted the invitation. This situation developed within Sharif's plans. Because he aspired to the caliphate, it was thought that Vahdettin would offer Sharif Hussein the Caliphate in such an atmosphere.⁴⁹ In addition, according to British intelligence reports, Sharif Hussein's representative, al-Assil, had a meeting with Ismet Pasha during the Lausanne Peace talks in February, during which Ismet Pasha said that Türkiye would recognize the independence of the "Arabs" and that he could recognize Sharif Hussein as the King of Arabia if the Arabs also accepted him. However, although there was no indication of leaving the Caliphate to Sharif, recognition as the Arab King would be seen by Sharif Hussein as a move in this direction.⁵⁰ Therefore, on March 3, 1924, when the news of Türkiye's abolition of the Caliphate was conveyed to Sharif

45 Mehmet Ali Büyükkara, *Suudi Arabistan ve Vehhabilik*, Rağbet Pbl., İstanbul, 2004. p. 89; Vassiliev, *Ibid.*, p.261.

46 Joshua Teitelbaum, "Pilgrimage Politics; The Haji and Saudi- Hashimate Rivalry 1916-1925", *The Hashimites in the Modern Arab World*, Ed. A. Susser, Ashumuelewitz, London, 1995, p.71

47 Büyükkara, *Ibid.*, p. 90; Haifa Alangari, *The Struggle for Power in Arabia, Ibn Saud, Hussein, Great Britain 1914-1924*, Garner Publishing Limited, 1998, p.229.

48 IOR/L/PS/10/881, File; 488/1920, Pt 3 "Hedjaz Relations Between H.M. Gov. & King Hussein, questions of Subsidy, Negotiations for Conslusion of a Treaty", No: TJ/221.

49 Polat, *Ibid.*, p.290.

50 Joshua Teitelbaum, "Taking Back" The Caliphate: Sharif Husayn Ibn Ali, Mustafa Kemal and The Ottoman Caliphate", *Die Welt des Islams*, New Series, Vol. 40, Issue 3, (Nov. 2000), p.421.

Hussein, who was in a troubled conversation with the British in Jordan, he took this opportunity and declared that he had taken over the Islamic Caliphate.⁵¹

Predictably, Sharif Hussein's declaration of his Caliphate at a time when British support for him was waning would have come as a shock to the Islamic world. Without detecting the trend in the Muslim World in general, he hastily proclaimed his Caliphate. This move placed a powerful weapon in the hands of the emir's enemies, especially Ibn Saud, and Indian Muslims countered Sharif Hussein's motives and reputation. In a flood of reactions, it was announced by these circles that Sharif Hussein's real plans finally came to light.⁵² He began to lobby heavily among Javanese and Indian Muslims to prevent this reaction in India. As a result of these efforts, although the Central Caliphate Committee was divided on whether to support Sharif Hussein's move, it would not be able to provide strong support among Muslims in general.⁵³ On the other hand, British intelligence reports stated that there was some support for Sharif Hussein from Aleppo, Damascus, Beirut and Palestine for the declaration of a Caliphate, and that the people of Jeddah preferred to remain silent, which disturbed the French.⁵⁴

Sharif Hussein's taking of such a step at this chaotic stage, when Britain was trying to gather the parties around a table for the Kuwait Conference, caused Ibn Saud to take action against him and also caused the reaction of the British.⁵⁵ To the British, the proclamation of the Caliphate was an untimely and extremely unnecessary step. However, despite this proclamation, Sharif Hussein waited for help from his British friends to conclude his negotiations with Britain in the way he wanted during this period when the reaction against him was at its peak. Although he could not find help, he was met in these circles with sarcasm and called "*a troublemaker*".

While these developments were taking place in the Hejaz, the British Government was calculating how a change of administration in the Hejaz could change the balances in the region. According to British officials, the time had come for Hejaz to change, and it would be in British interests. This impression was received in most of the meetings with Ibn Saud since 1916.

After the meeting in Riyadh, Ibn Saud waited for news from the governors of the Islamic countries while he worked out ways of delaying a possible military operation on the grounds of the approaching Hajj season.⁵⁶ As a matter of fact, an invasion attempt on Hedjaz in this season could have eventually turned into an explicit and unavoidable massacre. For this reason, and confirming the predictions of the British authorities, Ibn Saud postponed the invasion attempt until after the Hajj season.

51 Teitelbaum, "Taking Back...", p. 423; Teitelbaum, "Sharif Husayn...", p.117.

52 Antonius, *Ibid.*, pp.262-263.

53 Paris, *Ibid.*, p.339.

54 Paris, *Ibid.*, p.338.

55 Freitag, *Ibid.*, p.79.

56 Büyükkara, *Ibid.*, p.91.

Nonetheless, British authorities reported to London that the Ikhwan forces were in a state of movement, addressing Taif since the beginning of August. Furthermore, a comprehensive report sent to London on September 21, 1924 by Bullard, the British Consul in Jeddah, mentioned that a significant number of Ikhwan troops who left Riyadh on August 1 arrived at the frontiers of Taif on August 31. This information caused an atmosphere of panic in the city and its rulers tried to appease the panic-stricken people. However, when the news asserting that the Suwaihit Palace located to the north-east of Taif was captured by the Ikhwan troops and was set on fire reached Mecca in the first days of September, all Hedjaz government officials, particularly Sharif Hussein, began to worry. This was a clear indication that Ibn Saud had launched the invasion of Hijaz. After the Ikhwan raids reached Taif, Sharif Hussein immediately sent a message to Bullard and asked what steps should be taken *"in the face of such an explicit hostility"*.⁵⁷ Following the message sent by Sharif Hussein, Britain not only started making plans on how to proceed against the invasion but also immediately took certain steps to ensure the safety of British citizens in Hedjaz by negotiating with both Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein from whom they sought some guarantees. Sharif Hussein, upon request by Britain, stated that they had four aircrafts and he assured Britain that these aircrafts would protect foreigners along with the citizens of Hedjaz. This assurance, however, did not reassure Bullard, so much so that he reported in a letter to London that the situation in the region was extremely sensitive and that Sharif Hussein had no strong mechanism to prevent this attack.⁵⁸ With his last move, Ibn Saud made it clear that he had chosen Taif as his primary target.

Taif had a strategic significance concerning the invasion of Hedjaz. Surrounded by walls during the Ottoman period, Taif was strategically located on the high plains to the southeast of Mecca at the crossroads of historical trade routes connecting Mecca, Asir and the Yemen highlands.⁵⁹ The city supplied the majority of the fruit and vegetable demands of Mecca and it was also popular as a summer resort for the people of Mecca.⁶⁰

In the first days of September, the arrival of the Ikhwan forces at the frontiers of Taif had such a significance that the people of the city fell into a great panic and attempted to leave the city. However, both the Taif District Governor and Ali, the son of Sharif Hussein, who was in the city at the time, stopped this attempt. Instead, they reassured the people of Taif, who were only protected

57 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.328.

58 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.329.

59 İsmail Köse, *Şerif Hüseyin*, İstanbul, Kronik Pbl., 2020, p. 171; David Howarth, *The Desert King Ibn Saud and His Arabia*, McGraw- Hill Book Company London, 1964, p.146.

60 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.330.

by 1,200 trained soldiers, that they would make a deal with the Wahhabis to prevent occupation of the city and so there was no need to evacuate the city.⁶¹ Despite providing these suggestions to the public, Amir Ali realized that the city could not be defended by the small number of forces brought from Yemen and Medina, and so he initially withdrew his forces from Taif to Hadah and then from there to Arafat. This move left the people of Taif completely defenseless and Ikhwan troops took control of Taif without any resistance in the first week of September.⁶²

The Wahhabis attempted great looting and massacres in Taif, which surrendered to the Ikhwan raids in a short time. The Wahhabis, who looted homes and workplaces, put the sword to anyone who showed any form of resistance or who tried to prevent the looting. They massacred about 500 to 700 people in a 17-hour period, regardless whether they were women, elderly or children, causing great panic in Mecca, Medina and Jeddah, which were also under the shadow of the occupation.⁶³

When Sharif Hussein heard of the massacre that took place in Taif, he immediately made an announcement of the persecution to the world. Furthermore, he protested the Wahhabis through the consulates of European states in Jeddah. In the telegrams he sent to the Islamic world, Sharif Hussein cited Ibn Saud and the Ikhwan troops as those responsible for this massacre. In all his messages, Sharif Hussein shouted out that the situation had become unacceptable, and he called on the world to stop Ibn Saud as soon as possible.⁶⁴

Upon the worsening situation in Hedjaz, the Jeddah consuls of Iran, Holland, France and Britain sent a joint ultimatum to the Wahhabis, demanding that their people not be harmed during the occupation. Ibn Saud responded positively to this request and assured that the people of these states would not be harmed.⁶⁵ Following this assurance provided by Ibn Saud, the Bullard

61 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p. 331; FO 371/11446, No. 3451, Report by Munshi Ihsanullah Entitled "Attacak on Taif", 14 September 1924.

