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BRITISH POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH KUWAIT

1890-1921

by

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Master of Arts

in the

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## A B S T R A C T

This thesis concerns British political relations with Kuwait between 1890 and 1921. The first notable ruler in this period was Sheikh Mubārak who assumed power in 1896 through the assassination of his brothers. At first he faced difficulties from the Turks, and he therefore signed a secret agreement with Britain in 1899 for protection. By this agreement he undertook not to sell, lease or contract with any foreign power except Britain.

At the same time Russia and Germany were trying to secure a port or coaling station on the Gulf. This of course threatened British interests in the area, especially proposals to make Kuwait a terminus of the Baghdād Railway.

Turkey in turn endeavoured to strengthen her position by attempting to exile Sheikh Mubārak and by occupying Umm Qasar, Bubiyan and Safwan. Britain denounced this as a disturbance of the "status quo", and appointed a political resident to Kuwait in 1904.

In 1913, after two years of negotiations, Britain and Turkey finally reached agreement about Kuwait but the First World War prevented its ratification. Britain thus declared Kuwait an independent principality under British protection.

Mubārak was succeeded by Sheikh Sālim in 1917, bringing a great change in Anglo-Kuwaiti relations. Sālim secretly gave active support to the Turks in the War, causing the British difficulties in enforcing the blockade they instituted. Sālim also suffered from strained relations with Ibn Sa'ūd over tribal matters and boundaries, culminating in a war for which Kuwait paid dearly, and in British arbitration to end the conflict.

Sheikh Sālim's reign lasted from 1917 to 1921 and was a critical period for Kuwait in her relations both with Britain and with Sa'udi Arabia.

Developments in Kuwait during this period illustrate the growing interest and influence of the European Powers in the area as the Ottoman Empire disintegrated.

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## P R E F A C E

European power and trade had come to the Indian Ocean when the Portugese rounded the Cape at the end of the 15th Century. Dutch, French and British had followed the Portugese, and by the middle of the 18th Century British influence had become predominant in the Arabian Gulf. In 1763 the British Residency was set up in Bushire under a firman from Karim Khan Zand which gave the East India Company a monopoly of the import of woollens into Persia and exemptions from all taxes. The British position was consolidated during the 19th Century by a series of agreements with local chiefs directed against piracy and the slave trade. These agreements had the effect of protecting local chiefs against Turkish or Persian efforts to turn their theoretical suzerainty into direct rule. Thus the Treaty with the Sheikh of Bahrain in 1861, by which he renounced piracy and slaving, protected his independence from the Turks when they occupied al Hasa in 1871. This occupation was part of the continuing process, begun by Sultan Mahmud II, intended to modernise the ramshackle Turkish Empire and to assert direct control over the provinces which had long enjoyed practical independence. In practice, in Arabia and on the shores of the Gulf, Turkish power was weak and had to be exercised mainly indirectly by playing off one local chieftain against another.

During most of the 19th Century the strategic reason for British policy in the Gulf was fear of the expanding power of Russia in central Asia and the threat it presented to the Indian Empire. But by the end of the century a new threat to British predominance was developing. This was the German drive for trade and influence based on the concession, obtained in 1899, for the construction of a railway from the Sea of Marmora to the Gulf.

It was against this background that Anglo Kuwaiti relations were developed. Sheikh Mubārak, known to Kuwaitis as the great Mubārak, aimed at retaining the power which he had seized from his brothers in 1896 and preserving the independence of Kuwait from outside interference from Turk or Arab. To achieve this he had to defeat the attempts of the sons of his brothers, whom he had dispossessed and killed, to assert their claims to the sheikhdom. This brought him into conflict with the Turkish governor in Basra and with Arab chiefs whose help his nephews tried to obtain. His determination to keep Kuwait independent in practice brought him into conflict with Turkish power at another level and the normal rivalries of Arab chieftains gave scope to his talent for diplomacy. In all these tasks he was able to obtain valuable, though sometimes hesitant, help from the British Government in their concern to defend and extend their influence against other European powers and to obtain a measure of control over the so-called Berlin-Baghdād Railway whose likely terminus seemed to be Kuwait.

This thesis describes in some detail the successes and failures of Mubārak's policies which eventually resulted in the declaration at the outbreak of World War I that Kuwait was an independent principality under British protection. The thesis carries on the story through the decline of Kuwait, which set in after Mubārak's death in 1917, and the deterioration of Anglo-Kuwait relations under his successor, Sheikh Sālim.

Chapter One gives the general history of Kuwait from 1890-1899 and describes the atmosphere and the political circumstances at that time in the countries surrounding Kuwait. It also describes the problems which face Sheikh Mubārak during the first two years of his reign from his nephews and the Turkish authorities at Basra. Finally, it shows the critical situation in Kuwait which obliged Mubārak to ask for British protection and indicates the part played by the Baghdād Railway project.

Chapter Two deals with international interests in Kuwait, including the German and Russian Railway projects and plans to make Kuwait a coaling station, the opposition of the British Government to these proposals and their attempts to make Basra the end of the railway instead of Kuwait.

Chapter Three describes Turkish relations with Kuwait from 1900-1906. These relations depended on the Turkish authorities at Basra, whose attitude towards Kuwait was not stable and varied with changes in the Walis of Basra.

Finally, Chapter Four deals with the British Political relations with Kuwait from 1904-1921, after the establishment of a British Agent there.

It was thought necessary to throw some light on Sa'udi-Kuwaiti relations while discussing that period, owing to the relevance of this to British political relations with Kuwait.

## CHAPTER ONE

### GENERAL HISTORY OF KUWAIT FROM 1890-1899

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Kuwait was founded on the Arabian Gulf shore about 250 years ago by the ancestor of the present ruling Sheikh Ṣabāḥ, when a number of the families of famous tribes of 'Anaiza migrated from Central Arabia. (1) These tribes included such important families as ĀL-Ṣabāḥ who are Sheikhs of Kuwait at the present time, ĀL-Khalaifa the Sheikhs of Bahrain, ĀL-Jalāhima, the Sheikhs of Qatar, ĀL-Zāyid and ĀL-Ma'awida. From these families the present Kuwaitis are descended. (2)

The inhabitants lived by trading, fishing, and pearling. The Kuwaitis were dependent on the sea, and the principal local industry was fishing, the most important fish being Zibaidy, Naqraur and Subaur. The second most important industry was pearl fishing, al-ghauṣ, and extended from May 15th to September 15th. (3) In these months the divers left Kuwait and headed towards the Arabian Gulf pearl banks. On their return they sold the pearls to the ṭājir, (merchant). The pearl dealers in their turn exported the pearls to Bombay, where they were classified for despatch to European and other markets. Some of the pearls were sent to Baghdād, especially the white pearls. (4) There were two types of pearl merchants; one of them was the ṭājir, who stayed in his shop or his house. The divers came to sell the pearls to him. The other merchants were ṭawāsh (petty merchants). The ṭawāsh always waited for the divers when they returned from their trip in order to buy the pearls. Mostly, however, the valuable pearls were taken direct to the ṭājir. There used to be a number of Indians in Kuwait who dealt in pearls, but later the Kuwaiti ṭājir multiplied rapidly, and it is estimated

that eventually a quarter of the income from the pearl trade was in Kuwaiti hands.

In 1904 Kuwait possessed 461 vessels, and the divers numbered 9,200. The average number of the divers per boat was 20 men. The pearl banks themselves were mostly between Kuwait and Rās-Tanaunora in Sa'udia Arabia and here such as: Jilai'ah, Ghamaitha, Dūhat-el-Zurq, Rās-el-Zūr, Khairān, Khafji, Khalālū, Sūfān, Fashaitāt, Dūhat el-Musawī, Wajh-el-Jazaina and Rās-el-'Aqraf.<sup>(5)</sup>

The main source of revenue in Kuwait besides the diving was the carrying trade, as a result of which the trade of Kuwait was chiefly confined to the upper and the western part of the Arabian Gulf and Shatt al-'Arab. In autumn the vessels left Kuwait in the direction of Baṣra to buy dates, then turned directly to the Trucial Coast to sell the dates if they found good markets. When they had taken on supplies of water and made other preparations, they sailed down the East Africa coast as far as the Rafjai river calling at Malibar, Zanzibar, Mumbasa and other countries on the coast. There, they sold the dates and bought spices, ropes, timber including teak, a jack wood and everything they needed, especially the materials connected with boatbuilding. In fact Kuwait was the centre of the boatbuilding industry.<sup>(6)</sup> The builders, however, were originally from Masqaṭ. The materials necessary for boatbuilding are timber, coir rope and fibre. Annually the boats returned bringing these materials from Calcutta. The cargo boats at that time were sailing boats such as Baghlah, Būm, Shyū'ai, Sambūk, Batil, Zarūq and Hūri. Each year the sailing boats made two or more trips to India, Zanzibar and the Rafjai river.

Having looked at the life of Kuwait at that time, and the sources of income, let us now turn to the inhabitants of Kuwait; the original tribes who migrated from Central Arabia and settled down in

Kuwait, and who are the townsmen of today. The great majority of the tribesmen are from the 'Anaiza tribe, the greatest and noblest tribe in Central Arabia, from whom āl-Ṣabāḥ, āl-Khalaifa, āl-Zāyid and Jalāhima are descended.<sup>(7)</sup> There are a number of tribes who settled in Kuwait besides the 'Anaiza tribes, for instance the 'Ajmān, Bani Khālid, Dawāsir, 'Awāzim, Dhufair and Muṭair tribes. There are also wandering bands of non-noble tribes, like the Ṣulubaṭ who settled outside Kuwait. They are more a community than a tribe, and there are also non-noble tribes like the Rashāyda who became the supporters of the sheikh of Kuwait. The Dhufair and Muṭair tribes who are friendly tribes from Nejd, entered the confines of Kuwait in certain seasons, and encamped at Jahra, which lies about 15 miles outside Kuwait.<sup>(8)</sup> They supplied the population with ghahi oil, milk and other goods. The Sheikh of Kuwait collected al-zakāt money from the tribes, and eventually the sheikhs of Kuwait collected al-zakāt from each member of the Bedouin who came to the outskirts of the town.

This is a summary of the local background of Kuwait. We have seen how the society was divided into tribes, and these tribes are divided into branches; for instance in the 'Anaiza tribe the 'Amārat are descended from the 'Attaubi tribes, the noble and aristocratic tribes ... and so on.

When Āl-Ṣabāḥ migrated from Central Arabia and settled in Kuwait, the settlers of Kuwait decided that Sheikh Ṣabāḥ should be the head, and should administer their affairs, hence Sheikh Ṣabāḥ became the Sheikh of Kuwait, and laid the foundation of the present principality in 1756.<sup>(9)</sup> The throne of Kuwait has remained in the Ibn Ṣabāḥ family from that time until the present day.

The most famous of all the sheikhs of Kuwait was Mubārak Ibn Sabah, the third son of the late Sheikh Ṣabāḥ, who was among

the greatest men that Arabia has produced.<sup>(10)</sup> Mubārak was intelligent, sensitive, decisive and thoughtful. He would listen a great deal, and when the person talking to him had finished his conversation, would retain a vivid recollection of what had been said. If he saw a person once he would never forget him for the remainder of his life. He was patient, yet ambitious, and whenever he wanted to do a thing, he would do it when the occasion presented itself, not looking for fame. He was forbearing rather than quick in temper; he was courageous and brilliant in politics, a brave person who needed a strong hand to conquer his enemies. In short, he was intelligent, had great wisdom and considerable knowledge of international affairs in order to fend off the bad and to encourage the good things by his skill and tactfulness.<sup>(11)</sup>

Mumbarāk was a believer in uniting the Arabs. He had a driving ambition to govern all the countries round him, but conditions were always against him. Therefore he broke with family tradition in his methods, by seizing power for himself.<sup>(12)</sup> In May 1896, Mubarāk usurped the throne by the assassination of his two step-brothers, Muḥammad and Jarrāh, with the help of his followers from the 'Ajmān tribe. The reason for the assassination was that Mubarāk's brother Muḥammad, who succeeded his brother 'Abdullah in 1892, was weak, inefficient and unpopular with the people. During his tenure of power, he was dependent on Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim, who was related to him by marriage and had acted as treasurer to his predecessor. Yūsif el-Ibrahaim came from Dūrah a short distance south of 'Abādān on the right bank of Shatt-el-'Arab. He was a wealthy man, and the same time was pro-Turkish; he always hoped to see the Turks one day depose Āl-Ṣabāḥ and place himself and his people in his position. He hated Mubarāk, and urged Muḥammad to seek revenge.<sup>(13)</sup>

Muḥammad's brother, Jarrāh, also hated Mubarāk because Mubarāk was a man of strong, active personality. Jarrāh was very weak, and was

dependant on Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim in all matters. For these reasons Mubārak hatched a conspiracy to get rid of both his brothers and Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim. He succeeded in killing his brothers, but unfortunately for his plans Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim was not in Kuwait that night. If he had been there, Mubārak would have killed him; but it was fate that helped him to be away from Kuwait, or perhaps he knew of Mubārak's intention and so fled from the danger.

Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim's escape and his subsequent return in strength troubled sheikh Mubārak. The latter, thinking that it would be best if he tried being good to Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim in order to entice him back to Kuwait, sent messengers to him asking him to return in order to regain his position and property, and said that he would be as safe as he had been during the reign of sheikh Muḥammad el-Ṣabāh. Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim, however, was not deceived by these promises, and knew what sheikh Mubārak was hiding behind them. He knew very well what would happen if he ever stepped into the country, so he pretended that he accepted the message and promised that he would return to Kuwait as soon as possible. He also promised to be very obedient and faithful to Mubārak, as he had been to his two brothers, if he was treated well. When the messengers had gone, Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim, realising that he was in great danger, decided to stay at Dūrah, hiding there and keeping clear of the hands of his enemy.

On the morning following the assassination of sheikh Muḥammad and his brother, Mubārak addressed a meeting of the heads of the prominent Kuwaiti families to announce his succession to the throne. The announcement was accepted unanimously. Their acceptance of him as their sheikh did not prove that the Kuwaitis accepted his unnatural act of murder, but was granted under threat of the sword.<sup>(14)</sup> The people knew that Mubārak, being a ruthless and ambitious man, would kill anyone who opposed his succession to the throne. Therefore sheikh Mubārak's

nephews, the sons of Muhammad and Jarrāh, could not reclaim their rights.

Sheikh Mubārak at the beginning of his reign tried to do his best to take care of his two brothers' sons and to lessen their grief. He showed them love, tenderness and generosity, but in vain. They decided not to stay in Kuwait, especially in view of Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim's departure.<sup>(15)</sup> Believing that Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim would do his best to conquer their uncle Mubārak, they secretly left Kuwait for Basra, accompanied by 'Abdullah el-Tubtibāi, and sheikh Muhammad Ben Ruwayih. In Basra they met Yūsif, and left with him for Dūrah where they would be well out of Mubārak's reach.

Before attempting to describe the reaction of Mubārak's nephews and Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim to the assassination, we shall give a general idea of the atmosphere and the political circumstances at that time in the countries surrounding Kuwait.

Both the strivings of the new nationalism in Iraq and the rivalry between Ibn Rashaid and Ibn Sa'ud in central Arabia played a part in shaping the course of events during the nine or ten years immediately preceding the first World War, as did the British influence and their political relations with the Trucial Coast. As a result of these factors Kuwait's relations with her neighbours were sometimes good and sometimes bad, depending on the political circumstances of each country at a given moment. We shall now proceed with a summary of events in each country in the area of the period 1890-1899.

Under the new Turkish Reforms<sup>(16)</sup> (el-Tanzimat), Iraq was divided into three provinces, the wilāyat of Baghdād, "the old one", wilāyat of Basra, founded in 1884, and wilāyat of Mūsil, founded in 1897. The wilāyat of Mūsil comprised sanjaq el rukn on which Karkūk and the Sulaimāniyah were dependent. The wilāyat of Baghdād consisted of El-Diwāniyah and Kerbalāh, whilst the wilāyat of Basra comprised El-'Emāra,

Baṣra itself, and al-Muntafiq. Each wilāyat was divided into governorates, ṣinjaqaya or mutasarifya. Each ṣinjaqaya was divided into qazā or suburbs and the qazā into nāḥia or divisions. Each wilāyat was ruled by a wāli and each ṣinjaqaya by a mutasarif. All of these officials were appointed by the Sultān. Whilst the inferior ranks were appointed by the wāli himself. The wāli was the representative of the Sultān and had dealings on his behalf with foreign consuls and the Sheikhs of tribes, in addition to supervising the wilāyat Revenue, with the help of the daftardar "House of Registry".

Every wilāyat had an administrative Council composed mainly of the employers and elected members representing the Christians and the Jews. Security was entrusted to a small military force called the ḡabtiya policemen which was under the direct control of the Turkish Ministry of Defence. The Islamic legal system was replaced by a number of civil codes and by French commercial law.

The policy of reform was extended also to the sphere of everyday life, especially when Medhat Pasha became Governor of Baghdād. Areas affected by it included education, the quarantine system and hospitals. However, perhaps one of the greatest achievements of Medhat Pasha was the tabu system, or registry of land management, which was aimed at settling the tribes on agricultural lands.<sup>(17)</sup> At that time the tribes played an important role in the economic and social life of Iraq settling separately in small groups among the Iraqi population. They surrounded both the big cities and the villages, and had control of the roads in and out of Iraq. Although similar to each other in their mode of life, these groups differed in their beliefs, since the Arabs are divided into two distinct sects, the Sunna and the Shai'a. Despite their religious differences, however, these tribes did not often come into armed conflict. A good example of the modus vivendi achieved by them is provided by the

Muntafiq tribes, who, though themselves Shai'a, were ruled by Sunna dynasty, whilst in Kurdistān, though the Shai'as were rare, the Sunna were still loyal to the Ottoman Sultān. The habits of the tribes differed in that the Kurds customarily moved from place to place in search of good grazing for their cattle, whilst the Arab tribes lived for the most part on the desert borders of Iraq in areas such as Dhufair on the south west frontier of Iraq, Anaiza on the grazing area along the Syrian border, and Shammar at the north of West Iraq.

It was not easy to apply the new Ottoman administrative procedures among these tribes inside Iraq, nor did the tribes themselves find it easy to obey the new legislation, involving, as it did, the abandonment of the traditional tribal way of life and the adoption of a new civil code. For this reason, Medhat Pāsha introduced the tabu system, which entitled the Registry Management to sell Government lands for sums repayable by small instalments, on condition that the owners remained free to dispose of it. This right was granted particularly to the sheikhs of tribes, on condition that the tribe of each particular sheikh was under his control. As a result of the introduction of this system many sheikhs became great feudal landowners, a phenomenon which had already appeared among the Muntafiq tribes.

Despite the reforms of Medhat Pāsha, and the plans for centralization in Iraq, the scheme for centralization was not as successful in Iraq as had been hoped. There were a number of reasons for this failure: Firstly: The difficulty of developing satisfactory means of transport in Iraq, combined with the mountainous nature of much of the terrain meant that the country had real communications problems.

In addition the widespread dispersion of the tribes made difficult the establishment of a central government. There was always fierce rivalry between city and tribe, between the Sunna and the Shai'a, and the Arabs and the Kurds.

Secondly: The general circumstances and atmosphere of Iraq discouraged the Turks from service in the country.

Thirdly: To strengthen his own influence in Iraq the Sultān used to stir up the Sunna and the Shai'a sects against each other, although he preferred the Sunna because of their loyalty to the Caliphate.

The foregoing is a summary of the Turkish position in Iraq, and of Turkish policies and methods.

We shall now turn our attention to the interests of the foreign powers. Originally these interests were religious, but they later became political. For example, British interference began with a mission established by the Church Missionary Society in Baghdād where a church and hospital were opened in 1899 and later the work of the society was extended to Muṣil, but by the time the relationships between Britain and Iraq had been established it was obvious that British religious interests had become political. (18)

Although commercial considerations had originally attracted the British power into the Arabian Gulf by the 19th Century, the routes around Africa for commercial exchange between South East Asia and Europe still formed the backbone to the activities of the British East India Company. Rather, British interest in the Gulf was prompted by a desire to secure a corridor for speedy communication between London and the British Government in India. Besides this consideration, there was of course the military importance of the Arabian Gulf for India - although this military importance did not actually become apparent until after the French expedition to Egypt in 1797. Because of these factors, Britain established a consulate in Basra where a station was to be established for the transfer of mail and messages from the Gulf via Baṣra and the Euphrates to Syria and as far as Aleppo. Hence the British established the consulate with a consul responsible to the British Government in

India. This situation occasioned an approach between the Wilāyat of Baghdād and the British authorities in Bombay, as a result of which the Wālis agreed to apply the principle of privileges granted by the Ottoman Government to the Europeans, which was 3%. This resulted in increased British commercial activity in the Gulf.

Russia was also interested in Iraq. In 1889 the Russian Consulate was refounded at Baghdād, both to protect their interests in Iraq, and at the same time to protect the Orthodox community there. Besides the British and the Russians there were the French, who claimed to be the protectors of the Catholics.<sup>(19)</sup> At the same time they were conducting archaeological excavations in the country. This was the situation of Turkish Iraq at that time vis-a-vis the foreign rivals.

Meanwhile the relationship between Iraq and Kuwait depended on the Wālis, especially during the period between 1899 and 1902. The Turkish authorities in Iraq were persistent in their efforts to incorporate Kuwait into the Baḡra Wilāyat. We shall, however, reserve discussion of these events until later, when British activity was directed towards Iraq and British interests were concentrated on the Omān Sultanate and the Trucial Coast. This Sultanate had been flourishing under the Bau-S'aid Dynasty since 1762. Omān was in fact able to exert influence on the south east of Central Arabia as well as on the Indian Ocean coast. She could occupy Hermez region on the East Africa coast, and the Arabian coastline and became, in fact, a maritime power of some standing in the region, especially where piracy was concerned.

The region prone to piracy was centred on what is called the Piracy Coast, which was the inner shore of the Gulf of Omān. This was later called the Trucial Coast. It was inhabited by many tribes under the leadership of El-Qwāsīm, and its chief headquarters were in El-Shārqa

and Rās-El-Khaimah.

The Qwāsīm, a powerful tribe occupying Rās El-Khaimah and Khūr-Faqān on Cape Mussendom, were engaged principally in fishing. They were a branch of the great Ma'awal tribe who occupied the Arabian Gulf coast from Zurdistan to Bander Abbas, on the Gulf. (20)

The influence of the Qwāsīm has spread over the whole area known as the "Pirate Coast". Their armed dhows scored the Gulf and its approaches. They had become formidable opponents to peaceful sailors. As the pirate raids in the region increased against both local and British ships, the British allied themselves with the Sultāns of Omān in an endeavour to destroy the centres of piracy. The pirate fleet was large. It consisted of some hundreds of armed boats, estimated at one time to be sixty-three big ships and eight hundred small vessels employing nineteen thousand men with long sailing experience in the Arabian Gulf. (21) The British Government now took upon itself the task of suppressing piracy in the Gulf because it was a danger to British trade with India.

Many clashes had already occurred between the British and the pirate fleets, so the British Government mounted three expeditions against the pirate coast. The most important expeditions were those of 1809 and 1819. The expedition of 1819 was under the control of Major Sir Grant Keir, who struck a deadly blow against El-Qwāsīm and destroyed their town of Rās-El-Khaima. Despite this, however, the Qwāsīm continued to plunder indiscriminately the merchant vessels of all nations. Afterwards negotiations were commenced with the aim of securing peace. As a result, every sheikh on the pirate coast was required to sign a general peace treaty, which was concluded on the 8th January, 1820. It stipulated that piracy in the Gulf should cease. (22)

However, it soon became apparent that the general peace treaty of 1820 would not bring permanent peace in the area because the agreement

did not stipulate that the sheikhs should avoid local wars among themselves. Hence, in 1835 the sheikhs signed a maritime armistice, the conditions of which stipulated that under no circumstances would the sheikhs engage in maritime wars among themselves for a period of six months. Meanwhile, the British Government undertook not to interfere in the sheikhs' land wars. This agreement was renewed annually until 1843, when the sheikhs agreed to a ten years extension, at the expiration of which it was decided to prolong the agreement in perpetuity.<sup>(23)</sup> The reason for this decision was that the various sheikhs (the sheikh of Rās-el-Khaima, Sultān Ben Ṣaqar, the sheikh of Abu Dhabi, Sheikh S'aid Ben Tahnaun, the sheikh of Dhabi S'aid Ben Butye, the sheikh of 'Ajmān Hamid Ben Rashaid, the sheikh of Umm-el-Quwain Abdullah Ben Rashid) having tasted the benefits resulting from a maritime truce with the British under the mediation of a resident in the Gulf, realised at last that nothing was to be gained by prosecuting a maritime feud against the British. Another agreement intended to stand in perpetuity was signed in May, 1853. The terms of this latter agreement were not different from those of the previous one, but an important item was added to it confirming that the Omān coast was a British sphere of influence. The chief stipulation was that any maritime attack from one of the tribes on another should not be reciprocated, but reported to the British authorities in the Arabian Gulf.

These agreements dealt generally with measures concerning the restoration of peace in the waters of the Gulf and the protection of British vessels and property in the ports of the Omān coast, and at the same time restricted the authority of the sheikhs of the Trucial coast within their territories when dealing directly with matters which might expose them to the influence of foreign powers. In 1892 the British Government signed another agreement with the Sheikhdoms. This agreement

for the first time conferred on the British Government authority over the internal affairs of the Trucial Sheikhdoms. The latter were not to enter into any agreement or correspondence, save through the British Government, and not to allow the residence within their territories of any foreign agent without the consent of the British Government.<sup>(24)</sup>

The British increased their influence in the Gulf during the last part of the 19th Century by declaring protectorates over the principalities and over the lands of the more important sheikhs. Into the latter category fell Masqat, Bahrain Qatar and Kuwait. In 1854 Britain took over from S'aid Ben Sultan, Emir of Masqat, the Island of Kuria Muria, which became dependent on the British Crown. In 1856 S'aid Ben Sultan died and was succeeded by his sons Saueni and Maĵed. In 1861 they agreed, after British arbitration, to divide the Sultanate of Masqat and Zanzibar between them, Saueni taking Masqat and Maĵed the Sultanate of Zanzibar.

By this time France had restored her influence in the Gulf, and especially in Masqat, where French activity had ceased since 1811. During the reign of Sultan Saueni, France and Britain signed a declaration in support of the independence of both the Masqat and the Zanzibar Sultanates. Doubtless the intent of that agreement was to prevent Britain from completely dominating Masqat, yet despite this, British influence in that Sultanate increased steadily.<sup>(25)</sup> In 1864 Britain lent assistance to the Sultan of Masqat when his principality was under pressure from the Second Wahābis in Central Arabia. The Wahābis renewed their attack on Omān in that year, and the British forces now intervened hurriedly under the command of Colonel Lewis Pelly, the British Resident in the Gulf. The British action was directed against Qatif and Buraumi, which were the Wahābi centres in the region of Omān. As a result of the British intervention, the Wahābis retreated. In 1866 they promised not to repeat

this attack on the Arab Sheikhs allied with Britain and particularly the Emirs of Oman. From that time on Wahābi pressure on the Arab principalities of the Gulf dwindled.

One of the signs of the increase of British influence was the signing of an agreement with the Emir of Masqaṭ by which he granted the British a concession for erecting telegraph lines on his lands. In 1873 Turkey, the Governor of Masqaṭ, signed an agreement forbidding the slave trade. In the same year, British subjects were granted a privileged status by being placed under British consular legislation.

In 1880, the British Agency in Masqaṭ was granted the right to have a British military guard, and at the same time the British agent was granted complete freedom of movement in the Sultanate.

