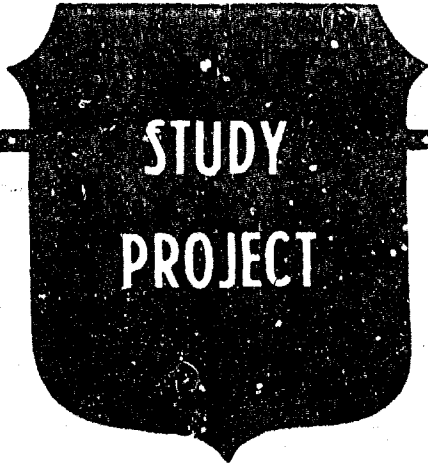


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SECURITY AND DEFENSE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

BY

COLONEL AWWAD DIAB MAYTAH, JORDAN ARMY

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The world is now aware that the question of Palestine is the core of the Arab-Israeli conflict and that the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people must be respected. The problem can be solved by achieving a comprehensive and just peace settlement which ensures the legitimate rights of Palestinian people, guarantees security and stability in the Middle East region and enhances international peace and security by trade the land with the peace.

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SECURITY AND DEFENSE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

AN INDIVIDUAL STUDY PROJECT

by

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1 March 1990

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Few regions of the world provoke more interest, controversy, or international crises than the Middle East. It has been an important arena of the world events from the beginning of written history.

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# SECURITY AND DEFENSE OF THE MIDDLE EAST

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The term Middle East is of 20th century origin, having been coined in 1902 to refer to the general area between Arabia and India. It is an example of geographical references with political overtones that have often been derived from the western view of the world with Europe as the center. The area to the east of Europe was thus logically regarded as the east and political issues relevant to it were part of the "eastern question." In the 19th century, when West Europe became concerned with the affairs of Asia in more substantial way the area was viewed as the Far East. The term Near East had already been used first to refer to South East Europe, then under the Ottoman Empire in Asia and Africa.

Beginning in World War II, this term became to be replaced by Middle East, though some still use the older phrase, and some non-western countries often prefer the term South West Asia. The definition of Middle East has been elastic. Sometimes it has been used for a large area, spanning three continents and largely dominated by Islamic culture, stretching from North Africa to Central Asia, the Horn of Africa and Pakistan; but the term is most familiarly used to depict the triangle from the Nile Valley to the Moslem area of Central Asia to the Persian Gulf, an area containing about 120 million people and lands of Egypt, the Fertile Crescent (which now includes the countries, Jordan, Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Israel), Iran, Saudi Arabia and Persian Gulf countries.

The present map of much of the area dates from the breakup of the Ottoman Empire after World War I, when new states were constituted under the League of Nations mandates administered by France and Britain. The Middle East, with



its geographic setting between the land masses of Europe, Africa and Asia, the crossroads of the world, thereby engendering trade and a mixture of people and cultures, but also leading to continual conflict and waves of invasion. The Middle East in whole or in part has been subjected to the control of a variety of rulers throughout the history up to the Turks in the 20th century.

The strategic importance of the area has long been recognized. Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the Middle East to block British control of India. In turn, Britain supported the Ottoman Empire, which lasted until 1918, to prevent Russian expansion southward. Germany before World War I competed with other powers at the time to obtain a foothold in the area. In the post-World War II era the vital importance of the area has been enhanced by the western dependence on the area for oil. Two-thirds of the world's known oil reserves lie in the area. The borders of a number of Middle East states were shaped in the early 20th century by decisions of Britain and France and were more the result of British and French strategic interests than of local ethnic or religious factors. A number of boundaries are loosely defined or may not be fully accepted by other countries.

By the beginning of the 1980s, the inventory of Middle East problems, both internal and foreign, was far greater than the region could cope with itself, or than any single outside power could manage. No regional constellation of countries, nor the U.S. or the USSR alone could resolve the Arab-Israeli conflict, settle the Palestinians, end the Arab-Israeli conflict, terminate the strife in Lebanon, bring stability to the countries torn by civil war or improve economics and social conditions. These problems require insight, planning and understanding on a large scale, a scale that would require

cooperation among the nations of the Middle East as well as among the powers outside the region for whom the Middle East will be an area of vital importance during decades to come. In studying the Middle East, it is wise not to oversimplify a complex reality.

The states of the central Middle East were created in the World War I period by the colonial powers without regard for desires of the people of the area. This significantly divided the area and has set the people of the area against each other.

#### PURPOSE

This paper has been written to study the security of Middle East and provide an appreciation and analysis of the Arab historical process in the 20th century. This paper also illuminates the current conflicts in the region and provides an appreciation on regional events to the end of the century.

## CHAPTER II

### HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST (1850-1920) AN ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC FACTORS THAT INFLUENCED THE ARAB-RENAISSANCE AND THE ARAB WAR OF LIBERATION (1916-1918)

#### THE ARAB RENAISSANCE

After the decisive Battle of Marj Dabiq in north Syria in 1516, the Ottoman Sultan Salim "The Conqueror" crushed Mamluk power in Syria, and a year later in 1517, Cairo and Egypt surrendered to the Ottoman Turks. Thereafter, for 401 years (1517-1918) the Arab world remained under Turkish rule. It was not until June 1916 that the flag of the Arab War of Liberation was raised in Mecca by Sherif Hussein Ibn Ali, the Emir of Mecca and guardian of the Holy Places.

The first steps in the quest for Arab nationalism were launched by the members of the Literary Society, which was formed in Beirut in 1847 for the purpose of propagating the Arabic language. Arabia had witnessed the establishment of Wahabi power in the early 18th century and the conquest and occupation of Syria and of Arabia by Mehmet Ali the Albanian ruler of Egypt in 1818 and 1832, respectively. But these events had little impact on the dormant Arab national consciousness.

In 1832 Mehmet Ali was on the march again. In that year he completed the conquest of Syria, occupied Damascus, Homs and Aleppo, and decisively defeated a Turkish force which was attempting to bar his progress to Constantinople. The road to Constantinople lay open, but pressure from the great European powers and determined opposition by Lord Palmerston blocked Mehmet Ali's efforts to establish an Arab empire just as he was about to meet with success.

