

# The Arabs of the Levant During the First Quarter of the Twentieth Century AD

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## **Abstract:**

The study explained the role of Arabs in the eastern Arab world during the first quarter of the twentieth century. And how their conditions were during the First World War. Then the study touched on the role of some Arab countries in the First World War. They supported some superpowers at the expense of others. The study mentioned the most important events that occurred during the First World War, the most important of which was Britain's entry into Iraq. The British tried to shape their policy inside Iraq to completely sever Iraq's ties with the Ottoman Empire. Thus ending the Ottomans' connection with the Arabian Peninsula. After that, the study showed Jamal Pasha's policy with the Arab nationalists in the Levant. The study then also mentioned Sharif Hussein bin Ali's correspondence with the British to gain their favor at that stage to eliminate Ottoman rule in the Hijaz, and the British promised him the king of the Arabs. Then the study touched on Sharif Hussein's announcement of the Great Arab Revolt against the Ottomans, and finally the study mentioned in the conclusion the most important results of the First World War.

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Then the study reached some results and made some recommendations.

**The influential events during the First World War in the Arab Levant.**

## **Britain's entry into Iraq:**

Although the British influence inside Iraq had previously taken many forms before the First World War and exclusively wanted to exclude any attempts from other countries, whether through trade or telegraph and mail lines, sending exploratory missions on the society and antiquities, establishing commercial and shipping companies, and so on, learning the difficulty Entering with military forces into Iraq, so that it appears in the image of the occupier, and for this it must think of a way to protect their forces in the Gulf, and provide a guarantee of protecting India from the impact of the war.

Britain preempted the Ottoman Empire declaring war on it by sending British forces to the Persian Gulf, after British politicians were convinced of the idea of resident Percy Cox, despite

their differences in the place of its settlement for fear of provoking the Ottoman Empire if it settled near Abadan and the oil wells, before declaring war, or appearing as an invader in front of Muslims in the region, and the negative impact that this may have on Indian Muslims. However, the final decision was the landing of the Indian campaign of the Sixth Corps in Bahrain after it moved from Bombay in the year 1332 AH / 1914 AD, led by the naval commander Delamin<sup>1</sup>, two days before the declaration of war, and Cox took over All the political issues of the campaign based on the directives of Hardinge, Viceroy of India, through which he emphasized British control, maintenance of order and security in the Shatt al-Arab and the Arabian Gulf, investment in the friendship of the Arab sheikhs in the region to preserve British interests<sup>2</sup>, and the fact that the Arabian Gulf was a barrier to India, isolating it from the effects of the war against Ottoman Empire.

Britain turned to the Arabian Gulf with its eyes on Iraq, because it saw the Gulf as the first line of defense for India, and it also wanted to influence the Gulf sheikhs with whom it has special protection treaties, especially the sheikhs of Muhammarah and Kuwait, which it saw as more vulnerable to the Ottoman threat and the loss of British influence in their regions. In particular, as for Qatar, Bahrain and the coast of Oman, the rising power of Ibn Saud in the region, which was able to annex Al-Ahsa to his rule in the year 1331 AH / 1913 AD, would prevent it from the influence of the Ottomans on it, and therefore the entry of British forces after declaring war to southern Iraq would prevent the Ottomans from their interests in the Persian Gulf On the one hand, and on the other hand, to prove to the sheikhs of the region the military strength of the British<sup>3</sup>.

The British announced to the sheikhs of the region that the end of this war was the end of the Ottoman Empire and that they would not take action that threatened their freedom or their religious rituals. If these sheikhs maintained security and deterred their subjects from carrying out reckless action against the British forces or that harmed British interests, they would emerge from this war stronger and more powerful, Freedom before<sup>4</sup>.

The British forces fired their cannons on the fort of Al-Faw on the Shatt al-Arab, then the forces led by Roshter landed in Iraq, heading to Basra, and they were able to occupy it on the twenty-third of November. Then they continued their march towards the city of Amara and then Nasiriyah, and they tried to advance to Baghdad, but with the help of German officers, especially Von Goltz von der Goltz The Ottoman forces were able to inflict losses on the British forces, which made British officials reconsider their assessment of the military situation, the appropriate

<sup>1</sup> Ismail Yaghi and Mahmoud Shaker, History of the Islamic World 1492-1980, 1st edition, (Riyadh: Mars Publishing House, 1995 AD), 183.

<sup>2</sup> Abdulaziz Abdul Ghani Ibrahim, The British Peace in the Arabian Gulf 1899-1947, 1st Edition, (Riyadh: Dar Al-Marikh Publishing House, 1981 AD), 186.

<sup>3</sup> Jamal Zakaria Qassem, The Arab Gulf, a study of the history of the Arab Emirates 1914-1945, 1st edition, (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1973 AD), 3.