On the 10th March, 1891 during the governorate of Faiṣal ben Turkey, the famous treaty, which explicitly declared a British protectorate over Masqaṭ, was signed. This was known as the "Friendship, Trade and Navigation Treaty". In this agreement the Sultān Faiṣal ben Turkey promised and bound himself, his heirs and successors never to cede, sell or mortgage his territory to any foreign powers. The agreement provided for full co-operation between Britain and Masqaṭ in the political, military and economic fields.<sup>(26)</sup> In 1895-97 loans were granted to the Sultān by the Government of India on the security of the Zanzibar subsidy, for it was held that to require him to place his customs department under British Management would be a violation of the declaration of 1862.<sup>(27)</sup>

In 1898 visits were paid to Masqaṭ by French gunboats, and in the course of the year, disregarding his agreement of 1891 with the British Government, the Sultān made a grant of a coaling station to France, although he did not assign a particular place. The place most likely to be utilised was Bander Hissah, a harbour not far from Masqaṭ.<sup>(28)</sup>

Accordingly, naval dispositions were made there by the British Government to anticipate, if necessary, a French attempt at occupation.

The second principality which was taken as a British zone of influence was Qatar. The relationship between Britain and Qatar began when Sheikh Muḥammed ben Thāny signed a peace treaty with Colonel Lewis Pelly, the British Resident in the Gulf, on 12th September 1868. By the terms of this agreement, the sheikh promised not to commit any breach of maritime peace. He also acknowledged the authority of the British Resident in solving any misunderstanding relating from the enforcement of the Maritime Truce.<sup>(29)</sup> The agreement stated, in connection with Qatar's relationship with Bahrain that the Sheikh of Qatar would maintain friendly relations with the Sheikh of Bahrain.<sup>(30)</sup>

This agreement of 1868 marked a change in Britain's attitude to Qatar, for formerly the latter had been regarded as a dependency of Bahrain. It acknowledged, although indirectly, the title of Sheikh Muḥammed ben Thany as Sheikh of Qatar, and established a basis for the emergence of a dependent town, owing no allegiance to Bahrain.<sup>(31)</sup>

Meanwhile the Turkish Government warned Britain not to interfere in Qatar affairs. In fact, Turkey made several attempts to occupy Qatar in 1872.<sup>(32)</sup> These warnings were usually ignored by the British Government. Respect for the authority irregularly exercised by the Turks in Qatar came to an end among the inhabitants of the peninsula as a consequence of the successful rebellion of 1893.<sup>(33)</sup> In 1894 a Turkish representative at Duha was murdered, and in 1898 there was a rising there, in which several Turks were killed.

In 1898 the Sheikhs of Qatar sought British protection similar to that enjoyed by the Trucial coast, which had previously entered into an agreement with the British Government. However, no response was forthcoming from the British.

Bahrain was the third principality included in the British zone of influence. The Bahrain Islands in this period were valuable chiefly for their pearl fisheries. British relations with Bahrain began when Bahrain was a partner in the general treaty of 1820, for the suppression of piracy and the slave trade. Subsequent compacts in 1856 and 1868 progressively increased British influence.

By the following instrument the Sheikh 'Isā ben 'Ali-āl-Khalaifa surrendered his external sovereignty, thus virtually placing the Islands under the British protection. (34)

On the 22nd December, 1880, Sheikh 'Isā signed an agreement with the British Government by which he bound himself and his successors in the Government of Bahrain to abstain from entering into negotiation or making treaties of any sort with foreign powers without the consent of the said British Government, and to refuse permission to any other Government than the British to establish diplomatic or consular or depots in the Bahrain territory, unless with the prior consent of Britain. (35)

In 1892, the Sheikh of Bahrain signed another agreement with the British Government. This was the exclusive agreement of 13th March, 1892, by which the Sheikh reaffirmed in more explicit terms his original surrender of external sovereignty in 1880, and added a general non-alienation clause. This clause stated that the Sheikh bound himself and his heirs and successors to the following restrictions:

1. He would not be allowed to enter into any agreement or correspondence with any power other than the British Government.
2. He could not, without British approval, permit the agent of any other Government to reside within his territory.
3. That he could not cede, sell, mortgage or otherwise give for occupation any part of his territory, save to the British. (36)

We must now turn our attention to Kuwait, whose geographical position and foreign relations were already being discussed by the British whilst Sheikh Mubārak-el-Ṣabāḥ was strengthening his own position in 1896-97. At that time British officials were expressing various views as to the actual status of Kuwait.<sup>(37)</sup> Mr. Stavrides (legal adviser to the British Embassy at Constantinople) expressed the following view in a memorandum of 30th June, 1896: "The country of Kuwait, in spite of her full independence, appears on the map as if it were part of the Ottoman Empire. The ruling family in it, own vast lands in Baṣra, and particularly in the province of Fāo. This latter factor made the sheikh accept the title of qāimaqām, granted by the Sultān, together with the title of Pasha, of which the Sheikh is proud".<sup>(37)</sup> A copy of this memorandum was forwarded to the Government of India and sent by them to Colonel Wilson, Political Resident at Bushire.

In July the British warship "Sphinx", with Commander Baker on board, visited Kuwait. His report confirms the usurpation of Mubārak, but he thought it had been done with the concurrence of the people. He added that "the presence of an English man-of-war frightened Sheikh Mubārak considerably. Kuwait is nominally an independent Arab territory, but in reality the Turks exercise great influence over it, more especially since the new chief acceded to power, he finds it necessary to play into their hands".<sup>(38)</sup> Sheikh Mubārak would not come out to the ship and Commander Baker noticed that the Sheikh flew the Turkish flag and taxed him with it.

Whilst the British man-of-war was visiting Kuwait, Mubārak's nephews appealed to Ḥamdi Pasha, the Wāli of Basra, for redress, and for the restitution of the landed property which should have come to them, but which had been appropriated by Mubārak. At first it appeared likely that their petition might be taken into consideration, as it was strongly

supported by the Wāli Ḥamdi Pāsha, who urged on the Porte the convenience of the occasion for the effective occupation of Kuwait by Turkish troops. Mubārak, however, spent money lavishly in enlisting on his side the mushair of Baghdād, Rajab Pāsha, and other high officials, whose influence at Constantinople finally prevailed.<sup>(39)</sup> Hence, at the end of 1897, Mubārak was, at last, officially recognized. In fact, the incident which had occurred between Sheikh Mubārak and his brothers was very common and happened frequently among the Arab tribes.

Mubārak realized that the reappointment of Ḥamdi Pāsha as Wāli of Basra might have some effect on his position, even though the Porte had forgotten the incident. Besides Ḥamdi Pāsha, the chief supporter of Mubārak's nephews was Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim of Dūrah, their maternal uncle. At the same time, Sheikh Mubārak also feared lest the Ottoman government should be roused by the incitements of Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim. He tried, therefore, to win over the Constantinople authorities. A statement, to which was attached a complaint, was submitted to the Ottoman authorities at Basra, stating that Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim had killed his two brothers Sheikh Muḥammad and Sheikh Jarrāh. That statement contained the testimony of all the people of Kuwait, with a few notable exceptions, such as Sheikh Muḥammad el-Fāris, Sayid Sulymān-el-Sayid, Abdulla-el-Rāshid and Jābir el-Ghānim.<sup>(40)</sup> Sheikh Mubārak assumed that the statement would undermine the position of Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim, would stop his aggressive attitude and plots, and that he would ask to be allowed to return to Kuwait. When some of the nobility of Kuwait, at Mubārak's instigation, asked Yūsif to stop his plotting, he answered that he was not plotting against Kuwait, and that he had never wished to do any harm to its people.<sup>(41)</sup>

Reassured by this statement he sent delegates, headed by his brother, Sheikh Humaud-el-Ṣabāh, to Dūrah, where Yūsif was residing, to ask to make peace and to try to persuade him to return to Kuwait. The

delegates went and met Yūsif-el-Ibrāhaim and, during discussions with him, pressed him to return. At first he listened to their arguments in silence, but when they continued to press him, he brought to them a copy of the statement in which Sheikh Mubārak had accused him of the murder of Sheikhs Muhammad and Jarrāh. Then he began to reproach them saying, "after you have seen this, do you want me to believe what Sheikh Mubārak says, and do you want me to return to Kuwait with you, when you have falsley testified that I had killed Sheikhs Muhammad and Jarrāh. Do you expect me to trust your friend who accused me of that brutal deed, whereas you are all quite sure I am innocent". (42)

The delegates were unable to argue with this statement, so they returned to Kuwait and told Sheikh Mubārak.

Now that there appeared to be no hope of his persuading Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim to return, Sheikh Mubārak sent a message to Abd-al-Azaiz-el-Ibrāhaim, who was in Bombay with Abd-al-Azaiz-el-Sumait, begging him to contact Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim and to ask him to give up his aggressive attitude, since he did not hate him. Abd-al-Azaiz-el-Ibrāhaim answered that he was extremely sorry, but that he was unable to interfere in the private affairs of Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim. (43)

Mubārak's nephews now sought British protection from Captain Whyte, who was British Consul at Baṣra at that time. In return they promised him that they would be willing to carry out British orders when their principality was restored and their uncle exiled. After promising to help them, Captain Whyte left Baṣra for England. On his arrival at Constantinople he placed before Sir Philip Currie, the British Ambassador to Turkey, a memorandum which he had drawn up on the 22nd March, 1897, and which throws much light on the politics of Kuwait at that time. In the memorandum he said, "Mr. Stavrides describes Kuwait as being entirely independent, but it seems to me that the acceptance by the Sheikh of an

appointment from the Sultān as qaimaqām precludes the possibility of any foreign power recognizing under present conditions his independence. I was assured at Baṣra that Sheikh Mubārak's sole object in killing his two brothers, was to usurp the sheikhdoms, and to possess himself of their wealth."<sup>(44)</sup> In assessing this point of view, Currie requested the opinion of the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who replied frankly that "Kuwait is now under the Ottoman sovereignty that is a fact which cannot be denied".<sup>(45)</sup>

The result of these differences of opinion as to the status of Kuwait was that the request of Mubārak's nephews for British support was rejected.

In September, 1897, Sheikh Mubārak's position was in danger because Sheikh Jāsīm ben Thāny was recruiting the Bedouin tribes and making other preparations to go to the assistance of Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim and Mubārak's nephews. His intention was, in fact, to make a combined attack on Kuwait by land and by sea. Realizing the danger to his position, Sheikh Mubārak now sought recognition by the Turkish authorities, spending considerable sums in his endeavour to secure his aim.<sup>(46)</sup> He wrote to his friend S'aid Pāsha, the wali of El-Hasa, and sent him gifts in order to strengthen the friendship between them. In his letter he explained to him that Sheikh Jāsīm intended to attack Kuwait. S'aid Pāsha now looked into the matter and learned about the proposed expedition from one of his men. He immediately sent a formal letter to the wali of Baṣra informing him that Sheikh Jāsīm ben Thāny was a danger to the security of the people and that he intended to attack Kuwait.<sup>(47)</sup> The response came in November, 1897, when the wali of Baṣra despatched Sayid Rajab and a number of high ranking officials, together with a military detachment, to Qater to negotiate with Sheikh Jāsīm and to arrange a settlement between the two Sheikhs. They succeeded in averting

trouble and returning to Basra in safety.

After this incident Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim remained in Qatar for some time. Later he left for Hāil, realizing that Muḥammed Ibn Rashaid, the Emir of Hāil and Jabal Shammar, feared that Sheikh Mubārak intended to extend his power over Central Arabia. The chief reason for Ibn Rashaid's fears was that Sheikh Mubārak had given refuge to his rival, Ibn Sa'ūd, and there was a danger that the latter might at some time return to his country with his supporters and reclaim the rights which Ibn Rashaid had usurped. This rivalry endured for a long time.

Before we embark on a description of the relationship between Kuwait and Central Arabia at that time, it may be useful to give a short summary of the background of Central Arabia.

In this area the influence of the Wahābism had spread over Central Arabia and the Coast of the Arabian Gulf. The present era of Central Arabian history began with the rise of the Wahābism, by which the course of events in Nejd has since been largely determined. Consequently, in dealing with the area, it is necessary first of all to enquire into the origin of Wahābism. Wahābism was originally a purely religious movement, founded by Muḥammad ben Abdal'wahāb, who devoted himself to the task of purifying Islam from the errors and laxity of faith and practice which had crept in during the course of time.<sup>(48)</sup> His leadership strongly influenced the subsequent development of Wahābism.

Initially, Wahābism was a reformation of Muḥammad's doctrine of Islam. It took the form chiefly of a protest against superstition and luxury in the Muḥammadan world.<sup>(49)</sup> Later, through the force of circumstances, the movement acquired a secular and political function. This was to serve the personal ambitions of the Emir of Nejd, Ibn Sa'ūd who adopted the movement.<sup>(50)</sup>

At the same time, a new power emerged. This was the town of

Hāil which was already considered, in a sense, as the capital of Jabal Shammar, partly because of its size and wealth, and partly because of its central position.

The Āl-Rashaid family was of the clan of Ja'afar, the noblest branch of the Shammar tribes. About 1891, a great internal revolution had taken place in Central Arabia, by which the whole of Nejd had been brought into subjection to Ibn-Rashaid, the 'Northern' or Shammar Emir. (51) The territory which Ibn Rashaid included even the lands of Ibn Sa'ūd, the 'Southern' or Wahābi Emir, his former overlord. At that time the Turkish authorities at Hasa were the chief supporters of Ibn Rashaid, hoping, through him, to cut off the Wahābi movement at its root. Accordingly, after the revolution, Emir Nejd Abdulrahmān ben Faisal ben Sa'ūd was expelled from Nejd by Muḥammad ben Rashaid. He sought refuge in Kuwait, but was refused admission by the Sheikh of Kuwait, Muḥammad ben Ṣabāh, and after wandering for a while with his men from the 'Ajmān tribes, he found a temporary refuge at Qatar. (52) He negotiated for a time with the Turks, seeking permission to reside in Kuwait, and, at length, in 1897, the Turkish authorities finally consented to allow him to stay there, and paid him a monthly allowance. (53)

Consequently, Abd-al-Ruhmān ben Faisal ben Sa'ūd and his family had been living in Kuwait under Sheikh Muhammad's protection for some years. The relations between Sheikh Mubārak and Ibn Rashaid were strained, both because of the former's attitude to Ibn Sa'ūd in granting him refuge in Kuwait and because Ibn Rashaid realised that Mubārak was ambitious and would, given the chance, extend his power into much of Central Arabia. Hence, Ibn Rashaid was waiting for a convenient occasion to conquer Sheikh Mubārak. Realising Ibn Rashaid's intentions, Sheikh Mubārak awaited the opportunity of thwarting him. At first Sheikh Mubārak put all his efforts into political plans to separate Ibn

Rashaid and Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim, believing that Yūsif el Ibrāhaim was the more dangerous enemy, and that he exercised a powerful influence over Ibn Rashaid. <sup>(54)</sup> For this reason he was careful not to give them the chance for concerted action. He began writing letters to Ibn Rashaid, advising him to keep clear of Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim, and not to listen to him, because Yūsif was intent on causing trouble and enmity between the two rulers. <sup>(55)</sup> These letters achieved nothing, however, and Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim continued to stir up Ibn Rashaid against Mubārak.

At the end of 1897, some traders from Hāil were killed and their money stolen near Kuwait. Immediately Ibn Rashaid accused Sheikh Mubārak of being behind the massacre. Sheikh Mubārak tried in vain to prove that he was innocent. He apologised to Ibn Rashaid, explaining that he knew nothing about the matter, but Ibn Rashaid refused to believe him. Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim now seized his opportunity and kept on encouraging him to make war on Sheikh Mubārak for the welfare of Kuwait. In this year, however, Muhammad ben Rashaid died after a reign of twenty-eight years. Thus Sheikh Mubārak and his people escaped from a very difficult situation. <sup>(56)</sup>

Before Muḥammad Ibn Rashaid died, he advised his successor, Abd-al-'Azaiz ben Mit'ab, to refrain from any interference in a matter which did not concern him. Though Abd-al-'Azaiz was ultimately lured with gifts into disregarding this good advice, it was for the moment from the Turks that Mubārak had most to fear. <sup>(57)</sup> The new ruler, Abd-al-'Azaiz, was already aware of the ambition of Mubārak to extend his authority over most of Central Arabia, and his relations with the ruler of Kuwait were similar to his predecessor's. Accordingly, as tension mounted, Mubārak became sure that the only solution would be the sword. The troubles between Ibn Rashaid and Sheikh Mubārak will be discussed later.

By the end of the year 1897, Sheikh Mubārak had begun to despair of obtaining the Sultān's recognition of his independence. Since all

his efforts towards that end had so far proved fruitless. Consequently he turned to the British Government with a request for protection.<sup>(58)</sup> He visited Colonel Meade, the political Resident in Bushire, with his formal request, and the latter promised to contact his Government about the matter. When Colonel Meade informed the British authorities of Sheikh Mubarak's request, the Minister of Foreign Affairs sent a telegram to the Government of India, stating that in the Minister's opinion, Britain should not interfere in the local affairs of the Arabian Gulf principalities, and that it would be preferable not to grant protectorate status to Kuwait.<sup>(59)</sup>

Owing to the contradictory declarations, the British Ambassador in Constantinople, Sir Philip Currie, now asked his Government's opinion concerning the Turkish pretensions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs replied to this enquiry confirming that the Ministry had never recognized Turkish sovereignty over Kuwait, but pointing out that it would be illogical to completely ignore the fact that Kuwait was under Ottoman influence.<sup>(60)</sup>

The Indian Government wished to recognize Turkish sovereignty over Kuwait, in order to give substance to their view that it was Kuwaiti ships which had attacked the Indian ship "Haripasa" which belonged to a subject to the Jamnagar State. This ship had been attacked and robbed near Fāo by about 30 pirates on the 22nd August 1895, whilst on its way to Baṣra to collect a cargo of dates. The pirates killed four members of the crew, wounded four more, carried off about Rs3,400 in cash.<sup>(61)</sup> The British Government did not doubt that the Sheikh of Kuwait knew well who the culprits were, because almost all the land in the vicinity of Fāo belonged to him. For this reason the British thought that the culprits were from Kuwait.<sup>(62)</sup>

The Kuwaiti case became more prominent from autumn 1897, when

Sheikh Mubārak requested British protection after he had failed to obtain Turkey's recognition of his independence. The British Government replied to Sheikh Mubārak's request with a cable sent to the Viceroy, recommending that there should be no interference in Kuwait other than the minimum necessary to maintain peace in the Gulf and that the question of protectorate status for Kuwait should be left for consideration at another, more convenient time.

On the 6th December, 1897, Colonel Meade sent a telegraph concerning a projected movement of Turkish troops from Baghdād to Fāo, and on the 22nd three battalions of Turkish infantry left Baghdād in two steamers for Basra, evidently threatening an attack on Kuwait.<sup>(64)</sup> This information was telegraphed on the 22nd and 23rd December, 1897 by Colonel Meade to the Government of India, acting in accordance with the instruction of the Secretary of State, who told Colonel Meade that no action should be taken to assist the Sheikh of Kuwait without special sanction.<sup>(65)</sup>

The British Ministry of Foreign Affairs altered its attitude to the question of applying protectorate status to Kuwait, and Bahrain, because of the interest shown by the Government of India in the Arabian Gulf. Colonel Meade, the British political Resident at Bushire wrote a confidential memorandum on Kuwait stating: "Kuwait owns an excellent harbour, and if it comes under our protectorate, it would become undoubtedly one of the most important positions in the Arabian Gulf. Add to that the possibility of rendering it, in future, the end of the railway from Alexandretta or Port S'aid, there we would be in a position to protect that line. Its trade with Baḡra is successful, as it is with Nejd and Syria. Slave trade and also piracy will receive a fatal blow if Kuwait becomes under our protectorate. Thus it can be said that the British protectorate over Kuwait means the centralization of our political

international interests in the waters of the Gulf and on its shores".<sup>(66)</sup>

Gradually, political attitudes now began to favour Sheikh Mubārak, who was admired for his strong personality, warm disposition and political sagacity. The British believed that a refusal to grant protectorate status to Sheikh Mubārak would drive him back into the arms of the Turks. The opinion of the new British Ambassador at Constantinople, Sir Nicholas O'Connor, was requested on the matter, but before his answer was received, a confidential cable reached the Viceroy from the Minister of Foreign Affairs, stating that, if the Indian Government considered that it would be easy to exercise a protectorate over Kuwait without new military arrangements in the Arabian Gulf, then Lord Salisbury would accept such a step, and would be ready to support it diplomatically and politically in case of any protest against the declaration by the Ottoman Government.<sup>(67)</sup>

After a short time, the Minister of Foreign Affairs received O'Connor's reply, in which he cautiously expressed his support for the idea of a British protectorate over Kuwait; but insisted on the necessity of considering the matter further.<sup>(68)</sup> There is an important memorandum written by Mr. Sandison, the Oriental Affairs attache at the British Embassy in Constantinople, concerning a meeting which he had in July 1899 with the Turkish Prime Minister. At this meeting the Turkish Prime Minister insisted that Turkish sovereignty in the Arabian Gulf region extended as far south as Qataif, and warned Sandison that any such pretensions by the British would lead to political difficulties on both the provincial and international fronts. He refused to condone the British interference in Kuwait, which was ostensibly intended to put an end to piracy and the slave trade, stating that the Ottoman Empire was quite ready to patronize any humanitarian idea which would lead to the suppression of such evil practices, but that the occupation of Kuwait

was not necessary in order to achieve the desired end.

In 1898 there was a rumour that the Russian Government had obtained, from the Sublime Porte, a concession for building a railway from Tripoli to Kuwait, and for establishing a coaling station on the Arabian Gulf, possibly at Kuwait. (69)

Meanwhile, the Germans were trying to secure from the Porte a concession for the construction of a railway from Baghdād to the head of the Arabian Gulf.

A short time later the Turkish Government took positive action for, at the end of 1898, a Turkish gunboat left Baṣra for Kuwait, claiming that Sheikh Mubārak had become an outlaw. The reason for this action was that the Turkish authorities in Constantinople doubted his loyalty. Mubārak himself was to blame for this since he had encouraged acts of piracy against Turkish dhows. (70) The Turkish authorities realised this and acted accordingly. Because of this turn of events Mubārak renewed his request for British protection.

As a matter of fact, Sheikh Mubārak's request for protectorate status marked the end of the policy of friendly neutrality which he had tried to pursue in international affairs. He tried to maintain friendly relations with both Britain and Turkey, but this proved difficult in view of the constant struggle between the powers for sovereignty in Kuwait. Eventually, Mubārak found that he had to throw in his lot with one side or the other and chose Britain. The British Government now agreed to consider Mubārak's application for protection. (71)

According to Sir W. Lee Warner, who wrote a memorandum concerning the control of Kuwait, the granting of protectorate status to the principality offered Britain the following advantages:

1. It had a very fair harbour.
2. It was a political railway terminus.

3. It was favourably situated on a trade route.
4. It would give to Britain control over piracy and the slave trade.
5. It would enable Britain to exclude Russian and other foreign influences. <sup>(72)</sup>

In view of this, the Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, suggested to Colonel Meade that he should try to reach a confidential agreement with Sheikh Mubārak, similar to the British agreement with Musqat of the 20th March, 1890, but on clearer lines. <sup>(73)</sup> He also suggested to him that action should be taken immediately in complete secrecy in order to circumvent the suspicions which would be raised by an open declaration of a protectorate in Kuwait.

Accordingly, on the 21st January, 1899, Colonel Meade proceeded to Kuwait aboard H.M.S. "Lawrence". On his arrival he found that the Turkish corvette, Zahaf, was in Kuwait harbour, but it left on the following day. <sup>(74)</sup>

On the 23rd January, Mubārak signed an agreement by which he bound himself, his heirs, and his successors not to receive any agent or representative of any foreign power or government in Kuwait, or in any other place within the limits of his territory, without the previous sanction of the British Government. Further, he undertook not to cede, sell, mortgage or give for occupation any of his territory to any government or to the subjects of such a government. In return for this undertaking, the British Government promised to support Mubārak and to protect him, his heirs and his successors from any foreign influence. They also paid to him Rs15,000 (about £1,000) and consented to the use of British naval forces in the Gulf in order to protect Kuwait if it should be threatened with foreign invasion. <sup>(75)</sup>

It appears that this agreement provided an opening for Britain to interfere not only in Kuwait's affairs, but also in the affairs of

Nejd and South Iraq. Further, it aided the declining influence of the Lynch Company over the river traffic of the Tigris and Euphrates. On the other hand, the agreement created problems in connection with Sheikh Mubārak's position in the Ottoman Empire. Sheikh Mubārak owned vast agricultural lands and palm gardens in Fāo, which was considered as Ottoman territory. As soon as he accepted British protection, however, his ownership of these lands was annulled in accordance with Turkish law. The British promised Sheikh Mubārak that they would do their utmost to protect his rights in South Iraq. (76)

It was not easy to enter into secret and important negotiations without knowledge of them reaching Sheikh Mubārak's brothers who were opposed to Mubārak's idea of requesting protectorate status from the British. They were in favour of maintaining relations with the Ottoman Government, both because they had no wish to lose their property in Basra and in Fāo, and because they remained unconvinced of the advisability of abandoning a policy of friendly neutrality in favour of one political commitment and submission to a foreign power. Humūd refused to sign the agreement with Sheikh Mubārak, and when all endeavours to persuade him to agree failed, Sayid Aghā Muḥammad Raḥaim, the British Representative in Bahrain, testified to the agreement on the 23rd January, 1899. (77)

Colonel Meade on behalf of his Government and Sheikh Mubārak on behalf of himself, his heirs and his successors, did each in the presence of witnesses, affix their signatures to it.

It was supposed that as long as the British-Kuwait agreement remained secret, few difficulties would arise, but all the historical evidence indicates that the Turks were aware of this development of British influence in Kuwait. The Sultān had expressed his deep anxiety about Sheikh Mubārak's policy, and the latter naturally feared lest the Turks should try to gain. For this reason he sought from Colonel Meade

a special promise that the safety of the lands of the Şabāḥ family at Fāo would be granted. The objectives of Sheikh Mubārak and Colonel Meade could not easily be achieved since Sultān Abdul Hamid had given wide ranging powers to Hamdi Pasha, the Wali of Baṣra, who had become well acquainted with the Şabāḥ family since he had become wali. Hamdi Pasha sided with Mubārak's nephews in opposing the latter's pretensions to the gardens of Fāo and the lands of the Şabāḥ in Fāo. In addition, Hamdi Pasha was trying to induce the emirs, who had taken refuge in Baṣra, to enter into political conspiracies with a view to removing Sheikh Mubārak and resisting the idea of the British protectorate in Kuwait. (78)

In May, 1899, Sheikh Mubārak issued new customs regulations in Kuwait, which raised the import duty on all goods arriving at the port by 5%. These included goods from Baṣra and other Turkish ports which had previously been exempted from duty on presentation of a certificate from the Turkish custom houses. (79) In retaliation for this action, the Turkish harbour-master with five soldiers arrived in Kuwait at the end of September to take charge of the customs house and to open a telegraph line from Fāo to Qataif, which would pass through Kuwait. Sheikh Mubārak declined to receive the harbour-master, and he had to return to Baṣra. (80) Instructions there reached Baṣra from Constantinople that the matter should not be dropped, and a Turkish expedition left Baghdād destined for Kuwait via Baṣra. Noting these indications of an aggressive Turkish policy, the British Government now issued a warning to the Turkish Government stating that, while the British themselves had no designs on Kuwait, they had friendly relations with the Sheikh and that inconvenient and disagreeable questions would be raised if an attempt were made to establish Turkish authority or customs control in the port without the prior consent of the British Government. (81) At the same time the British sent a ship to Kuwait to

Kuwait to protect the Sheikh against any overt acts of aggression by the Turkish authorities. In fact, however, the British ship, Sphinx, was ordered merely to call at Kuwait and proceed without staying for any length of time.