Although Mehmet Ali's spectacular military advance initially heralded promises of political opportunity and of emancipation to the oppressed peoples of Syria, later developments were to prove otherwise. In the words of the Arab historian, George Antonious, author of "The Arab Awakening":

Thus the ambitious plan of an Arab empire conceived by Mehmet Ali and nurtured by Ibrahim failed to find in Syria the sustenance it needed and was the more easily stifled by England's hostility. Its great weakness was that it was formed out of time, in advance of the birth of Arab national consciousness. It vanished with their retreat, not to be heard of again as a problem in world politics until the War of 1914. Then it emerged once more as the dream of one man and his son of Arab race this time, whose purpose was to be strengthened by the very forces that had been denied Mehmet Ali--the fire of Arab nationalism and the strong arm of England's backing.<sup>1</sup>

In 1876 an event of historical importance to the Arab world occurred. Abdul Hamid II was proclaimed Sultan on 31 August 1876, following the deposition of the unpopular monarch Abdul Aziz. Abdul Hamid II reigned for 33 years until 1909 when he was deposed in turn by the "Committee of Union and Progress," more popularly known as the "Young Turks."

Two events of major importance which occurred during Abdul Hamid's reign which were to have an important bearing on future Turco-Arab relations and on Turkey's entry into the War of 1914, were the construction of the Hejaz and Baghdad Railway and the launching of Germany's politico-economic and strategic policy of "Drang nach Osten--the drive to the East." The Hejaz Railway project, which envisaged the laying of a railway line from Damascus to Medina and on to Mecca, was a political masterstroke and won the Caliph plaudits from Moslems from all over the world. The work of construction, which was entrusted to German engineers, began in 1901. By the autumn of 1908 the line had been laid to Medina--a distance of about 900 miles.

Apart from the religious and political advantages which accrued, the strategic value of the Hejaz Railway could not be ignored. In one stroke the

railway reduced travel time between Damascus and Medina from 40 days by caravan, and 10 to 15 days by sea from Syria to the Hejaz, to a mere 5 days by train. Though initially the shortening of travel time was intended to accelerate the movement of Turkish troops to Arabia and the turbulent Yemen, the Hejaz Railway was eventually to act as a conduit for the rapid and convenient movement of political ideas, and for the conduct and coordination of military operations by the nascent Arab Liberation Movement.

The other factor of political importance was the birth of a new "Drang nach Osten" orientation in Germany's foreign policy. Economists and political thinkers had awakened interest in the possibilities of expanding Germany's political and economic influence in Asia Minor as a means of countering British influence in the region. In course of time, it was adopted as a basis of new policy which was to establish German ascendancy in Constantinople.

In autumn of 1898, Kaiser Wilhelm II arrived in Constantinople on a state visit to the Sultan, and in pursuance of Germany's "Drang nach Osten," succeeded in obtaining important concessions from the Sultan. The most important concession, which raised problems of a strategic, as well as political and economic nature, was the construction of the Baghdad Railway from Konia to its terminus on the Persian Gulf. It was a bold and ambitious Germanic scheme, pregnant with the promise of empire, and it represented a formidable challenge to British interests in the Persian Gulf.

#### THE YOUNG TURKS AND THE ARAB RENAISSANCE: 1908-1916

The 1908 Turkish revolution was the work of the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP), a secret association which the Young Turks had formed in Salonica, with the avowed object of overthrowing the Sultan's despotism. The Arab members of the CUP, who were mostly Arab officers, had participated in

the revolution as Ottoman citizens rather than as Arab nationalists. The artificial Turco-Arab honeymoon was destined, however, to be short-lived.

In September 1908, two events of importance occurred which were to have a direct bearing on the future prospects of the Arab Revolt. The first event was the appointment of Sherif Hussein Bin Ali by the CUP as the Grand Sherif and Emir of Mecca (or the Khadem al-Haramain al-Sherifain - the "Keeper of the Holy City" and the "Protector of the Holy Places"). The other event was the formal inauguration of the Hejaz Railway, which had been completed as far as Medina. Prior to his appointment as Grand Sherif, Sherif Hussein had been living in Constantinople for nearly 16 years as a "political captive" of the Sultan.

The suppression of the non-Turkish racial societies that followed had two immediate but far-reaching effects--the societies went underground and the CUP adopted the doctrine of Pan-Turanism, a movement of purely Turkish nationalism, and began to assert itself.

Apart from the serious political and social implications the Pan-Turkish movement had for the non-Turkish 70 percent of the population of the Ottoman Empire, the adoption of the doctrine greatly influenced Turkish strategic planning in World War I by focusing attention on the Caucasus region, at the expense of Arabia, Syria and Mesopotamia. This accelerated the collapse and eventual annihilation of the Turkish Armies in Palestine and Arabia.

Between the years of 1909 and 1914, in the sullen and discontented Arab provinces of the empire, four political societies were formed--two were public and two were secret. The two public societies were the "Al Muntada al-Adabi" in Constantinople in 1909 and the "Ottoman Decentralization Party," in Cairo in 1912. Two secret societies had also come into being. One was

Al-Qahtaniya, which was established towards the end of 1909. Its object was to promote turning the Ottoman Empire into a dual monarchy on the pattern of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Arab provinces were to form a single kingdom, which was in turn to form part of a Turco-Arab Empire, under the Ottoman Sultan in Constantinople. This policy stemmed from the belief that unity could be reached through separation, but on a more lasting and realistic basis. The leader of the society was none other than Major Aziz Ali al Masri, an officer of the Turkish Army who was destined to play an important role in the Arab revolt.

The other secret society was the Al-Fatat (The Young Arab Society), which was founded in Paris in 1911. Its founders were seven young Moslem Arabs who were studying in Paris. The objects of the society were to work for the independence of the Arab countries and their liberation from Turkish or any other alien domination. Al-Fatat proved to be the most effective society of its time and moved its center from Paris to Beirut in 1913, and later to Damascus in 1914, under the very nose of the Ottoman administration. Early in 1914, and following the dissolution of the Al-Qahtaniya, Major Aziz Ali al Masri formed a new society called Al-Ahd (The Covenant). It was not until 1915 that the Al-Ahd joined forces with its parallel civil organization--the Al-Fatat--to pool their resources to provoke the Arab Revolt. Aziz al Masri, who had resigned earlier in a formal protest against the patently anti-Arab policies adopted by the Young Turks, was arrested, court-martialled and thrown into prison in 1912, on the orders of his classmate at the Ottoman Academy in Constantinople, Jemal Pasha (Biyuk).

While the four Arab societies were working in their various ways towards the concept of Arab nationalism, Sherif Hussein Ibn Ali, now firmly entrenched as Sherif and Emir of Mecca, was actively planning the overthrow of Turkish

rule in the Hejaz and Arabia. In the absence of the central, unifying political and military leadership and the dynamic motive force provided by the Hashemites, the Arab Revolt could well have remained a mere pipe-dream in the patriotic but troubled hearts of Arab nationalists.