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad Shafiq Ghurbal and others, previous source, 270.

numbers of military forces to advance in Mesopotamia, and the point of view of the local notables of the region, but their forces were then forced to withdraw to the city of Kut, south of Baghdad. They barricaded themselves there for five months, then surrendered in April 1916, which led to great embarrassment to the British position in the war. Despite this, General Maude was able to arrange the situation of the British forces and was able to defeat the Ottomans in Kut. He continued his advance until he was able to enter Baghdad in the year 1335 AH / 1917 AD. He gave his speech two days after his entry, in which he tried to make the people believe that they had come to liberate them from the oppression of the Turks and give them their freedom and independence. But instead, Sir Marshall completed what Maud had begun and continued his method of occupying Mosul, and his forces did so in 1336 AH/1918 AD<sup>5</sup>, thus occupying the entire Iraqi territory, bringing Mesopotamia into a new phase for its people, which would later lead to a radical change in the shape of their Arab region.

The British tried to form their policy inside Iraq to completely sever Iraq's ties with the Ottoman Empire, and thus end the Ottomans' connection with the Arabian Peninsula. The truth is that what resulted from Britain's occupation of Mesopotamia was the emergence of a new political entity there that appears on the map of the Arab Levant under the name of the Kingdom of Iraq, and the beginning of drawing A map of the Arabian Peninsula and its distribution into political units, each of which has territorial sovereignty linked to Britain by prohibitive treaties. This was clearly demonstrated in the Uqair Conference in Kuwait on November 27, 1922 AD, which laid the foundations of the political borders between Iraq, Kuwait, and Najd.

Britain's entry into Iraq and its occupation was a direct reason for the emergence of the principled character of the sheikdoms of the Arabian Peninsula, as the Ottomans' exit from the Arabian Peninsula and Iraq was final, and Britain did not wait for the end of the war for this, but rather declared at its beginning that Kuwait was an independent government, which was stated in a speech The British Political Resident in the Gulf to the Sheikh of Kuwait, Mubarak Al-Sabah, on 3 of November, 1914 AD, where he promised him full British protection if he participated with his forces in attacking the areas of Safwan, Umm Qasr, and Bubiyan, and that the British government would acknowledge and recognize the sheikdom of Kuwait as an independent government under British protection<sup>6</sup>.

Britain also recognized Najd and Al-Ahsa as an independent region under the emirate of Abdulaziz bin Saud in the year 1333 AH / 1915 AD. As for Qatar, the British government was able to sign an agreement - which was not ratified - with the Ottoman Empire in the year 1331 AH / 1913 AD, in which it extracted recognition from the Ottoman Empire of the end of its

<sup>5</sup> Muhammad Shafiq Ghorbal et al., op. cit., 275.

<sup>6</sup> A fighter from the desert, website: accessed on 4/17/2018.

[http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/Behoth/IraqKwit/2/doc02.doc\\_cvt.htm](http://www.moqatel.com/openshare/Behoth/IraqKwit/2/doc02.doc_cvt.htm).

sovereignty. On Qatar, and that Qatar is an independent sheikhdom inherited by the princes of Al Thani<sup>7</sup>.

As for Bahrain, it was nominally independent, ruled by Al Khalifa, but Britain dictated its foreign policy since the nineteenth century and consolidated its authority over the islands completely since 1317 AH / 1900 AD with the establishment of the position of the British political agent in Bahrain, and the Ottomans, the Saudis, or the Persians had no means To control it.

Thus it seemed clear that Britain wanted to change the shape of the Arab East, in order to achieve its interests, goals and aspirations in the region, according to the British colonial view of controlling important global regions, and the Arab East was no exception to this colonial vision of the world, but was another piece on the chess board used To ensure Britain's position in India to assert and sustain its global empire.

#### **Jamal Pasha's policy with the Arab nationalists in the Levant:**

In the year 1333 AH / December 1914 AD, Jamal Pasha arrived in the Levant after orders were issued to appoint him as Commander-in-Chief of the Fourth Army, for very important goals for the Ottoman Empire, the most important of which was maintaining order inside the Levant, and attacking the British across the canal in Egypt.

On the day of his arrival in Damascus, the Syrian Governor General, Hulusi Pasha, handed him several documents that he claimed were seized at the French consulate, and that they incriminated a group of Arab employees and notables on charges of collaborating with the French. Jamal Pasha says in his memoirs that he “turned a blind eye to them and did not try them directly when he took command of the army.” Fourth, despite the clear and indebted documents to them so as not to endanger the unity of the Islamic world<sup>8</sup>, he even summoned a group of them and explained to them the necessity of the victory of Islam and the state. They promised him to remain loyal to the state and not to put obstacles in the way of its victory. He also tried to allay the fears of Christians that they were brothers in the homeland. Anyone who is exposed to them will be severely punished, and the declaration of holy jihad is to fight the occupying aggressors, namely the British, French and Russians<sup>9</sup>.

Meanwhile, Asaad Dagher, who was a member of the Arab secret societies at the time, says that the trial council based its rulings against them on charges, the purpose of which was to issue a death sentence regardless of the validity of the charges or not, as the first charge was membership in one of the Arab societies that seeks to destroy the state and secession. About her, or correct

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<sup>7</sup> Mufid Kasid Al-Zaidi, *The Contemporary History of Qatar 1913-2008*, 1st edition, (Amman: Dar Al-Manhaj for Publishing and Distribution, 2010 AD), 275.

<sup>8</sup> Jamal Pasha, previous reference, 346.