62 *Times*, 17 September 1924.

63 FO 371/11446, No. 3451, Report by Munshi Ihsanullah Entitled "Attack on Taif", 14 September 1924.

64 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.333.

65 In the letter signed by Ibn Saud, which was delivered to the Consuls of the relevant states, the following statements were included: "Your letter has been received and duly noted. We, Arabs, have no possessions regarding your property or your subjects. Our aim is to fight those who stand between us and the Kaaba, which Allah granted us as a reward and as a shelter for people. The Kaaba is the honor of all Arabs and we will dedicate our property and our lives to its protection. Mecca and its people will be safe from harm, both materially and personally. We have no intention of attacking Jeddah and its environs. Please, let us know in case there is an attack or damage to any part of the city and we will prevent it." IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.145.

sent an Indian envoy named Yasin Khan to Mecca to ensure that the British pilgrims were not harmed and he made attempts to inform Sharif Hussein of the situation. In such a position where Mecca was under a clamp, Sharif Hussein repeated his previous assurance and guaranteed that foreign national pilgrims would be protected. However, Sharif Hussein was unable to ensure the security of foreign nationals or their own subjects at the time.⁶⁶

Meanwhile, Bullard continued to report the events in Taif to London. Bullard initially sent telegrams stating that there was no massacre in Taif and that he did not care much about the seriousness of the attack.⁶⁷ However, he began to send more detailed intelligence reports to London when he later confirmed how ruthless the Wahhabis were from the intelligence he received from the field and from the testimonies of witnesses. In his report dated September 21, Bullard mentioned the situation with Sharif Hussein after providing an overview about what happened in Taif and he further reported that Sharif took action to ensure a strong defense around Mecca after desperately applying to them for help. In addition, contrary to this news from Taif, Bullard reported that the fall of Taif had not caused much panic among the people of Hedjaz and Jeddah and he further mentioned that the people of this region “...rather considered the war as a personal struggle between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein and also an opportunity to get rid of Sharif...”. He also believed that the people of Hedjaz thought that this was a good opportunity to dethrone Sharif Hussein.⁶⁸

Bullard’s report was served to London on October 6, while Ikhwan troops advanced towards Mecca. The report was referred to the relevant department after a detailed analysis by Victor Mallet, the second secretary of the eastern department of Foreign Affairs, who did not like Sharif Hussein at all. Mallet was just one of the Foreign Affairs staff angered by Sharif Hussein for not signing a draft treaty with Britain and he was of the opinion that as long as the Wahhabi attacks did not pose a threat to Mecca, Sharif Hussein should be allowed to learn from them. However, he also believed that if Mecca was plundered, it would be met with horror in India as well.⁶⁹

66 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, No. 16, British Agent, Jeddah to Mr. MacDonald enclosing report, 21 September 1924.

67 DBFA, Vol. 4, p.173.

68 Bullard hated Sheriff Hussein and majority of his reports were filled with condescending expressions that demeaned the Sheriff. For this reason, it should not be forgotten that the intelligence provided by Bullard stating that the fall of Taif and the news about the massacre in Taif were perceived by the people of Hedjaz as an opportunity to get rid of Sharif Hussein were rather exaggerated and reactive. For the full text of the report, pls see: IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, “Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein”, pp. 328-333; Meanwhile, according to the Times reporter from Alexandria, Ibn Saud did not attack Mecca immediately partly because he believed the tribes on his way were strongly loyal to Sharif Hussein and partly because he was anxious about the security of the lines of communication. Times, 17 September 1924.

69 Paris, *Ibid.*, p.340.

Parallel to Mallet's assessments, Foreign Affairs officials expressed the opinion that urgent measures should be taken to stop the advancing Wahhabi forces, which would greatly disturb the Muslim world. Accordingly, an urgent meeting was held with officials from the colonial office. At the meeting, it was argued that Sharif Hussein's power over Ibn Saud had decreased considerably compared to 1919 and opinions were presented on the concrete steps that the British Government should take against Ibn Saud's progress. Some of the Foreign Affairs officials advocated for stopping Ibn Saud's troops with the British air force, while other officials such as Young and Oliphant advised the Government to wait without taking any action. Tyrrell, the Undersecretary of State for Foreign Affairs, stated that he was against a military intervention and argued that the intervention of the air force in the incident would do nothing but strengthen the Sharif Hussein regime. MacDonald, who simultaneously assumed the roles of Prime Minister and Foreign Affairs Minister, argued that British intervention should only consider ensuring the security of the people of the region and any other intervention would harm the position of the British in the region.⁷⁰

Therefore, these views, which came to the fore at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, were served to Mecca through the Jeddah Consulate at a time when Sharif Hussein requested help from Britain. The message delivered to Sharif Hussein on September 29 primarily emphasized that the British Government never abandoned its policy of helping to promote peace and friendship among the rulers in Arabia. Furthermore, it was clearly stated that the British Government "...had no intention of getting involved in any conflict between the parties regarding the holy places of Islam...". The British Government further stated in the message that they could act as a mediator, like in the Kuwait conference, if the parties agreed.⁷¹ Thus, in the current conflicts, Britain preferred to "remain neutral for the time being" unlike the Hurma Village and Turaba conflicts in 1919, in which Britain explicitly favored Sharif Hussein. The troubled relations with Sharif Hussein, which were ongoing since 1920, had a great impact on the British Government's adoption of such a policy. British Prime Minister MacDonald expressed his government's policy against Sharif Hussein by the proverb "you reap what you sow".⁷²

In London, the government seemed to have decided on the future of Sharif Hussein and the Hejaz. Ibn Saud saw this and immediately acted. Thus, at this stage, the following questions may come to mind. According to the strategy pursued by the British Government during the years of war, Sharif Hussein was supported. However, even though the equation changed after the war and it was known that Sharif Hussein would not agree to a treaty with Britain for the

70 FO 371/10012, No. 6751, 9 September 1924

71 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.196.

72 Paris, *Ibid.*, p.341.

future of Arab lands, which the British wanted, why did Britain support Sharif Hussein in the Battles of Hurma Village and Turaba? Why did Ibn Saud not allow him to capture the Hejaz at an earlier date? The first point that needs to be addressed here is undoubtedly the fact that Britain had not yet seen the results of the basic moves that would affect the shaping of the Middle East as of 1919-1920. The decisions of the Paris Peace Conference, which would have a profound impact on the future of the region, had not been revealed, it was clear how to proceed with the French regarding Syria and Mosul, and rebellions arose against the British and French administrations in many regions of the Middle East, especially in Egypt, and in the Iraqi and Trans-Jordanian states established in the Middle East under the leadership of Sharif Hussein's sons Faisal and Abdullah were not yet revealed. However, Ibn Saud's struggle with the Shammar tribe was still ongoing. In other words, chaos was still ongoing in the Middle East with the consequences of the war, and uncertainty was manifesting itself in almost every region except the Hejaz. Therefore, with all these elements, Britain's interests outweighed Sharif Hussein to be tolerated a little more in the Hejaz. Another issue is whether the British wanted to sign a treaty with Sharif Hussein? Or did they use these talks as an excuse to end Sharif Hussein's rule in the Hejaz? The available British documents revealed that the British administration made a lot of effort to reach an agreement with Sharif Hussein. Between 1920 and 1924, the British repeatedly sent a delegation to Sharif Hussein, but they were unable to acquiesce him. Moreover, the British government, although financially supporting the Hejaz administration, made intense efforts to have Sharif Hussein accept the articles it specifically identified in the treaty. These articles were completely contrary to what Sharif Hussein demanded in the order to be established in the post-war Middle East. Sharif Hussein insisted on one thing: keeping the promises Britain made to him during the war. He repeatedly conveyed to London that he would only sit down with England to keep these promises. However, there was something in this equation that Sharif Hussein had forgotten, which was that he still saw himself as indispensable to England. Sharif Hussein portrayed himself as a man of the cause against Britain.