On the 13th September, O'Connor reported that he had carried out his Government's instructions, and had received an assurance from the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs that no further attempt would be made to insist upon the appointment of the harbour-master; that the Ottoman Government had no intention of establishing a custom house at Kuwait; and that the despatch of a military expedition was not contemplated, since, though such an expedition had been proposed by the Wali of Baṣra, Hamdi Pasha, the Sultān did not consider it worth the risk or expense.<sup>(82)</sup> Finally O'Connor succeeded in convincing the Sultān that the Wali Hamdi Pasha, who was renowned for his enmity to the British and to the Sheikh of Kuwait, was an obstacle to any Anglo-Ottoman agreement concerning Kuwait's affairs.<sup>(83)</sup>

The Sultān therefore dismissed him in order to prevent him from undertaking any personal ventures in Kuwait without his knowledge.

By the end of 1899 Turkish standing in Kuwait had greatly improved as a result of the replacement of Hamdi Pasha by Muhsin Pasha as Wali of Basra, and it was clear that it was Turkish influence which had averted the crisis. Muhsin Pasha professed to be a friend of Sheikh Mubārak, and dropped all the designs of his predecessor of which the Sheikh disapproved.<sup>(84)</sup> These were:

1. The establishment of effective quarantine regulations.
2. The establishment of a Customs house.
3. The appointment of a harbour-master.
4. The extension of the telegraph line from Fāo to Qatif, passing through Kuwait.

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## CHAPTER TWO

INTERNATIONAL INTERESTS IN KUWAIT

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By the end of the 19th Century, German imperialist activity had started in the Ottoman Empire, while at the same time, the Ottoman Empire itself was relying on the support of France and Britain against the approaching Russian threat to the Black Sea and Balkans. Meanwhile, both France and Britain were paying close attention to oriental affairs, wishing as they did to protect the Ottoman Empire, and to safeguard its political integrity. This policy began to change after the Berlin Congress of 1878. Indeed, they had even started to be antagonistic towards the Ottoman Government when it began to consider an alliance with Germany.

The policy of rapprochement from Turkey was welcomed by Germany in view of her expansionist aims. These aims were necessitated by the economic situation at that time, for the increasing population of Germany was aggravating her need for food, while her growing industries, particularly spinning and weaving industries, needed essential raw materials. Despite this need, however, Germany became a colonial power somewhat late, and her colonial gains were not of vital importance, (with the exception of German East Africa, which was comparatively poor in raw materials).

The German Government considered Turkey as a flourishing and geographically well-situated market for German merchandise. Hence they welcomed the Turkish approach, with a view to making the Turkish Empire a field for economic expansion. The signs of German influence in the Ottoman Empire were these.

First there was the political influence of Germany in Constantinople. Another sign of this influence was seen in the German mission which trained the Ottoman army, foremost amongst which was the De Goltze mission. Germany also broadened her policy towards the East by the carefully stage-managed and much publicised visits of the Emperor William II to the Ottoman Empire in 1889 and 1898.

As a result of the latter visit, the Baghdad railway project came into existence, prompted by the German desire for a base on the Arabian Gulf. (1)

However, a concession was issued by the "Imperial İradē" for the eventual extension for the location of the German terminus. (2) The exact site was to be settled after completion of the survey then under way. It was estimated that the line would reach the Gulf in about 8 years. Thus the German Government took the first step towards demolishing the basis of British trade and towards making Turkey a corridor for the expansion of German influence into South-West Asia. (3)

In response to these moves, the British Government claimed that the new German involvement in the area was threatening Britain's economic interests in the East. The Germans however, were obstinate in their attitude and continued to pursue their policies for the penetration of new zones of influence, for the establishment of a commercial situation which the Turkish Government considered to be of special importance.

The Germans were unwilling to await the outcome of the discussions with the Porte before choosing a terminus, and on January 5th, 1900, the German commission which was engaged on a preliminary survey of the proposed railway line from Constantinople through Baghdad arrived in Basra. (4) This commission consisted of Herr Stemrich, the German consul general in Constantinople, and Herr Von Kapp, the Chief

Engineer of the Anatolian railway, and an interpreter. While the Germans were in Baṣra, Mr. Wratislaw, the British Consul there, had several conversations with Herr Stemrich, from whom he learned that the results of their journey so far had been far from encouraging.<sup>(5)</sup> In the opinion of Herr Stemrich the proposed line should have a terminus on the Gulf, and for this the Germans proposed to select a site in Kuwait Port. Herr Stemrich spoke frankly to Mr. Wratislaw and seemed to have no idea that Britain might raise any objection to the German plan. He was, however, certain that Sheikh Mubārak of Kuwait would oppose the railway scheme and would likely refuse them their chosen site because the German Government had dealt directly with the Sultān and had not consulted the Sheikh.

The British Government was worried by the German Commission, but could not warn either the Turks or the Germans against interfering in the affairs of Kuwait. This was because they had signed a secret agreement with Sheikh Mubārak in 1899. Eventually Britain decided to inform Sheikh Mubārak of the plans for a railway and to give him instructions. These were that before coming to any arrangement whatsoever with the German Commission, he should inform directly the British Political Resident in Bushire, so that Mr. Gaskin the Assistant Resident at that time could go to Kuwait to determine exactly what had happened.

On the 19th and 20th January, the German Commission reached Kuwait. Before their arrival they sent two letters to Sheikh Mubārak informing him of their coming, with the result that when they arrived the Sheikh received them in his palace and treated them very hospitably. On the second morning Herr Stemrich had a secret meeting with Sheikh Mubārak at which he explained to him the purpose of the Commission. He emphasised that Kuwait would benefit by being developed as an important

naval and commercial station, and added that the German Government was prepared to purchase, for any price he might care to name, a large tract of lands of Kāthima as the site for the railway station. Moreover, the Government was ready to rent twenty square feddāns of the lands surrounding the place.<sup>(6)</sup> Herr Stemrich also asked Mubārak to use his friendly influence with the other Arab Sheikhs whose territory lay in the Euphrates Valley, because he believed that Sheikh Mubārak had authority and influence amongst them.<sup>(7)</sup> In return he promised that Germany would recompense him and his people. Kuwait would be an important trading centre, for, when the terminus of the Baghdād railway was established at Kāthima Bay, a considerable quantity of commercial shipping would call at the port to supply the railway with cargo and passengers. Further, if the Sheikh agreed to the company's proposal, the Germans promised to support him by land and sea by the establishment of a military post for the protection of Kuwait.

In accordance with British advice Sheikh Mubārak refused all these proposals, declaring that he did not know whether the Germans came on their own behalf or on behalf of the Sultān.<sup>(8)</sup>

If the latter was the case, he would like to give them a letter to the Sultān to inform him that he acknowledged the Sultān of Turkey only as the head of the Muslim world. He also made the excuse that the suggested project would result in the extension of the Ottoman authority over Kuwait. The Turks had tried hard to dethrone and to degrade him but he considered himself to be independent of the Turkish authority. He added that any orders concerning Kuwait issued by the Sultān himself would be rejected.<sup>(9)</sup> In this way Sheikh Mubārak made it plain to Herr Stemrich that neither he nor the other sheiks would accept any foreign interference in their territories. For this reason, he said he could not guarantee the safety of the proposed line, and he would not be

responsible for any damage which might befall it. He added that his authority was limited to the neighbourhood of Kuwait, and that he exercised no real authority over the other sheikhs. Thus the German Commission failed and Herr Stemrich and his commission left Kuwait angrily.<sup>(10)</sup>

The real reason for the Sheikh of Kuwait's rejection of the German proposals was that he had bound himself and his successors by a secret agreement with Britain not to allow any foreign power to interfere in his territory. Prominent among those whose interference would be unwelcome were the Turks and their allies.<sup>(11)</sup>

Sheikh Mubārak now hastened to inform Colonel Meade, the British Political Resident in Bushire, of all that had transpired between him and the German Commission. The news worried Colonel Meade, who considered the German Commission to be part of a Turkish plot to attract the Germans into the Arabian Gulf, as a result of which, they hoped British influence there would be weakened. It also appeared to him that the Ottoman and German Governments were taking advantage of British involvement in the war in South Africa to complete their domination of Kuwait. He was troubled by the fact that the Germans had nominated a consul-general in Constantinople and remarked that the latter should be responsible for other important matters in addition to the Anatolian railway project. He said, "We have to safeguard our position in the Gulf and be ready to defend our position against any power, also the presence of the Turkish, Russian, and German staff will be detrimental to our interests in the Arabian Gulf region."<sup>(12)</sup>

Sheikh Mubārak's rejection of German proposals strengthened his relations with Britain, but was by no means the end of his troubles. The threat of overwhelming pressure from Germany and Turkey remained, and Russia was also interested in developments in Kuwait. Since she might find it

necessary to seek a counterpoise, she was rumoured to be trying to obtain an important railway concession from Alexandretta to the Arabian Gulf, with a coaling station at Kuwait.

The Russians were considering means of impeding British expansion in the Gulf and they realised that the best way of achieving this aim would be to gain a foothold there themselves. Accordingly, in 1900, a group of financiers represented Count Kapnist, a Russian businessman and the nephew of the Russian ambassador in Vienna, supported by the Russian ambassador in Constantinople applied for a concession for a railway from Alexandretta to the Gulf, with the intention of establishing a coaling station in Kuwait.<sup>(13)</sup> Russia's aim in seeking this concession was to thwart German design, and to prevent Britain from exercising complete control over Kuwait.

While Russia was busily engaged, the British Government was discussing the best means of avoiding trouble in the Gulf.<sup>(14)</sup> Hamilton, Secretary of State for India, proposed a new policy of rapprochement with Germany, because Britain needed German support against Russia and Turkey.<sup>(15)</sup> This proposal was supported by the British ambassador in Constantinople, on account of the political and military difficulty which Britain was having, particularly in South Africa. Hence the British Government now agreed to inform both the Turkish Government and Marschall von Bieberstein, the German ambassador in Constantinople of the secret agreement with Kuwait.<sup>(16)</sup> Accordingly, on April 9th, 1900, O'Connor informed the Turkish Prime Minister, Tawfaik Pasha, that Britain would not disturb the "status quo" in Kuwait, nor would she interfere with the Sultān's authority in the Arabian Gulf. Britain would not remain idle if any other great power disturbed the "status quo", or if the Turkish Government granted privileges to foreign powers in any region belonging to the Sheikh of Kuwait. The reasons for this was that Kuwait was tied by a special agreement with the British Government.<sup>(17)</sup>

At the same time Von Bieberstein was given further information about the most recent British agreement with Kuwait to the effect that, though not incompatible with the maintenance of the "status quo", it would prevent the Sheikh from giving up his territory to any foreign power without British approval. The German ambassador did not accept O'Connor's viewpoint, but insisted that Kuwait was part of the Ottoman Empire.<sup>(18)</sup> To this O'Connor replied promptly that the sheikh was not allowed to cede or to lease his territory to any foreigners without British permission, because Britain wished to avoid any disturbance of the "status quo". The German press and diplomatic corps now reacted by protesting strongly against the British agreement with Kuwait and the German Government began to stir up trouble over Kuwait. In June 1900, Sir Frank Lascelles, the British ambassador in Berlin, met Herr von Bülov, the German Minister of Foreign Affairs and discussed with him both the future of the Baghdād railway and the situation in the Ottoman Empire, particularly Iraq and Kuwait.<sup>(19)</sup> Lascelles put forward the view that "Kuwait was only technically dependent on the Sultān", but in reality, was free to pursue her own foreign policy. Von Bülov, however, insisted that Kuwait was dependent on the Sultān.

At first the Germans thought that the agreement with Britain was merely some sort of private legal arrangement and that it would be possible for the German bank to buy the concession from the British businessmen. When, however, they came to understand the implications of the agreement, they realised that they were in danger of losing their influence in Kuwait, and, with it the railway concession. Through fear lest this should happen, the German Government now instructed the ambassador in Constantinople to press the Turks to reassert their rights over Kuwait. The German deputy Foreign Minister, commenting on the critical position with regard to the Baghdād railway, stated that any foreign influence

over Kuwait would be a threat to Germany's plans to extend the Anatolian railway to the Arabian Gulf.<sup>(20)</sup> He emphasised that if Germany succeeded in this matter, it would be necessary for Turkey to exercise proper authority over the whole area from Alexandretta to Kuwait. He insisted that it was a matter of great importance to Germany that Sheikh Mubārak be made to declare that he would not grant any foreign concession until he had granted Germany the necessary lands and docks for the Baghdād railway. In effect Germany was trying to gain the concession which Britain had already acquired from the Sheikh. Accordingly, in August 1901, the Germans declared that they did not recognise the British agreement with Kuwait on the grounds that it was contrary to the decision of the Berlin conference of 1878.<sup>(21)</sup>

On September 3rd, 1901, Count von Wolff-Metternich, the German ambassador in London, left Lansdowne in no doubt as to the viewpoint of the German Government, stating that Kuwait was a part of the Ottoman Empire, and that if Britain stopped the Turks from landing on the shores of their own territory by force, then the international balance in the region would be disturbed.<sup>(22)</sup> Lansdowne, however, found the argument useless, as he expressed to Lascelles.<sup>(23)</sup> The next day Lansdowne received Anathopoulo Pasha, the Turkish ambassador in London, who came to present his Government's protest at what had been published in the British press concerning the decision of the British Government to proclaim a protectorate over Kuwait.<sup>(24)</sup> He described the agreement of 1899 as illegal. Lansdowne's response was to assure the Turkish ambassador that there would be no protectorate "unless our hands are forced by events".<sup>(25)</sup> Accordingly, in September 1901, the Turkish Minister of Foreign Affairs instructed his ambassador in London to inform the British Government that in view of the guarantees given, the Turkish Government would respect the "Status quo" in Kuwait, provided that the British Government did not send forces

to Kuwait and refrained from declaring a protectorate. Lord Lansdowne promised the ambassador that his Government had no intention of occupying Kuwait or of declaring a protectorate there as long as the Turks respected the "status quo". In an urgent telegram despatched to his ambassador in Turkey,<sup>(26)</sup> Lord Lansdowne stated that the affairs of Kuwait required caution and that he had to consider facts leniently, because not all the points of the British agreement with Kuwait were clear, and because the agreement had been made without the Sultān's knowledge.<sup>(27)</sup> The purpose of this was to threaten the Turkish Government in case in the event of the Turks strengthening their pretensions, the British authorities in the Gulf should have to enter into negotiations with Sheikh Mubārak, and hold discussions more clearly expressed than previous ones.

The international situation vis-a-vis Kuwait, thus depended largely on the ability of Britain and Turkey to maintain the "status quo" and the degree of independence enjoyed by Sheikh Mubārak. The Turkish Government, for their part, promised that they would not send forces to Kuwait and they would do their utmost to persuade Ibn Rashid, Emir of Nejd, to pursue a peaceful policy towards Kuwait. As for Britain, she promised not to declare a protectorate or to send forces to Kuwait, and to persuade Sheikh Mubārak to stop his raids on Nejd. The Turkish and British authorities were both satisfied with this agreement, the Turks because they retained formal sovereignty over Kuwait and the British because, in reality Kuwait came under their control, and as a result of this agreement, they would be able to participate on equal terms with the Germans. In fact British trading interests were probably better safeguarded by stringent provisions against any preferential tariffs or facilities.

On March 21st, 1902, Lord Lansdowne, then Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, in a memorandum on the situation in Kuwait, remarked

that the British obligations towards the Sheikh were "as ill-defined as the boundaries of his principality. We have distinctly announced that he does not enjoy British protection; on the other hand, we once made him a present of £1,000, and promised him our 'good offices', whatever that may mean. When we made this promise we were, I feel, no doubt thinking of Kuwait proper, if there is such a thing, and not of Bubiyan or other outskirts over which the Sheikh has rights of one sort or another. We might, it seems to me, explain (1) to the Porte, (2) to Sheikh Mubarak, (3) to the foreign powers immediately interested, the objects of our policy. I should be inclined to say that our engagements to name, and to endeavour to obtain the adhesion of the Porte and of the Sheikh to our approximate definition of that district. I would make it clear to the Turks that we do not stand in the way of an arrangement under which the terminus of the line might be placed at some spot other than Kuwait to their advantage if they can make anything out of it.

As to the Foreign powers, I have already explained to most of them that we are not going to oppose the railway project, provided British capital receives a share at least equal to that of any other power in respect of construction, management and orders for materials, and I have added that while we do not grudge a debouche for international commerce in the Gulf, and have no wish to make it into a British Lake, we shall resist to the utmost all attempts by other powers to obtain a foothold on its shores for naval or military purposes. This I take it, is the 'bed-rock' of our policy in the Arabian Gulf. We shall pursue that policy, not in virtue of ambiguous understandings with the local chiefs, but as the predominant power in Southern Persia and the Gulf; the power whose commercial interests in those regions far exceed those of other powers, the power to whose efforts in the past it is due that the waters of the Gulf are open to the trade of the world, and whose

duty it will be in the future to protect the new trade routes. If it is understood that we have to be reckoned with whoever builds the railway and wherever it finds a terminus, because we are that power, we can regard with indifference the local intrigues of any number of sheiks and emirs".<sup>(28)</sup>

Lord Lansdowne's point of view was conveyed to Tewfaik Pasha, who remarked to O'Connor that Britain's aim was to possess Kuwait, "which is, in fact, part of the Sultān's properties", and to use it as a base in case of war with Russia.<sup>(29)</sup> At this time Russia was hoping to build a railway from the Caspian Sea to South Iran, with a possible extension to Bandar 'Abbās, and it was difficult for Britain to oppose this advance.

On March 28th, 1902, O'Connor reminded Tewfaik Pasha of the previous agreement which had been concluded between his Government and the Ottoman Government to maintain the "status quo" in Kuwait, and said that his country had spared no efforts to act in accordance with the spirit of the guarantees given. The Turkish authorities, however, had done as much as they could to disturb Sheikh Mubārak. O'Connor added that Britain's interests lay not only in freedom for all nations to trade in the Arabian Gulf, but that she also had political and economic interests in the area which she had to safeguard.<sup>(30)</sup>

The Viceroy of India, Lord Curzon, showed no enthusiasm for diplomatic discussions which were being held with the Ottoman Government. For him Kuwait was an important station on the route to India and for this reason Britain should be ready to defend it at any moment. Hence it was logical that the British should declare it a protectorate.<sup>(31)</sup>

Meanwhile, the upsets to the British policy in the Gulf increased because of the troublesome situation in Qatar and Nejd on the one hand, and in Kuwait on the other. Ibn Rashaid, the Emir of Nejd, contacted Sheikh Jāssim, the Emir of Qatar, with a view to forming a strong alliance against Abd-al-'Azaiz Ben Sa'ūd, who captured Riyadh, but Sheikh Jāssim rejected

the proposed treaty. The affairs in Kuwait were much more dangerous. In September 1902, Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim made his last attempt to invade Kuwait, having first made certain that Mustapha Nūri Pasha, the Wali of Baṣra, would not oppose him. Yūsif fitted out two dhows, loaded with men and arms, and proceeded to Kuwait. However, a report concerning the proposed attack on Kuwait reached the British Political Resident at Bushire, and he instructed Lieutenant J.G. Armstrong, the commander of the 'Lapwing', which was then lying off Fāo, to proceed to Kuwait.<sup>(32)</sup> The result of this manoeuvre was that when the dhows approached the shores of Kuwait, they found the Kuwaitis prepared to meet them. Therefore they turned round and made a run for the Persian side, with the 'Lapwing' in pursuit. A gun battle ensued, in which one English officer was killed and two injured. The 'Lapwing' captured the two empty dhows and took them to Baṣra for further investigation.<sup>(33)</sup>

Sheikh Mubārak now made a careful investigation to discover the identity of the leader of the campaign. He was convinced that it had been mounted at the instigation of his enemy, Yūsif-el-Ibrāhaim, working in cooperation with his nephews, and he informed Wratislaw that he had witnesses to that effect. In reply, Wratislaw instructed him to send the witnesses to Baṣra so that he could hear their testimony. Sheikh Mubārak complied with this request and his witnesses testified before Wratislaw. However, there was no conclusive proof against Yūsif-el-Ibrāhaim and no real evidence of his participation in the campaign.<sup>(34)</sup>

In 1902, however, O'Connor was instructed to make a protest and, at the same time, to warn the Turkish Government to desist from their attempts to disturb the "status quo" in Kuwait. In addition, O'Connor asked Tewfaik Pasha to remove Yūsif-el-Ibrāhaim and Mubārak's nephews from the area.<sup>(35)</sup>

Whilst these manoeuvres between Yūsif-el-Ibrāhaim and Sheikh

Mubārak, and between the Turkish and British Governments were taking place, the Russian warship 'Vanyag' arrived in Kuwait on December 12th, 1902. (36) The Russian Consul at Baṣra and two of the ship's officers came ashore and visited Sheikh Mubārak. At the meeting the Consul asked the Sheikh whether British warships ever called at Kuwait. He explained that he came to offer the services of his Government should they obtain a concession for a railway from Alexandretta to Kuwait.

In reply to this offer, Sheikh Mubārak said that he regretted that he would not be able to make an agreement with the Russians because they allied themselves with the Belgians in Iran, and helped them to extend their authority over the Iranian customs, especially at Muhammara. (37) At this, the Russian Consul informed the Sheikh that the deeds of the Belgians in Muhammara were no different from their deeds in other cities of Iran, such as Bander 'Abbas and Bushire. Sheikh Mubārak pointed out, however, that Muhammara was not like any other city of Iran, since it was independent of Persia and formerly controlled by 'Athman ben Mumlūk. The Bani Ka'ab had seized it and the present ruler Sheikh Ka'z'al ben Haji Jabir-Merdāw, was his close friend. Hence Mubārak could not make an agreement with any European power. (38)

The Russian Consul now promised to reconsider the Belgian matter, so Sheikh Mubārak promised in turn to accept the agreement after the Russians had put an end to the Belgian authority over the Muhammara customs. The Russian consul left Kuwait on December 14th. Before leaving, he presented the Sheikh with a double-barrelled gun and five chambered revolver. Following the Russian Consul's visit to Kuwait, three British ships arrived in Kuwait, and Colonel Kembell visited Sheikh Mubārak. He renewed the agreement with him, increasing the guarantees of the British Government as to the independence of Kuwait and their assurance of defence against any foreign power's aggression. In return

Sheikh Mubārak promised not to allow any foreign interests other than British interests in his territory.<sup>(39)</sup> Colonel Kembell considered that it was his Government's duty to protect Kuwait and Britain was determined to put her agreement into force. Hence, he ordered a party of marines to land with four machine guns to defend Kuwait against the harrassment of Ibn Rashaid. Kembell was obliged to land his men because the Turkish Government had broken its promises not to send forces to Kuwait by supporting Ibn Rashaid with arms and men.

On March 4th, 1903, the Russian cruiser 'Boyarin' made a call at Kuwait which lasted for 4 days. The call did not occasion any anxiety with regard to the situation there.<sup>(40)</sup>

As a result of the Baghdād railway scheme fierce hostility was aroused between Russia and Germany because both Governments were interested in the scheme and wanted to participate in the extension of the railway in the Gulf area.

In 1903 Lord Curzon was able to tour all the Arabian Gulf countries including Kuwait, where he spent two days as a guest of Sheikh Mubārak. This visit, indicated the triumph of the British influence in the principality after strong competition with the Turkish. Thus Kuwait became openly a zone of the British influence. The purpose of Curzon's tour was really to show that Britain was determined to defend her position in the Gulf, come what may. In 1904, after the "Entente" agreement had strengthened the British position in the Middle East, the Government of India installed a political agent in Kuwait.<sup>(42)</sup>

In November 1904, the Turkish Government protested to the British Government because of the latter's nomination of a public agent in Kuwait, and described this deed as a clear violation of the "status quo". Meanwhile, Germany decided it would be better to stay in the background and work indirectly by exploiting differences between the

the British and the Russians on one side, and between the Turkish and the British on the other.<sup>(43)</sup> From 1905 until the outbreak of the first world war in 1914, negotiations were held between the British, German, Russian and Turkish Governments over the Baghdād railway and the "status quo" in Kuwait. The Anglo-Russian objection was increased after the new agreement in 1907 between them concerning their interests in Persia and setting out separate spheres of influence in Persia. This subject became an important element separating Germany from England, France and Russia. In August, 1911, the Potsdam conference was held between the German Emperor and Russian Emperor to consider the points under dispute. The result of the meeting after much more political hedging was that Germany undertook not to interfere in the Russian concession in Persia, and Russia undertook not to interfere with the railway line connecting Baghdad with Europe.<sup>(44)</sup>

This stipulation referred to Berlin-Baghdād railway proposals, which the Russians promised not to hinder in any way. In 1914, the Baghdād railway proposals were reconsidered in the last international conference, and a solution was reached through a modification of the agreement between the German and the Turkish banks.

The French Government obtained a concession from the Sultān to establish a link joining their concession in Syria and Palestine in Alexandretta and the Baghdād railway. French capital was firmly committed to the Baghdād railway and agreement facilitating its progress could only be welcomed in France. Thus, the French Government was kept informed of the state of negotiations. The German government was more closely concerned than any other power and was in definite competition with France for the arrangement with Turkey. However, these arrangements were followed by negotiations between the British and Turkish Governments, which ended in the signing of an agreement on July 29th, 1913, concerning

the affairs of the Gulf and specially Kuwait and Baghdād railway. Under this agreement, in the items of which the concurrence of the Sheikh had been secured, the territory of Kuwait was recognised as an autonomous "Qaza" of the Ottoman Empire. The Ottoman flag was to be flown by the Sheikh, but he was to have the right to insert a distinctive symbol in the corner, and to be a Qāimaqām appointed by the Turkish Government. The boundaries of the Sheikh's immediate territory and his wider tribal jurisdiction were delimited and the Turkish Government recognised the existing agreement between Sheikh Mubārak and the British Government. Regarding the Baghdād railway, in the case of the extension of the railway to Kuwait, both the Governments agreed on the arrangement of protecting the line. The British Government undertook on their part, not to alter the nature of British relations with Kuwait, nor to establish a protectorate there as long as the "status quo", as defined in the convention, underwent no change. (45)

On June 15th, 1914 an agreement was reached between the British and German Governments concerning the Baghdād railway, in which Britain recognised the importance of the Baghdād railway for international economic development. Britain also promised to support the German proposal to extend the railway to Baṣra. The German Government accepted British capital in the committee of the Baghdād railway company, as a result of which Britain possessed certain rights and privileges. The two parties agreed that Baṣra would be the end of the line, and also the German Government would give up her right to extend a line to the Arabian Gulf. The Germans undertook not to establish a port on the Arabian Gulf as they thought before, and not to support any foreign power in this action.

The two parties undertook to negotiate with the Turkish Government concerning the navigation of the Tigris and Euphrates. (46)

It seems therefore that the Baghdad railway dispute was ended when the German diplomacy succeeded in persuading Russia, France and Britain to accept her interests. The German's aim was to expand eastwards. However, the outbreak of the First World War killed as these German hopes, and the German capital which had been deployed in the Middle East was all lost. Meanwhile Britain declared that Kuwait was an independent principality under British protection, and they then removed the last Turkish strongholds in the Arabian Gulf. The British troops advanced to Basra and Baghdad realising their historic hopes in the dominating of Mesopotamia, while the Germans' military hopes were extinguishing in that area.