<sup>9</sup> Mahmoud Mansi, previous reference, 285.

political messages but dated years before the World War, or fabricated messages to distort the image of free Arab patriots<sup>10</sup>.

Whatever the matter was, this or that matter, the policy of management that Jamal Pasha adopted upon his arrival in the Levant completely turned into brutality, oppression, and successive executions, especially after the army's loss in the Battle of the Canal, the change in his mood, and the occurrence of what he expected on the day of his departure of defeat for the Ottoman forces and his failure to confront them. The British in the Suez Canal<sup>11</sup>, where they suppressed the Arab nationalist movement, accusing large numbers of Arabs of high treason based on the papers and documents they confiscated from the French consulate.

Sharif Hussein tried several times to mediate with Jamal Pasha to pardon the Arab patriots convicted of treason, but that did not succeed, and it increased the federalists' doubts about Hussein's position regarding loyalty to the state. Gallows were erected in Beirut and Damascus in batches in the year 1333 AH/1915 AD, and many of those who were executed were executed. The martial law council convicted them in Aliyah in Lebanon, while it issued prison sentences or exile for dozens of others, which had a bad effect in the Arab countries and increased the intensity of the dispute and division between the Arabs and the Turks, and aroused the ire of other Arabs, and convinced them of ideas of liberation to get rid of the yoke of oppression that they had suffered from. Jamal Pasha. And the policy of Turkification used by the federal government and even the pursuit of independence from the Ottoman Empire.

The Arabs' complaints were increased by the bad economic situation during the war, which was accompanied by the policy of severity and violence adopted by Jamal Pasha, and the confiscation of the farmers' crops and livestock by Turkish officials, as famine prevailed in the heart of the Levant and the people's hunger increased, and many did not find anything to eat, until hundreds of people died under... The weight of hunger and thirst, and the extremely high prices in prices caused many people to migrate and move away from their land. All of these factors increased people's fatigue and bitterness, so that Jamal Pasha's policy in the Levant came to be one of the decisive factors in changing the thinking of Arab notables about the necessity of rebellion and separation from the Ottoman Empire.

### **Correspondence of the Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali:**

The Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali<sup>12</sup>, hoped to establish an Arab kingdom, with him as its crowned king as Caliph of the Muslims. Sharif Hussein's aspirations were encouraged and

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<sup>10</sup> Asaad Dagher, *The Great Arab Revolution*, 2nd edition, (Amman: Ministry of Culture, 1991 AD), 77.

<sup>11</sup> He narrates in his memoirs that he expected a black day for the Ottoman forces in their attempt to expel the British from Egypt, as he knew the extent to which those forces lacked the necessary equipment to enter the war, in addition to expecting a rebellion by the Arabs in the Levant region. For more information: Jamal Pasha, *op. cit.*, 245.

<sup>12</sup> Hussein bin Ali al-Hashemi, the founder of the Hashemite Kingdom of Hijaz in Mecca and the first to call for the independence of the Arabs from the rule of the Ottoman Empire. He was born in Istanbul in 1854 AD. He

supported by the British. This became clear after the outbreak of World War I and the entry of the Ottoman Empire into it on the side of Germany. This was not the case. British support stems from its conviction of the right of the Arabs to independence and liberation from the Ottoman Empire or to establish an Arab state on the Arab lands that Sharif Hussein dreamed of, but it stems from its desire to defeat the Ottoman Empire and its ally, Germany, by nullifying the effect of the call for jihad that was expected to be announced before. The Ottoman Caliph, at the instigation of Germany, in order to gain the loyalty of its subjects, and the subjects of its French and Russian Muslim allies, whether in India, Central Asia, or Africa.

The Sharif of Mecca, Hussein bin Ali, was the person more qualified to nullify the claim of jihad in the eyes of Britain than the rest of the leaders in the Arabian Peninsula, due to his religious status in the Islamic world, which he derived from his lineage, and from his position as protector of the Islamic holy sites of Mecca and Medina, as well as His geographical location added another importance, as he could isolate the Ottoman forces in the south of the Arabian Peninsula, the forces camped in Asir and Yemen, and cut off their supply lines and communication with the forces in the north of the Arabian Peninsula, which is an advantage that Al-Idrisi, who was in a state of hostility with the Turks, did not possess, nor did Imam Yahya possess. In Yemen, which sided with the Turks, their powers were limited to their territories<sup>13</sup>, and the Ottomans no longer had a real presence in the center and east of the Arabian Peninsula due to British control over the shores of the Arabian Gulf. Abdulaziz bin Saud was able to impose his influence on Al-Ahsa in the year 1331 AH/1913 AD.