Meanwhile, while these calculations were being made against Sharif Hussein in London, the Indian Office was also seriously concerned about the advance of the Wahhabi forces towards Mecca. A possible looting or conflict was known to cause an outrage among the Muslims of India. Although Sharif Hussein's proclamation of himself as the Caliph caused an outrage among Indian Muslims, the invasion of Mecca by the Wahhabis could have triggered further problems among Muslims that were not yet foreseen.⁷³

The officials of the Indian Office were correct in their concerns. As a matter of fact, in a letter delivered to the British Prime Minister with the

73 IOR/L/P&S/10/112425, No: 9866, 25 September 1924.

signature of Shavket Ali, the Chairman of the Central Caliphate Committee, in Delhi on October 4, the British were warned that interference by the British or any other power in the sacred lands of Islam would not be welcomed among the Muslims of India. The committee held the view that non-Muslim states should not be involved in Hijaz affairs or in the conflict between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein.⁷⁴

Likewise, in the letter delivered by the Mumbai Muslim League to the British Prime Minister on October 9, it was stated that any intervention in Hejaz affairs by a non-Muslim state would cause hurt and anger and it was suggested that a conference should be organized with the participation of representatives of Muslims from all over the world to solve the problems between Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein.⁷⁵ Meanwhile, some Muslim representatives in Cairo believed that a commission comprised of Muslim representatives should step in to solve the problem.⁷⁶ Therefore, considering these warnings from India, the British Government closely followed the progression of the Wahhabis and implemented a policy of "sitting on the fence".

While London tried to adopt a policy that would contribute towards a solution to the problem, a delegation of Hedjaz leaders held a meeting with Amir Ali in Jeddah on October 3. At the meeting, which was held to the best knowledge of Sharif Hussein, Amir Ali stated that the situation was desperate and a change of management was necessary.⁷⁷ After the meeting, the delegation contacted Sharif Hussein directly and demanded that he abdicate in favor of his son Amir Ali.⁷⁸ Sharif Hussein requested that another person be proposed in his place at first and declared that he would accept anyone other than Ali as his successor. Sharif believed that the succession of his son Ali would not prevent the Wahhabi danger. In fact, Amir Ali also refused the delegation's request to take his father's place despite their insistence. He believed that Ibn

74 IOR/L/PS/10/1125, File: 3665/1924, Pt-2-4, "Hejaz-Nejd Situation", p.124.

75 IOR/L/PS/10/1125, File: 3665/1924, Pt-2-4, "Hejaz-Nejd Situation", p.110.

76 IOR/L/PS/10/1125, File: 3665/1924, Pt-2-4, "Hejaz-Nejd Situation", p.98.

77 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.175.

78 In the telegram delivered to Sharif Hussein current situation was described as follows: "*The situation is desperate and frankly there is no time for negotiation. We beg, in the name of humanity, His Majesty's abdication as a measure to stop the shedding of innocent Muslim blood and allowing both sides to form an interim government*". After these mutual correspondence, Sharif Hussein replied the delegation who was pretended to be acting on behalf of the people of Hedjaz as follows: "*No objection. I have already announced you that I will agree, with a great pleasure, to abdicate and that I have no wish other than the tranquility, prosperity and happiness of the country. Now that you should appoint some officials to take over the country and the administration and I'm going to abdicate immediately. However, you will be responsible for any undesirable event that may occur if the transfer process is delayed. There are several talented people you act with. Appoint any one or another of them. In this context, if my son Amir Ali accepts the position you have proposed, then appoint him accordingly.*" IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.178.

Saud would reject this change of reign as a compromise. However, a four-person group formed by the members of the delegation under the chairmanship of the Governor of Jeddah began to pressurize Ali. This group also expressed to Ali that they would ask the British to take over the protection of Hedjaz to prevent Ibn Saud's invasion of Mecca if he did not accept the mission. The members of the delegation also informed Bullard of the situation on the same day and they asked him to contact London for instructions in case they could not persuade Ali to accept the post upon the abdication of Sharif Hussein.⁷⁹ In response to this request, Bullard confidently provided an extremely meaningless answer stating that London was closely following the developments but that his government was interested in ensuring the tranquility and welfare of the people of Hedjaz over governing Hedjaz. Thus, Britain had once again demonstrated that it did not want to be involved in this issue in any way. After this reply from Bullard, the members of the delegation applied to Amir Ali again the next day, October 4, and renewed their offer for him to take over the reign. Upon these pressures, Ali informed the members of the delegation that he agreed to take his father's place that afternoon and the delegation immediately wrote a letter to Ibn Saud, rejecting Sharif Hussein's reign and offering to negotiate to find a solution to the problems.⁸⁰

79 In their letter to Bullard, members of the delegation wrote the following:

"Taking into consideration the current situation of the country, we would like to inform you that all the people of Hedjaz want King Hussein to abdicate on the grounds of the continued mistakes of the administration, the danger that surrounds us on all sides and the proven impotence of the central government. In this way, it will be possible to take the necessary steps to ensure the security of the country, give an end to the slaughter of innocent victims and to negotiate with the interlocutors. However, King Hussein refuses to abdicate and has repeatedly stated that he will not accept our request. Therefore, we feel obliged to inform you that he is personally responsible for everything that will further happen to the country and its inhabitants. However, human rights require an intervention to protect the rights of the innocent and conclude an agreement with Amir Saud that will guarantee the security of both the lives and the property." IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.177.

(In fact, Sharif Hussein was willing to abdicate and the available correspondence had supported this fact. The claims of the members of the Delegation asserting to Bullard that Sharif Hussein did not want to abdicate did not correspond with the truth. It was Sharif Hussein who, in fact, asked Amir Ali to meet with the members of the delegation and who directed the Delegation Members to Bullard to find a solution. (RY)

80 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p. 175; In fact, it was Amir Faisal who first suggested Sharif Hussein to abdicate in favor of his son Ali by the end of September. Faisal thus sought to appease Ibn Saud. Faisal, his brothers Abdullah and Zayd and Abdul Malik al-Hitap, the Hedjaz agent in Cairo, had planned a conspiracy to overthrow Sharif Hussein a year ago. When the British intelligence revealed this plan, the situation was then referred to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. However, Ministry officials refused to implement this plan, as the British Government did not want to be involved in such a conspiracy. For Allenby's plan, see. FO 371/8940, No. 3546, 29 December 1923, p. 164; For Faisal's plan, see. FO 371/10014, No. 4567, 24 September 1924, pp. 55-56; For the British Foreign Affairs Office's rejection of the plan, see. FO 371/10014, No: 9866, 29 September 1924, pp.70-71.

Sharif Hussein then understood that he had his back against the wall. Resigning the throne was also his last move to salvage the situation. Britain had explicitly declared that it would not side with him. Furthermore, he had ordered his small army to stop the Wahhabi attacks, but it was short of ammunition and had to constantly retreat from the Ikhwan forces. The people of Hedjaz then turned their backs on him by explicitly declaring that they did not want his reign.

In fact, the prominent leaders of the Hedjaz made efforts to bring Ibn Saud and Sharif Hussein together, to no avail. In these meetings, Ibn Saud unequivocally stated that Sharif Hussein should resign. Hence, this uncompromising attitude of the Saudi leader caused the people of Hedjaz to renounce Sharif Hussein completely as a last move.

Consequently, Sharif Hussein abdicated on October 4, with his son Ali accepting the post. His abdication was then communicated by telegram, with the signature of Rahman Serag, the Deputy Prime Minister of Hedjaz, to all relevant units and the capitals of some states on the same day. The National Party of Hedjaz (al-Hizb al-Vatani al-Hedjazi), constituted by the notables of Hedjaz,⁸¹ also issued a statement announcing to the whole world that "...The people of Hedjaz decided to appoint Amir Ali as the King of Hejaz, on the condition to fully comply with the resolutions regarding the rights and interests of the holy places of the entire Islamic World...".⁸² Thus, Amir Ali became the King of Hedjaz based on constitutional rights without claiming that he was the Caliph.⁸³ The new King took his throne in this extremely painful agenda of the Hedjaz and days before the Ikhwan troops entered Mecca.

In a letter delivered to the British Government, Bullard recommended that the British Government treat Amir Ali as the de facto head of Government so not to recognize him officially. While making this recommendation, Bullard thought that Ibn Saud would not accept the Hashemites who remained in Hedjaz and under no circumstances would Amir Ali be fully approved by the people of the region. Bullard had a negative view of Amir Ali, just as he did of Sharif Hussein, and said that "*more stubborn his father is, more unstable and weak Ali is*". The British Government listened to this recommendation of Bullard and never recognized Amir Ali as the King of Hedjaz.⁸⁴

The people of Hedjaz had the expectation that Ibn Saud would stop if Sharif Hussein abdicated. In an article published in the Times, which evaluated this expectation, it was stated that, contrary to popular belief, Sharif Hussein's abdication would not stop Ibn Saud and "*...the fate of Hedjaz and the Dynasty thereof is in the hands of the brave and ambitious leader of Central Arabia...*".⁸⁵

81 Paris, *Ibid.*, p. 343.

82 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.179.

83 IOR/R/15/5/36, Telegram From British Consul, Jeddah to Foreign Office, London and Telegram Despatch of Same Date, 4 October 1924.

84 Paris, *Ibid.*, p.344.

85 *Times*, 22 October 1924.