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## CHAPTER THREE

TURKISH RELATIONS WITH KUWAIT1900-1906

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There is no doubt, from the historical evidence, that the Sheikh of Kuwait recognized the Turkish protectorate when he raised the Ottoman flag over his palace during Medhat Pasha's expedition, which was designed to bring about submission of the Emir of Nejd in 1871. This acknowledgement of Turkish authority was an important factor which promoted closer contact between the Turks and the emirs of the Arabian Coast. Because of his importance, and in return for services rendered, the Turks bestowed on the Sheikh of Kuwait the title of Pasha. He was also given vast lands in the vicinity of El-Fāo, it appears that during this same period a Turkish customs administration was established in Kuwait. However, after Mubārak became Sheikh in 1896 relations between Turkey and Kuwait took a turn for the worse, both because of the secret agreement which Kuwait made with Britain in 1899, and on account of the hostile activities and schemings of Hamdi Pasha, the Wali of Baḡra. Relations between Kuwait and Turkish Iraq did, however, improve temporarily when Muhsin Pasha succeeded Hamdi Pasha in Baḡra. (1)

In June 1900 it was reported that Muhsin had been created a Pasha and had received an "irade" from the Sultān. In addition, it was learned that various projects which had been set in motion by Hamdi Pasha with a view to establishing Turkish authority in Kuwait and which were distasteful to Mubārak, had been dropped. (2) In August of the same year, several attempts were made to persuade Sheikh Mubārak to visit Baḡra, but the latter made excuses for avoiding contact with the Turkish authorities. (3)

In the same month, affairs in Kuwait were further complicated by the connection of the principality with the disturbances in the interior of Arabia. Sheikh Mubārak, realizing that his rival, Ibn Rashaid, the Emir of Hāil, had embraced the cause of his enemy, Yūsif el-Ibrāhaim and of his nephews, Muḥammad and Jarrāh, was not likely to neglect any opportunity he might have of weakening the authority and influence of Ibn Rashaid. Such an opportunity presented itself in the shape of 'Abd-al-Ruhmān ben Faisal of the Sa'ud dynasty, the former rulers of Riyādh, who had been dispossessed by Muḥammad ben Rashaid in 1892. At the same time Sheikh Mubārak felt that his position was strong because of his friendship with the British.<sup>(4)</sup> Accordingly, he made up his mind to avail himself of the opportunity, especially when, in August, 1900, Ibn Sa'ūd received a letter from his supporters in Nejd, expressing their willingness to espouse his cause should he make a move to recover his lost authority.<sup>(5)</sup>

In the meantime, Sa'adūn Pasha, Chief of the semi-independent Muntafiq tribes, had raided Nejd from the north with great success, and had gained a considerable amount of booty. He was pursued by Ibn Rashaid with a large force and after a petty skirmish, he retired with his men and most of his loot to Turkish territory. Sa'adūn Pasha wrote to Sheikh Mubārak seeking his help against Ibn Rashaid. Meanwhile, Sheikh Mubārak was awaiting the return of Ibn Rashaid from his engagement with the Muntafiq. His intention was to storm his enemy. On receiving Sa'adūn Pasha's letter, he ordered a force under the leadership of his brother Sheikh Hamūd and his son Sālim to march to Samāwah on the road of Gershan, whilst he himself marched with another force on the road Zubair. These events occurred on October 29th 1900. He left at Jahara and Subaihiya 9,000 horsemen and 3,000 infantry to watch for the return of Ibn Rashaid, lest he should escape.<sup>(6)</sup> Sa'adūn Pasha was now at Shatra and Ibn Rashaid near Samāwa in the Wilayat of Baghdād. The forces of Mubārak and those of Sa'adūn now joined together

without much difficulty, and once united were equal, if not slightly superior in number, to the troops which Ibn Rashaid then had on the spot. (7)

In due course, however, Muhsin Pasha intervened to put an end to this war, with the result that both the parties agreed to return home. Ibn Rashaid making the first move. Mubārak was accompanied on his homeward journey by the Mutassarif of the Nassirya. He intended to meet Muhsin Pasha near Zubair. On 17th November, 1900 Sheikh Mubārak arrived near Zubair and took up quarters in the palace of the naqaib of Baḡra at Rāfidhiya. There he was visited by Muhsin Pasha, who endeavoured to persuade him to travel to Baḡra. The latter succeeded in his aim, with the result that on the 18th November 1900, he and Sayid Tālib el Naqaib were able to escort Mubārak to Baḡra. Thus, Mubārak recognized to some extent Turkish suzerainty and it is further stated that he gave the Sultān and assurance of his fidelity, and promised to cease "coquetting with foreign powers". Mubārak also emphasised that he had withdrawn his forces without attacking the emir of Hāil, Ibn Rashaid. (8) On the 19th of the same month he returned to Zubair, and thence to Kuwait.

Mubārak had put himself to much expense and trouble in arranging and supporting a large army, and yet, at the Wali's command, he had simply returned home without gaining anything. By his visit to Baḡra he had allowed the Turks to strengthen their claims to sovereignty over Kuwait, which indeed in his relations with the walis and the Sultān since his accession to the Sheikhship, he had constantly admitted. (9) The aim of the Turks in so acting was to squash firmly the idea of making Kuwait independent of the Ottoman Empire, but the arrangement thus concluded lacked substance for the Sheikh's submission was feigned, and he was in reality on the point of adopting an independent policy. At the same time, however, Sheikh Mubārak was being instructed by the British Government,

through the political resident at Bushire, to keep quiet. Mubārak's retort to these instructions was to inform the British that so long as Yūsif-el-Ibrahaim remained with Ibn Rashaid in Nejd, the former would not keep quiet, but would urge Ibn Rashaid to attack Kuwait.<sup>(10)</sup>

In view of the intransigence of both sides it is hardly surprising that the hostilities between Sheikh Mubārak and Ibn Rashaid were soon renewed. As we mentioned before, Abd-al-Ruhmān Ibn Sa'ūd had received a letter from his supporters in Nejd, expressing their willingness to espouse his cause, should he make a move to recover his lost authority. Therefore Ibn Sa'ūd decided to move out to Kuwait and to appeal to Mubārak for assistance. The latter now ordered the Bedouin tribes subject to Kuwait to support Ibn Sa'ūd in his raids upon Nejd from the East. 'Abd-al-'Azaiz Ibn Sa'ūd struck at Riyādh itself early in 1901. He succeeded in entering the town but Ibn Rashaid's garrison held out in the forts.<sup>(11)</sup> At the same time Sheikh Mubārak left Kuwait with a large number of tribesmen, leaving his son Jābir in charge of the administration there. Mubārak and his forces proceeded to Riyādh. However the news from Riyādh reached Mubārak informing him that Ibn Sa'ūd had entered the town on the 15th February. After this 'Abd-al-'Azaiz was installed as governor there. Some members of the family of Ibn Rashaid now entered into negotiations with the triumphant invader,<sup>(12)</sup> and at the same time Ibn Rashaid's garrison held out in the forts. Mubārak strengthened his position among his Bedouin adherents, and a fierce and bloody engagement which took place on the 17th March at Sarraif, about 20 miles north east of Buraida in Qasaim, so altered the situation that Sheikh Mubārak was obliged to beat a hasty retreat from Nejd. The casualties of Mubārak's side are said to have been very heavy, some 2,000 having been killed in action or subsequently perishing in the desert. About 400 of Ibn Rashaid's supporters are said to have perished, including his brother Talāl. Amongst those lost to Mubārak were two of his cousins, some of his principal chiefs, and his brother Hamūd.<sup>(13)</sup> It was even rumoured for a time that Sheikh Mubārak himself

had been killed in this attack. In the meantime 'Abd-al-Azaia Ibn Sa'ūd, his position having become untenable, after the defeat of Sheikh Mubārak at Saraif, reluctantly withdrew from Riyādh. (14)

As a result of this battle the British were placed in a difficult position in view of the agreement of 1899. A warship was instructed to sail to Kuwait and this act was followed up with a personal visit by Colonel Kemball. It is clear that the British were now afraid lest a family coup should occur, to the detriment of British interests in the Gulf. Colonel Kemball found Sheikh Mubārak alive but in a state of extreme mortification. The astonishing fact is that throughout Kemball's visit, neither he nor Mubārak made any reference to recent events. (15)

In fact, crushing though his defeat had been, Mubārak was able to conceal its effect on him from Colonel Kemball. What he wanted to know was whether or not the Turks had heard about his defeat and what was their present attitude towards him. It appears that Sheikh Mubārak hid the news of his defeat even from his friend, Khaz'al, Sheikh of Muhammara, whilst his son, Sheikh Jābir, was kept in ignorance of the death of his uncle Hamūd during the battle. (16)

It was expected that the Turks would now take advantage of Sheikh Mubārak's defeat and resume both their activities in Kuwait and their influence in the Arabian Gulf. These expectations were fulfilled for Muhsin Pasha, Wali of Baṣra, became active and received a visit from Qāsim Pasha, the Commander in Chief of the Turkish Forces in Iraq and nephew of the Sultān. That was in April 1901. Qāsim Pasha came at the head of Turkish Forces, which it was rumoured would be used by the Turks against Mubārak. At the same time the Turks sent a warship to Kuwait. These overtly hostile acts induced the British Ministry of Foreign Affairs to write in haste to the British Ambassador in Turkey requesting him to draw the attention of the Sultān's Government to the dangerous situation to the north of the Arabian

Gulf, and to remind them of the possibility that the British would support the Sheikh of Kuwait in accordance with their promises to him as set out in the convention of 1899. (17)

The alternative policy adopted by Mushin Pasha now saved the situation. The Turkish forces remained in the neighbourhood of the city of Kuwait while Qāsim Pasha paid a friendly visit to Sheikh Mubārak. The wali's endeavours to persuade Sheikh Mubārak to allow Turkish forces to remain in Kuwait failed, but he did succeed in persuading the Sheikh to accompany him to Fāo, where he declared his allegiance to the Sultān. Afterwards he returned to Kuwait bound now by a double allegiance. (18)

A short time later the Mushir Muḥammad Pasha, Commander in Chief of the Turkish forces visited Baghdād and Baṣra, whence he sent a special message to Sheikh Mubārak in March 1901, proposing that they should meet to discuss Muslim affairs and particularly the tribal disputes which were responsible for hundreds of deaths amongst the Sultān's Muslim subjects. Sheikh Mubārak thanked the Mushir, but he did not commit himself to travel to Baṣra. (19)

So far as the emir of Nejd, Ibn Rashaid, was concerned, the crisis had now passed. The Turkish Government, guided by the advice of Mushir Muḥammad Pasha, gave no encouragement to Ibn Rashaid. Disgusted by the Turkish attitude, he now sought British protection. Meanwhile Sheikh Mubārak asked, through the Commander of the "Sphinx" that the British Government should establish a permanent protectorate over Kuwait as soon as possible. (20)

In fact the British policy in the Gulf allowed for hostile relations with some Arab leaders. Early in June 1901, Fahad Pasha, the agent of Ibn Rashaid in Nejd, was seen in Baṣra. He sent a special message to Wratislaw, the British Consul there, saying that the Emir of Nejd had lost patience with the Turks, who did not give him material help,

though they made considerable demands on him. For this reason, he requested that Nejd should be given British protectorate status similar to that afforded to Kuwait. The condition set by Faham Pasha was that Mubārak should abdicate the throne in favour of his nephews. He added that it was in the power of Ben Rashaid to do this on condition that the British would remain neutral and would supply him with arms. For his part he would allow Britain to have complete domination over Kuwait and would guarantee that the construction of the proposed railway across northern Nejd would be carried out in complete safety. Ibn Rashaid had learned of the railway project from the previous British Consul at Baghdād, Col. Loch. The British Consul at Baṣra informed Fahad Pasha that his Government would treat Ibn Rashaid's proposals with respect due to one as able and as important as he. (21)

Wratislaw now contacted London where he received Lord Salisbury's reply in which the Foreign Minister stated that, whilst he appreciated the friendship of Ibn Rashaid, yet he was not willing to effect any political change in Kuwait. (22) This news was duly passed on to Ibn Rashaid. In fact, it appears from the available documents that Fahad Pasha had been sent by Ibn Rashaid merely to meet the Mūshir Muḥammad Pasha in Baṣra, and he criticised the Wali Muhsin Pasha and accused him of dealing too leniently with Sheikh Mubārak. But Fahad Pasha failed in his mission to the Turkish Commander in Baṣra, and he was authorised to meet the British Consul. He met Wratislaw and they held the first discussions in the light of the fact that Lord Salisbury's reply had closed the door to Fahad Pasha's aims. At this time Lord Curzon, Viceroy of India, was convinced of the necessity of establishing friendly relations with the Emir of Nejd and of avoiding completely any interference in his affairs. He suggested sending a mission of British officers from Egypt via Aqaba to allay Ottoman suspicion, the arrangement for this mission being prepared in co-operation with the emir's agent at Baṣra. Lord Curzon wrote to the Minister of Foreign

Affairs in London: "We can explain to the emir the impossibility of dismissing Sheikh Mubārak from Kuwait's sovereignty, but that we are ready to prevent him from new hostilities in Nejd and to put all our diplomatic power towards preventing any Turkish hostilities there."<sup>(23)</sup>

In order to achieve this end, Lord Curzon ordered Colonel Kemball to travel to Kuwait to arrange some sort of armistice or peace treaty between the emir and the sheikh. At the beginning of August 1901, Colonel Kemball met Sheikh Mubārak and the latter suggested that Sheikh Khaz'al should act as an intermediary between him and Ibn Rashaid.

Colonel Kenball instructed the British Consul in Baṣra to meet the emir's agent there. The increasing rumours concerning the railway scheme occasioned some fresh diplomatic problems in the relations between the British and the Ottoman Empire and it was difficult to contact Sheikh Khaz'al through Baṣra.<sup>(24)</sup> Ibn Rashaid who was also aware that the situation was worsening and preferred to continue in his allegiance to the Turks. The Turkish Government for its part, put pressure on Ibn Rashaid in August 1901, to restrain him from reaching any accommodation with the British Government.

The Turks, who now seemed to be drifting into a pronounced partisanship for Ibn Rashaid began to concentrate troops upon the Euphrates, and on 24th August the Turkish gunboat Zahaf arrived at Kuwait whilst the British "Presens" was there.<sup>(25)</sup> The Turkish gunboat was warned by the British commander to leave the harbour, but the Captain of the Turkish gunboat ignored the warning and called on Sheikh Mubārak on the 25th. In the course of his visit he endeavoured to persuade the sheikh to recognize Turkish authority over Kuwait. When Sheikh Mubārak refused, the Captain assumed a threatening tone and said that he would go to Baṣra and report on the state of affairs, after which he would return with ships and troops to enforce Turkish authority.

After this failure, the Turks tried to persuade Ibn Rashaid to make an attack on Kuwait, providing him with arms and with men for this purpose. Accordingly Ibn Rashaid moved towards Kuwait evidently acting in accordance with a plan worked out in collaboration with the Turks; and in November, 1901, he occupied Safwān which was within 16 hours travelling distance of Kuwait.<sup>(27)</sup> Having got thus far he decided to continue besieging Kuwait whilst awaiting a convenient opportunity to attack.<sup>(28)</sup>

Meanwhile Sheikh Mubārak concentrated his tribal levies and wrote to Sa'adūn Pasha, requesting him to come with his tribesmen to Kuwait. At the same time, Shiekh Mubārak wrote to the British political Resident in Bushire, informing him of Ibn Rashaid's intention towards Kuwait. The British Political Resident responded by sending three British warships to Kuwait. The crews of the ships, aided by a large number of the citizens, dug a ditch around the city as a means of protection against outside enemies.

Ibn Rashaid's original intention was to make his first raid on the Jahara, 15 miles distant from Kuwait, but he was thwarted in his aim by the presence of the Kuwaiti forces. He now turned his attention to Subaihiya but it was empty, so he returned to Wārah where he came across a caravan of the Mutair tribe which was coming out of Kuwait. He plundered 800 sheep and 2,700 camels, all belonging to the people of Kuwait. Ibn Rashaid eventually reached Kuwait, but was told by one of his spies about the forces in the town, together with the ditches and other preparations which had been made to hold off any attack. Realising that the British had probably also made naval preparations, Ibn Rashaid moved off slowly and reluctantly to Hafār.<sup>(29)</sup>

Sheikh Mubārak had not the slightest idea that the Turkish authorities were behind Ibn Rashaid. Hence, in November, 1901, he wrote to Mustapha Nuri Pasha, the Wali of Baṣra,<sup>(30)</sup> to inform him of the behaviour of his enemy, Ibn Rashaid, towards Kuwait, and to complain about his attacks

on and harassment of the tribes. He stated that he was sure that the Sublime Porte would disapprove of Ibn Rashaid's hostile acts against his loyal Kuwaiti subjects. The Wali answered immediately sending a message to Sheikh Mubārak in Kuwait with one of his men in which he stated (inter alia) that the Ottoman Empire certainly condemned the deeds of Ibn Rashaid and had only the strongest disapproval for his hostile attitude. The severest punishment would be inflicted on him if he did not change his attitude. On official instructions Ibn Rashaid's followers were driven out of Baṣra. (31)

On reading the above message Sheikh Mubārak realised that the Turkish authorities were lying. However, he kept silent, and did not reveal his suspicions to the Wali's messenger. On the contrary, he welcomed him and thanked him. He expressed his pleasure to hear that the Ottoman Empire had heeded his complaint and had dealt fairly with him against his enemy. He gave the messenger gifts and presents for the Wali. Meanwhile he remained alert and took measures to meet his enemy.

As a result, the Turks were concerned lest Sheikh Mubārak should cause trouble. Thus, they issued a supreme decree by which he was to be exiled from Kuwait. He was given the option either of travelling to Constantinople, being appointed legal adviser to the state, or of dwelling in an Ottoman country where he would be paid a monthly salary by the state, amounting to 150 Ottoman Lire. If he refused to take one of these courses, he was to be driven out of Kuwait by force. At the end of November, 1901, Mustapha Pasha, the Wali of Baṣra, informed Sheikh Mubārak in writing of the Supreme Decree, asking him to inform him promptly of his choice. (32)

Sheikh Mubārak was seemingly unmoved. He wrote a letter to Mustapha Pasha, pointing out the services which his forefathers had rendered to strengthen the authority of the Ottoman Empire, and explaining that he was also following the same course in obeying their orders. For this reason he

did not deserve to be exiled from his country.

This attempt was, of course, quite useless since the wali had no power to rescind the decree which had been issued from Constantinople. Sheikh Mubārak was fully aware of this, but his intention in acting this way was to gain time whilst he wrote to the British Political Resident in the Gulf, informing him about the intentions of the Ottoman Government. The British Resident promised Mubārak that the British would help him. He reported to his Government that if the British did not check and stop the action of the Turks, Mubārak would have to join them.<sup>(33)</sup> The Captains of the "Pomone" and "Rædbreast" visited the Sheikh and informed him that he would undoubtedly receive British support; but he was much depressed and said that although he was in favour of Kuwait being a British protectorate and putting into force his agreement with the British, he had not yet received any definite written assurance from the Political Resident at Bushire that the British Government would protect him. Further, if he did not receive an assurance, he would have to make terms with the Turks, who were uncomfortably close and of whom he was afraid.<sup>(34)</sup>

Mustapha Nūri Pasha knew that Sheikh Mubārak would not readily leave Kuwait, and that he was already planning to avoid any enforced departure. He thought it better, therefore, to allow him as little room for manoeuvre as possible, so he ordered his brother, Mir 'Allai Najib Bey, and Sayed Rajed Naqaib of Baṣra to travel to Kuwait on one of the big Ottoman warships, the "Zahaf". He sent with them a detachment of the army, together with a copy of the telegram which had been sent from Constantinople. The party was under orders to bring matters to a head, and if Mubārak disobeyed the decree, to expel him by force from Kuwait.<sup>(35)</sup> On the 1st December, 1901, the party arrived and the next day the Naqaib of Baṣra and Mir 'Allai Najib Bey presented Sheikh Mubārak with a letter containing telegraphed orders from the Sultān that he must either go to

Constantinople to be a member of the Council of State at a high salary, or leave Kuwait and live elsewhere on a state pension.<sup>(36)</sup> An early reply was requested. The Sheikh was very much upset at this, the second threatening telegram which he had received from the Sultān. He decided not to reply at once; but to wait for some days to consider his answer. At first the Naqaib of Baḡra agreed to give Mubārak time to think, but on the 4th December he changed his mind on the grounds that he could not stay in Kuwait any longer but had to leave for Baḡra that night.<sup>(37)</sup> An appointment was therefore made for the naqaib to call that afternoon at the Sheikh's house. Earlier on the same day Captain Simons, the Commander of the "Pomone" endeavoured to persuade the Sheikh to give an evasive reply until he received instructions from the British Political Resident at Bushire. On the same day at 2.10 in the afternoon, the "Sphinx" arrived with an answer from the Resident to the Sheikh's letter of the 30th November. In reply, the Resident asked Captain Simons to inform Sheikh Mubārak that his country was ready to support him to prevent the execution of the Ottoman order.<sup>(38)</sup>

The meeting between Mubarak and the naqaib at the Sheikh's house was attended by Captain Philip, the Commander of the "Sphinx" and Captain Simons. The meeting was short, for Captain Simons would not let Sheikh Mubārak reply to the naqaib's question, justifying his action on the grounds that the Sultān's two threatening telegrams were a violation of his agreement with the British Government to preserve the "status quo" in Kuwait.<sup>(39)</sup> Such a violation called for British intervention. Captain Simons demanded that the naqaib should leave immediately threatening that, unless he did so, he would be compelled to shoot the "Zahaf" and sink her. The naqaib left Mubārak's house angrily and with threats. The "Zahaf" withdrew at 6 o'clock the following morning.<sup>(40)</sup>

The delegates now returned to Baḡra where they informed the Wali

of the British interference in the matter and of the threats of Captain Simons. The Wali ordered the troops to withdraw and the Ottoman Government concentrated on avoiding a conflict with the British. As a result of the Turkish attempt against Sheikh Mubarak, the British Government complained to the Sublime Porte about the Naqaib's behaviour and warned the Porte against bringing further pressure upon the Sheikh. Should the latter warning go unheeded, the British Government would find it necessary to take action. In response the Turkish Government disavowed all knowledge of the Naqaib's mission and the Minister of Foreign Affairs stated that Sheikh Mubarak's presence in Constantinople would be an embarrassment, and that there was no intention of causing trouble to Kuwait. (41)

Nevertheless, the Turks, having failed in their attempts to overawe the Sheikh of Kuwait by the use of force against his town, now made another, more practical attempt to restrain him. This involved the use of the threat posed by Ibn Rashaid, who, whilst in the vicinity of Basra with part of his forces at the end of December 1901, planned with the Wali and mushir a combined land attack with Turkish support on Kuwait. In accordance with the agreement reached, the Turkish authorities at Basra supplied Ibn Rashaid with arms and men, and also with a sum of money from the Basra treasury. (42) At the same time, the Turkish authorities prohibited the export of provisions to Kuwait, which relied on Basra for food supplies, and thus attempted to starve the town. (43) However, the British warships "Perseus", "Marathan", "Sphinx" and "Assuage" were all sent to Kuwait, which they were ordered to defend by force if necessary. Simultaneously, they were to co-operate in the defence of the town by carrying food. (44)

The wali's prohibition of the export of provisions to Kuwait was a further violation of the undertaking to maintain the "status quo" in Kuwait, (45) and the British Government served upon the Turkish Government due warning of this fact. The Turkish Government announced that the Wali

of Basra himself had acted without instructions, and that the Sublime Porte had been ordered to cancel his decree. (46)

In January 1902, the situation in Central Arabia altered, for important developments were taking place in Nejd. These served to draw Turkish attention towards that area instead of Kuwait. Sheikh Mubārak took advantage of the opportunity by involving himself in the events, though secretly, in support of 'Abd-āl-Azaiz Ben Sa'ūd against his enemy Ibn Rashaid. This was especially the case when Ibn Rashaid attacked the neighbourhood of Kuwait and encamped there with the intention of attacking caravans travelling to and from Kuwait. Sheikh Mubārak now saw that the time was ripe for him to carry out the plan which he had drawn up on his failure at the battle of Saraif. Accordingly, he went to Jahara with a large number of his armed men to distract the attention of Ibn Rashaid, and compel him to remain in areas well away from his own principality. Meanwhile Sheikh Mubārak urged Ibn Sa'ūd to go and reoccupy the city of Riyadh, so taking advantage of Ibn Rashaid and his men. At first Ibn Sa'ūd was mindful of his failure in 1901, when he had taken the city only to lose it again to a surprise attack by Ibn Rashaid. At the same time he was keen to take advantage of such an excellent opportunity, and so he decided to take the risk. Either he would win and so regain the glory of the Sa'ūd family; or else he would die, satisfied that he had done his utmost to regain that glory. He set out from Kuwait, equipped by Sheikh Mubārak with 40 camels, 30 rifles, 200 riyāls, a quantity of provisions and 40 men, most of them from the family of Sa'ūd. In order to mislead his enemy Ibn Rashaid, he began by attacking some southern tribes. He went to the 'Ajman tribe and asked them to ally themselves to him. Though the chief did not consent to do so, a large number of the men joined him. He was joined by a large number from the Mūra tribes, the Sūbair and the Sehoul. With them he invaded the Qahtān and Mutir tribes and took from them as plunder a large quantity of money. His support increased after

every invasion until his followers numbered 1,500 infantry and 600 horsemen. He now decided that he was in a position to attack the city of Riyādh.<sup>(47)</sup>

Perceiving the aim of Ibn Sa'ūd's campaign, Ibn Rashaid now hastened to attack the borders of Kuwait in order to prove to Sheikh Mubārak that he did not consider Ibn Sa'ūd worthy of his attention, nor was he concerned about his movements in Nejd. He then submitted a complaint to the Ottoman Government, protesting at the rebellious acts of Ibn Sa'ūd. The Turkish Government, however, took no action to restrain Ibn Sa'ūd, but was content merely to forbid him to take provisions from Hasa and Qataif, and to discontinue the payment of a salary to his father 'Abd-al-Ryhman Faisal Ben Sa'ūd. When the tribesmen learned the Turkish Government opposed Ibn Sa'ūd, where before they had thought that the Turks were encouraging him in his uprising against Ibn Rashaid, they deserted him almost to a man. In fact only 20 persons remained with him in addition to the 40 warriors with whom he had set out from Kuwait.<sup>(48)</sup>

Though desperate, Ibn Sa'ūd decided to press on with his plan, hoping either to achieve the glory of regaining Riyādh, despite the odds, or else to perish gloriously whilst carrying out what he saw as his duty. Realising that Ibn Sa'ūd was in dire straits Sheikh Mubārak wrote to him to return to Kuwait and not to risk himself in vain. In his letter he explained the difficulties that would be involved in overcoming Ibn Rashaid, and fruitless since he had the support of the Turks. Mubārak failed, however, to dissuade Ibn Sa'ūd from carrying out his plan.