Henry McMahon's correspondence was not the first of its kind with the Sharif of Mecca, but rather the end of the line of agreement with him, after which the Sharif of Mecca announced the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire. Britain had previously communicated with him and his son Abdullah through the British delegate, Lord Kitchener, and his secretary, Ronald Ronald Storrs, and the Governor-General of Sudan, Reginald Wingate, but the Sharif was not yet ready to indulge in an alliance with Britain that could be described as blasphemy, or treason, and Hussein was not confident of the success of the alliance, as the British did not provide him with any guarantees, and he was The Turks have huge ground forces, and their strength has been strengthened thanks to German training and the construction of the Hejaz Railway. What will be their fate in the event of failure? Al-Sharif spent time thinking with his sons, and while Faisal was urging him to be careful and patient, Abdullah was calling on him to revolution. Al-Hussein devised a plan for himself between the two opinions, so he proceeded on his way with determination but with caution and caution. Hidden contacts continued, and the two sides

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led the Great Arab Revolt in alliance with the British against the Ottoman Empire to make the caliphate among the Arabs instead of the Turks in 1916 AD, and he was called the King of the Arabs. He overthrew his rule, Abdulaziz bin Saud in 1924 AD after Britain declared neutrality in the dispute between them. He died in 1931 AD.

<sup>13</sup> Suleiman Al-Madani, *The Arab File in the Twentieth Century*, vol. 1, 1st edition, (Beirut: Al-Manara for Media and Artistic Production, 1998), 200.

exchanged points of view, which led to making the British more convinced to go ahead with this. Kitchener also sent his greetings to Abdullah, telling him that if the Arab people helped Britain in this war, it would pledge that no interference would take place in the Arab countries, and that it would give the Arabs every assistance against any external foreign aggression<sup>14</sup>.

Lord Kitchener's stay as Britain's delegate in Egypt during the turbulent international situation and before the outbreak of World War I was a key for him to understand the region and know the political tensions and tension in the relations between the Arab leaders and the Ottoman Empire in that period. Abdullah bin Sharif Hussein used to pass through Cairo in the morning and on his way to Istanbul. Which helped build a qualitative relationship between him, Storrs, and Kitchener, through which they learned of the severe tension in relations between Sharif Hussein and the federalists<sup>15</sup>, and alerted them to the depth of the dispute between the Arabs and the Turks in that period, which motivated Kitchener until he began the first step in a series of steps that ended with the Sharif of Mecca participating in the war as an ally of Britain against the Ottoman Empire<sup>16</sup>.

This is how Britain proceeded to put its plan into effect and take the initial steps to resist the call for Ottoman jihad early on. Its first step was to begin contacting Sharif Hussein through Lord Kitchener in the year 1332 AH/1914 AD<sup>17</sup>, in which he asked Secretary Ronald Storrs to write to Abdullah bin Hussein to confirm whether He and his father would have sided with Britain after he was tempted by the idea that Britain would help the Arabs gain their independence<sup>18</sup>.

It is possible that British officials before World War I did not have regional goals for themselves in Ottoman lands, or to respond to the Ottoman Empire's entry into the war by seizing any of the areas under its control. Rather, they actually saw Britain allowing its allies to obtain regional gains in Europe and Asia. Minor at Turkey's expense, but Kitchener himself and his work team, who became Minister of War after being accredited in Egypt, saw the seizure of those Arabic-speaking areas as a vital interest for Britain, which meant a retreat from previous British policy in the region<sup>19</sup>.

The government of the Ottoman Empire felt apprehensive about Hussein's position regarding his support for their position on entering the war, and on declaring jihad against the British, French, and Russian forces, especially since he advised them in his correspondence before the war

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<sup>14</sup> James Morris, *The Hashemite Kings*, translated by Youssef Al-Miqdadi, 1st edition, (Amman: Dar Al-Ahlia for Publishing and Distribution, 2009), 10.

<sup>15</sup> Muhammad Shafiq Ghorbal and others, previous reference, 268-269.

<sup>16</sup> George Anthony, *The Awakening of the Arabs*, translated by Nasir al-Din al-Assad and Ihsan Abbas, Taha, (Beirut: Dar al-Ilm Li'l-Malayyin, 1987 AD), 207.

<sup>17</sup> Suleiman Musa, *Historical Correspondence 1914-1918*, 1st edition, (Amman, Jordan, 1977 AD), 23.

<sup>18</sup> Omar Abdul Aziz Omar, *History of the Arab East*, 1st Edition, (Beirut: Arab Renaissance House, 1984 AD), 450.

<sup>19</sup> David Fromkin, *Peace Beyond Peace, the Birth of the Middle East 1914-1922*, translated by: Asaad Kamel Elias, 1st Edition, (London: Riyad Al-Rayes for Books and Publishing, 1992 AD), 107.

not to enter it, as the supplies were not sufficient for the needs of the people in the Arab provinces belonging to them, nor were the soldiers sufficient. And the current military equipment to secure the Hijaz and the southern regions in particular of the Arabian Peninsula, as the military and economic arrangements and precautions are very weak compared to the countries against which they will go to war, but they were satisfied with thanking him for the advice<sup>20</sup>, and therefore they sent many telegrams that bore the signatures of senior figures in the state, not to urge him to bless the declaration of jihad. Only, and even supported the state in mobilizing an army from the Hijazi tribes to join the Fourth Army in the Levant, led by Jamal Pasha, to attack the Suez Canal<sup>21</sup>, but Hussein used cunning and camouflage in his correspondence with them to limit from their doubts, and made strong excuses after excuses so that he would not be forced to fulfill their desire to declare and bless jihad, until he finished his negotiations with the British, which reached an advanced stage with the British<sup>22</sup>.