#### THE POLITICAL WEB: TURKISH TERROR AND ANGLO-FRENCH DUPLICITY

With the banning of Arab secret societies in 1914, Al-Fatat and Al-Ahd agreed to pool their resources and coordinate their political efforts, but they were forced underground. Matters were not helped by the appointment of Jemal Pasha (Biyuk), a member of the Young Turks triumvirate, as governor and commander-in-chief of Syria and Arabia. In the Hejaz, Sherif Hussein was resisting attempts by the CUP to absorb the Hejaz into Ottoman administration, stripping it of its provincial privileges and immunities. It was to clarify the policy and intentions of the Unionist Government towards the Emir of Mecca that Emir Abdullah, the second son of Sherif Hussein and member of the Parliament for the Hejaz in the Ottoman Council of State, undertook a journey to Constantinople. During Emir Abdullah's stopover in Cairo as a personal guest of the Khedive, in February 1914, he had his first meeting with Lord Kitchener, the British Agent for Egypt and Sudan. On being asked by the Emir as to what assistance could be expected from the British government in "case of need," Lord Kitchener replied: "that the traditional friendship between Great Britain and Turkey prevented His Majesty's Government from interfering in her internal affairs."<sup>2</sup> British interest in the Arab cause, however, revived on the declaration of war by Turkey in November 1914. (see Map 1)



THE MCMAHON CORRESPONDENCE: OCTOBER 1914-JUNE 1916

In November 1914 the Caliph-Sultan had proclaimed a jehad (Holy War) against the Entente powers and demanded Sherif Hussein do the same. With great dexterity and skill, Sherif Hussein managed to placate the Ottoman government by stating that a declaration on his behalf would merely result in a British naval blockade of the Hejaz.

In October 1914 Emir Abdullah, who was acting as his father's political adviser, received the first of a series of British notes inviting the Arabs to join the war on the side of Great Britain. Later, the secretive note-passing took the form of a convoluted and complex correspondence with Sir Henry McMahon, the Counsel-General,--turned-High-Commissioner (January 1915) in Egypt, which had been formally proclaimed a British protectorate in December 1914. The gist of the correspondence was that "Great Britain would help the Arabs in their fight for liberation until the evacuation by the Turks and Germans of the Arab countries had been completed."<sup>3</sup>

THE DAMASCUS PROTOCOL: MAY 1915

With the failure of the Turkish offensive against the Suez Canal conducted by Jemal Pasha (Kuchuk) in February 1915, Jemal Pasha (Biyuk) returned to Damascus a bitter and disillusioned man. As reports of anti-Turk underground nationalist activities gathered weight from March 1915 to May 1916, Jemal Pasha (Biyuk), who was destined to gain notoriety in Arab history as "The Butcher," ordered the public hanging of Arab nationalists, guilty or otherwise, in Damascus and Beirut. The brutal executions were the breaking point in the relations between the Arabs and Turks. Insofar as the Arab nationalists were concerned, it was the point of no return.

In the early winter of 1915, the Higher Committee of the Al-Fatat, in coordination with the Al-Ahd, had passed a resolution which stated that:

In consequence of Turkey's entry into the war, the fate of the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire is seriously imperilled and every effort is to be made to secure their liberation and independence. It being also resolved that, in the event of European designs appearing to materialize, the society should be bound to work on the side of Turkey in order to resist foreign penetration of whatever kind of form.<sup>4</sup>

These fears of British, French, Russian and Italian designs were shared by the Grand Sherif. An innate distrust of the European powers was apparent in the resolution.

In April 1915, Emir Feisal (the third son of Sherif Hussein) arrived in Constantinople. Though the Young Turks expressed sympathy for the Grand Sherif's predicament in the Hejaz, they all implied that the Sherif's endorsement of the fatwa (religious decree) for a jehad would simplify matters considerably, and suggested that his father give urgent consideration to their plea. On his return to Damascus on 23 May 1915, the Al-Fatat and Al-Ahd had drawn up a protocol defining the conditions under which the Arab leaders would be prepared to cooperate with Great Britain against Turkey. These conditions were:

"The recognition by Great Britain of the independence of the Arab countries lying within the following frontiers: (see Map 2)

North

o The line Mersin-Adana to parallel 37 North, and thence along the line Birejik-Urfa-Mardin-Midiat-Jazirat-Amadia, to the Persian frontier;

East

o The Persian frontier down to the Persian Gulf;

### South

o The Indian Ocean (with the exclusion of Aden), whose status was to be maintained;

### West

o The Red Sea and the Mediterranean Sea back to Mersin;

o The abolition of all exceptional privileges granted to foreigners under the Capitulations;

o The conclusion of a defensive alliance between Great Britain and the future Arab state; and

o The grant of economic preference to Great Britain."<sup>5</sup>

"Such were the conditions," observes George Antonious,

On which the Arab leaders were prepared to support an Arab revolt to be proclaimed by the Sherif of Mecca, and to do everything in their power to help the allied cause ... the Damascus protocol is an extremely important text, not only for what it contains, but also on account of the use to which it was afterwards put by Sherif Hussein, when in the following July, he resumed negotiations with Great Britain.<sup>6</sup>

According to that Sherif Hussein wrote his first note to Sir Henry McMahon on July 14, 1915.

By 1916, however, Jemal Pasha was in a suspicious and dangerous mood, as the Turkish military intelligence had got wind of the motives and intentions of Arab nationalist secret societies. A reign of fear and terror was unleashed on the Arab populace. News of the contemplated move of a picked force of 3,500 Turks under Khairi Bey to the Yemen in April 1916 through the Hejaz forced Sherif Hussein to act at once. These 3,500 Turkish troops could in no circumstances be permitted to proceed beyond Medina and Mecca, as their presence could well succeed in smothering the Arab revolt at birth.

Accordingly, Emir Ali (the eldest son of the Sherif), who was then commanding

the Sherifian forces in Medina, was given specific instructions by the Sherif that the move of Khairi Bey beyond Medina was to be met by force.

THE SYKES-PICOT TREATY 1916 AND THE BALFOUR DECLARATION--NOVEMBER 1917

Before even attempting to analyze the Anglo-French strategic concept of operations adopted for the defeat of the Ottoman Army in World War I, it is necessary to consider and appreciate the political motives of the allies--their solemn promises to the Arabs notwithstanding. The first step in the betrayal of their erstwhile Arab allies was the Sykes-Picot Treaty of 1916, to be followed a year later by the Balfour Declaration (November 1917). On Turkey's entry into the war, Russian, British, and French political ambitions and aims at aggrandizement at the expense of the Ottoman empire began to manifest themselves. Negotiations were opened early in 1915 and a series of secret agreements were reached. Russia earmarked Constantinople and four Vilayets of Eastern Anatolia for herself. France reserved to herself the greater part of Syria, a considerable portion of Southern Anatolia and the district of Mosul. Great Britain, not to be outdone, claimed a band of territory extending from the south of Syria, across the desert to Iraq and the Persian Gulf. Palestine was reserved for a special international mandate (see Map 3). As George Antonious so caustically and justifiably remarks:

The Sykes-Picot Agreement is a shocking document. It is only the product of greed at its worst, that is to say, of greed allied to suspicion and so leading to stupidity: it also stands out as a startling piece of double-dealing.<sup>7</sup>

Information about the existence of the agreement was passed on to the Turks in early 1918 by the Bolsheviks in the wake of their 1917 October Revolution. In turn, the Turks passed the information on to the disbelieving Arabs.