The situation in Hedjaz at the time was indeed as it was assessed by the Times. Ikhwan troops were still moving towards Mecca. The British Government tried to follow the progression of the Wahhabis based on intelligence acquired from the field. The reports Bullard sent to London had great significance in this sense. As a matter of fact, in the report sent from Jeddah on October 11, Bullard reported that the Ikhwan troops had gathered in Arafat and that they were really close to taking over Mecca. Bullard stated that the people of the city were hopeful that the Wahhabis would treat the people well if they captured Mecca, however, uneasiness was still at its highest level. Bullard, who provided detailed information on a possible evacuation plan with regard to the British and foreign pilgrims from Mecca in such a situation, asserted in his report that a ship was kept ready in Jeddah for evacuation purposes if needed.⁸⁶ Ibn Saud ordered the Ikhwan troops to stop at Arafat. For the looting and massacre in Taif not to be repeated in Mecca, Ibn Saud ordered Khalid Ibn Luway, the commander of the Ikhwan troops, not to advance to Mecca without his knowledge.⁸⁷ Hence, the Ikhwan troops awaited instructions from Ibn Saud.

The people of Mecca, particularly the merchants, were afraid.⁸⁸ All the shops in the Bazaar were shut down days in advance. Bullard stated in his reports that the British had evacuated 8000 Indian-born British citizens in the days prior to writing.⁸⁹ However, public order in the city deteriorated and the city's rabble and the poor had taken advantage of the opportunity and began to loot government offices. The news that Sharif Hussein was leaving the city began to spread, thereupon a significant portion of the people of Mecca started to evacuate from the city and took to the roads to Jeddah.⁹⁰

Despite all the precautions taken, the people of Hedjaz expected that that the British Government would not allow Ibn Saud to completely seize Hedjaz and that they would "put a brake" on him at some point. The Hedjaz people were worried that the upcoming events would completely destroy the financial prosperity of Hedjaz "if no lines were drawn for Ibn Saud". In addition, it was stated in Arab circles that Britain would have had to act anyway if an Anglo-Hedjaz Treaty was signed between Sharif Hussein and Britain.⁹¹

When the British decided to close the Hashemite issue in Hedjaz, Sharif Hussein left Mecca and arrived in Jeddah on October 9. A vessel, belonging to the Hashemite Kingdom, which allowed him to leave Jeddah as soon as possible, waited at the port. However, Sheriff Hussein delayed his departure, expecting that, as Bullard put it forward, he would regain the throne.

86 For the full text of the report, see. IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", pp.174-179.

87 Büyükkara, *Ibid.*, p.92.

88 Alangari, *Ibid.*, p.244.

89 T.E. Lawrence, *Evolution of a Revolt*, Rodelle Weintraub, London 1968, p.68.

90 Büyükkara, *Ibid.*, p.92.

91 *Times*, 15 October 1924.

When the newly crowned King Ali arrived in Mecca on October 6, he sent letters to Ibn Saud through envoys to conclude an agreement. However, on October 12, Ibn Saud's representatives did not take Ali's proposals seriously, tore up the letters and arrested the envoys. There were no Hashemite forces in sight to stop the Ikhwan troops affiliated to Ibn Saud. Ibn Saud was rather determined, and Amir Ali, after realizing this determination, evacuated his troops from Mecca on October 12 to prevent bloodshed. Two days later, on October 14, Ikhwan forces occupied Mecca without encountering any resistance.⁹² Thus, after a period of close to a century, Mecca was once again taken over by the Saudis.⁹³ The Ikhwan troops, while having the necessary weapons at hand, did not engage in any looting within the framework of strict instructions of Ibn Saud. Despite these instructions, they destroyed all religious structures and cemeteries that contradicted Wahhabi teaching. The houses where Hz. Muhammad and Hz. Fatima were born along with the prayer place of the Prophet were among the places that were destroyed. The Wahhabis also destroyed musical instruments, mirrors and valuables in Mecca that contradicted their teachings.⁹⁴

Mecca was now completely under the control of the Ikhwan troops and they expected Ibn Saud to arrive in the city. King Ali retreated to Jeddah together with his forces. Two days before his arrival in Mecca, Ibn Saud issued a declaration addressing the people of Mecca and Jeddah where he tried to intimidate them. In this declaration, Ibn Saud specifically stated that he had no intention to occupy Hedjaz or to establish dominance over the people of the region and that he did not harbor any hostility towards them. He further stated that he would not allow Hussein and his sons to establish dominance over Hedjaz. Ibn Saud also stated that the Muslim world would decide on the form of government to be established in Hedjaz. He terrorized Hussein and his supporters saying that: *"Whoever abandons his devotion to Sharif and his sons, both his life and property will be under the protection of Allah; however whoever helps Hussein and his sons oppression and injustice by following a path other than the Muslims, we will not be responsible for the damage they may suffer in our attainment of the holy purpose in front of all Muslims."*⁹⁵

92 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p. 142; IOR/L/PS/10/1124, Concul Bullard, Jeddah to Foreign Office, London enclosing Jeddah Report for Period 11-20 October 1924.

93 *Times*, 12 January 1926.

94 J.B. Philby, *Sa'udi Arabia*, London 1955, p. 288; Gray Troeller, *The Brith of Saudi Arabia*, Routledge Taylor&Francis Group, Newyork, 2013, p.219.

95 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.79.

2. Ibn Saud's Invasion of Jeddah and Ending the Hashemite Rule in Hedjaz

Simultaneously, when Mecca was captured by Saudi forces, Sharif Hussein left the port of Jeddah on a vessel named "Rakmatain"⁹⁶ and reached Aqaba on October 17. He was welcomed in the port by Britain's Amman representative A.L. Kirkbride.⁹⁷

Kirkbride, in line with the instructions he was given, had a meeting with King Abdullah of Jordan before welcoming Sharif Hussein. King Abdullah was quite worried about the recent events in Hedjaz. He wanted to clear the uncertainty on his father's condition after he abdicated. King Abdullah, who seemed upset at the meeting, thought that the British authorities would allow his father to reside in Amman. After Kirkbride stated that it was not possible at the time to meet this demand, King Abdullah confessed, albeit bitterly, that Britain's alienation from its Arab friends had pushed them towards great uncertainty and "...he regretted not to be loyal to the Turks at this stage of the war...".⁹⁸ The British believed that the residence of his father, Hussein, in the Arabian Peninsula would disturb the new administration in Hedjaz. Although the British did not have any contact with Ibn Saud on this issue, it was clear from the messages provided to the people of Hedjaz that Ibn Saud would not allow this either.

Kirkbride had a long meeting with Hussein, who had just arrived in Aqaba in the afternoon. Sheriff Hussein expressed his frustration when he was told that the British Government would host him in Aqaba until he decided on where to go next and stated that the British were responsible for the developments. He was convinced that Britain had time to rectify the situation. He believed that the British were still loyal friends of the Hashemite family and he expressed that he was seeking reconciliation to correct the problems between them. Despite Hussein's statements, Kirkbride explained that he was not assigned to consult with him on such matters. London's position was firm and its decision regarding the Hashemite family would not be reconsidered. When Hussein realized its stance on the matter, he helplessly considered to stay in Aqaba until he decided on his permanent place of residence. After this decision, his son King Abdullah sent the necessary number of tents to the port of Aqaba and tried to ensure his father's comfort.⁹⁹

Meanwhile, Faisal, with the permission of the British Government, made an attempt to convince his father to take up a conditional residence in

96 *Times*, 14 October 1924.

97 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.116.

98 FO.686/130, Record of A.L Kirkbride's interview with Amir Abdullah on 17 October 1924; IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.116.

99 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", pp.116-122

Basra. Throughout his term of residence, Hussein would not be involved in local politics and would obey the laws. However, this proposal was also rejected. Hussein's messages delivered from Aqaba to Jeddah, in which he still considered himself the "*Head of the Hashemite Administration*", had been obtained by London through intelligence reports. Sharif Hussein, even while in exile in Aqaba, acted like the head of government and tried to encourage the movement of resistance by providing his son Ali with new directives to ensure that Jeddah did not fall into the hands of Ibn Saud.¹⁰⁰

Despite the determination of the British Government, neither Sharif Hussein nor his sons wanted to despair of London. So much so that on October 20, three days after his father's arrival in Aqaba, King Ali asked Naji al-Assil, the representative of the Hejaz in London, to write a letter to the British Foreign Affairs Office to request help. In this letter, al-Assil referred to the agreement between Sharif Hussein and Britain, which turned into a snake story that was not accepted by Hussein, and called for the conclusion of the unfinished negotiations as well as for the enforcement of the treaty. Al-Assil, who also made assessments of the situation at the time, noted that Ibn Saud did not respond to King Ali's proposal of peace and further suggested that this would eventually lead Hedjaz into chaos. Al-Assil, who considered it a great mistake that the British Government accepted the problem as a religious issue and did not intervene therein, thought that Wahhabism was a simple Bolshevik-style political movement, which was contrary to the understanding of Islam. Al-Assil, who stated that the lives and property of thousands of innocent women and men were left at the mercy of an irresponsibly-acting dictator, which had nothing to do with British justice, claimed that King Ali evacuated the city to prevent the bloodshed of innocent people in Mecca and not because of the defeat. Adding that the situation had become extremely dangerous, al-Assil finally repeated that he did not ask the British to provide a simple favor, but he demanded instead that Britain take action, particularly for the conclusion of the Anglo-Hashimi Treaty. He also requested that Ibn Saud be expelled from Mecca and Taif to save the lives of thousands of innocent people.¹⁰¹ As stated earlier, Sharif Hussein's attitude was effective in not signing the treaty mentioned by al-Assil.