At a time when the British forces were incurring losses and standing on defense in the Arab countries in 1333 AH / 1915 CE, and assessing the general situation at the sites of war confrontations was not moving in the direction of British interests, Sir Henry McMahon in Egypt was preoccupied with the dangers threatening British interests in the region. He received Sharif Hussein's secret memorandum<sup>23</sup>.

Sharif Al-Hussein exchanged ten letters with Henry McMahon in the period between July 1915 to March 1916 AD, each of them tried to get out of it with what it was hoped to achieve his interests from his point of view, and each party tried to draw a vision of the Arab region after the war, these perceptions that contributed Influentially in the formation of the Arab Levant after the end of World War I.

According to the first letter dated July 14, 1915 AD, within the Hussein-McMahon correspondence, Sharif Al-Hussein tried to take advantage of Britain's need for him and the Arabs to obtain from them recognition of the political independence and unity of the Arab countries in the continent of Asia, and this letter came in conformity with the demands of the Arab associations in Syria, which he called It bears the name of the Damascus Pact 1333 AH / 1915 CE, where Fawzi al-Bakri carried a verbal message to him from the secret Arab societies, and despite al-Hussein's lack of haste in responding, he sent his son Faisal, where he met the leaders of the Arab movement and the members of the two Arab societies of which he became a member<sup>24</sup>, and the Covenant Society, on the basis of At their request, they showed him the text of the charter, which included the conditions of the Arabs to conclude an agreement with Britain

<sup>20</sup> King Abdullah bin Al Hussein, previous reference, 104.

<sup>21</sup> Clip Saud Al-Fawaz, Correspondence exchanged between Sharif Hussein and the Ottomans 1908-1918, 1st edition (Cairo: Religion, 1997 AD), 116.

<sup>22</sup> Mahmoud Salih Mansi, The Arab Awakening Movement in the Asian East, 2nd Edition (Cairo: Dar Al-Fikr Al-Arabi, 1978 AD), 16.

<sup>23</sup> George Antonius, op. cit., 250.

<sup>24</sup> Eugene Rogan, previous reference, 237



and enter its side in the war, and asked him to present it to his father in order to make it a basis for his negotiations with Britain, and it stipulated that Britain recognized the independence of the Arab countries located within the imagined borders, where to the north is the Mersin line Adana to the borders of Persia, and to the east the extension of the borders of Persia to the Arabian Gulf, and to the south the Indian Ocean with the exception of Aden, which will maintain its status as it is, and to the west the Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea to Sinai, and the conditions also included a defense treaty between Britain and the independent Arab state for a period of fifteen years It can be extended by agreement between the two parties, with Britain giving precedence over others in economic projects. Al-Hussein also added another special condition of his own, which is Britain's recognition of the caliphate if an Arab caliph pledges allegiance to it<sup>25</sup>.

As for Sir Henry McMahon's first response, dated August 30, 1915 AD, it was ambiguous and did not explicitly include acceptance of the conditions of Hussein and the Arab nationalists. Rather, it included general pledges regarding Arab independence and caliphate, and was characterized by evasion rather than being a clear agreement, which aroused Hussein's dissatisfaction, and so memorandums and letters continued between the two parties. Until it reached the final agreement, which included what we can summarize in the following: that Sharif Hussein use all his influence and power to declare the Arab revolution to defeat the Turks and denounce them publicly that they are the enemies of Islam, provided that Britain helps him to complete what he needs of weapons, equipment and money, and recognize the Arab caliphate if Its establishment, the recognition of the independence of the Arabs within a specific region and the protection of this independence<sup>26</sup>, and the abolition of the foreign concessions enjoyed by foreigners within the scope of the system of concessions in the Ottoman Empire<sup>27</sup>.

If we look at the terms of these talks and what they concluded, it becomes clear the extent of the British evasiveness in clearly recognizing the borders proposed by Sharif Hussein, as they agreed to it in general with some reservations. These reservations about which the Sharif agreed to postpone discussions until after the war, out of his desire to Without harming British-French relations, as stated in his fourth memorandum, the British later exploited it to remove Palestine from within the proposed borders, as they implicitly considered it a reservation, which McMahon mentioned in his second memorandum in particular under the pretext of appreciating French interests in the Levant.

The British negotiators were able to push Hussein to declare revolution against the Ottoman Empire without giving him clear and definite guarantees. Rather, he announced it on false promises, and after they cut off, through negotiations, large parts of the borders that he proposed in agreement with the Arab nationalists. Hussein relied on the word, the promise, and British

<sup>25</sup> George Anthony, previous reference, 252.

<sup>26</sup> George Antonius, previous reference, 266.

<sup>27</sup> Mahmoud Saleh Mansi, previous reference, 288.

honor. In making promises and fulfilling them, the country that entered the region occupied and controlled parts of the Arab lands belonging to the Ottoman Empire.

Thus, Hussein's correspondence went in three directions, in which he tried to use all his cunning and show submission at times, as in his correspondence with the Turkish leaders, and at other times he used diplomacy and persuasion, as in his correspondence with the British leaders, or to incite resolve and strengthen the resolve, as in his correspondence with the Arab nationalists. This correspondence was the reason for shaping the shape of the Arab region in the Levant, and contributed to its reshaping.