On 15th January, 1902, Ibn Sa'ūd made a sudden dash from the side of Hasa to recover Riyādh for his father. He entered the town at night, accompanied at first by 80 adherents, near Riyadh he had left 30 more of his followers beside Zwiłoshb Well, 2 hours walk from the city, to guard his camels. He took the other men and walked to the gardens surrounding the city. At a place called Shamsiah, he ordered his brother Muḥammad to stay with 23

of his men to wait for news. He himself went on with 7 men, including his cousin 'Abdallah Ben Jiluwi. They climbed the fence of the city at night and went to a house next to the house of Ibn Rashaid's Governor, 'Ajilan Ben 'Abdalrūhmān. The house belonged to one of the slaves of the Sa'ūd family, named Juwaisir. On entering the house Ibn Sa'ūd received a warm welcome. He ordered them to keep quiet and they obeyed. Next, Ibn Sa'ūd climbed the wall leading to the house of 'Ajilan and entered it, at which juncture he sent one of his men to his brother Muḥammad with instructions that he was to come to that house.<sup>(49)</sup> Muḥammad soon arrived with his men at dawn. Whilst Ajilan was leaving his house for the Mosque, Ibn Sa'ūd fired his rifle at him, but he missed. Ajilan tried to escape inside the house but Ibn Sa'ūd ran after him and seized him. They fought together and Ajilan was about to defeat Ibn Sa'ūd, when Abdallah Ben Jiluwi fired his gun at Ajilan and killed him instantly. Thus Ibn Sa'ūd entered the house with his men without meeting resistance. He proclaimed himself Prince of Riyādh without the citizens raising any objection.<sup>(50)</sup>

Ibn Sa'ūd soon sent a messenger to Kuwait to inform Sheikh Mubārak and his father of the victory. Ibn Rashaid's garrisons were now expelled from the neighbouring districts of Kharj and Hariq, and Ibn Sa'ūd informed the Porte that the country thus recovered would be ruled by him as a loyal subject of the Sultān.<sup>(51)</sup>

Whilst Ibn Sa'ūd was proceeding to Riyādh to recover the lost power of the Sa'ūd dynasty in Nejd, the Turks remained determined to vex Sheikh Mubārak by pressing on his borders.

In January 1902, troops had reached Zubair, 15 miles South West of Baṣra. A week later they had moved 20 miles South to Safwān. By the end of January and beginning of February military positions were established on the Island of Bubiyan, Umm Qasar and Safwān which were considered to be outside the borders of Kuwait. A Turkish post of 40 men was placed at

Umm Qasar, a large garrison at Safwān and an outpost of 20 men on the eastern side of Bubiyan.<sup>(52)</sup>

Sheikh Mubarak protested and claimed that the Turks were disturbing the "status quo", adding that they had no right to limit his boundaries and that the occupied areas were actually within the boundaries of Kuwait. In support of his claim to ownership of these places he said that Umm Qasar had received its name on account of one of the well known Kuwaiti merchants called Riziq in the time of Jābir el Sabāh; and that Bubiyan Island was annually occupied by fishermen who owed allegiance to the Sheikh and used it for fishing purposes during the summer months.<sup>(53)</sup> As for Safwān Well it had been a halting place for the caravans of the Kuwaiti people for a very long time. These places were of no importance financially, but a denial of Sheikh Mubarak's authority and rights would be a serious blow to his prestige and influence in Kuwait itself. He refused to accept any Turkish officials under any guise whatsoever in Kuwait, because he knew from bitter experience that the Turkish officials would destroy whatever good the proposed agreement might hold. They would weaken his authority both locally and in the adjacent desert, and would cause a constant strife which in turn, would result in the formation of factions among his people.

The Turkish Government paid no heed at all to Mubarak's protest, but, on the contrary, they ordered the Turkish soldiers in the occupied areas to deal roughly with the populace, especially on the Island of Bubiyan.<sup>(54)</sup> Sheikh Mubarak was now compelled to bring the matter to the attention of the Political Resident in the Gulf. The British Government was uncertain of Kuwait's boundaries. According to O'Connor, this question could not even be discussed unless Britain declared a protectorate over Kuwait, as he had no legal standing. The British, therefore, did not protest to the Porte on this occasion and the troops continued their advance. In February, Mubarak reported that they had reached Qasar Subaihiya, to the North-East of Kuwait Bay, and were beginning to occupy Bubiyan Island. Officials in India and in the Gulf asked for a gunboat to be sent to stop the Turkish

advance. Accordingly "Sphinx" was sent, but only to report on the situation. (55)

The problem was one of ownership. Wratislaw and Kembell did not think that the British could object to Turkish occupations of Umm Qasar and Safwān, but Mubārak claimed that Kuwaitis had occupied these places in the past. The Foreign Office did not think anything useful would be gained by protesting, since the Porte claimed ignorance of the whole situation. If necessary, the navy could drive the Turks back from the sea. (56) The Admiralty, however, was not particularly well disposed to this idea, since it meant that they would have to maintain a force in the area until the matter was settled. The officers involved had little confidence in Mubārak, who seemed to be developing a hostile attitude towards the British, and to blame them for his difficulties. Furthermore, the report of the gunboat was not encouraging. 300 Turks were at Safwān, 300 at Subaihiya, 20 and an officer at Bubiyan and 40 and an officer at Umm Qasar. (57)

There seemed to be nothing to prevent a further Turkish advance. Mubārak stressed his claims to Bubiyan as a fishing base and Curzon felt that the claim was justified, but O'Connor was afraid of the consequences of a Turkish refusal to withdraw if a protest were made. Either Britain would lose prestige or she would have to use force. He feared further that such a course would be the first step towards British occupation and the establishment of a protectorate, and that the result would be that Russia would also feel bound to seize an area on the Gulf as a site for a coaling station. (58) Lansdowne supported O'Connor, and the Indian Government was told that Mubārak could only be aided in Kuwait and the Bay itself. Hamilton explained to Curzon that the main problem was that of obtaining a suitable railway terminus and that Britain could not occupy all possible sites. She must therefore reconcile herself to the situation (i.e. that Kuwait was not the only possible site). (59)

There was also the question of the "status quo". Kembell said that although Turkish claims were not easy to prove, the advance of their troops definitely effected the "status quo" by weakening Mubārak's position. Moreover, Mubārak had taken Britain's advice not to oppose the Turks, and he should therefore be supported at this time in the hope that he would change his mind.<sup>(60)</sup> Meanwhile, the Foreign Office had already changed its policy and O'Connor had issued a protest. The Porte officially denied all knowledge of the movements of the Turkish troops, but unofficially the Foreign Minister said the action had been taken because the Porte wanted any railway terminus established in the area to be under Turkish influence and protection.<sup>(61)</sup>

In Britain, Lansdowne, Hamilton and Selborne<sup>(62)</sup> met to discuss the situation. The possibility of a site for a terminus other than Kuwait had not previously been considered, for Kuwait had been secured and Britain had assured Germany and Turkey that she would not violate the "status quo". Now, however, a new approach was needed. Lansdowne refused to consider the establishment of a protectorate and the resources of the navy were already overstretched in the Gulf. Therefore, it was decided:

(1) To continue Mubārak's defence with as little responsibility as possible.

(2) To recognize Ottoman sovereignty within the "status quo".

(3) To insist on an equal share in the railway.<sup>(63)</sup> O'Connor claimed that Britain had opened the Gulf to trade for Europe and was thus entitled to these claims. Curzon declared that to adopt the policies outlined above was to abandon Kuwait to the Ottoman Empire, and asked for a precise definition of the "status quo".<sup>(64)</sup> The Foreign Office wanted to avoid such definitions and did not feel that Britain's position in the Gulf should depend so heavily on Mubārak. Curzon, however, objected to the railway altogether since it gave Germany claims to the Gulf. Curzon felt that

Britain should stand by her support of Mubārak, particularly in view of the fact that the Viceroy had troubles in Aden to contend with,<sup>(65)</sup>

Whilst the British Government was discussing the position with regard to the "status quo" in Kuwait, the Turkish authorities at Baṣra took measures to harass the Sheikh. The measures taken appear to have shaken him somewhat, for in March 1902, Sheikh Mubārak offered the Wali of Baṣra a large bribe, amounting to £10,000, in an attempt to induce him to make favourable representations to the Sultān and put a stop to Turkish encroachments on his territories. What Mubārak in fact wanted was reconciliation with the Turkish authorities. The Wali, however, refused the offer.<sup>(66)</sup>

The Turks were determined to exile Mubārak whatever the cost, and on 28th May, 1902, they arrested Mubārak's agent, 'Abd-al-'Azaiz el Sālim, by order of the Sultān, on the grounds that he had forwarded to the Sheikh a prohibited Arabic newspaper called "Khelafa". The Turkish Government considered the newspaper seditious and had, therefore, banned its import into the country. The paper was seized together with the title deeds to the Fāo estates. Mubārak was informed of the arrest of his agent whilst he was at Muhammara dealing with an act of piracy committed against a Kuwaiti boat. When he asked the wali what was the reason for the arrest, he was told that it was the concern of the Sultān. Sheikh Mubārak then claimed that the arrest of his agent had occurred whilst he was under British protection; he therefore requested British aid in obtaining the agent's release.<sup>(67)</sup> The British Government for its part made a strongly worded protest to the Sultān, in which it was urged that the Ottoman Government itself should take the initiative in punishing the wali.<sup>(68)</sup> The Turkish Government ignored this protest.

At this juncture, Yūsuf el Ibrahaim told 'Abdul 'Azaiz that he was prepared to save him from torture and to set him free on condition that

he would betray Sheikh Mubārak. 'Abdul-'Azaiz refused, and remained in prison until he was freed in 1905, when Mukhlis Pasha became Wali of Baṣra.

The above episode marked the end of the serious attempt from abroad to overthrow Mubārak, and the Turks now began to turn their attention to Central Arabia, and the struggle between the two powers of Ibn Sa'ūd and Ibn Rashaid. On 31st July, 1902 Ibn Rashaid was making energetic preparations for a campaign against Ibn Sa'ūd, lamenting, meanwhile, that he had delayed the confrontation for so long that he had given his enemy time to strengthen himself.

As for Sheikh Mubārak, he never ceased to support Ibn Sa'ūd, sending to him caravans laden with food, weapons and ammunition. He considered that the defeat of Ibn Rashaid would be ample revenge for the losses which he had sustained at the battle of Saraif. In November, Ibn Sa'ūd visited Kuwait, accompanied by many of the tribes of Nejd, to fight alongside Sheikh Mubārak against Diwaish Ben Sultān, an ally of Ibn Rashaid, who had camped on the borders of Kuwait with the intention of harassing Sheikh Mubārak. Sheikh Mubārak decided to seize his chance. He held discussions with Ibn Sa'ūd as to what action should be taken, and showed him letters exchanged between Ibn Diwaish and Ibn Rashaid concerning the attack on Kuwait. Mubarak suggested that they should make a sudden attack before his enemy grew in strength and Ibn Sa'ūd agreed. Mubārak mobilised a large army under the leadership of his son Jābir, who also had the support of Ibn Sa'ūd and his men. They attacked Ibn Diwaish and inflicted a heavy defeat on him causing him to make a hasty withdrawal in the course of which he lost most of his possessions, which fell into the hands of the enemy. The spoil included 500 camels. (69)

During Ibn Sa'ūd's visit to Kuwait, Ibn Rashaid seized the opportunity occasioned by his absence to attack Riyādh. A message was sent that the enemy be repelled and Sheikh Jābir was asked to relieve

the city. In reply Jābir apologetically explained that he could only undertake such a venture on his father's orders. Ibn Sa'ūd accepted his excuse and went in person to Kuwait, to seek help from Sheikh Mubārak. Aware of Mubārak's cunning nature, and realising he could not afford any delay, Ibn Sa'ūd decided very cleverly to ask for help publicly before all the people of Kuwait, in order to force him to decide promptly and in circumstances in which a refusal would be embarrassing. Accordingly, when he entered the town he started crying and pleading for help. When Mubārak and the people heard the crying, they thought that their enemy had been defeated and that Ibn Sa'ūd had come to plead for further assistance against Ibn Diwaish, but when Ibn Sa'ūd reached Mubārak, he asked him in front of his people to help him against Ibn Rashaid who was besieging Riyādh. Sheikh Mubarak promised that he would help.

Mubārak immediately ordered that ships should be loaded with food, ammunition and weapons and that they should sail to Sālūf to the south of Kuwait. He also ordered the force returning from fighting against Ibn Diwaish to march to Riyādh, taking the necessary supplies from the ships. Ibn Rashaid, perceiving the arrangements made by Ibn Sa'ūd in Kuwait, and realising the strength of the army which he would have to face, now changed his mind and withdrew from Riyādh. On receiving news of Ibn Rashaid's withdrawal, Ibn Sa'ūd speedily returned to his country. (70)

At the end of December, 1902, a raid led by Ibn Rashaid in person was made on some Kuwaiti subjects in the neighbourhood of Jahara. A certain amount of damage was done, but the raiders were eventually beaten off, and Sheikh Mubārak himself moved to Jahara, where he began to assemble his men for defensive or, if necessary, offensive action. The Turkish authorities at Baḡra now feared that Mubārak's concentration of forces at Jahara might herald an attack upon Zubair. (71) The British Government had already warned Sheikh Mubārak against such a move, by which he would involve

himself in difficulties in Central Arabia or with the Turkish authorities and had received an assurance that he had no plans for such a venture. (72)

At the beginning of March, 1903, Ibn Sa'ūd visited Kuwait with his brother Muḥammad to confer with Mubārak. In the same month Ibn Sa'ūd had an interview with the Russian Consul-General at Bushire to discuss the affairs of Central Arabia. It was understood that at the interview with the Russian, support in arms and money was offered. (73) In November, 1903, during his tour of the Arabian Gulf to determine how best Britain's position there could be defended, Lord Curzon visited Kuwait, including Umm Qasar, Bubiya Island and Safwān. At a private interview aboard the "Hardinge" Curzon impressed on Sheikh Mubārak the importance of not embroiling himself in the conflicts of Central Arabia. The British Government, he said, promised to defend Kuwait from external aggression, but the British would be unable to interfere if he got himself into difficulties by meddling in the domestic affairs in Central Arabia. At this meeting, Mubārak asked Lord Curzon to compel the Turks to evacuate both Bubiya and Umm Qasar which belonged to him. (74)

Soon after Lord Curzon's visit, the British Government decided to strengthen their relationship with Kuwait by establishing a new agency there, both to improve postal communications and to increase the efficiency of British political representation with Mubārak. Accordingly, on 24th June 1904, Kuwait was formally authorised, and on 6th August Captain Knox arrived from Bushire. In November 1904, the Turkish Government protested that the appointment of Knox altered the "status quo". (75)

By now the situation in Central Arabia was critical as a result of armed Turkish interference in the struggle between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Sa'ūd during the summer and autumn of 1904. In May, 1904 the Turkish Government despatched an expedition from Turkish Iraq to support Ibn Rashid in the Qasaim district of Nejd. The force sent was, however, completely

destroyed by Ibn Sa'ūd and his allies.<sup>(76)</sup> At the end of October, 1904, Fakhri Pasha, the deputy Wali of Baṣra, acting on instructions from Constantinople, wrote to 'Abd-al-Ruhmān Ibn Faisal, Ibn Sa'ūd's father inviting him to settle the affairs of Qasaim at a friendly meeting. 'Abd-al-Ruhmān replied in a letter addressed to Mikhlis Pasha, the Wali of Baṣra, in November. In his letter 'Abd-al-Ruhmān professed his loyalty to the Sultān, and asked him not to send troops to Qasaim, because the people of Qasaim did not want Ibn Rashaid, and any attempt to impose him on them would result in bloodshed. At the same time, a telegram was sent from 'Abd-al-Ruhmān, via Baṣra, to Constantinople, in which he made the same request.<sup>(77)</sup>

In February, 1905, Ibn Sa'ūd had two meetings with Mukhlis Pasha and Mubārak, at Safwān on the 8th and at Qāshimya Wells on the 13th. At these meetings, Mubārak used his title of Ruler of Kuwait and Chief of its tribes, instead of that of qāimaqām, and in so doing annoyed the Turks to some extent. This point did not, however, affect the negotiations.<sup>(78)</sup> At the meetings, Ibn Sa'ūd told the Wali that he and his people had complained to the Ottoman Government about Ibn Rashaid and his high-handedness but that his explanations were always well received at Constantinople. Meanwhile, preparations continued in Mesopotamia for sending another expedition to Central Arabia to help his enemy, Ibn Rashaid. When he took the law into his own hands and crushed Ibn Rashaid, the latter retaliated by preventing messengers from Ibn Sa'ūd reaching the Sultān. Then when Ibn Rashaid decided to fight him he was aided by the Turks with troops and arms. Finally, 'Abd-al-Ruhmān Ben Faisal asked the Wali to prevent Ibn Rashaid from interfering in the affairs of Nejd. He threatened that, should Ibn Rashaid enter Nejd, he would strongly resist, but promised loyalty and obedience to the Turks, provided that Ibn Rashaid would be kept away.

In his reply, the wali promised Ibn Sa'ūd that his Government

would stop giving supplies to Ibn Sashaid, but explained that he himself had no authority for dealing with affairs of Nejd. The outcome of these meetings was that Ibn Sa'ūd was appointed qāimaqām of Nejd under the control of the Turkish authorities. Any interference by Ibn Rashaid in the affairs of Nejd was banned, and Turkish garrisons were established throughout Qasaim. Hostilities between Ibn Sa'ūd and Ibn Rashaid were, however, resumed at the end of 1905.

From 1905 onwards there was a considerable improvement in Mubārak's relations with the Turks. After the great fire in Constantinople in 1904 he made a donation to aid the refugees there and received a medal from the Sultān for his help. In August 1905, Mubārak subscribed £450 towards the cost of new Turkish barracks at Baṣra. When his contribution was cordially acknowledged, he professed devotion to the Sultan's cause and made a further donation of £200. In the course of the same year, many deserters from the Turkish forces in Nejd fled to Kuwait, where Mubārak fed them before sending them on to Baṣra. Up to March, 1906, these deserters totalled 500 or so. Their number was greatly increased in April when Ibn Sa'ūd made a sudden attack on the forces of Ibn Rashaid and his allies. Ibn Rashaid himself was killed in the course of the attack. Encouraged by this success Ibn Sa'ūd now proclaimed himself "Ruler of Sharq and king of Eastern Arabia". A peace was formally concluded between Jabal Shammar and Nejd in July, 1906. (79)

In 1906 the Turkish garrison at Qasaim found itself in difficulties with the local populace and with Ibn Sa'ūd, and consequently withdrew to Hejāz. This evacuation resulted in great loss of Ottoman prestige in Arabia. Meanwhile Qasaim was incorporated into the territory of Nejd. When the Turkish garrison withdrew to Hejāz, some of the troops made their way to Kuwait including, in August, Fariq Sādiq Pasha and 150 men. In December, 800 troops from the Qasaim occupation force came, but Mubārak

refused them entry, fearing occupation. As part of an agreement whereby these 800 men were to be sent on, the Turks released 'Abdal Azaiz Sālim al Badr to Kuwait where he remained under open arrest. (80)

In 1906, when the Ottoman Government was preparing to lay the foundations of the Hejāz railway, Mubārak contributed the sum of £550. The Sumblime Porte wished to reward him for his services and to encourage him to remain loyal in the future and so, in August 1906, an order was issued granting him the Badge of Honour, first class. (81) Although he was fully aware of the weakness and deterioration of the Ottoman Empire, and though he believed that the Caliphate should be vested only in an Arab leader, Mubarak preferred to keep on good terms with the Ottoman Government. This fact is, perhaps, especially remarkable since Kuwait was by now a British Protectorate. (82)

Appended is a list of some of Mubārak's important statements:-

"If a father is sometimes hard on his son, it is nevertheless the father who should be obeyed."

Although he believed that the Arabs should exercise the caliphate, he did not resent the fact that it rested in Turkish hands until the time was ripe to restore it. Referring to this matter, he said:- "We all know that every age has its time and Empire. The men and empire of this time are the Turks. The existence of the caliphate within their hands at present strengthens Islam and strengthens the cause of the Muslims."

Mubārak expected the Ottoman Government to trust him, as is evident from the following statement:- "If the Turks made peace with me, I would act accordingly and save her the need for the sixth army at Baghdād."

He also knew the extent of the bankruptcy which the Ottoman Government was suffering, and the difficulties that they were experiencing in collecting dues and in maintaining their forces. For this reason he often helped the Turks when a convenient opportunity presented itself.

When Ottoman soldiers were going to, or returning from, war he would sometimes clothe them and provide them with food and other supplies. He paid his dues, which amounted to £200, in advance. Among the other states in the area, the usual procedure was to pay dues by instalments, but Mubarak never delayed payment in this way. He never refused to carry out the missions entrusted to him by the Ottoman Government, no matter how important or unimportant they were, and often acted as an intermediary between the Ottoman Government and the rebellious Arab Sheikdoms. (83)

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## CHAPTER FOUR

BRITISH POLITICAL RELATIONS WITH KUWAIT 1904-1921

## I

KUWAIT POSITION BEFORE 1914

It may be of interest to give a brief account of the relations of the British Government with Kuwait. Although from the middle of the last century friendly intercourse had been maintained with the representative of the British power in the Arabian Gulf, nothing of consequence occurred until early in 1897,<sup>(1)</sup> when the Germans began to increase their influence in the Turkish territories. They were particularly interested in Kuwait as a likely site for the terminus of the projected Berlin-Baghdād railway. In fact the Germans were intent on gaining control of the coasts around the Arabian Gulf, including Kuwait port.

It was at this point that the British Government woke up to and faced the impending danger which was threatening British interests in the Gulf, paramount among which was the security of the trade routes to India.<sup>(2)</sup> Hence, when Sheikh Mubārak asked Britain for protection in 1899 she agreed to protect him and signed an exclusive agreement with him on 23rd July, 1899.<sup>(3)</sup> In 1900 Sheikh Mubārak signed a further agreement with Britain concerning traffic in arms, according to the conditions of which the export and import of arms to and from Kuwait was prohibited. Other developments of importance for Anglo-Kuwaiti relations were the visit of Lord Curzon to Kuwait in course of his tour of the Arabian Gulf in 1903, and the establishment of a post office and associated medical work in Kuwait. In connection with the latter event

it may be worthy of note that Mubārak undertook not to allow any other foreign power to establish a post office in Kuwait.<sup>(4)</sup>

In Spring 1904, a plan which had been made in the previous year for the protection of Mubārak from increasing Turkish influence in the affairs of Kuwait and of Ibn Sa'ūd in Nejd was revived. In accordance with the plan, Britain appointed a political Officer at Kuwait on 24th June, and on 6th August, the newly appointed Political Agent, Captain S.G. Knox, arrived from Bushire. The assistant Surgeon joined the Agency, accompanied by a postal subordinate, but an official post office was still not established. The instructions given to Knox on taking up his appointment were:-

- (1) To maintain friendly relations with Mubārak.
- (2) To protect British trade interests.
- (3) To watch Turkish activities on the borders of Kuwait.
- (4) To discover the true extent of Mubārak's occupation of Khūr-el-Şubaihiya.
- (5) To report immediately any change in the existing situation.
- (6) To pay special attention to the areas of Khūr Abdulla, Baubiyān, Umm-Qaşr.
- (7) To collect information about the struggle between Ibn-Rashaid and Ibn-Sa'ūd.
- (8) To investigate alleged imports of arms to Kuwait, especially rifles for Ibn Sa'ūd.

He was, however, neither to authorise nor to forbid their arms trade.<sup>(5)</sup>

In November 1904, the Turkish Government protested to the Government of India concerning the latter's nomination of a Political Agent in Kuwait, describing the appointment as a clear contravention of the agreement for the maintenance of the "Status quo" between the two countries. At this time also, it appears, the Turks believed that the

British were encouraging the Sheikh of Kuwait to support Ibn Sa'ūd in opposition to the Turkish arms and efforts in Central Arabia. In reply the British Government stated that the appointment was not a permanent one, but that they reserved the right to send an Officer to report on the situation to ensure the continuance of the "modus vivendi" which had been reached in Kuwait. The British Government also instructed the Government of India, on 24th November 1904, that Major Knox should remain in Kuwait for the time being and that he should be withdrawn after a "reasonable time". Before Knox left Kuwait, he informed Mubārak that he would repeat his visit, and that the date of his return would depend on the course of events.<sup>(6)</sup> However, the plan was carried no further at this stage, since the British Government feared lest it should have an adverse effect on the negotiations which were then taking place in Constantinople concerning the evacuation of Bubiyān by the Turks.<sup>(7)</sup> Owing to the problems confronting the British authority in Aden in its endeavours to solve the frontier dispute with Yemen, the Minister of Foreign Affairs decided that it was not the right time to nominate Knox as Political Agent in Kuwait. It was therefore decided that he should be withdrawn, but he returned in 1905, when he was helped by Dāwūd'Abd al-Ruhmān, a Kuwaiti subject.

During this period, the relationship between Britain and Kuwait became stronger, especially after the appointment of a Political Agent from the Staff of the Indian Political department. The Political Agent was directly subordinate to the political Resident at Bushire. At this time also the British exploited their favoured position in Kuwait and began to send out missions to study the outlying regions and to compile reports on their internal social and political situations and on their relations with the Sultān. In the year of Knox's arrival, he made a trip to the Turkish borders and visited Jahara at the South-Eastern corner

of the Gulf of Kuwait, Safwān, and Umm-Qasar. In the following year he visited the South of Kuwait, travelling as far as Hafār. He was, in fact, the first European to travel in that region. At the same time, the British navy surveyed the entire coastline of Kuwait. The reports of all these surveys are still extant and are kept at the Ministry of Defence and the Admiralty in London. (8)

In 1905, the Government of India suggested to Mubārak that he should have a special flag. In accordance with the proposal Percy Cox, the British Political Resident at Bushire, visited Kuwait on 16th July, 1905, to arrange with Mubārak the adoption of a new flag to be flown on his ships and those of his subjects. At first Mubārak rejected the idea on the grounds that his people would not know what to make of the change. He added that if he agreed to adopt a new flag, it might well increase the hostility of the Turks towards him. When, however, Cox explained to him that it was in his own interests that his dhows carry a flag by which they could be recognised unmistakably as his by customs officials on the Gulf and also offered to design a flag and other articles of equipment which might be useful in conjunction with it, Mubārak agreed. (9)

Once the idea had been accepted in principle, Cox began to arrange the matter with the Political Agent, who by coincidence has fallen ill with appendicitis and left Kuwait. A year later, Cox broached the plan to Mubārak and on the 12th July 1906 Mubārak agreed to adopt the flag on condition that the British Government would give him a written guarantee that he would be protected in case of any unpleasantness with the Turks which might result from his use of it. (10) Cox prepared samples and from them Mubārak chose the Turkish red flag with the word "Kuwait" in both Arabic and Roman letters to prevent any official who might be ignorant of Arabic from pleading that he did not understand. (11) The British Government was, however, unwilling to give the guarantee,

since this might entail the protection of every Kuwaiti dhow from reprisal in Turkish waters. The advantages gained would not be worth the inconvenience which would result.<sup>(12)</sup>

In 1907, the British Government took up the idea of establishing a coaling depot, hoping in this way to forestall the acquisition of the same place by another power. Therefore, Cox was instructed as a first step to find out Mubārak's views. Mubārak rejected the idea and he seemed anxious neither to sell nor to lease the land. Cox emphasised that his Government would protect Mubārak from any danger from the Turkish Government. The negotiations at Kuwait regarding the establishment of the coaling depot were eventually concluded successfully. Sheikh Mubārak agreed to lease in perpetuity to the British Government a plot of land to the south of Bandar Shuwaikh for R.s.60,000 Rupees "per annum", leaving them the right to relinquish the lease at any time should they wish to do so. At the same time, the British Government assured Sheikh Mubārak that they recognised that the town of Kuwait and its environs belonged to him and his heirs after him; that all his arrangements including customs arrangements would remain in his hands and in those of his heirs after him, and that the British Government would collect no customs duties in the Bandar Shuwaikh lands or in any other lands that they might thereafter lease from him or his heirs after him.<sup>(13)</sup> In 1911 Mubārak undertook not to grant a pearl fishing concession to any foreigners without the prior approval of the British Government.<sup>(14)</sup>

The Turks, however, were displeased at these developments, since they held that Kuwait was really part of the Wilāyat of Baṣra and that Mubārak had, therefore, no right to lease any part of the territory to the British. Naturally, therefore, they protested against the new advantage gained by the British.