On being queried as to the contents of the agreement found in the imperial Russian archives by the Soviets, the British Foreign Secretary, Mr. Arthur Balfour, confirmed with

All the assurance at his command that Great Britain in accordance with her former pledge would stand by the Arabs in their struggle for liberation and assist them in obtaining their freedom. Never was a lie more blatant, yet Sherif Hussein . . . with his faith in British standards of fair dealing still unshaken, took the disingenuous message at its face value and set his mind at rest.<sup>8</sup>

#### THE BALFOUR DECLARATION: NOVEMBER 1917

After several months of negotiations with Jewish leaders in England, the British government had entered yet another commitment which conflicted with their previous pledges to the Arabs. This was the famous Balfour Declaration, which stated quite specifically and unequivocally that:

His Majesty's government view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people and will use their best endeavors to facilitate the achievement of this object, it being clearly understood that nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country.<sup>9</sup>

As George Antonious so aptly observes:

The Balfour Declaration, as it came to be universally known, was issued from the foreign office on 2 November 1917 and made public a few days later, that is to say, two years after the issue of Sir Henry McMahon's note of 24 October 1915 and 18 months after the outbreak of the Arab revolt, when Sherif Hussein relying on England's pledges of Arab independence, which he had every reason to believe applied to Palestine, had thrown in his lot openly with the allies.<sup>10</sup>

As was to be expected, the publication of the Declaration provoked a wave of protest in the Arab world. This was stilled by yet another palpably false

statement by the British government, though. On 16 June 1918, in reply to a memorandum submitted by the seven Arab leaders of political standing in Egypt, who had been privy to the terms of the Hussein-McMahon compact, the British Foreign Office issued a document known as "The Declaration of the Seven." This confirmed Great Britain's previous pledges "to the Arabs in plainer language than in any former public utterance and more valuable still, provides an authoritative enunciation of the principles on which these pledges rested.<sup>11</sup>

With a persistence towards subterfuge and falsehood that is virtually inexplicable, the English and French governments issued a statement of 7 November 1918, which was universally known as the "Anglo-French Declaration." In it, the allies, now in occupation of the northern Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire, defined their war aims "as the complete and final liberation of the population living under the Turkish yoke and the setting up of national governments chosen by the people themselves in the free exercise of the popular will.<sup>12</sup>

However, the final denouncement came at the peace conference in Paris in January 1919, where Emir Feisal headed the Hejaz Delegation. There was wide divergence between what the Arabs rightly claimed and what Great Britain and France were willing to recognize as their part of the bargain. The final "settlement" imposed on the Arabs violated the promises specifically made to them and the principle on which the allies enunciated as the foundations of the future peace. What followed is a matter of history. Iraq rose in revolt in 1920, the Syrian rebellion broke out in 1925, and Palestine was in ferment till the outbreak of World War II.

The final act of this dismal and sordid chapter of allied-Arab history was enacted at San Remo on 25 April 1920. At the conference, it was decided to

place the Arab lands between the Mediterranean and the Persian frontier under mandatory rule! Syria and Lebanon were to be placed under a single mandate to be entrusted to France. Great Britain was to hold a mandate for Iraq and another for Palestine, the latter of which would carry with it an obligation to apply the Balfour Declaration (see Map 4).

#### POLITICAL AIMS AND STRATEGIC CONCEPTS

In varying degrees, the political ambitions of the major contestants in the Middle East zone of operations influenced the strategic concept of operations adopted by their High Commands. Turco-German War plans were hamstrung by a divergence of strategic objectives. Turkish plans were dominated by the Young Turks' Pan-Turanic policy, which resulted in the major effort of the Ottoman Army being concentrated in the strategic cul-de-sac of the Caucasus region. German plans were influenced by their "Drang nach Osten" policy for economic prosperity in the east, and their concern for threatening British interests in the Suez Canal zone and the Persian Gulf. Anglo-French strategic interests lay in dominating the Arab Middle East by absorbing the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire into their imperial orbit. Russian war plans were aimed at the absorption of the eastern provinces of Anatolia, to buttress their newly acquired possessions in Moslem Caucasia and Central Asia, together with the control of the Dardanelles. Imperial Czarist ambitions were thwarted by the Bolshevik October Revolution of 1917. The Jewish planned to increase immigration to the Palestine to establish the Jewish state there. At the bottom of the woodpile and the weakest of the protagonists were the Arabs, who were determined to achieve an independent Arab state between the Mediterranean and the Zagros mountains on the ruins of the Ottoman Empire. During four years of war, each of the combatants attempted to follow their

avowed political ambitions and aims with varying degrees of success and failure.

#### TURCO-GERMAN STRATEGIC WAR AIMS

In 1914, Turkish strategic war aims were directed at the attainment of the Young Turks' political and racial policy enunciated in 1909--the absorption of all Turkish people into a single, racially pure, Pan-Turanic state to the exclusion of all non-Turks. The Triumvirate that ruled Turkey was convinced that the war would be won by Germany and saw in it an opportunity to realize its territorial ambitions for a Pan-Turanic state that would include Russian Armenia, northwest Persia, and the Moslem provinces of Caucasia and Trans-Caucasia. It was Germany's pledge to assist Turkey in securing these provinces that encouraged the Young Turks to cast their lot with the Central Powers.

The groundwork for the Turco-German alliance had been well and truly laid by the state visit of Kaiser Wilhem II to Abdul Hamid in 1898 and by the establishment of a German Advisory Military Mission 15 years earlier under Colonel Von der Goltz in 1883. As a result of the Kaiser's visit, and in conformity with Germany's policy of "Drang nach Osten," German engineering firms undertook the construction of the strategic Baghdad to Hejaz Railway. Turco-German political, military and economic cooperation continued without interruption until 1914, despite Turkey's traditional friendship with Great Britain, a fact that had been made perfectly plain to Emir Abdullah during the course of his meeting with Lord Kitchener in Cairo in February 1914. Apart from her Pan-Turkish territorial ambitions, Turkey's fear for Russia encouraged her in seeking Germany's friendship and protection. Apart from their concern with Russia, the inner group of Turkish leaders who held power



in Constantinople evinced little or no interest in the Arab provinces of the empire, a failing which eventually was to prove their political and military undoing. A further and more serious strategic failing was the Turks' failure to appreciate the vital role the Suez Canal zone and the Persian Gulf region played in Great Britain's global strategic posture. A major effort directed at the Suez Canal would not only have succeeded in severing Britain's vital line of communication with India and Australia, but could well have resulted in the ousting of the unpopular British political and military presence in Egypt, the main strategic base for allied operations launched against Gallipoli, Palestine and Syria. Similarly, the consolidation of the Turks' military position in the Basra region of Lower Mesopotamia would have prevented the landing of the British Mesopotamia Expeditionary Force, and its subsequent build up and advance upstream to Baghdad. The failure to appreciate the prime importance of the Suez Canal Zone and of Lower Mesopotamia to the British war effort was a very serious flaw or blind spot in the strategic perception of the politically and racially oriented Young Turks Triumvirate. The failure of the Young Turks' strategic perception was to cost them dear and lose them the war.