While al-Assil made these attempts in London, King Abdullah of Jordan in Amman wrote a letter to the Palestinian High Commissioner, Clayton, about Ibn Saud's attacks and asked about his father's condition. King Abdullah knew that Britain was the only force that could stop Ibn Saud and in his letter he was merely "*begging*" the high commissioner to ensure that Britain would intervene and restore the rights of the Hashemite Kingdom.¹⁰²

100 Köse, *Ibid.*, p. 183.

101 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", pp.232-236.

102 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.206.

Meanwhile, Faisal, the King of Iraq, chose a different method to his brother Abdullah to stop Ibn Saud. On October 26, Faisal contacted the British High Commissioner in Iraq and asked the London Government whether it would be appropriate to make an offer to Ibn Saud of organizing an Islamic Conference to resolve the conflict in Hedjaz. He also requested to invite some representatives of Islam from abroad to this conference, particularly the Kings of Egypt and Afghanistan. In fact, it was his brother Ali and the head of the Supreme Islamic Council of Jerusalem, who wanted Faisal to take the initiative of making such an offer. They expected, as a final move, that this proposal would stop Ibn Saud.¹⁰³

In the first week of November, it was conveyed to Faisal in polite terms that this request was not approved by the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Considering the Hashemite-Saudi conflict, the officials of the ministry were of the opinion that it would be more appropriate if the proposal to convene this conference was made by a person or organization not belonging to a Hashemite family and not by Faisal.¹⁰⁴ Therefore, with this move, Britain neutralized the final effort to stop Ibn Saud.

In fact, the idea of convening the conference was not new. Britain tried to reconcile the parties and to ensure peace at the Uqair and Kuwait Conferences, which were organized months ago, but these attempts could not yield any results due to the intransigent attitudes of both Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud. The call for an Islamic Conference, this time proposed by Faisal, could not take place at this stage, however, Ibn Saud later organized the conference with wide participation in Mecca in June 1926.

Following the capture of Mecca, the Ikhwan troops prepared to march to Medina and Jeddah as a final move. Meanwhile, Amir Ali expanded his troops to Jeddah and tried to strengthen its defense mechanism. Bullard, in his report to London, provided the intelligence that that Jeddah was surrounded by wires and wide trenches and its defenses were constantly being strengthened, that volunteer troops from Aqaba, Jordan, Palestine and Basra joined Ali's army with the initiatives of King Abdullah and Faisal, and that Ali had procured weapons and ammunition (and even aircrafts procured from Britain) from some European countries through Italy and had them shipped to the port of Jeddah. Bullard also stated in his report that, despite all these defense mechanisms, the people of Jeddah did not actually want to engage in a war with Ibn Saud and even those who took refuge in Jeddah from Mecca began to return on the grounds of fair treatment provided to the people of Mecca.¹⁰⁵ Jeddah was preparing for a long psychological war.

103 IOR/L/PS/10/1125, File: 3665/1924, Pt-2-4, "Hejaz-Nejd Situation", p.637.

104 IOR/L/PS/10/1125, File: 3665/1924, Pt-2-4, "Hejaz-Nejd Situation", pp.647-649.

105 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.3.

Ibn Saud wanted the operation in Jeddah to be completed without any problems. As Jeddah was the city where the consulates of the European States were located, he knew that any news of the massacre that would spread from the city to the world would not have favorable results for him. Therefore, he did not rush to seize Jeddah. He wanted to finalize the invasion under siege while breaking the resistance of the people.

The notables of Jeddah were in favor of handing over the city to the Ikhwan troops. Accordingly, they even sent a representative to Mecca at the end of October to learn about the conditions for surrendering the city of the Wahhabis. The Wahhabis only had one condition that they wanted the people of the city to fulfill: the surrender of Amir Ali or that he (forcefully) leaves the country. If this condition was met, they pledged that the people of Jeddah would have no reason to be afraid, that all officials would remain in charge, that the people of the city would be treated fairly, that Ikhwan troops would not enter the city for occupation and that the city would be governed by a council elected by the people of the city. However, if this condition was not met, Ikhwan troops would enter the city by force and treat the people as they did in Taif. The representative brought this news from Mecca. Therefore, when the people of the city visited Amir Ali and asked him to surrender the city and for him to leave the country, Amir Ali accepted this request without resistance and promised "... *that he will abdicate and leave the country if notified in writing...*". When Amir Ali's words were conveyed to Khalid bin Luwayi and Ibn Saud, the commanders of the troops besieging Jeddah, it was thought that it was only a matter of time before a victory was achieved in Jeddah. However, although Amir Ali promised in advance to stop the resistance, he later decided to not surrender and rather resist when he saw the volunteer units from Basra, Aqaba, Jordan and Palestine joining his forces.¹⁰⁶ This resistance movement would last for about a year.

The suggestions of the commanders around him, as well as from the joining volunteer units, were effective in helping Amir Ali make such a decision. The commanders had convinced him that the city was ready to resist and that they had enough ammunition for such resistance. He was also encouraged by his brothers King Abdullah and Faisal and in particular by his father Sharif Hussein in Aqaba. Their attempts for negotiating with Ibn Saud prevailed with international support and Amir Ali believed that these attempts could still yield results.¹⁰⁷

106 IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia-Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.100.

107 The British intelligence documents included some evaluations stating that the suggestions and efforts of a Turkish officer (whose name is not specified) who was in command were very effective in Emir Ali's decision to resist. Accordingly Amir Ali had structured the defense of Jeddah in accordance with the instructions and arrangements of this Turkish officer. IOR/L/PS/10/1124, File: 3665/1924, Pt 1, "Arabia- Situation 1924, Wahhabi Attack on Hedjaz, Capture of Taif& Defeat Hedjaz Army, Abdication of King Hussein", p.101.

When the siege of Jeddah began to prolong, the people of the city naturally began to suffer, particularly with health and food. The troops defending the city also began to encounter these problems. Bullard reported that the volunteer troops were experiencing health problems and that complaints about dysentery and malaria were common.¹⁰⁸

In the meantime, some consuls in Jeddah, in particular the France consul, tried to take some initiatives to achieve a reconciliation between Ibn Saud and Amir Ali despite the British Government's prevention attempts. Ibn Saud wrote a letter to the consuls in Jeddah on November 21, 1924 when he was informed of these attempts stating that he was aware of the attempts to establish peace, however, that it was not possible as long as Amir Ali remained in Jeddah. In his letter, Ibn Saud also warned the consuls, demanding them to either provide foreign citizens with a safe place to protect themselves inside or outside Jeddah or to send them back to Mecca. He promised that the safety of foreign nationals would be ensured in this way.¹⁰⁹ Ibn Saud also wrote another letter to all the consuls to be announced to the people of Jeddah, asking the people of the city to migrate to safe places or to Mecca or to capture and deport Amir Ali. Ibn Saud, thereby, planned to create a climate of fear and oppression over the people with the help of the consuls. However, this plan was not fulfilled and the letter was returned, in accordance with the neutrality policy followed by all consuls.¹¹⁰

Although a similar attempt was made by Philby, who was a close friend of Ibn Saud and who was his adviser for a period, by visiting Mecca, this attempt was blocked by the British Government through Bullard.¹¹¹

In the meantime, while Amir Ali, who was still trying to resist under the siege, sought reconciliation with Ibn Saud, Cox felt the need to warn the British Government to stop Ibn Saud. Cox was someone from the field and who had the opportunity to communicate with many people in Amir Ali's close circle, notably with Faisal and Fuad al-Hatip (the former Foreign Minister of the Hedjaz Government). In line with his conviction from these meetings, Cox believed that Amir Ali had agreed to compromise for reconciliation with Ibn Saud. Accordingly, after his father was dethroned, Amir Ali only dealt with the property of the Hedjaz and did not lay claim to Bişa, Hurma and Turaba. He was also expected to agree with the issues put forward by Ibn Saud at the Kuwait Conference regarding the borders of Hedjaz. Cox, after conveying these

108 IOR/R/15/5/37, File: 10/11, Ibn Sa'ud and The Hedjaz, p.122

109 In the letter sent jointly by the British, Italian, French, Dutch and Iranian Consulates in response to this letter of Ibn Saud on 2 December 1924, it was stated: "...We consider it necessary to remind you the need that our citizens should be respected. This war is based on the rules of international law that has always been in force therefore, we invite you, on behalf of our governments, to respect the personality and property rights of our citizens; otherwise you will be responsible for any event that our citizens may face, anywhere and anytime...". IOR/R/15/5/37, File: 10/11, Ibn Sa'ud and The Hedjaz, p.216.