Looking at the course of the correspondence, we find a remarkable development in it, contributed to by several factors that combined at critical moments. Perhaps it was sometimes improvised and dependent on the momentary circumstances of the situation, or the acceleration of the pace of events and the changing conditions in places of military confrontations, or the shifting of loyalties among the Ottoman elements according to the accumulations of Racism, whether ethnic or even religious, or due to the impact of the economic conditions and famine that accompanied World War I.

In the beginning, the Sharif was afraid that the federal government in the Ottoman Empire would isolate him, and therefore the beginning of the contact was in 1332 AH / 1914 AD when Abdullah bin Al-Hussein asked the British not to allow Ottoman supplies through the Suez Canal to suppress the revolution that would ignite if he isolated his father from the sherifate of Mecca, and used them. Because of their influence to prevent his removal, the British response was disappointing to Hussein, as the British response made it clear that Britain's interest was limited to the security and comfort of the Indian pilgrims<sup>28</sup>, which makes it clear that the issue of stewardship in Hijaz was his main interest, with it enjoying the greatest degree of independence and not independence, but these initial contacts later drew the attention of the British to the psychological readiness of Hussein to depart from obedience to the state and cooperate with them. Britain's failure to show an explicit willingness to support him led, at the time, to Hussein showing complete subservience in his correspondence with the federal government, and he also tried to advise them not to get involved in the war.

Perhaps the British's contact with Hussein in October 1914 AD, to seek his opinion in the event that the Ottoman Empire entered the war, and Hussein's expression of his rejection of the British offer, due to his lack of willingness to demand the rights of the Arabs at that time, led the British to put forward their great and tempting offer to Hussein, which was his enjoyment of complete sovereignty and the exercise of all authority. The privileges of honor, and its defense to repel any external attack, with the promise to help the Arabs gain freedom on the condition of their alliance with the British. The British message also included an indication that if he declared

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<sup>28</sup> Mahmoud Saleh Mansi, previous reference, 288.

himself as caliph of the Muslims, he could rely on Britain's support. Hussein's correspondence with Kitchener was the beginning of his aspiration in thinking. Al-Hussein towards the king - and perhaps it is from here - Al-Hussein's dream became greater than his reality, and his compass of thinking moved from stewardship to caliphate. Indeed, the course of communications after that shifted from the issue of preserving his status as Sharif of Mecca to negotiating the borders of the Arab state to be established, and the appropriate ways to work against the Ottoman Empire, and the appropriate pretexts that it presents to the Islamic world to justify its position, which was evident in all of its letters to Arab societies and Arab nationalists, and in its correspondence with McMahon, who went beyond Kitchener's promises to defend it in the event of external aggression to consolidating the concept of an independent Arab state under Hussein and under his rule. This was a deceptive British political evasion, as it was no secret to them that there were other leaders in the peninsula who enjoyed semi-independence in their countries that they controlled, such as Ibn Saud, the sheikhs of the Gulf, Al-Idrisi, and the Imam in Yemen, in addition to the leaders of the national societies in the Levant and Iraq who did not originally agree on the form of leadership. As for Hussein, will he be a religious leader only bearing the name of the Caliph or a political leader ruling the Arab lands? Also, their control and occupation of Iraq makes him out of reach of Hussein's ambitions, but we can say that the picture crystallized at that time according to the need of the parties and according to the need of the parties for each other. Al-Sharif Hussein began to aspire to the establishment of an Arab kingdom that would include the countries of the Arab East, and the Arab nationalists in the Levant were searching for a religious leadership that believed in their ideas to support and lead them so that it would not be easy to attack their movement with religion and depart from Islam, while the British were searching for a religious leadership to stand in the face of the declaration of holy jihad by the Ottoman Empire.

Thus, we can say that British policy was able to deceive Hussein, and pushed him, full of hopes, to declare his revolution against the Ottoman Empire, which was then called the Great Arab Revolt.

#### **Declaration of Sharif Hussein's revolution (the Great Arab Revolt):**

The historical reasons crystallized for Hussein to declare revolution and rebellion against the rule of the Turkish federalists, supported by the Arab nationalists on the one hand, and Britain on the other hand. Everyone's aspirations were mixed in it. Hussein dreamed of religious and worldly leadership over the Arab countries, and the Arab nationalists wanted to get rid of the rule of the Turks, and the British wanted victory in War and the defeat of the Ottomans.

Sharif Hussein quickly prepared for the revolution. He contacted the Arab tribes and gained the trust of their sheikhs by joining him. He asked the British to supply him with the necessary rifles, money, and supplies. He also asked them to land forces on the coast of the Levant to cut off the Ottoman army's lines of communication with Anatolia. His plan was to ignite the revolution in

the Hijaz. And the Levant alike. A few days before the announcement of the revolution, Sharif Hussein became aware of the influx of the Ottoman force into Medina. He felt that it would not hesitate to march on Mecca while it marched to Yemen, and all his dreams would collapse and his life and the lives of his children would be in danger. He informed his son Faisal, who was in The city at that time, rushing him to declare rebellion and revolution against the federal government<sup>29</sup>.