Germany's strategic war aims in Asia were, however, at variance with the Pan-Turanic concept of the Young Turks. Insofar as the German High Command was concerned, and rightly so, Egypt, the Suez Canal, Mesopotamia and the Persian Gulf were prime strategic objectives. Their occupation would place Great Britain at a grave strategic disadvantage politically, militarily and economically. Fortunately for Great Britain's interests in the region, the divergence of German and Turkish war aims effectively prevented a serious threat from developing against either Egypt or Mesopotamia. The only occasion during the war when Turkish and German strategic aims coincided was in August

1917 when General Falkenhayn and Enver Pasha agreed on the necessity to recapture Baghdad and to eject the British from Mesopotamia. The plan of campaign was given shape and substance by the initiation of operation "Yilderim," which planned the recapture of Baghdad and the subsequent advance to the Persian Gulf by Army Group "F" (Yilderim). (see Map 5) However, before the plan could be executed, the rapid build up of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force on the borders of Palestine, the violent opposition to the Baghdad venture by Jemal Pasha, and Allenby's ominous concentration and evident preparations for the decisive third Battle of Gaza resulted in a drastic change in Turco-German plans for Yilderim, as will be discussed in the next chapter.<sup>13</sup>

Thus, from the commencement of the offensive against the Russians by the Caucasus group of armies under Enver Pasha's personal command in December 1914, through the Gallipoli campaign in 1915, and the retreat in Mesopotamia, to the annihilation of the skeletal and impoverished 4th, 7th and 8th Turkish Armies by General Allenby's Egyptian Expeditionary Force in Palestine in September 1918, Turkish interest lay permanently and unflinchingly focussed on the Caucasus. Never for a moment, even though Constantinople was threatened by the allied landing at Gallipoli, did Turkish concern for the Caucasus waver. The campaigns in Egypt, Arabia, Palestine, Syria and Mesopotamia, where the British had deployed just under one million men, were considered to be sideshows, and little value--whether strategic or political--was attached to them. They were, as a consequence, starved of men, material and sustenance throughout the period of war. Despite the low priority accorded to these fronts, the Turkish forces, abandoned to their fate in the Arab provinces, succeeded in trying down over 215,000 British troops in Egypt and Palestine,

which included the strategic Imperial Reserve, and over 415,000 in Mesopotamia.

#### BRITISH STRATEGIC WAR AIMS

In conformity with the British strategic defense concept that

the obvious line of the actual defense of the eastern frontier of Egypt is the Suez Canal, Sir John Maxwell, Commander of the British forces in Egypt had by December 1914, deployed the 10th and 11th Indian Divisions for the defense of the canal. In addition to the weak Indian corps, two divisions of an Australian and New Zealand contingent were undergoing training in the Delta. At a conservative estimate, General Maxwell had a force of some 70,000 men available for the defense of the canal. Naval support was provided by the East Indies Squadron which dominated the Red Sea. By January 1915, Egypt was expectant and fully prepared for an expected Turkish attack across the Sinai directed at the Suez Canal.<sup>14,15</sup>

In August 1917, the (British) Eastern Force was abolished and the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) reorganized into three corps--the Desert Mounted Corps, 20 Corps and 21 Corps, comprising of three mounted and seven infantry divisions. The EEF was initially opposed by the 8th Turkish Army under the command of General Kress Von Kressenstein. As the Turco-German High Command was still engaged in bitter and acrimonious dispute over the conception, strategic aims and objectives of Yilderim, the 7th Army which had been assembled at Aleppo in the summer of 1917, was moved to Palestine in November 1917. Yilderim Headquarters (Force "F") did not arrive in Jerusalem until 29 October--two days after the third Battle of Gaza had begun.<sup>16</sup>

The third Battle of Gaza, during which the EEF drove north from the Suez Canal, lasted from 27 October to 14 November 1917 and culminated in the capture of Jerusalem by the British on 9 December 1917. The British Front was stabilized on a general line across the Palestine midriff. On the capture of Jericho in February 1918, Allenby initiated a series of offensives across the

River Jordan directed at the severance of the Hejaz Railway at Amman. The Battles of Amman, conducted from 21 March to 4 May 1918, were intended to be coordinated with the capture of the Turkish garrison at Maan (in Transjordan) by Emir Feisal's Arab Northern Army. In all, four battles for Maan, extending from April to July 1918, were undertaken by the Arab Northern Army, but the Maan garrison held out until their organized tactical withdrawal to Amman in September 1918. This withdrawal conformed to the overall Turkish strategic retreat from Damascus to Aleppo in the face of Allenby's offensive in September 1918. Attempts by the British 20th Corps and the Desert Mounted Corps to cross the River Jordan, directed at the capture Amman, also failed.

#### SHERIF HUSSEIN IBN ALI'S CONCEPT FOR THE ARAB CAMPAIGN

The Leit-Motiv of Sherif Hussein's strategic concept of operations was the adoption of a strategy of the "indirect approach," with strong political and psychological undertones. A strategy of the "indirect approach" was, in the Grand Sherif's view, ideally suited to the Arab psychology and methods of essentially tribal and guerilla warfare, and would in turn, place the stolid, pugnacious but unimaginative Turks at their greatest disadvantage. The two main pillars of the Grand Sherif's strategic concept were based on the political awakening and active participation of the Arabs of Arabia, Syria and Iraq in the grim struggle that lay ahead, together with a psychological approach to undermine the Turks' morale and authority with the conduct of limited military operations in the zones to be liberated. In modern military parlance, Sherif Hussein's concept could best be described as a "peoples war," where "the people are the water and the guerillas are the fish."<sup>17,18</sup>

In his silent political and psychological struggle with the astute Sultan Abdul Hamid II from 1893 to 1908, and later with the racial fanatics of the

Young Turks' movement, Sherif Hussein had learned, in the hard and dangerous school of practical politics, to appreciate and analyze the strength and weaknesses of the Turks. In his limited field of military operations, he had an opportunity to study the Turkish Army at first hand during operations conducted against the Idrisi in Asir in 1911. He was horrified to witness the unthinking brutality meted out by the Turks to the subjugated tribes of Asir, and at the same time he appreciated the utter futility of pitting ill-armed Arab tribesmen, however brave and motivated, against tough, battle-experienced and ruthless Turkish regulars. Terror was a weapon the Turks would not hesitate to use.