110 IOR/R/15/5/37, File: 10/11, Ibn Sa'ud and The Hedjaz, p.216.

111 IOR/R/15/5/37, File: 10/11, Ibn Sa'ud and The Hedjaz, p.224.

points to the British Government, stated that the occupation of Hedjaz by the Wahhabis would be extremely inconvenient for Her Majesty's Government, and therefore the government officials should take the shortest possible steps to prevent further progress of Ibn Saud, while considering Amir Ali's request for reconciliation. Cox voiced the need for Ibn Saud to completely evacuate Hedjaz.¹¹² However, the urgent demands of Cox were not heard in London.

On December 5, 1924, while the siege of Jeddah and Medina was still prevailing, Ibn Saud arrived in Mecca and asked its people to pledge allegiance to him.¹¹³ Furthermore, on December 13, he issued a statement addressing the people of Mecca and the Islamic world declaring that a conference would be held with the participation of all Muslims of the world to decide on the management and the future of Hedjaz.¹¹⁴ Thereafter, with the elections held in Mecca in the same month, a council was formed under the chairmanship of Abd el-Kadir al-Shaibi consisting of 10 members. Hafiz Wahba was appointed as the Governor of Mecca and the new administration of Hedjaz was thus formed.¹¹⁵

As Hijaz welcomed the year 1925, the chaotic situation regarding the reconciliation efforts remained unclear. The Islamic World still thought that there could be a resolution between Amir Ali and Ibn Saud. In particular, the members of the Indian Caliphate Committee and the Supreme Islamic Council in Cairo made another unsuccessful attempt in February 1925 for this purpose. In April, this time, Al-Hatip met Ibn Saud in Mecca and again conveyed Amir Ali's request for reconciliation. Although Al-Hatip announced that Amir Ali had renounced many of the rights that the Hashemites had asserted at the Kuwait Conference, Ibn Saud did not agree to negotiate.¹¹⁶

In the hot summer months of 1925, the Ikhwan troops announced that the siege of Jeddah was suspended for a short time on the orders of Ibn Saud, but neither Amir Ali nor the people of Jeddah had much strength to resist anymore.¹¹⁷ There was severe famine in the city. As a matter of fact, when Clayton visited Amir Ali on October 9, 1925 in Jeddah, he recorded in his diary that Ali was both physically and psychologically depressed and further stated that the people of Jeddah were now waiting to surrender together with their soldiers. Clayton was also amazed that the Ikhwan troops had not captured the city while it was in this condition.¹¹⁸ In fact, he was authorized by the British Government to negotiate with Ibn Saud and on his way to Bahra he felt obliged to stop in Jeddah. When

112 IOR/L/PS/10/1125, File: 3665/1924, Pt-2-4, "Hejaz- Nejd Situation", pp.371-377.

113 Muhammed Ali Said, *Britanya ve Ibn-i Suud*, Translate: Mehmet Erkoç, Şura Pbl., İstanbul, 1990, p.50.

114 *Bulletin of International News*, Ibn Sa'ud and the Resurrection of the Wahhabi Power in Arabia, Vol. 3, No. 12, Jun. 1927, p.4.

115 Vassiliev, *Ibid.*, p.263.

116 Vassiliev, *Ibid.*, p.263.

117 Alangari, *Ibid.*, p.240.

118 Gilbert Falkingham Clayton, *An Arabian Diary*, Berkeley&Los Angeles, University of California Press, 1969, pp.92-95.

Clayton had an informal meeting with Amir Ali on October 9 together with Jordan and the new British consul assigned to Jeddah, he realized that the dangerous state of the siege was reflected in Amir's behavior. Since Clayton declared that he did not come to Jeddah for an official mission, no political or military issues were discussed in the meeting.¹¹⁹

Although the British Government declared its side as neutral in the Hashemite-Saudi conflict, Clayton was assigned to Hedjaz from Jerusalem by the British Government to sign a treaty between Ibn Saud and Britain. This sign was a clear indication that there was no point for Amir Ali to resist any further. While Jeddah and Medina were under siege, the British decidedly favored the Saudis with regard to the future of the Arabian Peninsula.

Clayton left Jeddah to meet Ibn Saud in a village called Bahra, located between Mecca and Jeddah, and he had the opportunity to see the final state of the siege while passing through Ikhwan troops besieging the city. In his notes, he reported that the surroundings of the city were destroyed due to the effect of the frequent bombardment and that the Ikhwan troops maintained a close blockade by holding the hills 5-6 miles away, while a few aircrafts under Amir Ali's command had been constantly flying and dropping bombs on these hills. However, as the aircrafts were flying too high, they could not damage or disturb the Ikhwan troops.¹²⁰

Clayton visited Ibn Saud's headquarters in Bahra on October 11 and personally negotiated with Ibn Saud to have a treaty signed by November 2. The main focus of the negotiations was the issue of determining the borders of Iraq and Jordan that could not be resolved at the Kuwait conference, which was where clashes with the Ikhwan forces still prevailed. During these negotiations, Ibn Saud agreed to make various concessions in determining the borders of Iraq and Jordan in return for the recognition of the acquisition of Hedjaz by Britain. Accordingly, the negotiations were concluded after the Treaties of Bahra and Al-Hadda were signed between the parties on November 1 and on November 2, respectively.¹²¹

Thus, the border between Iraq and Neced was determined with the Treaty of Bahra. Accordingly, this treaty, which essentially reiterated a provision of the Muhammara Treaty, not only regulated severe punishment for the perpetrators of the tribes who violated the border between the two sides, but also provided assurance that neither the Iraqi nor Neced forces would infringe the common borders using this as an excuse.¹²² The tribes were allowed to use the pastures and it was decided to establish a special court composed of representatives of both states to investigate the raids.¹²³

119 Clayton, *Ibid.*, p.92.

120 Clayton, *Ibid.*, p.94.

121 Vassiliev, *Ibid.*, p.263; Alangari, *Ibid.*, p.242.

122 Daniel Silverfarb, "Great Britain, Irak and Saudi Arabia: The Revolt of Ikwan, 1927-1930", *The International History Review*, Vol. 4, No. 2, May 1982, p.224.

123 Vassiliev, *Ibid.*, p.263.

Furthermore, the border between Najd and Jordan was determined with the Al-Hadda Treaty and it was decided to leave a large portion of the Sirhan Valley to the Najd Government.¹²⁴ In return for this concession, Ibn Saud allowed the creation of a corridor connecting Jordan to Iraq. In addition, it was decreed that the parties should refrain from creating religious propaganda on each other's lands and that a special court should be established for the prosecution of criminals by introducing a permission system to prevent tribes from border raids. Accordingly, the border conflict between Najd-Iraq and Najd-Jordan were also resolved in addition to the previously determined Kuwait-Najd border.¹²⁵ However, the terms regulated by these treaties, in which the British Government made great efforts to resolve the problems with Ibn Saud, did not last long and after a while the conflict continued on the border.

When Amir Ali learnt of the Bahra and Al-Hadda treaties, he understood that his days in power were numbered. There was no point in resisting any further. The British repeatedly stated that they would not help and his brothers King Abdullah and Faisal were also unable to provide adequate assistance. Unrest broke out among the Palestinian, Yemeni and Syrian soldiers, who did not receive salaries for months, and Amir Ali's reputation among his soldiers was shaken.¹²⁶ Having seen that conditions were worsening, Amir Ali desperately informed the British consulate that he wanted to negotiate terms for surrender with Ibn Saud. Amir Ali finally decided to surrender and end months of hard resistance. However, the news that arrived before the negotiations were initiated stated that there was only 12 days' worth of food stock left in Medina and that the city would surrender if no aid was delivered, further demoralizing Amir Ali. As it seemed impossible for Jeddah to send assistance to Medina in these conditions, the people decided to send a delegation to Ibn Saud for the surrender of the city. The people of the city demanded that Ibn Saud prevent the Ikhwan troops from entering Medina as they were afraid of a possible massacre and pillage that would occur during the surrender. Accepting the request, Ibn Saud sent his son Mohammed instead of the Ikhwan soldiers to take over Medina to prevent a massacre and pillage in the city. Finally, Mohammed Bin Saud entered the city on December 6, 1925, as agreed and ended the resistance by providing food aid to the starving people. Jeddah, too, surrendered on December 22 after the fall of Medina and the interim government that was formed was handed over the city to Ibn Saud a day later.¹²⁷ To prevent a possible negative situation, the British took Amir Ali to Aden on the day of the surrender of Jeddah by embarking on a vessel called "*Cornflower*". In fact, he declared that he wanted to reside in Palestine or London as a permanent residence, but the British did not allow this request; later he was sent to Baghdad upon Faisal's request.¹²⁸