In March 1911, the British and Turkish Governments held negotiations concerning a number of matters, including the Baghdād

railway and zones of influence in the Arabian Gulf. The question of Kuwait was prominent in the negotiations. Eventually agreement was reached and a convention designed to give effect to it was signed in London on 29th July, 1913 by Ibrāhaim Haqy Pasha on behalf of Turkey, and Sir Edward Grey on behalf of Britain. The terms of this agreement as they concerned Kuwait were as follows:-

- (1) The Turkish Government recognised Kuwait as an autonomous qazā, and acknowledged the right of the Sheikh of Kuwait to fly the Turkish flag as formerly, but with the addition of the word "Kuwait" in the corner.
- (2) The Turkish Government undertook not to interfere in the internal affairs of Kuwait, or to seek to exercise influence over the succession. In future the Turks were merely to issue Firmans concerning the investiture of the new Sheikh. In addition, the Turks undertook not to occupy any part of the territory of Kuwait. The Sheikh of Kuwait was to have the right to appoint agents to look after his interests in the Turkish territories.
- (3) The Turkish Government acknowledged the agreement made between Kuwait and Britain, and particularly the agreement of January 1899. They also acknowledged the concessions which had been granted to British subjects in Kuwait by the Sheikh.
- (4) In return the British Government declared that Britain would neither sign a new agreement with Kuwait nor seek to occupy it as long as the Turks did not break this agreement.
- (5) Articles 5 to 7 of the agreement had particular reference to the boundary surveys on the basis of which it was agreed that Umm-Qasar and Safwān wells were within Turkish territory, whilst Bubiyan and Warbah Jahn bay of Kuwait were recognised as Kuwait. Kur-el-Zubair was recognised as the northern boundary and Al-Qarain as the southern boundary of Kuwait.

(8) In case of the extension of the railway to Kuwait both Governments agreed on arrangements for protecting the line.

(9) The Sheikh of Kuwait was confirmed in his possession of gardens and property at Fāo, which were immune from taxation. (15)

However, this agreement was never ratified because of the outbreak of the First World War in August 1914.

On the outbreak of hostilities between Britain and Germany, Turkey showed signs of her intention to intervene on the German side. Accordingly the British resident at Bushire proposed to the Government of India that letters should be drafted in anticipation of the expected declaration of war between Britain and Turkey, ready for sending to the Gulf Sheikhdoms. It was also suggested that all Muslims should be informed that so long as there was no serious interference with Indian pilgrims proceeding to Mecca and Medina no hostile action would be taken by the British or Indian Government against the ports of Jeddah or the Holy places. (16)

In 1914 Sheikh Mubārak was informed officially by the Political Resident at Bushire that a state of war existed between Britain and Germany. He responded by making a declaration of loyalty to the British Government on behalf of himself and his tribes on the 21st August. In his declaration he placed his efforts, his men, and his ships at Great Britain's disposal, together with his garrison on the Islands at the mouth of the Shatt-el-Arab, which he claimed was lawfully his. He repeated this declaration in a letter of the same date to the Political Resident in the Arabian Gulf, which was formally acknowledged by the latter on the 25th August. (17)

In view of the increasing likelihood that Turkey would intervene in the war on Germany's side, it was obvious that the British Government's previous undertaking to the Sheikh of Kuwait would have to be renewed and

extended to cover all contingencies in the event of a state of war arising between Britain and Turkey.<sup>(18)</sup> Accordingly, a letter concerning these assurances was despatched to the Sheikh on the 3rd November 1914, by the British Resident in the Gulf. In the letter Mubārak was given the following instructions:-

- (1) He was to attack Umm Qasar, Safwān and Bubiyan and occupy them.
- (2) He should afterwards endeavour, in co-operation with Sheikh Khaz'al Khān, Emir Ibn Sa'ūd, and other reliable Sheikhs to liberate Baṣra from Turkish possession.
- (3) Should this prove to be beyond his ability, he should make arrangements, if possible, to prevent Turkish reinforcements from reaching Baṣra or even Qurnah until the arrival of the British troops which were to be sent as soon as possible. He was assured that two British men-of-war would arrive there before his troops. Though it should be his prime aim to liberate Baṣra and its people from Turkish rule, the British requested that he should do his utmost to prevent his troops and others from plundering the merchandise belonging to British merchants in Baṣra and its dependencies, and to protect the European residents in Baṣra.
- (4) In return for his assistance in this important matter, the British Government promised Mubārak that if he succeeded in this enterprise, Baṣra would not be returned to the Turks by surrender or otherwise.
- (5) Furthermore Britain made certain promises concerning him personally.

There were:-

- (i) His gardens would remain in his possession and that of his descendants and would not be subject to the payment of revenue or taxes.
- (ii) If his attacks on Safwān, Umm Qasar and Bubiyan were successful and he occupied them, Britain would protect him from any consequences arising from that action.
- (iii) Kuwait would be recognised as an independent principality under

British protection. (19)

After the British landed and occupied Baṣra in November 1914 the situation was transferred and the Turks were driven out of Baṣra. Because Britain had undertaken obligations towards Ibn Sa'ūd as well as towards the Sheikhs of Kuwait and Muhammara to resist the Turks, the Turks realised it was beyond their ability to resist well equipped troops, therefore they declared el-Jehād or Holy war, hoping thus to stir up their co-religious, the Arab tribesmen, against the British. Religious Agents were sent out amongst the tribes to encourage them to fight under the Turkish banner.

The activities of such men were apparent in the south of Iraq, where, in July 1915, a force commanded by Muḥammed Fādhl Pasha-el-Daghistanī, and accompanied by some religious men (Sheikh Abbās Būniyan and part of his tribes, the Bani-Lam) spread into the borders of Ahwāz, which was under the jurisdiction of the principality of Muhammara. There they asked the tribesmen to revolt. They met with success in the case of the tribes of Bani-Taraf, which revolted and decided to occupy the city of Ahwāz. Sheikh Khaz'al of Muhammara, however, organised an army to protect Ahwāz. The British Government had already sent troops from India en route through Bahrain to Baṣra and Qurnah to fight the Turkish troops. The tribes of Bani Ka'ab were incited by the Turkish emissaries and rose against Sheikh Khaz'al and accused him of being an ally of the British Government and of acting against the Muslim Turks.

According to the treaty ratified between Khaz'al and the British Government in September 1914, the former was to provide aid to the British troops against the Turks and to resist any tribes which might revolt. (20) Hence Khaz'al strengthened his position by fighting these tribes and so putting an end to the revolt.

During the tribal disturbances at Muhammara, Sheikh Mubārak

paid a visit to his friend Khaz'al. When he realised the circumstances in which Khaz'al found himself, he decided to assist his friend in his difficulties. Hence he wrote to his son, Jābir, who was in charge at Kuwait, to send reinforcements to support Sheikh Khaz'al. However, when Sheikh Jābir received his father's letter, he read it before the people of Kuwait. They refused to support Khaz'al on the grounds that he was an ally of the British who were fighting their Muslim brothers, the Turks. In fact they had already been swayed by the invitation to fight under the Muslim brother which had been issued by religious people in Iraq and Turkey. For this reason they refused to support Khaz'al. (21)

Sheikh Jābir was astonished at their response, since it was the first time that Kuwait had dared to disobey Mubārak's orders. When Jābir informed his father in writing of what had occurred in Kuwait, and of how the people refused to carry out his orders, Sheikh Mubārak was extremely angry and sent a strongly worded letter, in which he warned that anyone found opposing his orders would be put to death. The people, however, at first remained unmoved in their attitude of disobedience, but eventually, after long discussions between the dissident faction and Sheikh Jābir, they agreed to send help to Khaz'al. First, however, some of the leading Kuwaitis went to Muhammara, where they met Sheikh Mubārak and expressed their regret for what had happened. They promised him that as soon as they arrived back in Kuwait they would send the forces and equipment needed. When they arrived in Kuwait they sent six large ships, manned by 180 warriors, to Muhammara.

Whilst this correspondence between Mubārak and Jābir was being carried on, Sheikh Khaz'al suppressed all the revolts and riots within his territory and peace was restored. (22)

## II

ANGLO-KUWAITI RELATIONSHIPS WITH A REFLECTION ON SAUDI-KUWAITI  
RELATIONS 1914-21

After the British occupation of Baṣra and the evacuation of the Turkish forces there, Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy of India, insisted on visiting the Arabian Gulf and his purpose in undertaking this tour was to assess for himself the tendencies of the Sheikhs in the area and to sound out their views concerning the formation of a united force under their leadership.

Accordingly, in February 1915, he left Bombay with a British Fleet. He visited Bahrain, and also Kuwait. Percy Cox came from Baṣra especially to attend Hardinge on his visit to Kuwait. When Lord Hardinge arrived at the port of Kuwait, Sheikh Jābir went to welcome him, accompanied by Cox and Colonel Gray, the British Political Agent in Kuwait.

On the following day Mubārak went in person to visit Hardinge on board the warship, and invited him to visit the town. The same afternoon, Hardinge repaid the visit by calling on Sheikh Mubārak in his palace. In the course of that visit, Lord Hardinge assured Mubārak his government would remain on good terms with him for as long as Mubārak prevented any other powers from interfering in his territory, and that his Government would make every effort to help him. On the next day, Lord Hardinge left Kuwait for Baṣra.

As we have seen, Sheikh Mubārak's relations with the British were good and he did his utmost to help them against the Turks in Iraq until they occupied Baṣra. As for his relations with Ibn Sa'ūd, these were also still very good. When the 'Ajmān tribes revolted against him and threatened Riyadh, he sought help from Sheikh Mubārak, and the latter immediately despatched a force to help "his son" Ibn Sa'ūd.<sup>(23)</sup> The Kuwaiti force which went out to support Ibn Sa'ūd was accompanied by Sheikh Sālim, Mubārak's second son, and Sheikh Ahmad, his grandson.

Ibn Sa'ūd and his allies defeated the 'Ajmān forces at the battle of Riyādh which was near Qataif and raised the seige of Riyādh. (24) The 'Ajmān were finally routed in September of the same year, and forced to withdraw from Nejd. The Sheikh of the 'Ajmān tribe now asked Sheikh Sālīm to allow him to take refuge in the neighbourhood of Kuwait, in accordance with Arab traditions of hospitality, and also because Sālīm was on bad personal terms with Abd-al-Azaiz he consented, and this action on Sālīm's part resulted in cooling off of relations between Ibn Sa'ūd and Kuwait.

Whilst the triumphant army was still at Riyādh, news came of the death of Sheikh Mubārak on the 15th November 1915, and of the succession of his eldest son, Sheikh Jābir. Sheikh Jābir was concerned about the possible reaction from his brother Sālīm, who was his junior by only a year or so, and whose feeling regarding his brother's succession were uncertain. Sālīm arrived in Kuwait on the 7th December, and the same evening had a long conference with his brother and with Sheikh Khaz'al Khān, who had always been friendly towards him. As a result of the discussions, Sālīm agreed to recognise his brother as Sheikh and to serve him faithfully.

On the 8th December, Lt. Commander Bickford and Colonel Gray, the British Agent at Kuwait, visited Sālīm and Jābir. They were received with great cordiality by both, and each expressed the hope that British negotiations with Kuwait would be as cordial during Jābir's reign as they had been during the reign of his father. (25) In March 1916, Lord Hardinge sent a letter to Jābir, congratulating him on his succession and assuring him that: "So long as you act up to existing arrangements with the British Government you may expect the same support as was enjoyed by your father". (26)

Sheikh Jābir was a pleasant man whose mildness and affability were to make him a popular ruler during his short reign of rather more than a year.

Whilst Sheikh Jābir was building up his strength amongst his tribesmen and citizens, Ibn Sa'ūd was making a fresh endeavour to sign an agreement with the British. Before, however, we discuss the agreement we shall give a brief account of when and why this new initiative came from Ibn Sa'ūd and of what was the basic purpose of his request. Probably he wanted to protect his territories from the Turks and from their ally Ibn-Rashaid, or from his rival Sharaif Husain who, though himself pro-British in their conflict with the Turks in Hejaz, yet had designs himself of Ibn Sa'ūd's territory in Nejd. Unfortunately for Sharaif Husain, circumstances were against his ambitions in Nejd, since Ibn Sa'ūd enjoyed the full support of his powerful tribes.

It was for this reason that when Turkey sided with Germany against Britain, Ibn Sa'ūd was inclined to co-operate with Britain, since relations between the Wahābi movement, with which he was connected, and the Turks had not been good in the past. The Turks had peremptorily rejected spiritual authority of the movement and this rejection was partly responsible for the continual hostility between Ibn Sa'ūd and al-Rashaid, the Turks' ally in Nejd.

Early in 1915, Ibn Sa'ūd asked Britain to despatch a British delegate to Riyādh. The British Government welcomed this policy of rapprochement with Ibn Sa'ūd. The reason was that, since Turkey had joined the Central Powers, the British Government were anxious for their communications with India and were conscious of the fact that behind the Turks stood the Germans. They were therefore, keenly seeking new allies in Turkish Arabia wherever they might be found. Captain Shakespear, who had visited Riyādh in March 1914, as a traveller rather than as a

representative of his Government, <sup>(27)</sup> now became the first British representative at the Court of Abd-al-'Azaiz Ibn Sa'ūd. Ibn Sa'ūd received him readily since he was willing to sign an agreement with the British and Shakespear was ready to negotiate such an agreement. Before this mission could bear fruit, Shakespear was killed at the battle of Jarab between Ibn Sa'ūd and Ibn Rashaid, early in 1915.

As a result of Shakespear's death, the agreement between the two sides was delayed for some months. In December 1915, Ibn Sa'ūd went to Dārāin near Qataif where he met Cox and signed with him an agreement on the 26th of the month. The terms of the agreement were as follows:-

- (1) Britain acknowledged Ibn Sa'ūd's authority over Nejd, Hasa, Jubail and their dependencies and territories, the exact nature and extent of which were to be discussed and determined later. She further acknowledged that their ports from Uqair to Safaniya on the shores of the Arabian Gulf were the possession of Ibn Sa'ūd and of his fathers before him and solemnly recognised Ibn Sa'ūd and the independent ruler thereof and as the absolute chief of their tribes, and likewise his sons and descendents after him.
- (2) For his part Ibn Sa'ūd bound himself not to enter into any correspondence, agreement or treaty with any foreign power or nation and, further, to give immediate notice to the political authorities for the British Government of any attempt on the part of any other power to interfere with the above territories.
- (3) Ben Sa'ūd undertook not to cede, sell, or mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of the above territories or any part of them, or grant concessions within those territories to any foreign power or to the subjects of any foreign power without the consent of the British Government. Further, he will follow British advice unreservedly, provided that it would not be damaging to his own interests.
- (4) Ibn Sa'ūd undertook to keep open the roads leading to the Holy

places which passed through his territories and to protect pilgrims whilst journeying to and from the Holy places.

(5) Ibn Sa'ūd undertook, as his father had before him, to refrain from all aggression on, or interference with the territories of Kuwait, Bahrain and of the Sheikhs of Qatar, and the 'Omān Coast who were under the protection of the British government, and who had treaties with the said government. The limits of their territories were to be determined.

(6) The British Government and Ibn Sa'ūd agreed to conclude a further, more detailed treaty, with regard to matters concerning the two parties. (28)

This agreement was known as the Dārāin treaty.

Ibn Sa'ūd's relations with Britain were now very good. In the meantime, however, his relations with Kuwait had become very bad, mainly because Sheikh Jābir was not interested in desert affairs, but he spent all his life in the town. The immediate result of Jābir's urban disposition was that Ibn Sa'ūd found himself master of the desert, and took advantage of his new influence by endeavouring to persuade the tribes who belonged to Kuwait to join under his protection. He collected the "Zakāt" from them, and soon the 'Awazim and Mutair tribes, which had been reckoned as "Kuwaiti tribes" drifted back to Ibn Sa'ūd. After a year, all the gains won by Mubārak for Kuwait at great expense and effort had been lost.

The chief reason for the hostility between Kuwait and Ibn Sa'ūd was, as we have mentioned above, Sheikh Sālim's permitting the 'Ajmān tribe to take refuge in Kuwait during his father's reign. Ibn Sa'ūd refused to accept that Sālim had the authority to grant this permission, and put pressure on Sheikh Jābir to expel the 'Ajmān tribe from the neighbourhood of Kuwait. Sheikh Jābir, however, at first refused to eject them, fearing lest, in so doing, he should drive them into the enemy camp. At the same time, he was unable to resist Ibn Sa'ūd, in the event of open hostilities. (29) Finally, after the interference of

the British Government, Jābir yielded in February 1915 and agreed to expell them in order to appease Ibn Sa'ūd. The 'Ajmān now left the neighbourhood of Kuwait.

On the 5th February 1917, Sheikh Jābir died, after a short reign over a year. He was succeeded by his brother Sālim, who was regarded as a much stronger character than Jābir and who, during his father's life time, had had charge of tribal matters whilst Jābir, who was an amiable but weak character and a "bon viveur", had been Deputy Governor in Kuwait. (30)

Sālim had spent most of his life among the Bedouin, and the key to his character probably lies in this phase of his career. He left Kuwait for the desert because he disapproved of Mubārak's laxity in religion. His subsequent experience had a profound effect on his character for, rather than yield to his father and return to the luxuries of Kuwait, he endured the rigours of desert life for 17 years. However, throughout that period, Sālim enjoyed his father's confidence as the Commander of the tribal forces, in which capacity he served his father with complete loyalty. This was so in spite of Mubārak's straying from the path of true religion. (31)

Sālim was narrow in outlook, bigoted in religious matters, and tactless in his personal relations. However, his marked individuality and strength of purpose ensured his authority over both tribesfolk and town-dwellers. (32)

By July 1917, Ibn Sa'ūd, who had begun to collect the "Zakat" from the 'Awāzim, who were practically a Kuwaiti tribe, was instigating them to leave Kuwait and settle in his own territory. At the same time Sheikh Sālim was beginning to make friends in the desert. Naturally enough his friends were from the Shummar and 'Ajmān, Ibn Sa'ūd's enemies. Immediately the 'Ajmān, with their chief, al-Hithailān, moved down into the neighbourhood of Kuwait, and Sālim now realised how to gain his revenge on Ibn Sa'ūd. Ibn Sa'ūd's position in Qasaim could not easily be defended, in spite of a tacitly acknowledged truce with Hāil, since his forces had gone off to their homes in the south. For this reason

he found it to his advantage to reach an accommodation with the Shammar and gave them permission to enter his territory on condition that they encamped around the walls of Artuwiyah.<sup>(33)</sup> At the same time, he placed his son Turki in charge of Qasaim, and gave them passes for supplies in Kuwait. So, the Shammar obtained their supplies both in Qasaim and Kuwait.

During October great changes had taken place both in Kuwait itself and in the desert. In Kuwait, Sālim had gained a good deal of prestige as a ruler, and had become a good deal more amiable as his position became more secure. His relationship with the merchants was good. However, the same could not be said of his relations with Ibn Sa'ūd since the latter was still collecting the "Zakāt" from the Kuwaiti tribes, and this fact rankled with Sālim.

Sālim realised from past experience how important it was for Kuwait to maintain control over the tribes, and for this reason he decided on an attempt to regain what had been lost by sending members of his family to subdue the Hinterland.<sup>(34)</sup> This action did not suit Ibn Sa'ūd at all, and at the same time Sheikh Sālim protested to the British Agent at Kuwait, Colonel Hamilton. A long correspondence between Kuwait and Riyādh now ensued, but to no avail, since Ibn Sa'ūd claimed that he was acting within his right in collecting the "Zakāt" from the tribes, and denied that he had overtaxed them.<sup>(35)</sup> He refused to cease from taxing them altogether.

At this juncture, Colonel Hamilton went to Riyādh to discuss the matter with Ibn Sa'ūd. At his meeting with the Sheikh, Hamilton tried to persuade him to stop meddling with the tribes. He reminded him of his good relations with the British Government, and of the treaty which had been signed in December 1915, with him and Cox. Hamilton also brought to Ibn Sa'ūd's attention the article in the Dārāin Treaty

concerning Kuwait which referred to the quadrilateral behind Kuwait which it had been the custom to regard as Kuwait territory.<sup>(36)</sup> In reply, Ibn Sa'ūd told Hamilton that the 'Awāzim and Mutair tribes had left Kuwait for Hasa and had settled down there; but since both territorial and tribal boundaries were acknowledged in Arabia, he also blamed Sālim for giving refuge and protection to the 'Ajmān tribe, although he knew that they were his enemies. Ibn Sa'ūd realised, however, that he was in the wrong, and he promised Hamilton that he would send back the tribes which he had enticed away from Kuwait, on condition that Sālim, on his part, should send away the 'Ajmān tribe and have no contact with the Shammar, who were enemies of Nejd. Hamilton accepted these conditions and promised Ibn Sa'ūd that he would negotiate with Sālim.

On the 3rd December 1917, Hamilton returned to Kuwait and informed Salim of what had taken place between him and Ibn Sa'ūd. Sheikh Sālim accepted Ibn Sa'ūd's point of view and expelled the 'Ajmān tribes from his territory.<sup>(37)</sup>

We now turn to Sheikh Sālim's relations with Britain. When he became Sheikh of Kuwait, the Government of India forwarded to Cox its recognition for presentation to the new ruler, and renewed with him the undertaking which had been given to his father. However, Sālim's policy towards the British differed from that of his father and brother. He was believed to be somewhat anti-foreign, and particularly anti-British since Britain was the enemy of Muslim Turkey.<sup>(38)</sup> At the very outset of his reign, he refused to assist the British war effort, and was, in fact, secretly supporting the Turks. The British Government had been gathering information from which it appeared that Kuwait was being used as a base for supplying goods to the Turks and to the tribes which were ranged on the Turkish side, and so at the end of 1917, the British navy found it necessary to establish a blockade at Kuwait.

On January 4th, 1918, Sheikh Sālim formally agreed to the British

Government's establishing a blockade for the control of exports to the interior, but a few days later, he withdrew the concession on the grounds that his honour and dignity would be affected by such a blockade. Even a visit on the 9th February from the Deputy Political Resident at Bushire, bearing a message from the Civil Commissioner, failed to change Sālim's attitude of uncompromising hostility to the idea of the blockade. (39)

In February, however, Sheikh Sālim held a meeting of his family and leading merchants, which was attended, at the Sheikh's request, by the particular agent. At the meeting, Sālim gave his final reply which was that if he received a formal demand in writing to allow the blockade post as a military necessity, he would reply in writing stating that he consented, provided that he should be allowed to visit the British Agent first. Neither Sheikh Sālim nor his "Majlis" put forward any solid reasons for opposition to the plan and they seem to have aimed merely to put off its enforcement for as long as possible. Opposition remained firm, however, and accordingly the British resorted to the measures which had been sanctioned by the army Commander. These included:-

- (1) A naval demonstration.
- (2) Blockade by sea with notification of the fact to all Indian and Persian ports.
- (3) A request to the Sheikh to remove himself to Fāo or Baṣra. This last measure could be enforced at the discretion of the Naval Commander in Consultation with the Political Agent. (40)

On the 10th February the S.S. Zayāni was ordered by the Political Agent, Colonel Hamilton, not to unload her cargo, which was subsequently taken on to Baṣra. At once the situation at Kuwait improved and on the 16th February Sheikh Sālim wrote accepting the blockade proposals without reservation.

On the 22nd February, a British blockade officer, Lieut. McCollum

and four other ranks arrived in Kuwait to control the blockade arrangements. This officer received no real help and in fact, considerable difficulties were placed in his way. There was reason to believe that goods continued to leave Kuwait which was full of foodstuffs and other provisions, but as the posts were under the control of the Sheikh's followers no evidence was forthcoming. (41)

On the 15th March, Colonel Hamilton left Kuwait and was replaced by Captain P.G. Loch. At the beginning of April, several large caravans, estimated at 4,000 camels, which allegedly belonged to Qasaim and other Eastern areas of Ibn Sa'ūd's territory, but which were, in fact, composed largely of enemy infiltrators or of merchants who supported the enemy, assembled in Kuwait with a large number of Bedouin with about 3,000 camels and requested that the blockade be lifted to allow the export of an abnormally large quantity of assorted goods.

The British Agent contacted Baghdād about this matter but the Civil Commissioner refused the requests, with the exception of a few which could be permitted, provided that the necessary declaration was made. On the 10th April the British Men-of-War "Lawrence" and "Brambie" reached Kuwait, and the following morning the chiefs of the caravans and tribes called at the Sheikh's palace to hear the answer to the request for permission to export. On the same day the Political Agent and the blockade officer met Sheikh Sālim and informed him of the abnormal quantities and types of goods to be exported in the coming 15 months, and pointed out that the rest of the caravans were still in Kuwait. Sheikh Sālim hesitated to agree to send the caravans away empty handed, but eventually orders were given by the Political Agent, and the Sheikh was overruled.

After this event a letter was sent to Ibn Sa'ūd explaining the measure, and inviting him to come with Mr. Philby<sup>(42)</sup> to discuss the future regulation of traffic.<sup>(43)</sup> In addition, each caravan leader was given a

letter to the Sheikh or Governor of his district, explaining why the caravan had returned without goods. Before the tribesmen and caravans left Kuwait, they had to pass in front of the Agency, so that a check could be made to ensure that they were empty and that no goods were being taken out. As a precautionary measure, in view of the large number of caravans involved, a machine gun was placed on the Agency roof.

During the blockade, the British Agent received information to the effect that one remaining caravan was smuggling in arms and explosives, which were hidden in the saddles of the camels. A guard of marines and blue-jackets was now landed and investigated the caravan, but without success. The operation of passing the caravan proceeded quietly, and after waiting a short time to see if there was likely to be a chance of getting goods out, the caravans returned to Nejd where they complained bitterly to Ibn Sa'ūd.

There was considerable annoyance in Nejd at what had happened, but this died down, and Ibn Sa'ūd acted reasonably in instructing his representative in Kuwait to give guarantees concerning his caravans. At the same time, in order to avoid the occupation of Kuwait, and in an endeavour to settle the Kuwait problem, it was decided to buy all the stocks held in Kuwait and to limit imports to prevent their being replaced.

On the 4th May, 1918, Sheikh Sālīm wrote a letter to the Political Agent asking him to request his Government to extend to him the same protection and friendship as his predecessors had enjoyed. He promised to take complete responsibility for anything which might happen in his region, and that there would be a signal improvement in the conduct of his officials. The Sheikh's proposals were submitted to the British Government but, because there was some delay in their acceptance, the Sheikh grew impatient. Accordingly, the Political Agent was authorised, on the 3rd

June, to inform him that his Government were giving his letter their friendly consideration, and that it was hoped that Sir Percy Cox would deliver their reply on his return to Mesopotamia. <sup>(44)</sup> The purchases on behalf of the British Government amounted to:

Rice	56,753 bags	)	
		)	
Wheat	1,640 bags	)	
		)	
Barley	2,900 bags	)	To a total value of
		)	Rs. 26,52,943/12
Sugar	7,805 bags	)	
		)	
Coffee	10,665 bags	)	
		)	
Pepper	350 bags	)	
		)	
Tea	1,658 cases	)	

These purchases were, however, stopped on the 2nd June, as a personal concession to Sālim in response to his request to the Deputy Civil Commissioner at Baḡra, and to the Political Agent.

Instructions were, however, now given in India in other Gulf ports to replace the stocks bought by the British Government, with the result that further action became necessary, and on the 12th June Sheikh Sālim was informed that permission could not be given to land these goods pending the answer of the British Government to his letter. Traders were, however, to be given the option either of shipping their goods to Baḡra under permit, or of selling them to the British "at cost price plus 5%" on any goods which the blockade officer considered should not be landed at Kuwait. <sup>(45)</sup> On the 26th June, the S.S. "Zayāni" was ordered to sail on with her cargo which included more than 21,000 packages, mostly containing foodstuffs for Kuwait.