Sherif Hussein explained his strategy for the Arab campaign to the Arab historian George Antonious in an interview in Transjordan in 1924, and the latter comments

His approach to the problem was essentially psychological, and he reasoned in terms of character, morale and spirit as though they were the all important variables; while guns and shells were to be regarded as mere constants, common to both sides, and therefore cancelling each other out. The Turk was a born "stonewaller"--it was wasteful to attack him frontally as at Gallipoli with whatever superiority. Turkish units fought best on ground of their own choosing, with familiar bases to fall back on--it paid to render their tracks insecure. The Turkish soldier shrank from adventure, enslaved himself to habit, and was easily bewildered by the unexpected--take him by surprise with an attack in the rear, a threat to his flank, and a flare of risings on every side of him, and he was doomed. Thus argued Sherif Hussein, who was no soldier but who understood the Turks as well as the Arabs, and one virtue in his plan was that it rested on a strategy which was suited to Arab methods of warfare, and at the same time, was designed to put the Turks to their greatest disadvantage. But, it did not commend itself to the mandarins on the allied general staff, and his course was to recall his son (Emir Feisal) from Syria.<sup>19</sup>

During the course of his negotiations with the British in the years 1914 and 1915, Sherif Hussein had in consultation with his sons, Emirs Ali, Abdullah and Feisal, and the Arab officers of the Ottoman Army, and in

conformity with his strategic concept, advocated an allied landing in the Gulf of Alexandretta (Iskenderun) to sever Turkish communications between Asia Minor and the Arab provinces of Syria and Mesopotamia. Alexandretta, was a nodal point in the Turkish Railway system connecting Anatolia with Arab Asia, and the loss of this vital port-cum-railhead together with a thrust towards Aleppo would have a disastrous effect on the Turkish war effort in general, and on the movement of troops and supplies, in particular. The landing at Alexandretta was to be synchronized with uprisings in Syria and Arabia and the proclamation of the Arab Revolt in the Hejaz. In the event of a major allied landing in the Gulf not being possible, Sherif Hussein recommended, as a less suitable alternative, a landing on the Syrian coast, to interrupt Turkish communications, or to cause a diversion, thereby permitting an Arab uprising in Syria and Arabia. In either case, Sherif Hussein conjectured, the Turks would be caught between two fires--a major allied landing on the Syrian coast, and a concomitant Arab uprising flaring up in the Turkish rear from Aleppo to Mecca. Apart from the strategic merits of the plan, its psychological value lay in striking the Turk at his weakest point--the unexpected and the unfamiliar.

In April 1915 the situation was ripe for revolt. The Ottoman divisions stationed in Syria at the time were overwhelmingly Arab, and their officers, most of whom were members of the Al-Ahd Secret Society, would have marched with their men on a sign from their leaders. As Jemal Pasha (Biyuk) explained in his memoirs published after the war, "if the revolt had broken out as the result of foreign intrigues there would have been no way of suppressing it, and the government would have lost all its Arab territories."<sup>20</sup> On 25 April 1915, however, the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force under the command of General Sir Ian Hamilton had landed at Gallipoli. Of the 500,000 allied

troops committed to this disastrous campaign in the Dardanelles, over 250,000 were casualties.

In the event, Sherif Hussein's proposal was rejected by the allied mandarins, though the feasibility of the Alexandretta enterprise had been debated by General Maxwell and Lord Kitchener in December 1914. If an allied landing at Alexandretta, in preference to Gallipoli, had in fact taken place in 1915, in coordination with an Arab uprising, the Turks would, in their own view, have been hard-pressed to have retained possession of the Arab provinces of the empire. On the rejection of his bold and imaginative proposal, Sherif Hussein concentrated his attention and energy on planning for a more limited and circumspect Arab uprising in the Hejaz.

#### ARAB POLITICAL AND MILITARY STRATEGY

As to the political strategy to be adopted for the campaign to gain Arab independence from Ottoman rule, two varying schools of thought existed. One, advanced by Emir Feisal, was to stand by the Turks and demand recognition of Arab independence by them. In adopting this pro-Turk stand, Emir Feisal was influenced by the conviction that allied protestations of Arab independence were, in essence, fraudulent and deceitful. Moreover, they were primarily motivated by French designs on the Levant and Syria and British ambitions in Palestine and Iraq. The British offer to grant Arab independence on the defeat of Turkey was inadequate and contained no definite guarantee that the Damascus protocol would, in fact, be honored. Furthermore Feisal considered that the Arabs were unprepared to launch a revolt, and in the event of the rebellion misfiring, Turkish vengeance would be swift and effective.<sup>21</sup>

The other school of thought, which favored an Arab uprising in direct opposition to Ottoman rule, was advocated by Emir Abdullah. The Emir, who

represented the Hejaz in the Ottoman Parliament and was privy to the innermost secrets of the Secret Societies--the Al-Fatat and Al-Ahd--had a greater understanding of the political stakes involved, and was confident that Damascus and Baghdad would respond to the call to revolt. Emir Abdullah was of the view that a revolt, and eventual freedom, would in the final analysis only be achieved at the point of the sword. Sherif Hussein, having weighed the pros and cons of both courses open to him, decided on an interim, compromise solution. Emissaries were to be dispatched to Syria, Iraq, and the principal Arab rulers to sound them out on their views and attitude towards the projected revolt. Simultaneously, to keep the British option open, Hussein would give Lord Kitchener just enough encouragement to keep him in play.