124 Antonius, *Ibid.*, p.267.

125 Vassiliev, *Ibid.*, p.264; For the full text of both treaties, see: Clayton, *Ibid.*, pp.271-279.

126 Köse, *Ibid.*, p.196.

127 Antonius, *Ibid.*, p.268; Vassiliev, *Ibid.*, pp.264-265; Paris, *Ibid.*, p.345.

128 Köse, *Ibid.*, p.197.

Ibn Saud's complete domination of the Hedjaz region by capturing Jeddah made an overwhelming impression in Britain, as in the rest of the world. In an article titled "Ibn Saud's Victory" published in the Times Newspaper on December 23, the effects of the occupation on the Islamic world were mentioned and it was further explained that the practices of the Saudis in the holy places due to their Wahhabi belief caused concern for Muslims. The article also mentioned the exile of the Hashemite family, asserting that Sharif Hussein's son Amir Ali would eventually re-take the reign and that the Saudi Kingdom, established on an explosion of religious enthusiasm "...would not last forever..." and thus would not be permanent.¹²⁹

As Ibn Saud was now the ruler of the Hedjaz lands, he registered his authority in all Arabia. As a consequence of this annexation, Ibn Saud declared himself as the King of Hedjaz on July 8, 1926, and 10 weeks later Britain, France, Soviet Russia and The Netherlands declared that they recognized the new King.¹³⁰ Thus, the dawn of a new era had been opened in the Hedjaz region.

3. Exile of Sharif Hussein

Sharif Hussein closely followed the developments in Aqaba under British supervision. Both the British and Ibn Saud were extremely uncomfortable with Sharif Hussein being treated like the head of government in exile in Aqaba. As Aqaba was among Ibn Saud's possible targets, the British Government did not want to allow Sharif Hussein to reside in Aqaba any longer. In the first days of June 1925, when this situation was explained to him by Herbert Samuel, the High Commissioner of Palestine, Sharif Hussein lashed out and declared that he did not want to leave Aqaba. However, shortly before the fall of Jeddah, he bowed to the pressure from London. Sharif Hussein, who consented to leave Aqaba, requested first to travel to London to protect his reputation and later to agree with the destination that the British Government deemed appropriate for him after this visit. But the British Government vehemently denied this request.¹³¹ Finally, the British Government approved Cyprus as a permanent residence for Sheriff Hussein, who was then over 70 years old and whose demands were not accepted.¹³² The idea that Cyprus was the most convenient place for Ibn Saud

129 *Times*, 23 December 1925.

130 *Bulletin of International News*, "Ibn Sa'ud and the Resurrection of...", p. 5"; While all these events were going on, Soviet Russia was also closely following the developments in the region; they appointed Karim Kharimov as Jeddah Consul in August 1924. In his reports delivered from Jeddah to Moscow in October, the Russian Consul not only informed Russia that the new ruler of Hejaz would inevitably be Ibn Saud but also advised the Moscow Government to contact Ibn Saud without any delay. Kharimov believed that the British influence over Ibn Saud would be broken and this would help the Soviets to penetrate the region. Jhon Baldry, "Soviet Relations with Saudi Arabia and the Yemen 1917-1938", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 20, No. 1, Jan. 1984, pp.57-58.

131 Köse, *Ibid.*, p.191.

132 Howarth, *Ibid.*, p.149.

and where the British could keep Sharif Hussein under control had been voiced in London for a while. Sharif Hussein lived through a difficult time due to health problems in Cyprus, where he arrived in June 1925 with great disappointment, but the British did not allow him to leave the island until the last days of his life. British authorities rejected all demands of King Abdullah and Faisal in this regard. Sharif Hussein, who declared that he “*trusted the British more than his father*” while raising the flag of rebellion against the Ottoman Empire in 1916, was finally allowed to be taken to Amman on November 26, 1930, one year before his death. He was quite old and was suffering from serious health problems. He was now within the territories of an Arab State, but he did not live much longer. He was 83 years old when he died on June 4, 1931. He had a will that stated he was to be buried in Mecca, however, this will was not fulfilled and he was buried in the Harem-i Sharif in Jerusalem.¹³³

4. Ibn Saud’s Attempt to Strengthen His Rule in Hedjaz

Having completely ended Hashemite rule in Hedjaz, Ibn Saud first had to deal with problems that had for long been intertwined in Hedjaz. After all, he established a management system in Hedjaz that would meet the demands of the people and he granted the people of the region some privileges that were not applied in other parts of Arabia. The Wahhabis’ views on the people of Hedjaz, due to their strict sectarian understanding, changed over time in a positive way. In addition, Ibn Saud fought hard to implement various programs to prevent tribal behaviors such as hijacking, robbing of the pilgrims and rebellion against authority, particularly the ongoing bloody feuds between tribes, to ensure peace and security within the country. Ibn Saud had to implement some reforms timeously to correct the extremely difficult financial structure of the state and to improve the welfare of the people while implementing these regulations. He provided financial support from Britain to implement these reforms. Ibn Saud was, on one hand, dealing with all these internal issues, while, on the other hand, he had to wage an intense diplomatic struggle with his neighbors to make his authority dominant across all of Arabia. Furthermore, being recognized and accepted by the Muslims in other countries of the world as the ruler of the holy land of Islam was also considered as another of the most important issues that Ibn Saud had to overcome. He had already initially been subjected to intense criticism because he had seized the throne of the Hejaz without considering the wishes of Muslims in a broader framework. As a matter of fact, the Islamic Conference, which was convened in Mecca in June 1926, a few months after he declared himself the King of Hedjaz, by inviting delegates from the entire Islamic World, was primarily aimed at introducing him, his teachings and the policy of tolerance to the Muslim community.¹³⁴

133 For the exile years of Sharif Hussein, see, Köse, *Ibid.*, pp.193- 221.

134 Howarth, *Ibid.*, p. 156; For the congress work and reflections, see also. IOR/R/15/5/37, File: 10/11, Ibn Sa’ud and The Hedjaz, pp.567-571.

After capturing Hedjaz, Ibn Saud began to work on solving his problems with his neighbors in the Arabian Peninsula. The first problem was limited to the delimitation of the zones of domination and the establishment of friendly relations with his neighbors, in particular with the rulers of Asir and Yemen. Asir had a bad time since the death of Sayyid Muhammad, the founder and mainstay of the Idrisi Dynasty, in early 1923. Following the death of Sayyid Muhammad, disagreements arose between his heirs and other members of the family, a civil war broke out and in the commotion that reigned, the Imam of Yemen occupied a significant part of the coast, including the southern regions and the Port of al-Hudaydah. When Ibn Saud attacked the region, he asked for help from the ruling Idrisi on conditions that would give him control over Asir, but he avoided any intervention by acting wisely. As the conflicts progressed and the Imam seemed to be moving towards adding the whole of South Asir to his rule, Ibn Saud stepped in and signed a treaty with Idrisi that may be interpreted as accepting the patronage of the King of Hedjaz. With this treaty, Ibn Saud also took the first step towards completely capturing the region. Taking advantage of the internal conflicts that occurred in Asir, Ibn Saud continued his political pressure on the region and had the Asir Government sign another treaty that would officially bring Asir under his rule in 1930. Ibn Saud, who also found solutions to the existing problems with Yemen through various treaties over time, sat around a table with the Jordanian and Iraqi administrations under the supervision of the British to establish the northern border.¹³⁵ Significant steps were taken in this regard in the Bahra and al-Hadda treaties signed between Ibn Saud and Clayton, who acted on behalf of Iraq and Jordan, when Jeddah was under siege.