On the ninth of Shaban 1334 AH, corresponding to the tenth of June 1916 AD, Sharif Hussein fired the bullet of rebellion and revolution from the balcony of his house in Mecca, declaring the independence of Hijaz and its formation of the independent Arab state, with an Arab army consisting of men from the Arab tribes of Hijaz and Arab officers and soldiers from the Levant, Iraq, Egypt and Yemen<sup>30</sup>, and the fighting began. In various places in Mecca, Medina and Taif, under the leadership of Hussein's sons, they were assisted in this by British battleships at sea that bombarded the locations of Ottoman soldiers' concentrations. The British, through the British Wingate, the commander of the Egyptian army and the ruler of Sudan, also supplied Hussein with the necessary weapons and the required logistical support. Arab officers and soldiers joined the revolution, as did the British officer Lawrence, who later played a major role in leading the Arab forces. The Hejaz cities continued to fall into the hands of Hussein's forces, starting with Mecca, Jeddah, and Taif, despite the resistance shown by the soldiers of the Ottoman Empire, led by Fakhri Pasha in Medina, but the situation became unbearable, which led to the surrender and the city falling into the hands of Hussein's forces.

The revolution went through several stages, and its first stage can be considered from its announcement until the fall of the port of Al-Wajh into the hands of Al-Sharif's forces in 1334 AH / June 1916 AD, which deprived the Ottoman Empire of the opportunity to regain Mecca from the hands of Sharif Hussein. Then its second stage began with the seizure of Aqaba, which helped to The theater of fighting was transferred from the headquarters of the revolution in Hijaz to the center of the Ottoman forces, and the third stage was the one that ended with the complete removal of the forces of the Ottoman Empire from their headquarters in the Levant<sup>31</sup>.

Al-Hussein broadcast the Revolutionary Circular in 1334 AH/June 1916 AD, in which he tried to give the reasons to the Islamic world that made it revolt against the Ottoman Empire, justifying this by the Union Society's departure from the right path and the guidance of Islam, which had taken control of the joints of government in the Ottoman Empire, and that it had undertaken a policy of Turkification of the Ottoman elements. They fought the state in the midst of wars and failed alliances that led the state to obscene debts and great damages, and they killed Arab leaders and notables for no fault of their own, and they tried to kill the Arabic language by eliminating it from schools, and they declared martial law that had nothing to do

<sup>29</sup> Amin Saeed, *The Great Arab Revolt*, 1st edition, (Cairo: Madbouly Library, D. T.), 119.

<sup>30</sup> Sayyar Al-Jamil, *Genesis of the Modern Arabs*, 1st edition, (Amman: Dar Al-Shorouk, 1997), 524.

<sup>31</sup> Mahmoud Salih Mansi, previous reference, 325.

with religion, and gave many justifications as he saw that his religious duty was imperative. He must stand up to them and restore the prestige of Islam<sup>32</sup>.

The echo of the revolution was surprising and disturbing to the unionists in the government of the Ottoman Empire, and they tried through the newspapers to belittle the revolution and describe the revolution as a departure from Islam and agreement with the infidel occupier, but this did not greatly affect the Arab tribes in the Hijaz, and Jamal Pasha's violence in the Levant increased. He launched successive arrest campaigns and imprisoned many Arab officers and soldiers, which increased the anger of the Arabs in the Levant. The Germans, allies of the Federalists, became certain that the literary influence of the revolution had shocked the influence of the Ottoman declaration of jihad, and had affected their military plans<sup>33</sup>.

The British and French were quick to recognize the revolution, and their newspapers announced that their leaders had exchanged letters with Hussein, but they only recognized him as king of the Hijaz, after he had hoped for the position of the caliphate as a religious leader, and the position of the king as a political leader of the Arabs, which made Hussein realize that the British might not count on them.

After the fall of Aqaba to the forces of Faisal bin Al Hussein, they set out from there to launch raids on the Ottoman strongholds and on the Hijaz Railway, through which Thomas Edward Lawrence achieved his important personal achievement by blowing up the railway to disrupt the Ottoman trains heading to the Hijaz. These forces continued to do so until they were able to enter Damascus in October 1918 AD, after forming a pincer against it with the army of British General Edmund Allenby<sup>34 35</sup>.

The revolution ended with the expulsion of the forces of the Ottoman Empire from the Hijaz and the Levant, and the World War ended with the defeat of the Germans and its ally, the Ottoman Empire, which marked the beginning of a new formation for the region, in which the Arab tribes and Arab soldiers contributed with the support of the British, and while the Arab forces were happy with their victories and their progress towards the Levant, they built their hopes for establishing their state. As promised, the British and French announced in 1337 AH/November 1918 AD that they stood on the side of the oppressed peoples, and that they supported the liberation of these peoples from the authority of the Turks, and the installation of effective governments and local administrations for their affairs. However, in secret, they were determined to turn their ill-fated secret agreement with France and Russia, known as the Sykes-Picot Agreement, into reality, to divide the Ottoman properties in the Arab countries, through negotiations led by Mark Sykes, Lord Kitchener's advisor, and Charles-François Picot, the

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<sup>32</sup> For the full text of the Revolutionary Pamphlet: Amin Saeed, previous reference, 150.