On the 24th June, 1918, the Political Agent stated that occupation was still only real solution to the Kuwait question, but that if that were not feasible, the Sheikh's offer should be accepted as a compromise solution. <sup>(46)</sup>

Accordingly, on the 28th June 1918, the Government of India

announced that they accepted the Sheikh's offer on certain conditions. This decision was communicated to the Sheikh in the letter quoted at length below. It was, however, insisted upon that exports from India to Kuwait were to be prohibited except under a permit signed by the Political Agent, and that any necessary action would be taken to prevent exports entering Kuwait from any other Gulf ports.<sup>(47)</sup> The following Statement of Policy was made:-

"While the Government of India appreciate the desirability of checking trade with Kuwait they do not consider this of sufficient importance to justify the risk of an open breach with the Sheikh and the consequent necessity of military occupation with its possible far reaching effect on other parts of Arabia."<sup>(48)</sup>

On the 5th July the following letter was handed to Sheikh Sālim by the Political Agent.

"In your letter dated the 4th May in which you mentioned that since olden times there existed friendship full and perfect between the British Government and the Rulers of Kuwait in the time of your later father and brother, and that you ask the high Government to extend this friendship and assistance to you; and that you therefore wrote the above mentioned letter to say that you were ready to accept full responsibility on your self personally for all that happened in Kuwait and its territories likewise and that you will not allow any acts to be done in Kuwait or its territory which may be against the interests of the Government by any persons, either by your subjects men or others who may come into your territories, and that you will allow no enemies of the Government to come into Kuwait territory; and that you will be personally responsible that no goods are sent to the enemies of the Government on account of the friendship between you and the Government and you request that the Government will give you the assistance of the officer now here as

blockade officer to help you in dealing with this matter, and that you wrote this because you desire that there should be nothing but friendship and rights of friendship between the Government and yourself.

Your letter was communicated to the Government; and Sir Percy Cox was expected to return to Iraq after a short time and he would then deliver to you the reply of the Government, but he has been delayed and therefore the Government have ordered me to communicate their reply to your Excellency.<sup>(49)</sup> And it is as follows:-

The Government have deeply regretted the events of the last two years at Kuwait, but they welcome your declaration as affording an opportunity for the re-establishment of our traditional friendship between themselves and the Rulers of Kuwait and in order that there may be no misunderstanding in the future, they desire to explain their policy towards your Excellency. On the one hand, should you show to Government the same friendship and assistance which they have experienced from many years in their dealings with the Rulers of Kuwait they will continue to you the assurances given to your illustrious father, the late Sheikh Mubārak, especially that 'the town of Kuwait and its boundaries likewise belong to Sheikh Mubārak-el-Şabāḥ ruler of Kuwait, and his heirs after him'.<sup>(50)</sup> And will extend to you the friendship and protection and assistance which they gave to him and finally, they hope that you will again raise the name of your house of Kuwait to the high position which it held in the past in the eyes of the British Government, and the people of Arabia.

On the other hand it is the plain duty of the Ruler of a state which is on terms of friendship with the Government to prevent all acts either by his own subjects or by other persons in his territory, which may be contrary to the interests of the Government; and since they know that; if you wish to do so, you have the power to control your subjects and others in your territory, the Government will be compelled to hold your

Excellency personally responsible should any such act unfortunately be committed in future. They hope you will realise to your responsibility as the Ruler of Kuwait towards the Government under whose protection and friendship Kuwait has prospered in the past, and will understand that prosperity depends entirely on preservation of true friendship, both in word and deed with Government. The British Government decided to remove the blockade provided that you take measures of your own to prevent supplies being sent to enemies of the Government and hope that in taking these measures you will not hesitate to consult the Political Agent and Lt. McCollum who will remain at Kuwait as his assistant but in order to prevent ill-disposed persons from endeavouring to smuggle goods, no goods will be allowed to leave India or Kuwait in future by dhow or steamer without the production of a permit signed by the political Agent or his duly authorised representative. Government desires that full consultation should take place between you and the Political Agent regarding the quantities of goods required for your territory so that the legitimate needs of your people will be safeguarded and permits will also be granted by the Political Agent for goods which may be necessary for lawful trade with the subjects of the friend of all Sheikh Abd-al'Azaiz Ben Sa'ūd" (51)

It appears from the letter that Sālīm was made fully aware of all that was involved in his new relationship with the British and that, henceforth, he would have to accept their word as law. Sālīm now issued a declaration of friendship with Britain in which he stated that if any one of his subjects disagreed with the British Government in word or deed, he would have his property confiscated and he would be expelled from Kuwait.

Sheikh Sālīm was afraid of taking responsibility upon himself, and on the 7th July, he replied in writing to this effect. An interview was now arranged between the Political Agent and the blockade Officer, on the one side, and a representative of the Sheikh, headed by his son Abdullah

who had been appointed to superintend the whole blockade with special responsibility for land exports on the other. At a meeting it was decided that a clearcut system should be established for examining exports by sea, and that the examination of exports by land should be continued. Considerable pressure was put on Sheikh Abdullah to go round Kuwait and expel any enemy infiltrators irrespective of whether or not they had written passes. (52)

The blockade remained in force in Kuwait until the 3rd November, 1918, when the General Headquarters of the Mesopotamian Expeditionary Force was moved to Baghdād on the declaration of the Armistice with the Turks. (53) During the blockade, Kuwait had been in a critical situation and naturally she relaxed when the British announced that the blockade on the port was to be removed. No sooner had this respite been granted, however, than Sheikh Sālim was faced with another problem concerning the boundaries between his territory and that of Ibn Sa'ūd.

In the past the Sheikhs of Kuwait had considered that their southern boundary ran from a point nearly 150 miles South of Kuwait town, whence it continued in a straight line towards the East, ending at a port called Balbul. (54) In view of the situation of Balbul at the end of this boundary Sheikh Sālim decided to fix the boundary towards Kuwait and Hasa. The fact that a number of Kuwaiti tribes roamed this area for camping and grazing land encouraged Sheikh Sālim to pursue this scheme, as did the abundance of drinking water and the availability of a suitable anchorage. Sālim, however, decided to build a palace there and to build a new small town there.

News of this development soon spread across the desert and reached the ears of Ibn Sa'ūd who, in his anger, wrote a letter of protest to Sālim in which he claimed that Balbul was within his territory and asked him not to proceed with his plan for establishing a new town there. Sālim, however, refused to

listen to Ibn Sa'ūd, but wrote to him insisting that Balbul was in Kuwait territory and telling him to mind his own business. Ibn Sa'ūd's next move was to write to Major Moore, the British Agent in Kuwait, informing him of the misunderstanding between himself and Sheikh Sālīm, and of Sheikh Sālīm's claim to Balbul which was part of Qataif and within Sa'udi territory. Major Moore only wrote to Sālīm asking for his view of the facts which underlay Ibn Sa'ūd's letter and the Sheikh replied that he remained adamant that Balbul was within his territory. In this connection he cited the Anglo-Turkish agreement of the 29th July 1913, pointing out that it was very largely on this agreement that he based his claim. It will be remembered that in this agreement it was stated that the boundary line ran from Hafār in the Bātin through Safa, Qar'a, Haba, Warbah and 'Anta, to the Arabian Gulf at Jabal Hanaifah, and its distance from Kuwait town as the crow flies varied from 135 to 160.<sup>(55)</sup> It seems that this boundary was fixed during Captain Shakespear's tour of Central Arabia, for he submitted a note concerning this information (No.C-62 dated 12th August 1912). He pointed out that this was as definite and as definable a boundary line as any which one would reasonably expect to find in a desert. Owing to the scarcity of wells in the south it was a strong one, and all the points on which it was based were unquestionably within the jurisdiction of Sheikh Mubārak. Shakespear summarised the situation of the Bedouin in the desert and the problem of controlling them in his statement that "All the Arab Sheikhs base the territorial extent of their power upon their ability to enforce some order over the adjacent tribes, their power to enforce the payment of "Zakāt" by Bedouin and their capacity to prevent and to avenge outrages and raids within the territorial limits claimed. Judged by these standards there can be no question that Mubārak is the paramount chief within the limits described. He collected "Zakāt" from the 'Awāzim, who are practically a Kuwaiti tribe, the whole of the Mutair, except two or three distant sections

in Nejd, most of the 'Ajman, the Bani Khālid and, until lately, also from the Dhufair."<sup>(56)</sup>

By 1918, however, the political situation was completely different from when Captain Shakespear wrote the lines quoted above, for there is simply no comparison between the position under Sālim and that under Mubārak. The change had come about as a result of the general trend of events such as the adoption of "Walihabism" by the Mutair tribe. As a result of this acceptance, the Mutair was bound in an allegiance to Riyādh.

Before we embark on an analysis of the political situation at that time, we shall endeavour to give a brief idea of the nature of the Ikhwān movement. The Ikhwān movement had in it an element of religious intolerance, which it inherited from the Wahābi state in which it had its origins. The Wahābis were allowed to have no ties with non-Wahābis, even if relatives were involved. They would not mix with foreigners and had strict moral and ethical codes which they had to observe. They were almost entirely cut off from outside influence. The Ikhwān and their leaders were important in implementing Ibn Sa'ūd's foreign and domestic policies. He built up his army from members of the Ikhwān communities, and used this army to suppress any insurrection. Further, with the support of his Ikhwān troops he fought his campaign for a united Arabia.

The foregoing is a summary of the nature and importance of the Ikhwān. Now we must return to an important topic of the relations between Kuwait and Ibn Sa'ūd. We mentioned that relations were strained because of the boundary dispute in which both claimed that Balbul was within their territory. It seems that Ibn Sa'ūd based his claim on the unwritten law of the desert, whilst Sheikh Sālim based his on a document in the manner of a civilised state.<sup>(57)</sup>

In April 1920, the political situation became critical and potentially explosive, because Ibn Sa'ūd had given orders to Ben Shuqair, the chief of the Mutair tribes, and a loyal member of the Ikhwān, to supply

money and material from Hasa and Jubail to build houses and to settle with his followers at Jaryah, which was to the north-east of Balbūl in Kuwaiti territory, no more than 120 miles south of Kuwait town itself. When Sālīm received news of this move, he informed the Political Agent, fearing that if such encouragements were made, they would lead to trouble between Ibn Sa'ūd and himself. <sup>(58)</sup> At the same time Sheikh Sālīm had already warned Ibn Shuqair to leave Kuwait territory and to stop his acts, but the latter had refused and had begun to set up a few mud huts preparatory to settling for the hot seasons. <sup>(59)</sup>

Sheikh Sālīm, however, now despatched a force under Sheikh 'Ali Ben Khalaiifa el-Di'aij, who was in charge of the Sheikh's flag in the desert, with Ahmad Ben Jābir, against Ibn Shuqair and his followers who were encamped at Jaryah wells. Ibn Di'aij and his force encamped at Hemdh, south-east of Jaryah. When Ibn Shuqair saw the Kuwait Force he appealed to Faisal Ibn Diwaish, the chief of the Ikhwān movements, for help. Faisal hurried from Nejd to help his ally, and on the 11th May, while Di'aij was encamped at Hemdh with his force, Faisal el Diwaish, the Sheikh of the Mutair tribe, with a large number of Ikhwān, carrying their own and Ibn Sa'ūd's flags, advanced from Jaryah and made a sudden attack with his ally Ben Shuqair on the camp of Ben Di'aij. The Kuwaiti force was routed, the camp captured, the army scattered and the Ikhwān tribes took a large number of camels. Ben Di'aij's force suffered heavy casualties, among them Ben Di'aij himself and Sheikh Abdullah el-Jābir, who narrowly escaped capture and death by fleeing on horseback to Shi'aibah. <sup>(60)</sup>

Rumour now had it that an attack on Kuwait was planned and that a force was already on its way from Ibn Sa'ūd to carry out the plan. The inhabitants of Kuwait were terrified. On receiving news of the "debacle" at Hemdh, Sheikh Sālīm had ordered the bazaar to be closed for a few days whilst a wall and other fortifications were hastily constructed for the defence of the town. <sup>(61)</sup> It was said that between 160

and 200 men had been killed by the Ikhwān and that upwards of 300 camels belonging to the Sheikh and the tribesmen had been carried off as booty, in addition to large numbers of sheep, tents, etc. The 'Awāzim tribe was attacked by the Ikhwān on the 21st, but they succeeded in repressing attacks,<sup>(62)</sup> after which Ibn Diwaish returned to Artawiyah, his own place, leaving Ibn Shuqair in possession of Jaryah. It was after these events that the people of Kuwait built the defensive wall round Kuwait town. Every able bodied person participated in the construction of this famous wall, which took only two months to complete.

It was natural that Sheikh Sālim should now blame Ibn Sa'ūd for inciting Ibn Shuqair and Ibn Diwaish to make an attack on Kuwait, and so he informed the British Agent of the facts and asked for help. Meanwhile he wrote a letter to Ibn Sa'ūd on the 1st June 1920, informing him of what Ibn Diwaish and the Ikhwān had done in the Jaryah incident, and reminding him of the close relationship between the two houses of Āl-Ṣabāḥ and Āl-Sa'ūd, connected as they were by family and religious ties. The gist of the letter is contained in the following question:-

"In the view of brotherhood of old alliance between us I report occurrence to you and feel sure that it will displease you even more than me, if you once adopt the real facts and are not deceived by false evidence. My request is that you will order Faisal el-Diwaish to give back property, and make restitution for men. If he will not obey you, I cannot excuse you and must appeal to arms."<sup>(63)</sup>

When the messengers delivered this letter to Ibn Sa'ūd, he read it then stated that he absolutely denied Sālim's accusation. However, he wrote a letter to Sheikh Sālim which was entrusted to the messenger. In his letter to Sālim he said:

"You, of course, realise that these unfortunate matters which have already happened and the consequent disputes and struggles about

boundaries and subjects have not been started by me at all. You alone have been the cause, let every one remain within his own boundaries. You know that from olden time Āl-Sa'ūd and Āl-Şabāh never have they said 'this is our boundary, these are our subjects'.

The Āl-Şabāh confined themselves to Kuwait while the Al-Sa'ud looked after their own affairs, neither party having any doubt or difficulty. In the past when misfortune came upon Nejd it was split up into two parts, one going to the Turks and 'Ajmān dominated Hasa and the other under Bēn Rashaid. In those days any one who found himself pressed upon too hardly or tyrannized over by any of these three took refuge in Kuwait, because it was all one "Tarifah" class. Things went on in this way till Muḥammad Ben Şabāh died. After Mubārak had succeeded to the principality of Kuwait. I was at Kuwait. He used to give "Zakāt" to those of the Northern and Southern Arabs who used to come down to him. They used to take refuge alternately with him, with Ben Rashaid and the Turks. When I occupied Hasa your father was still paying Rs600 to the Turks in place of the "Zakāt" of the 'Awāzim tribe. He used to take the "Zakāt" from the Mutair, Subai'a and others, who used to come down to him and we did not object owing to close friendship existing between us.

I shall know how to plead by cause, I wish to assure you that all I have said in the beginning of this letter is correct and true, and I am fully confident that in future we shall have no trouble with each other, and everything will be satisfactorily arranged. You may rest assured that I am quite willing to meet your wishes in every way. As regards restitution of camels and horses, I have sent out men to go round and collect them. As soon as the points at variance are settled everything will be available, both what belongs to you and out of our own property. I am sending with your deputation my uncle Nāsir Bin

Sa'ūd in the hope of gaining your goodwill as I am anxious to come to an agreement.

I advise you to accept my ultimatum and sign the attached paper, otherwise I shall attack you when you next annoy me."<sup>(64)</sup>

When the deputation, with Nasir al-Sa'ūd, Ibn Sa'ūd's delegate, reached Kuwait in July, they handed the letter to Sheikh Sālim. After reading the letter, Sālim refused to sign the paper which Ibn Sa'ūd had sent as the basis for an agreement between them. He did, however, write a friendly letter to Ibn Sa'ūd in which he informed him of his refusal to sign but said that, like Ibn Sa'ūd, he also wished for a resumption of the former friendship of their two houses. He urged him to order restitution to be made for the Jaryah affairs, but made no reference to a frontier between them.<sup>(65)</sup> He said in his letter:-

"Regarding the signing of the paper; I must ask you to think the matter over carefully and I am sure you will see the right and benefit of remaining as we were in the past. I trust you will abandon the things which annoy me and please our enemies, and please God, you will only see a good result which will reference to Diwaish, as I told you before, I cannot take action against him without letting you know, as he is of no importance, though, by the grace of God, I could in every way. I have received the camels, riding camel and horse, which you sent with the envoys, and I trust you will now order the return of the rest of the property. I hope you will not make any objection to this, as it is a thing for which I can not hold you excused."<sup>(66)</sup>

On receiving this letter, Ibn Sa'ūd realized that the time had come for him to initiate hostilities against Sheikh Sālim, since it was obvious that the latter's obstinacy would thwart any attempt at reaching a negotiated settlement. Accordingly, he urged Ibn Shuqair to continue to erect houses at Jarayah and ordered Faisal-el-Diwaish to proceed towards

Subaihiya. The latter move was intended on the one hand to provoke the Kuwaiti tribes and on the other to bring forces into a suitable position from landing an attack on Jaryah.

Sheikh Sālim now found himself in a critical position as Ibn Sa'ūd started to urge his enemies to take action against him. He eventually decided that a solution could only be reached with the aid of the British Government, which enjoyed friendly relations with both sides. Hence he asked Major Moore if his Government could find a solution, reminding him that the British Government promised to give him every possible help, in accordance with the agreement of 1899.<sup>(67)</sup> Meanwhile, he rested his case on the fact that, according to the Anglo-Turkish agreement of 1913, the disputed territory was his. Unfortunately for Sālim, the British Government now informed him that the Anglo-Turkish agreement had been superseded by the agreement that the British had signed with Ibn Sa'ūd on the 26th December 1915 at Darain. From that date the Anglo-Turkish agreement had ceased to be in force.<sup>(68)</sup>

This information came as a bitter blow to Sālim, whose position was still critical. Later, however, Britain intervened to calm the situation by negotiating with each of them separately. After a long correspondence between Ibn Sa'ūd, Sheikh Sālim and Sir Arnold Wilson, the Civil Commissioner in Baghdād, a settlement was reached on the basis of a British agreement to appoint an arbitrator. In agreeing to do this Britain made a condition that Ibn Sa'ūd and Sālim each gave a written assurance beforehand that he and his people would abide by the arbitrator's decision, which would be given at the end of August. In connection with the settlement made before a real peace was concluded, Sheikh Sālim mentioned the following grievances which he had:-

- (1) The Jaryah affairs, and the question of restitution for lives and property lost.

- (2) Ibn Sa'ūd's action in collecting "Zakāt" from the 'Awāzim.  
 (3) The raids Bin Sa'ūd's tribes made on his territory. (69)

As we mentioned above, correspondence passed to and fro between the British Government, Ibn Sa'ūd and Sālīm. A telegram dated 2nd September reached the Civil Commissioner at Baghdād from the Political Resident in Bushire, stating as follows:

"As the boundary dispute originated in Jaryah affairs I think this will have to be included in the arbitration. In regard to (2) "Zakāt", I believe the custom is for Bedouin tribes to pay "Zakāt" to someone who is powerful enough to levy it, or has sufficient prestige to secure its payment without having recourse to force. If this is correct, I do not see how the question of "Zakat" can be included in the Arbitration.

As regards (3), raids and counter-raids are the order of the day in Arabia, and I do not see how any arbitration can stop them." (70)

After receiving this telegram the Civil Commissioner in Baghdād instructed the British Agent in Kuwait to inform Sheikh Sālīm of the views of the Resident at Bushire concerning the difficulties involved in collecting the "Zakāt" from the tribes, and particularly of the fact that the British could not guarantee his security in this matter. On the 8th September, the British Agent passed on this information to Sheikh Sālīm.

On the 17th September, Sheikh Sālīm wrote a letter to the British Agent concerning his disputes with Ibn Sa'ūd. In his letter he stated that he agreed with the British Government's view that it was impossible to include the question of "Zakāt" in the agenda for the arbitration. (71)

Sheikh Sālīm enclosed in his letter the agreement comprising four Appendices:-

(1) He agreed, on behalf of himself and on behalf of his own people that he would abide by the decision of the arbitrator, when the British Government would appoint to decide upon the frontier now at issue between Ibn Sa'ūd and himself, and on any other question relating to it, and he promised to give effect there to as long as he lived. In the meantime, he would do

all in his power to keep the peace, and would neither commit nor countenance any sort of aggression against Ibn Sa'ūd or his followers. (72)

(2) The second Appendix which dealt with the question of Sālīm's boundaries stated that they were as follows: on the south - Jazairat el-'Amāyir, i.e. the island of Musallamīyah and Jinnah. From the coast, west of the island of Jinnah, the line extends westwards to the village of 'Anata, and from there through the wells of Warbah, Hābah and Qar'ah to Sāfa, and thence north-west to Hāfar-al-Bātin. From there the line runs north-east, passes to the south of the wells of Safwān, Jabal Sanām and Umm Qasar and Bubiyan and to the island of Warbah and the sea. The grounds on which he based his claim were as follows:- Jazairat-el-'Amāyir had for years been frequented by Kuwaiti pearl divers, and might well be described as their port. It had been counted as belonging to the ruler of Kuwait up to the year 1902, when the Turks placed a military detachment there.

Regarding 'Anata, he said "Its inhabitants always resort to Kuwait, they engage in pearl-diving with the people of Kuwait, and all their work is connected with Kuwait. The tribes which drink from the wells of Warbah, Hābah and all the others mentioned above want me, and not Ibn Sa'ūd. Until the present dispute arose between Ibn Sa'ūd and myself and trade was stopped, caravans from Kuwait were under my protection until they arrived at these wells. At the time when the dispute arose between ourselves and the Turkish Government; when the latter were still in Mesopotamia and Hasa, and the British Government intervened in a friendly manner regarding Kuwait, the above frontier-less Jazairat-el-'Amāyir, in which there was a Turkish post was that allotted to Kuwait. Ibn Sa'ūd was in Nejd at the time and had not yet conquered Hasa, but he conquered it afterwards with our help, as is well known."

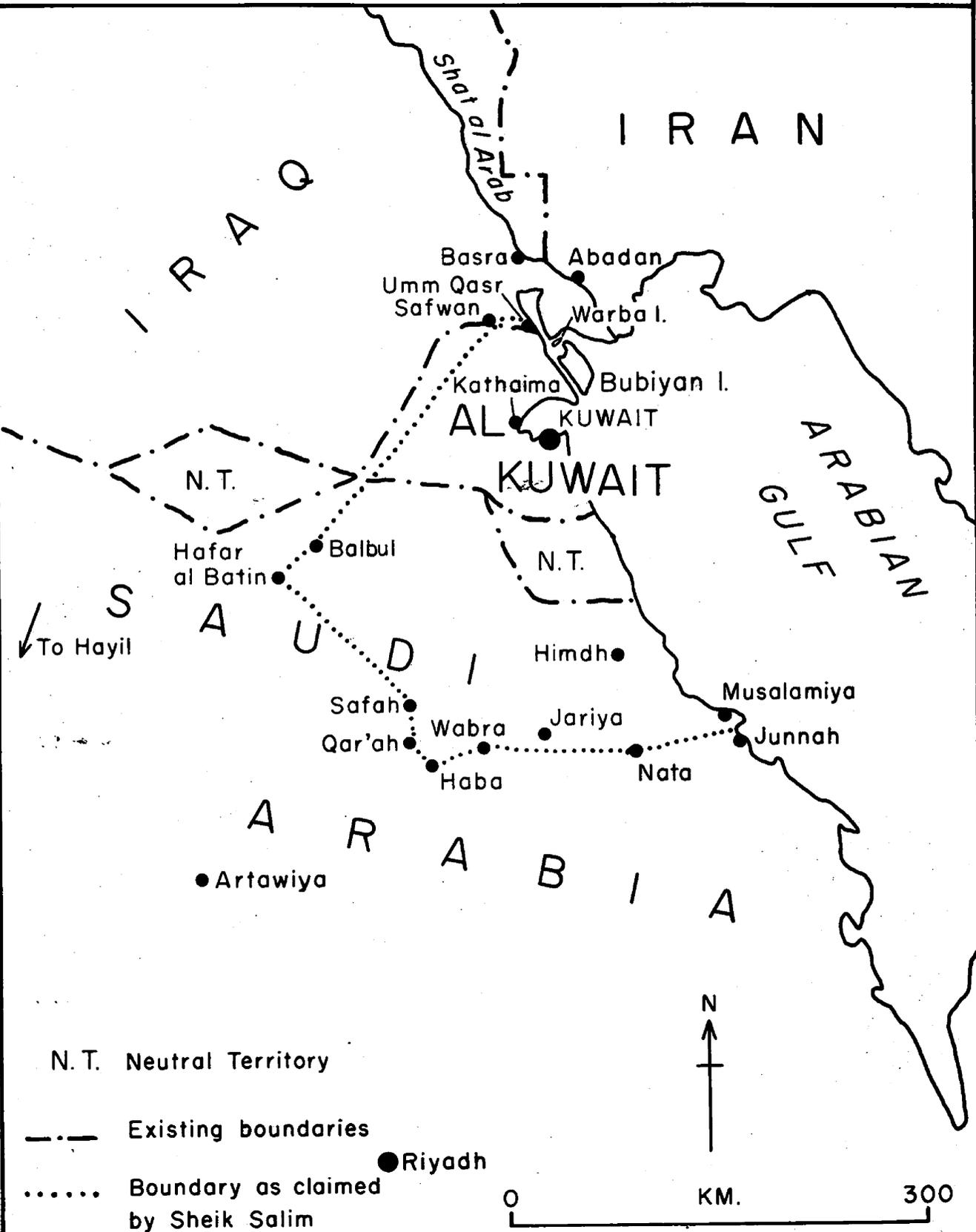
Sheikh Salim mentioned the correspondence which had passed between himself and Ibn Sa'ūd concerning the Hemdh raid of the 17th May 1920, in

which he asked Ibn Sa'ūd to order restitution to be made for the property which Diwaish and his followers had seized, and for the people whom they had killed without just cause. He added that, in reply, Ibn Sa'ūd had sent 165 camels and riding camel and a mare, and that at the same time he had prepared a document stipulating that if Sheikh Sālim signed it, he would return the rest of the property. Sheikh Sālim, however, refused to sign. In this he wrote out a draft for a treaty which he hoped to make with Ibn Sa'ūd. It was phrased as follows:

"We, 'Abdal-Azaiz Ibn Sa'ūd on the one part, and Sālim Ben Mubārak el-Ṣabāḥ on the other part, do hereby acknowledge and sign this treaty, and agree to the conditions set forth below:-

- (1) The boundary between the territories of Ibn Sa'ūd and Ibn Ṣabāḥ is that which has now been fixed by the arbitrator appointed for the purpose by the British Government.
- (2) Each of the two rulers accept full responsibility for the settled inhabitants, "Hadhar" living within his boundaries.
- (3) The Bedouin tribes are at liberty to give their "Zakāt" to whom they will, but the ruler, who takes it, accepts responsibility for that tribe until such time as it gives to enter the other ruler's territory, except with the latter's concurrence.
- (4) In the event of anything happening in the nature of raids or aggression at the hands of the subjects of one ruler, whether settled inhabitants or tribesmen, within the territory of the other ruler, the two rulers will settle the matters between themselves by means of friendly correspondence, and should any misunderstanding remain after such correspondence, they will refer the matters to Government, through the Political Agent at Bahrain and Kuwait.
- (5) There will be intercourse of trade between the people of Nejd and those of Kuwait. (73)

# MAP TO SHOW THE BOUNDARY CLAIMED BY SHEIKH SALIM

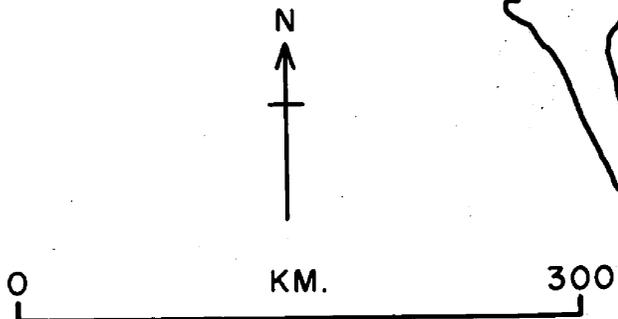


N.T. Neutral Territory

— · — Existing boundaries

..... Boundary as claimed by Sheik Salim

● Riyadh



These Appendices were submitted to the British Agent at Kuwait by Sheikh Sālīm, as a summary of his relationship with Ibn Sa'ūd. The guarantees required by the British Government before beginning arbitration were also given.