It would be appropriate to consider the overall effect the Arab Revolt had on allied strategy in the theatre. The Arab Revolt effectively barred the road to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean from Turco-German incursions, whether contemplated or planned, and interposed an obstacle to Turco-German southward expansion. On the signing of Treaty between Ibn Saud, the Idrisi of Asir, and the government of India, the sea routes from the Red Sea through the Indian Ocean and to the Persian Gulf were secure from Turco-German intervention. The defense of the Suez Canal and the sea lanes to India were the cornerstone of British policy in South Asia--a strategic fact that appears to have totally escaped the notice of the Young Turks. The Young Turks, in pursuing their strategic ambitions in the strategic dead end of the Caucasus complex, lost a golden opportunity to deal a severe body blow to British Imperial interest in southern Arabia, the sea bridge between Great Britain, her Indian empire and the Commonwealth of Australia.<sup>22</sup>



## ARAB MILITARY STRATEGY

Though he was no military expert or theoretician, Sherif Hussein's assessment and perceptions of the strategic requirements of the theatre of war were generally sound and practical and were justified by events. His perception was based more on the psychological aspects of the Turkish character and the national psychology of his own countrymen. Keeping in view the political aspects of the Arab Revolt, the strength and weaknesses of the Turkish Army, and the vital need for support and sustenance from a great power, the Grand Sherif adapted his strategy to suit the Arab politico-strategic environment. The war against the Turks in the restricted field of military operations was to be tribal, "will-o'-the-wisp," and guerilla in nature. A war of modest aims and objectives, of movement, of light mobile forces and of imperceptible but graduated attrition. Set-piece slogging matches with the Turk were to be shunned like the plague, for Turkish regulars would make short work of Bedouin auxiliaries in a conventional stand-up fight. The Sherif well knew the tribal inability to sustain heavy casualties, and the resultant steep fall in Bedouin morale and fighting spirit if they were permitted to occur. Instead, the vulnerable and sensitive Turkish umbilical cord--the Hejaz Railway--was to be probed, punctured and pricked at will, thereby bleeding the Turkish forces in Arabia to a slow but sure death. Siege operations, when undertaken, were to be of a flexible and elastic nature--no deliberate, set-piece frontal attacks were to be initiated, but Turkish garrisons, strung out like isolated beads down the 400-mile string of the Hejaz Railway, were to be allowed to rot on the vine.

In final analysis, the Hejaz Railway proved to be the operational killing ground of the Turkish Hejaz Expeditionary Force and of the 4th Turkish Army in Transjordan and Syria, for, stuck like greedy flies to fly paper, they lost

all ability to maneuver and were, to all intents and purposes, unwilling captives of the Hashemite Army for the duration of war. The soundness of Sherif Hussein's strategic concept was best illustrated at the end of the war. Then, the all-but-paralyzed Hejaz Expeditionary Force of over 20,000 men surrendered to Emir Abdullah's Eastern Army at Medina in January 1919. In addition, the 40,000-man 2nd Corps of the Maan garrison, which had been harassed and bled white by Emir Feisal's Northern Army from the summer of 1917 to the autumn of 1918, surrendered at Jiza, 18 miles south of Amman in September 1918, during the course of the general Turkish withdrawal to Damascus as a result of Allenby's offensive in Palestine. The remnants of Jemal Pasha's 4th Army were eventually annihilated by the advance elements of Emir Feisal's Northern Army at the very gates of Damascus, which was occupied by Emir Feisal on 1 October 1918. In the operations conducted by the Hashemite Army from June 1916 to October 1918, the Arabs could rightly claim to have accounted for over 30,000 Turkish troops, not to mention the 15,000 to battle-hardened veterans of the 7th (Yemen) Corps, and the 21st (Asir) Division, isolated in the remote southwest corner of the Arabian Peninsula.

If only Sherif Hussein Bin Ali's double envelopment maneuver involving an allied landing at Alexandretta, and an Arab uprising had been adopted, all the Turkish forces south of the Taurus would have been trapped in the enveloping Anglo-Arab pincers, at relatively little cost to both the Arab and Anglo-French alliance.

According to Jemal Pasha (Biyuk) and General Liman von Sanders, Commander in Chief of the Turkish Army Group, an Arab uprising in Syria, with a sympathetic revolt in the Hejaz, would have resulted in a precipitate Turkish withdrawal, as most of the divisions in Syria in 1915 were either Arab, or had a large proportion of Arab officers and men who would have undoubtedly obeyed

the call to revolt by the Al-Ahd. Both were of the view that the political unrest and hostility dormant in the Arab provinces of the empire were of greater concern to the central powers than the military operations conducted by the British and Arab forces through the critical years of 1918. Fortunately for the Turks, the strategic sweep of the existing political situation, with its inherent military possibilities, was beyond the intellectual and strategic horizon of the British High Command.

ANALYSIS OF THE ARAB CAMPAIGN: SHERIF HUSSEIN BIN ALI'S STRATEGIC CONCEPT

Sherif Hussein Bin Ali's strategic concept for the conduct of the Arab campaign was influenced and guided by two basic factors--the political means to be adopted for the achievement of Arab independence, and the psychological techniques to be employed to unhinge the dour and implacable Turk. A direct military confrontation was dismissed as totally impracticable. The approach had to be more subtle, indirect and insidious, and aimed at exploiting the vulnerable political and psychological weak spots in the Ottoman defenses, which had been considerably aggravated with the advent of the shortsighted and parochial Pan-Turanic policies initiated by the Young Turks. Basing his appreciation on the political environment obtaining in the Arab provinces of the empire, the Grand Sherif discarded a direct military confrontation with the Ottomans and opted for the launching of a political-cum-psychological campaign against the Young Turks to encourage them to loosen their hold on the Arab provinces--military force being injected only when and where considered necessary.

As no political movement without the implied threat of the use of force would have any chance of success against the Ottomans, Sherif Hussein opened discreet negotiations with the only great power in the region--Great Britain.

Apart from being the paramount political and naval power in the region, British suzerainty and sphere of influence was an established fact. Thus, Great Britain was the only power capable of nursing and sustaining a nascent Arab insurrection.

#### ARAB TACTICAL CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

Within the parameters of the strategic concept enunciated by Sherif Hussein, the tactical conduct of operations devolved on the Grand Sherif's sons--Emir Ali, Feisal, Abdullah and Zeid, assisted by a general staff manned by experienced and battle-tested regular army officers from the Turkish Army. Prominent among these were Aziz Ali el Masri, who was appointed the Chief of Staff of the Arab Army, Nuri as-Said, Jafar Pasha el Askari and Maulud Mukhlis.<sup>23</sup>

At a crucial planning conference held at Rabigh in November 1916, Aziz Ali had expounded his concept of what would, in modern military parlance, best be termed as an "Arab Peoples War," conducted by an "Arab Peoples Army." The general motivating force was to be the will of the Arabs to free themselves from Turkish bondage. For while the Turkish Army could, with little difficulty, overcome conventional resistance by an Arab Army, it could not hope to win the battle for men's minds--the key element in the successful waging of a people's war. Aziz Ali's tactical concept stipulated the formation of a hardcore of regulars, with a complementary mass of Bedouin guerilla fighters, operating like fish in the Arab Sea. In the absence of the support and cooperation of the Arab populace, the Arab Army, would have assuredly been hamstrung and inconvenienced in its operations. In fact, the main task facing Emir Feisal in his advance from the Hejaz north to Syria was to win over and retain the allegiance of the great confederacy of Bedouin

tribes to the Arab Revolt. On the other hand, the Turkish Army, operating in a hostile environment and immobilized by its own logistical weight, was to be tied to its life-sustaining umbilical cord, the Hejaz Railway, on which it depended for its nourishment and sustenance. While the Arab regulars were to attempt to neutralize and contain the depredations of the Turkish Army, the mobile, amorphous, self-sustaining and quicksilver Bedouin raiding columns, with a leavening and backbone of regulars were, to quote Aziz Ali, "to terrify the Turks, disrupt their communications and paralyze their movements, all the way north from Medina to Aleppo."<sup>24</sup> This fluid, unconventional, untidy, will-o'-the-wisp form of warfare was aimed at the planned and progressive destruction of the Turkish Army, in order to demoralize the Turks and to bleed them white. It was planned to be a slow and deliberate death by hemorrhage, rather than by surgical dispatch.