The treaty signed between Ibn Saud and Britain in 1927 undoubtedly had a significant impact on consolidating Ibn Saud's authority over the Peninsula. With the Treaty of Dareyn, which was most recently signed between the two sides in 1915, Britain had dominated its authority in Basra and Central Arabia. Ibn Saud was in favor of signing another treaty with Britain after the annexation of Hedjaz, that would be more permanent and without severe restrictive clauses, but also ensured the recognition of his independence. Similarly, the British Government was also ready to negotiate a treaty with Ibn Saud that would nullify the Treaty of 1915. Although conditions had drastically changed by 1925, Britain's interests in the Arabian Peninsula and the region had not changed. In this regard, Ibn Saud's friendship was still extremely important to Britain. Ibn Saud was no longer just a tribal chieftain who claimed sovereignty over the Najd region. It had borders with states such as Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait, whose territory was under the rule of the British mandate, and although oil had not yet been discovered in this country, it was close to oil wells in Iran and Iraq, which were of great importance to Britain. Failing to sign a treaty with Ibn Saud or to

135 Antonius, *Ibid.*, pp.265-266.

cooling the relations with Britain could have led Ibn Saud to turn to Italy and Soviet Russia, who also had ambitions for the region. It was obvious that Ibn Saud's close friendships, in particular with the Soviets, concerned the British.¹³⁶

Accordingly, a meeting was held in London on May 20, 1926, with the participation of officials from the Colonial Office, Foreign Affairs Office, Indian Office and Air Forces to sign a final treaty between the British Government and Ibn Saud. During the meeting, the recent developments in the Arabian Peninsula and the government's attitude towards these developments were discussed. At the meeting, government officials stressed that they were in consensus on signing a comprehensive treaty with Ibn Saud. However, it was decided to include several issues such as ensuring the security of Hajj; recognizing the British Government's position in Jordan, Iraq and Palestine by Ibn Saud; ensuring border security of these countries with Najd; and deciding whether financial support to Ibn Saud will be continued in the treaty and to negotiate them in this context.¹³⁷

Draft treaties, which appeared in the negotiations that began as of October 1926, were severally exchanged between the parties. Although the parties had difficulty in agreeing on the capitulations, in particular the British occupation of Aqaba and Maan, the status of the slaves in Arabia and the commercial interests of Britain in the region, the agreement of the needs by the parties from each other caused the conclusion of a treaty between the two sides in Jeddah on May 20, 1927. Although the duration of the original validity of this agreement, signed by Clayton on behalf of Britain and his son Faisal on behalf of Ibn Saud, was seven years, the validity of the treaty was later extended for two more terms with minor changes in 1936 and 1943 following the proclamation of the establishment of Saudi Arabia.¹³⁸

Ibn Saud had taken great advantage of this treaty at the time when Saudi Arabia was established and was considered a sovereign power over the Hedjaz, Najd and related regions. He was entitled to carry out foreign affairs, and political and commercial relations as well as to freely grant oil concessions. Ibn Saud further decided to take advantage of the opportunities provided by this treaty to improve his peaceful relations with the sheikhs on both the territories of Kuwait and Bahrain as well as on the coastlines of Qatar and Oman, and thereupon he found solutions to security problems on his borders. While having the power of a large and sovereign state such as Britain behind him in addition to being the absolute winner and ruler of Hedjaz, over time he managed to erase the negative image that had been formed against him in the Islamic World. Ibn Saud's efforts to bring the Ikhwan raids into line in the 1930s with the support of Britain had a

136 Daniel Silverfarb, "The Treaty of Jiddah of May 1927", *Middle Eastern Studies*, Vol. 18, No. 3, Jul., 1982, p.278.

137 Mustafa Bostancı, *Türkiye- Suudi Arabistan İlişkileri (1926-1990)*, TTK Pbl., Ankara, 2020, p.82.

138 Silverfarb, *Ibid.*, p.284.

great impact on erasing this negative image. Ibn Saud felt Britain's power while building a new state, establishing his authority inside and developing a network of foreign affairs.

Britain, which signed the treaty with various concessions, was also successful in maintaining its political and commercial sovereignty in the region for some time and in solving the border problems of the states under its mandate. Although its support for the Saudis had occasionally been disrupted throughout the establishment of a dynastic state on the Arabian Peninsula, British interests and the political reality in the region consequently allowed Ibn Saud to be recognized by London as the sovereign power of the region. The British placed intense pressure on Sharif Hussein to sign a similar treaty before, however, he did not consent to some articles of the treaty such as the Balfour Declaration and the recognition of the British mandate governments in the region, which prevented the signing of the treaty. This sign indicated to Britain that the time and tolerance granted to Hussein had expired. Learning from these unsuccessful negotiations, British diplomats did not include any of these articles in the treaty signed with Ibn Saud on the grounds that it would cause resentment among the Arabs and to avoid a second Sharif Hussein case. The articles of the treaty were identified to protect the dignity and sovereignty of Ibn Saud and to ensure that he was respected.

Owing to this treaty, the British had gained a loyal ally not only on the Persian coast, but throughout Central Arabia. The extension of the term of this treaty, signed in 1927, twice in the following years was a clear indication of this loyalty. However, this alliance of solidarity was not indefinite. In a world where the footsteps of the World War II began to be heard, the decline of Britain's dominance in the region allowed the Saudis to strengthen their relations with the U.S.A. Undoubtedly, the pioneering initiatives of American companies in this regard after the discovery of oil in the country contributed greatly to the initiation of these relations and their strengthening over time.

Conclusion

From the beginning of the 18th century, the Hejaz-based Arabian Peninsula had become the focus of both regional and intercontinental competition due to Britain's highly strategic position on the Indian roads. On the one hand, Britain was trying to keep the great powers it was competing with out of this region, and on the other hand, it was also fighting a separate struggle with the Ottoman Empire and the local tribal leaders in the region. In this context, although Britain's policy towards tribal leaders changed from time to time in the process, the main policy took shape in line with its interests. From the beginning of the first orientation to the region, the British tried to establish strong ties with tribal leaders whom they considered important through their

consulates and political liaison officers. The place of the Hashemites and Saudis in these tribes was of particular importance to the British for various reasons such as the power and position of the tribes.

The Saudis, who were in a power struggle with the tribes in the Arabian Peninsula since the beginning of the 19th century, particularly with the Ottoman Empire and Britain, confirmed that they were the real rulers of the region with the smart diplomatic methods that they followed throughout and after World War I. Abdulaziz Ibn Saud, who had gathered the Saudi Emirate that had disintegrated and weakened by internal strife by the beginning of the 20th century, came out as the leader of this diplomatic and military success.

During the years of the First World War, Britain had enabled Hussein, the Sheriff of Mecca, to embark on a rebellion movement against the Ottoman administration to collapse the Ottoman Empire from within. Although the rebellion changed all the balances in the region, in the new process, the British began to disagree with the leader of the Hashemites, Sharif Hussein. Meanwhile, Ibn Saud, who had close contacts with the British long before the start of the First World War and could not get along with Sharif Hussein, the Sheriff of Mecca, made every effort to support him throughout the World War I to end the Ottoman domination in the region in line with the demands of Britain. However, in line with the course of the British Government's relations with Sharif Hussein after the World War I, Ibn Saud played his political and military cards to end the Hashemite administration in Hedjaz. The war between the two leaders, which started after the World War I and which Britain could only stop for four years with a ceasefire, was a clear indication of this situation. At every opportunity Ibn Saud expressed that the real owners of the entire Arabian Peninsula, in particular Hejaz, were the Saudis and thereupon he sought ways to have this issue accepted by the British Government.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, the British Government followed a policy of balance with both Sharif Hussein and Ibn Saud (predominantly with Sharif Hussein) in line with its interests in the region. All the support provided to these two leaders in the region throughout this period was aimed at achieving this goal. However, during World War I, the British sided with Sharif Hussein to defeat the Ottoman Empire in the Arab lands. This was a requirement of Britain's then policy of "pick the winner". After the war, Britain continued to support Ibn Saud to protect its interests in the Arab lands, including having Hedjaz at the center, while, on the other hand, it was also in efforts to sign a treaty with Sharif Hussein. Despite the ongoing negotiations held between 1920 and 1924, Sharif Hussein did not find it appropriate to sign a treaty with Britain as the undertakings provided by Britain during the war and the outcome in the Arabian Peninsula after the war were different. Sharif Hussein, citing that the commitments provided were not kept, expressed to the British authorities at almost every opportunity that a divided and colonial situation that emerged

in the Arab lands would be disastrous for them. Consequently, this conflict became an opportunity for Ibn Saud. In line with the goals set out in the Paris Peace Conference, Britain decided not to continue with Sharif Hussein in neither the Arabian Peninsula nor Hedjaz. Britain did not intervene in the invasion attempts of the Saudis in Hedjaz, revealing the end of the tolerance granted to the Hashemites in Hedjaz. This situation then became the main indicator of the policy followed by Britain in the region. Sharif Hussein and his sons, who once believed that the British would prevent Ibn Saud's invasion attempts at some point, bitterly realized that they were wrong in their expectations when none of their requests for help were answered.

The Saudi invasion, which started in Taif between 1924 and 1925, ended with the occupation of Jeddah in 1925 and thereupon the Saudi rule began in Hedjaz. Subsequently, Sharif Hussein and his son Amir Ali were exiled under the supervision of the British. The British Government then recognized the Saudis and therefore Abdulaziz Ibn Saud as the leader of the entire Arabian Peninsula in its policy as of the new period and accordingly did not hesitate to take the necessary steps in 1927 to formalize this recognition.

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