As for Ibn Sa'ūd, he wrote to the British Agent in Bahrain, informing him of his acceptance of British arbitration and of his willingness to give the required guarantee. He said in his letter of September, 1920:-

"I undertook beforehand to accept the following conditions:-

(1) That I should accept during the whole of my lifetime on behalf of myself and my people the decisions which will be passed by the arbitrator appointed by His Majesty's Government.

(2) As regards my informing you as a preliminary to negotiations of any marks, wells, mountains or a feature such as grazing grounds etc., my answer is that I do not recognize that Ibn Ṣabāḥ had any boundaries in the Hinterland, neither mountain nor land-marks nor do I recognize that he has any shore in the Hinterland or Kuwait, beyond the surrounding walls of Kuwait town and this has been the situation from the days of his forefather and mine. If Sālīm has any proofs to the contrary let him produce them in order that I may admit or deny same. Any desert Arab you will know these facts and will be willing to give evidence to the above effect.<sup>(74)</sup>

As regards the conditions that I should guarantee that His Majesty's Government undertake to settle the matter, namely that no hostile act should be committed or any kind of aggression against the territories of Ibn Ṣabāḥ by any of my troops or tribesmen (except I am attacked by the other party) I undertake on behalf of myself and all who are under me that this shall be complied with.

I would further inform your Honour that I have equipped a party under the command of one of my sons to guard my northern frontier, they have orders to resist any sort of aggression on the part of the tribesmen

of Ibn Ṣabāh; should any of the tribesmen of Ibn Ṣabāh commit a hostile act, and get punished for his action, I fear it may create some difficulty for His Majesty's Government. Hence if His Majesty's Government are willing to go guarantee for Ibn Ṣabāh's actions whether little or great (as they apparently are) from today I would request that Ibn Ṣabāh be ordered to call back his raiding party which is at Jahara under the command of Da'aij. If this is done I will also recall the party in charge of my official; I request your Honour to inform me of the result."<sup>(75)</sup>

Whilst the negotiations between Britain, Sheikh Sālim and Ibn Sa'ūd, concerning the boundary question, were in progress, orders were given by the latter to Ibn Shuqair to build a fort at Jaryah. Meanwhile Sheikh Sālim received local information that Faisal el-Diwaish was on his way to Subaihiya with a large force marching openly with torches. It was obvious that he had been ordered to do so by Ibn Sa'ūd. Sheikh Sālim now protested at these hostile moves, especially since Ibn Sa'ūd had ostensibly accepted the conditions for the arbitration, which were laid down by the British Government. Ibn Sa'ūd's moves caused great resentment in Kuwait. When the news of Ibn Diwaish's march reached Kuwait, the inhabitants became extremely nervous, expecting an attack in the near future, possibly on Jahara, though they continued also to fortify Kuwait town.

On the 8th October it was reported by one of Sālim's spies that a large force of Ikhwān had left Wafrah for Subaihiya on the previous evening. This information was confirmed on the following day by a member of a Bedouin patrol which had been captured by the Ikhwān near Wafrah two days earlier. He had been left for dead by the Ikhwān but, despite his wounds, managed to reach Kuwait. A report of the Ikhwān movement was sent to Sālim, who was at Jahara investigating a report of a hostile concentration at the Tawāl wells to the west, and he immediately began to make defensive preparations.

The village of Jahara, including its gardens, farms, a rough parallelogram whose maximum length is about 1,300 yards. To the south-east very close at hand, is the fort, which is about 80 yards square with walls fifteen feet high and four feet thick (at the base - the thickness decreases to about two feet at the top). The doors and corners have towers, which give a rudimentary flank defence. The village itself is intersected by numerous mud walls which give cover from view and, to some extent, from fire.

When the battle commenced at 6 a.m. on October 10th, the Kuwaiti force was holding the south-west face of the village and was flanked by Ibn Tawālah and his mounted Shummar to the right and by Da'aij's horsemen to the left. The Ikhwān concentrated their attack on the Jahara villagers and, after routing Ibn Tawālah, turned the position from the north-west. Da'aij, who was cut off by a body of mounted Ikhwān, found himself unable to render assistance to the Kuwaiti contingent, with the result that they were forced to retreat and to re-form to the right. By nine o'clock the entire village was in the hands of the Ikhwān, most of the Kuwaiti force and their supporters had scattered and Sheikh Sālim, with the other Sheikhs and about 600 men had taken refuge in the fort, where they remained despite offers of a peace settlement from Diwaish, and despite three determined attacks during the night.

At least 3,000, and possibly as many as 4,000, Ikhwān were involved in the battle, and of these about 800 were killed and another 800 so severely wounded. A Kuwaiti who visited Subaihiya stated that half of the latter died before reaching Subaihiya. Hence, on reaching Subaihiya their effective strength was hardly more than 1,500. However, they found 300 reinforcements awaiting them there, and were subsequently joined by 200 more.

The Kuwaiti force is said to have lost only about 200 killed, very few of whom were actual inhabitants of Kuwait. The great difference

in numbers killed is due to the fact that the Ikhwān attacked across a broad front and showed considerably less regard for their own safety than did the Kuwaitis.

The defeat at Jahara threw the inhabitants of Kuwait into a state of great confusion and wild rumours were rife. An attack on the town was expected at any moment and every available man was sent to man the walls. Meanwhile, on October 11th, Sheikh Ahmad al-Jābir despatched a relief force numbering about 600 to Jahara by sea. At the same time, Ibn Tawālah, who had fled to Kuwait on the previous day set off by road.

Before the reinforcements arrived, however, Ibn Diwaish sent an "Ālim" Ibn Sulymān with definite proposals for peace. Ibn Sulymān said that the Ikhwān had been surprised to hear the garrison of the fort praying like Muslims since they had been led to suppose that the Kuwaitis were infidels. If they were true Muslims, he added, there should be no difficulty in reaching a peaceful settlement. The Ikhwān demanded that Sālim put down the vices of smoking, drinking, gambling and prostitution in Kuwait, to which the latter replied that, though he too disapproved of these things and was prepared to prohibit his subjects from practising them openly, he could not be responsible for what Kuwaitis did in private, or for the actions of foreigners in Kuwait. After this the question of the camels and other loot arose, Sālim promising not to interfere with the Ikhwān if they left behind everything which they had taken. Ibn Sulymān replied that they were spoils of war and that there was, therefore, no obligation to leave them behind. He promised, however, to discuss the matter with Ibn Diwaish, to whose tent he now withdrew. Shortly afterwards the Ikhwān withdrew, taking everything with them and without any further fighting. On the following day they reached Subaihiya.

On the 14th October, Ibn Diwaish sent a letter to Sālim asking that Hilāl al-Mutairi, one of Kuwait's leading merchants, should be sent

to Subaihiya to discuss a peace settlement. Sālim refused, insisting that, if there were to be any discussions, a member of the Diwaish family should be sent to Kuwait. On the 18th October, Diwaish sent envoys to Kuwait to discuss terms for a settlement of the dispute. Their terms leaked out before the official discussions took place, and it was known that they would be quite unacceptable to Sālim, since what they amounted to was a demand that Kuwait should become Ikhwān forthwith. At this point there seemed to be no alternative to war, and an attack on Kuwait was thought to be imminent. A representative of Sālim who had visited Subaihiya estimated the effective strength of the Ikhwān at 500 horse and at least 3,000 foot. Large reinforcements were said to be coming.

There seemed little that anyone could do now. Ibn Sa'ud was too far away to intervene even if Ibn Diwaish had acted contrary to his wishes. Jahara had been evacuated and Kuwait was virtually under siege on the land side. The Kuwaitis were nervous, expecting an attack and wondering how the Bedouin within their walls would react. They were also suspicious of the Nejdīs, and there was a certain amount of bitterness towards the British, who were blamed for honouring Ibn Sa'ūd and for supplying him with money and with arms which he was using against Kuwait. There was also constant questioning as to when the British arbitration over the boundary question, in which the Kuwaitis saw their best chance of peace with Ibn Sa'ūd, would take place. (76)

On the 24th October, Sheikh Sālim met the delegates from Ibn Diwaish. The meeting was attended by the British Agent in Kuwait, Major Moore, who warned the Ikhwān that Britain was prepared to intervene to protect Kuwait for as long as Sheikh Sālim adhered to the agreement of 1899. He added that, since the British Government had recently signed an agreement with Ibn Sa'ūd, one of the terms of which was that the latter should undertake not to commit any hostile act against Kuwait, it was clear that the

action taken by the Ikhwān was contrary to Ibn Sa'ūd's wishes and orders. He requested the delegates to tell their followers to withdraw from Subaihiya unless they wished to be exposed to harrassment by British aircraft.

On the following day the delegates left Kuwait for Subaihiya, accompanied by a representative of Sheikh Sālim. The latter handed a letter to Ibn Diwaish from Sheikh Sālim in which the demands of the Ikhwān were refused. On the 28th October the representative returned to Kuwait, bringing a letter from Faisal el-Diwaish. The letter said that Faisal had believed the promises which Sheikh Sālim and Ibn Sulymān had made at Jahara. He had, therefore, not taken any hostile action, and he had even tried to restrain Ibn Sa'ūd's forces. However, Faisal went on to say that he now saw how Sheikh Sālim had deceived him and had not kept his promise. For this reason the truce was over.

The carrier who brought the letter said that when he left Subaihiya, the Ikhwān had been preparing to leave on the 26th for Al-Safa, where they expected to receive supplies and ammunition. This report was correct in that the Ikhwān did move on to al-Safa. It is probable that the presence of British ships and planes in Kuwait influenced Faisal in his withdrawal. (77)

On the 30th October, the High Commissioner, Sir Percy Cox, made it clear to Sheikh Sālim that he considered it a matter of urgency that further bloodshed be prevented until a settlement could be reached between the Sheikh and Ibn Sa'ūd. He hinted further that the wells at Subaihiya were to be left alone by both sides or the R.A.F. would intervene. This message was also conveyed to Ibn Sa'ūd by way of Bahrain.

In February 1921, Sheikh Khaz'al Khān sent his eldest son Qāsib and Sheikh Sālim's nephew, Sheikh Ahmad, to Nejd to try and arrange a truce. They reached Ibn Sa'ūd's camp at al-Khaf, north of Riyādh on the 2nd March, and started back for Hasa on the 5th March. On the 4th March news of Sheikh Sālim's death reached them. He had been taken ill on the 23rd February at Jahara and had died on the 27th.

Before news arrived, Ibn Sa'ūd said that he felt nothing but friendship towards the Kuwaiti people and the Ṣabāḥ family, with the exception of Sālim. Sālim had brought all his recent troubles on himself by declaring war on the Mutair. Ibn Sa'ūd desired nothing more than peace between Nejd and Kuwait, but Sālim was a great obstacle to his achieving this end. He thought peace possible, however, if Ahmad el-Jābir would act for Sālim in all dealings with Ibn Sa'ūd.

Ibn Sa'ūd showed Ahmad el-Jābir a document concerning the frontier of Kuwait which he said he would recognise at once. In this document "Maqt'a" stream, which flows into the Arabian Gulf seventy-five miles south-east of Kuwait, formed part of the boundary lines, but the extent of the boundary line to the west is not known.

On receiving news of Sālim's death Ibn Sa'ūd tore up the paper and said that the two houses of Sa'ūd and Ṣabāḥ were once again united in perfect friendship and that there was no longer any necessity for a boundary between them. Sheikh Ahmad agreed and said that he was, so to speak, Ibn Sa'ūd's son. (78)

Sheikh Ahmad arrived in Kuwait on the 24th March and was given a tremendous reception. He was accepted as Sālim's successor by the Ṣabāḥ family on the same day, and on the 25th March he summoned a meeting of the notables of the town, who also accepted him. Peace now returned to Kuwait and relations with Riyādh took a distinct turn for the better.

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76. A Report from British Political Agent at Kuwait to Civil Commissioner at Baghdād, 16th October 1920, Jaryah Affairs, R/15/1/53/52, India Office, and also  
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## C O N C L U S I O N

Although Kuwait was nominally an independent principality, the Turks exercised considerable influence there, especially after Mubārak assumed power in 1896, through the assassination of his brothers.

For the first three years of his rule the Sublime Porte asserted a shadowy suzerainty over the area, but it was Mubārak's aim to preserve Kuwait's independence from both the Turks and from the claims of his dispossessed nephews. This brought him into conflict with the Turkish authorities at Baṣra on the one hand and with Ibn Rashaid, Emir of Hail, on the other, as he gave asylum to the Wahābi supporters of Ibn Sa'ūd whom Ibn Rashaid had put to flight from Nejd.

When Hamdi Pasha became the Wali of Baṣra he tried to induce the Porte to take action against Mubārak and in addition supported Mubārak's nephews with both arms and men for their attacks on Kuwait. Under this pressure Mubārak appealed for British protection as a way of severing his last ties with the Ottoman Empire.

It was only after a careful study of the strategic situation of Kuwait and her possible use as a base for British interests in the Gulf that protection was granted. The main factor influencing Britain in this decision was the Berlin-Baghdād Railway project. As a result of this then Britain signed a secret agreement with Mubārak in 1899 that he should not cede, sell, lease or contract with any foreign power except Britain.

The Turks tried to reassert their control of Kuwait only to meet with stiff opposition from Mubārak, who remained true to the secret agreement. Things became particularly difficult after a German company received a concession from the Porte for a railway. The mission sent to

Kuwait to offer a concession for its terminus and a port were rejected by Mubārak, and the Porte was persuaded by the Germans to send an expedition to Kuwait to enforce their authority. Only the presence of a British gunboat in the Arabian Gulf convinced them to hold back.

As a man with a clear perception of the realities of power Mubārak saw the need to come to terms with both the British and the Turks, and he therefore decided to negotiate with each of them separately. Thus, although he had a secret agreement with the British, he denied it and declared that he was subject only to the Sublime Porte. On the other hand, he publicly renounced his allegiance to the Sultān and permitted a British agent to reside in Kuwait and a British Post Office to be established.

Thus the British Government gained their first foothold in Turkish territory through the consent of Skeikh Mubārak. The Turks protested against British interference and tried to maintain their position. Britain now had to decide whether advantage lay in strengthening or weakening the Turkish authorities in Mesopotamia and Kuwait, and finally in 1913, after some hesitation, entered into an agreement with the Turks concerning the affairs of Arabia, including Kuwait. However, the agreement was never ratified.

In 1914 Turkey entered World War I on the side of the Central Powers. Turks thus became the allies of Britain's rivals in the area and the option of agreement with Turkey to secure British interests was no longer open. Britain was thus obliged to choose alliance with local leadership, and after contact had been made with Kuwait by the British Political Resident at Bushire, Great Britain declared Kuwait to be an independent principality under British protection. At the same time she declared protection over the Sheikh of Muhammara.

This was in direct contradiction to Mubārak's previously declared

policy of co-operation with Turkey. To preserve Kuwaiti independence from the Turks he had paid the price of losing some of that same independence to the British. He thus for a while lost control over his people who revolted against his pro-British policy, but subsequently managed to overcome the revolutionaries.

In 1915 Mubārak died and his death at such an early stage in the war was a severe blow to Britain. He was succeeded by his son Jabir, who himself only ruled one year before he died, to be replaced by his brother Sālim. Sālim was a conservative, whose dislike of change prevented him fully understanding the situation, and caused him to lose much of the power and influence previously accruing to his father.

During the war Sālim secretly gave support by supplying food, to the Turks, and as a result, when the British discovered this, a blockade was thrown around Kuwait. Sheikh Sālim initially resisted this measure, but finally had to submit to it and the British set up a Blockade Office and appointed an official to supervise all trade to or from Kuwait.

This blockade made the situation in Kuwait critical. Anglo-Kuwaiti relations became very cool and strained with the British Government's insistence on this policy, and were worsened when Sālim received a long letter from Britain threatening him should he impede its implementation. The blockade was accepted only with very bad grace by Kuwait.

The latter period of Sheikh Sālim's reign was marked by increasingly tense relations with Ibn Sa'ūd, over questions of boundaries and tribal affairs. This tension ultimately resulted in war, for which Kuwait had to pay dearly. The basis of disagreement was the boundaries which Sālim tried to fix between Kuwait and Hasa. A number of Kuwaiti tribes had already settled in this area for grazing their herds. Ibn Sa'ūd sent a protest and asked that plans to fix the boundaries on this basis should not continue. While Ibn Sa'ūd based his claims on the

unwritten law of the desert and tribal power, Sālim based his on a document in the more modern manner of settled peoples.

The British intervened as arbitrators in the dispute, in an attempt to put an end to conflict. They negotiated with both contenders separately, but this did not help as Ibn Sa'ūd did not honour his undertaking to Britain that he would end hostilities. Instead he declared war on Kuwait and sent the Ikhwān to beseige Jahra.

At Jahra a battle took place, and both sides suffered heavy losses. The Ikhwān withdrew from the area when Britain threatened them with aerial harrassment. Sheikh Khaz'al of Muhammara then intervened sending his son Qasib and Sheikh Ahmed al Jābir to Nejd to try to bring about a settlement.

While negotiations were under way news reached the delegates that Sālim had died. Ibn Sa'ūd immediately concluded peace with Kuwait and recognised Sheikh Ahmed as successor to Sālim. Bonds of friendship between the two families were renewed as before.

During Sheikh Sālim's rule, from 1917-1921 therefore, Kuwait had passed through a very critical period and found herself in some difficulty over her relations with both Britain and Sa'udi Arabia.

APPENDIX ONE

Exclusive Agreement: The Kuwaiti sheikh and Britain 23 January 1899.

Translation of Arabic Bond. <sup>(1)</sup>

Praise be to God alone (lit. in the name of God Almighty) ("Bissim Illah Ta'alah Shanuho".)

The object of writing this lawful and honourable bond is that it is hereby covenanted and agreed between Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm John Meade, I.S.C., Her Britannic Majesty's Political Resident, on behalf of the British Government on the one part, and Sheikh Mubārak-bin-Sheikh Ṣabāḥ, Sheikh of Kuwait, on the other part, that the said Sheikh Mubārak-bin-Sheikh Ṣabāḥ of his own free will and desire does hereby pledge and bind himself, his heirs and successors not to receive the Agent or Representative of any power or government in Kuwait, or any other place within the limits of his territory, without the previous sanction of the British Government, and further binds himself, his heirs and successors not to cede, sell, lease, mortgage, or give for occupation or for any other purpose any portion of his territory to the government or subjects of any other power without the previous consent of Her Majesty's Government for these purposes. This engagement is also to extend to any portion of the territory of the said Sheikh Mubārak, which may now be in the possession of the subjects of any other government.

In token of the conclusion of this lawful and honourable bond, Lieutenant-Colonel Malcolm John Meade, I.S.C., Her Britannic Majesty's Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, and Sheikh Mubārak-bin-Sheikh Ṣabāḥ, the former on behalf of the British Government and the latter on behalf of himself, his heirs and successors do each, in the presence

of witnesses, affix their signatures on this, the tenth day of Ramazan 1316, corresponding with the twenty-third day of January 1899.

(sgd) M.J. Meade,

Political Resident in the Persian Gulf.

(sgd) Mubārak-Al-Ṣabāḥ (L.S.)

Witnesses:-

(sgd) E. Wickham Hore,  
Captain, I.M.S.

(sgd) J. Calcott Gaskin

(sgd) Muhammad Rahim bin Abdul nebi Saffer (L.S.)

Footnote

- (1) C.U. Aitcheson, "Collection of Treaties etc.," Volume XII, Calcutta, 1893, p. 262

APPENDIX TWOBritish Political Representation in the Persian Gulf:- (1890-1921)<sup>(1)</sup>

## BUSHIRE:

1. Col. Talbot, March 1891-1893
2. Captain Godfrey (in temporary charge)
3. Major H. Sadler (June and July 1893)
4. M. A. Crawford (July-December 1893)
5. Major H. Sadler, December 1893-January 1894
6. Col. Wilson, 1894-97
7. Lieut.-Col. Meade, 1897-1900
8. Lieut.-Col. Kemball, 1900-1904

## MUSQAT:

1. Major Yate, 16 December 1889-March 1890
2. Lieut.-Col. Mockler, December 1890-October 1891
3. Major Sadler, November 1892-April 1895.
4. Captain J.F. Whyte, May 1895-November 1895
5. Major Sadler, November 1895-1896
6. Captain F.A. Beville, April 1896-June 1897
7. Major Fagan, September 1892-September 1899
8. Major P. Cox, October 1899-January 1904
9. Major W.G. Gray, 1904-1908
10. R.E. Holland, 1908-1910
11. Major S.G. Knox, 1911-1913
12. Lieut.-Col. R.A.E. Benn, 1913

## BAHRAIN:

1. Haji Muhammad Amin, March 1892–November 1893
2. Agha Muhammad Rahim, November 1893–February 1900
3. Mr. J.C. Gaskin, February 1900–October 1904
4. Captain F.B. Prideaux, 1904–1909
5. Captain C.H. Mackenzie, 1909–1911
6. Major S.G. Knox, 1911
7. Captain D.L.R. Lorimer, 1911–1913
8. Major A.P. Trevor, 1913

## BASRA:

1. Lieut. S.G. Knox, 1894–1895
2. Captain J.F. Whyte, 1895–1897
3. Major C.G.F. Fagan, 1897
4. Captain I.A. Forbes, 1897–1898
5. Captain Ramsay, 1898
6. A.C. Wratislaw, 1898–1903, H.M. Consul.
7. F.E. Crow, 1903–1916

## THE POLITICAL RESIDENT AT BAGHDĀD:

1. Col. Mckler, November 1891–April 1897
2. Major P.J. Melvill, April 1897–March 1899
3. Lieut-Col. W. Loch, 1897–1898
4. Major P.J. Melvill, 1897–1899
5. Lieut-Col. W. Loch, 1899
6. Melvill, 1899–1902
7. Col. L.S. Newmarch, 1902–1906
8. Major J. Ramsay, 1906–1909
9. J.G. Lorimer, 1909–1914

## KUWAIT:

1. Haji Ali Bin-Ghulam Riza, August 1899-August 1904
2. Major S.G. Knox, 1904-1908
3. Captain W.H.I. Shakespear, 1909-1915
4. Major W.G. Grey, 1915-1917
5. Captain Hamilton, 1917-March 1918
6. Captain W. Loch, March 1918-August 1918
7. Colonel MacCullum August 1918-1920
8. Major Nore, 1920 +

+ Appointment continuing past 1920

Footnote

- (1) Lorimer Gazetteer, Persian Gulf, Vol. II (Historical) and also Local Staff of the Political Agency, Kuwait, R/15/4/1/21, India Office Library.

APPENDIX THREE

The United Kingdom's recognition of Kuwait as an Independent State under British Protection. 3 November 1914.

In continuation of the previous letter<sup>(1)</sup> intimating the outbreak of war between the British Government and Turkey, I am ordered by the British Government to convey to Your Excellency gratitude for your loyalty and your offer of assistance, and request you to attack Umm Qasr, Safwān and Bubiyan and to occupy them. You should endeavour, afterwards, in co-operation with Sheikh Khaz'al Khān, Emir Ibn Sa'ūd and other reliable Sheikhs to liberate Baṣra from Turkish possession. Should this prove to be beyond your ability, you should make arrangements, if possible, to prevent Turkish reinforcements from reaching Baṣra or even Qurnah until the arrival of the British troops whom we shall send, please God, as soon as possible. I also hope that two of our men-of-war will reach Baṣra before the arrival of your troops there. And though it should be your highest aim, in this connection, to liberate Baṣra and its people from Turkish rule, still we request that you should use your utmost endeavour in preventing troops and others from plundering the merchandise belonging to British merchants in Baṣra and its dependencies, to protect the European residents of Baṣra and to safeguard them from loss and oppression. In return for your valuable assistance in this important matter, I am ordered by the British Government to promise to your Excellency that if we succeed therein - and we shall succeed therein, please God - we will not return Baṣra to the Turkish Government and we will not surrender it back to them at all. Furthermore I make to you on behalf of the British Government certain promises concerning your Excellency personally. Viz:-

(1) That your gardens which are now in your possession, viz., the date gardens situated between Fāo and Qurnah shall remain in your possession

and in possession of your descendants without being subject to the payment of revenue or taxes.

(2) That if you attack Safwān, Umm Qasr and Bubiyan and occupy them, the British Government will protect you from any consequences arising from that action. (2)

#### Footnotes

1. The British Political Resident in the Persian Gulf addressed a note to Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait, concerning the above declaration.
2. Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East. "A Documentary Record, 1914-1956" by J.C. Hurewitz, Vol. II, p. 4

APPENDIX FOUR

British Treaty with Ibn Sa'ūd, 26 December 1915. "Ratified by the Viceroy of India simla, 18 July 1916"

- (1) The British Government do acknowledge and admit that Najd, Al Hasa, Qatif and Jubail, and their dependencies and territories, which will be discussed and determined hereafter and their ports on the shores of the Arabian Gulf are the countries of Ibn Sa'ūd and of his fathers before him, and do hereby recognise the said Ibn Sa'ūd as the Independent Ruler thereof and absolute Chief of their tribes, and after him his sons and descendants, by inheritance; but the selection of the individual shall be in accordance with the nomination "by the living Ruler" of his successor; but with the proviso that he shall not be a person antagonistic to the British Government in any respect; such as for example in regard to the terms mentioned in this Treaty.
- (2) In the event of aggression by any Foreign power on the territories of the countries of the said Ibn Sa'ūd and his descendants without reference to the British government and without giving her an opportunity of communicating with Ben Sa'ūd and composing the matter, the British Government will aid Ben Sa'ūd to such extent and such a manner as the British Government after consulting Ibn Sa'ūd may consider most effective for protecting his interest and countries.
- (3) Ibn Sa'ūd hereby agrees and promises to refrain from entering into any correspondence, agreement or treaty with any Foreign power or nation and further to give immediate notice to the Political authorities of the British government of any attempt on the part of any other power to interfere with the above territories.
- (4) Ben Sa'ūd hereby undertakes that he will absolutely not cede, sell,

mortgage, lease or otherwise dispose of the above territories or any part of them, or grant concessions within those territories to any foreign power or to the subjects of any foreign power without the consent of the British Government. And that he will follow her advice unreservedly provided that it be not damaging to his own interest.

- (5) Ben Sa'ūd hereby undertakes to keep open within his territories the roads leading to the Holy Places and to protect pilgrims on their passage to and from the Holy Places.
- (6) Ibn Sa'ūd undertakes as his father did before him to refrain from all aggression on, or interference with the territories of Kuwait, Bahrain, and of the sheikhs of Qatar and the Oman coast, who are under the protection of the British Government, and who have a treaty relations with the said government; and the limits of their territories shall hereafter be determined.
- (7) The British Government and Ibn Sa'ūd agree to conclude a further detailed treaty in regard to matters concerning the two parties.<sup>(1)</sup>

Footnote

- (1) Hurewiz, Vol. II, pp. 17-18

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