<sup>33</sup> Mahmoud Salih Mansi, previous reference, 351.

<sup>34</sup> Edmund Henry Allenby is a British officer and administrator, famous for his role in World War I, when he led the force of forces in the seizure of Palestine and Syria in 1917 and 1918, and he died on May 14, 1936 AD.

<sup>35</sup> Eugene Rogan, op. cit., 196.

French consul in Beirut. As the first stab of betrayal against Hussein and the Arabs with him who stood with him in his revolution and supported him, which proved the mirage of British promises to Arab hopes, these negotiations that were drawn up in agreement with the French Figure The perception of the Arab East after the end of the World War and the elimination of the Ottoman Empire.

The end of the war was the beginning of a new era in the Arab East. Before that, international rivalries had reached their climax, and every power was working on local alliances in order to carve out a center for its influence. Britain, France, and Tsarist Russia, along with Iran and the Ottoman Empire, were preoccupied with that game<sup>36</sup>.

### Conclusion:

The effects of the First World War on the Arab Levant were very great, as a result of the collapse of the Ottoman Empire and its disintegration in many ways. The political structure under which it had lived for four centuries collapsed and began to collapse rapidly. This collapse caused the disappearance of the Ottoman political umbrella. The cover of the colonial face of the Allied countries was revealed, and foreign political intervention after World War I took the form of a mandate, with the British concentrated in Palestine and Iraq, and the French in Syria and Lebanon. All of this has caused confusion in the Arab identity, and social and political imbalance in the first place, which created new divisions on the geographical and national levels or contributed to perpetuating previous and old divisions, whether from a religious or social perspective.

The acceleration of events in the region during the war and immediately after its end did not give the Arabs a chance to catch their breath, especially after the famine that the war left behind, which led to the death of a large number in the region during the war, represented by the scarcity of food in Mesopotamia, accompanied by sick injuries to the local population and Indian soldiers. And the British in general, in addition to the natural disasters that accompanied the war, which destroyed agricultural crops in the Levant region.

The general situation of Arabs during wartime was clear evidence of this confusion in societal identity and political awareness, whether at the level of groups, intellectuals, scholars, notables, or even political leaders. Their positions on the Ottoman Empire and Britain varied, either according to personal interest, the extent of subordination to the British occupier, or loyalty. for the Ottoman Empire, or a position of neutrality until the war is revealed.

The Arabs in Iraq were looking forward to independence of their own away from Sharif Hussein, with whom the Arab nationalists in the Levant had harmonized during the period before his revolution against the Ottoman Empire, while Egypt was under British protection and powerless,

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<sup>36</sup> Jamal Zakaria Qasim, Britain and the Arabian Gulf in World War I, *Journal of Gulf and Arabian Peninsula Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, (1975 AD): 40

after Britain had deposed Khedive Abbas Hilmi II, who was loyal to the state. The Ottoman Empire in 1332 AH / 1914 AD appointed Sultan Hussein Kamel as his replacement. As for the Arabian Gulf, after witnessing the war and the subsequent collapse of the Ottoman Empire, Tsarist Russia, and the defeat of Germany, Britain began to confront the national powers alone, and became capable by demonstrating its military power and the system of alliances it concluded with those powers; To control the Gulf for nearly half a century after the end of World War I<sup>37</sup>. Mubarak in Kuwait had gained his own independence under British protection since the beginning of the war, and Abdulaziz bin Saud had imposed his control over the interior of the peninsula and the Treaty of Darien was concluded between him and the British, in which he guaranteed Britain's recognition of his authority, while Ibn Rashid in Hail, north of Najd, committed himself to neutrality. After his agreement with Ibn Saud in 1333 AH / June 1915 AD and his recognition of Sultan Ibn Saud over Najd, and not helping the Turks in the war<sup>38</sup>, Imam Yahya in Yemen committed himself to neutrality, as he became independent after the departure of the Ottomans, while the Arab sheikhdoms on the eastern coast were in a state of semi-independence under protection. British, more like a state of separation from public reality<sup>39</sup>.

Perhaps this discrepancy and difference among Arab leaders, sheikhdoms, and notables at that stage was a major reason for Hussein presenting himself as an Arab religious and worldly leader, around whom everyone would rally. Perhaps to a greater extent, Sharif Hussein himself made him ignore the ambiguity of the British position in McMahon's correspondence, as the promises The British were not clear despite Hussein's request to clarify the borders of his intended state, especially when the British hinted at the desires of their French allies in the Levant, which made him agree to declare the revolution in exchange for postponing discussion of this until after the war.

But it is certain; Britain was able to exploit this difference effectively, which enabled it to play an influential, multi-faceted role in the region according to every leader and every religious, social, or national identity. While national and local groups throughout the region sought status and power, and while the clashes between local coalitions and the occupying British and French forces were revealed, the First World War in the Levant region highlighted the ability of British foreign policy to contain allies and enemies, and to get out what it wanted, using several different methods, and means.

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