In the field of grand tactics, therefore, the strategic guidelines enunciated by Sherif Hussein had the inestimable advantage of being tailored to the political, psychological and military environment obtaining in the Ottoman Empire. Subsequent events were to prove the soundness and practicality of his concept. His emphasis on the political nature and aspects of the war of liberation, and on his assessment of the Turks' national psychology, character and morale not only resulted in the undermining of the Turkish Army base in the Arab provinces by the conduct of a war of movement, mobility and surprise which suited the Arab temperament and personality, but also drove the Turks to distraction.

If the Arab campaign proved anything, it demonstrated the vital importance of two basic factors that are invariably and inexplicably overlooked in the waging of a war--the political objectives to be achieved, and the national psychology of the opposing side. The mere application of military might,

bereft of political objectives and consideration of national psychology, invariably results in an overall political defeat, after a painful and costly military campaign. In the post-World War II era, Algeria and Vietnam are cases in point. And the nightmare disaster of the fall of Singapore in 1942 will just not go away.

SUMMARY OF STRATEGIC PERCEPTIONS: 1914-1918  
TURCO-GERMAN PERCEPTIONS

Insofar as the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were concerned, the Young Turks lost the campaign, strategically and psychologically, in 1908, owing to their blind infatuation with the Pan-Turanian Movement. By alienating Arab opinion, the Ottoman Empire sowed the seeds of its own destruction. Ottoman concern for a Pan-Turkish Empire, to the exclusion of the rights of all other races, dominated strategic planning and resulted in the almost total indifference to the fate of the Turkish Armies south of the Taurus Mountains. German strategic interest in its politico-economic policy of "Drang nach Osten" was the main driving force in its drive towards the oil fields of the northern Gulf, and in the severance of Great Britain's naval aorta at the Suez Canal. German strategic interests in the Suez Canal and in the Persian Gulf were, fortunately for the British, brushed aside by the Young Turks who concentrated their strategic main effort in the strategic cul-de-sac and dead end of the Caucasus.

BRITISH PERCEPTIONS

While the Young Turks rode roughshod over the feelings of their ten million Arab subjects and ignored the defense of their Arab provinces, the British High Command was very clear on the strategic and political objectives to be obtained in the Middle Eastern Theatre of Operations. The overall

political aim of the Anglo-French powers was clear and unequivocal. On the defeat of Turkey, the Arab provinces of the now defunct empire were to be parcelled out between Great Britain and France. As Arab support and cooperation was essential, they were to be promised independence on the defeat of Turkey. The political ruse worked with telling effect.

In the more immediate field of strategic military operations British strategy had three main objectives--the defense of the Suez Canal and Egypt, the protection of the oil fields in the Persian Gulf, and the eventual annihilation of the Turkish Armies south of the Taurus. For this purpose the Egyptian Expeditionary Force was established in the Suez Canal zone, and the Mediterranean Expeditionary Force secured Basra and its environs in the winter of 1914 and 1915. After allied forces were mauled at Gallipoli, the mandarins of the Allied High Command decided on a deliberate, safe and conventional strategic approach--an advance across the Sinai into Palestine and an advance up the Tigris to Baghdad and beyond. In short, the British concept was, to quote the British military historian Liddell Hart, "Singularly barren of surprise and mobility, those keynotes of the art of war," and, when commenting on Maude's campaign in Mesopotamia (1916-1917),

on the lower scale of tactical execution the record of the advance is spotted with missed opportunities, despite an overwhelming preponderance of force. While recognizing the difficulties of the country, the historian cannot but feel that a sledgehammer was used to crush a flea and the flea escaped being crushed. Even so, the Turks were placed in such peril that, as they confess, only the slowness of the enemy saved them from disaster.<sup>25</sup>

With a four to one superiority in men, and a three to two superiority in guns, Allenby, in a ponderous offensive, finally broke through the Turkish lines at Gaza (October-November 1917), and Jerusalem fell on 9 December 1917. On 21 January 1918 when Allenby's forces had captured Jerusalem, a further directive was received from the Supreme War Council which simply and

unequivocally stated that the strategic intention was: "To stand on the defensive in France, Italy and the Balkans and to undertake a decisive offensive against Turkey with a view to the annihilation of the Turkish Armies and the collapse of Turkey's resistance."<sup>26</sup> Allenby, however, was not to be pushed. From December 1917 to September 1918 the EEF settled down into a "Sitzkreis," across a defense front established across the Palestinian midriff. It was not until 19 September 1918 that he launched his final offensive against the skeletal Turkish forces opposing him. The Turco-German High Command had, in fact, expected Allenby to attack in March 1918.

Great Britain's lack-lustre military reputation, or what was left of it, was saved, to some extent, by the Battles of Megiddo. An appreciative Liddell Hart comments:

The Battles of Megiddo . . . was both one of the most quickly decisive campaigns and the most completely decisive battles in all history. Within a few days the Turkish Armies in Palestine had practically ceased to exist. . . . A more serious depreciation of the final campaign--the battle in Palestine, lies in the fact that Allenby had a superiority of two to one in numbers, and more in terms of weapon values. In addition, the morale of the Turks had so declined that it is often argued that Allenby had merely to stretch out his hand for the Turkish Armies, like an overripe plum, to fall into it. There is force in these contentions . . . if the subject was not a difficult one, the picture is almost unique, as a perfect concept executed. . . . Surprise and mobility had virtually won the victory without a battle.<sup>27</sup>

Though British generalship was not particularly awe-inspiring, in the political field they were very clear as to their political objectives. Quite simply, the Sykes-Picot Treaty and the Balfour Declaration, and all other declarations besides ensured that the Arab provinces of the Ottoman Empire were to be shared out equally between the British and French governments-- Palestine, Transjordan and Iraq to Britain, and Syria and Lebanon to France.



And what of their wartime allies--the Arabs? They could look forward to the benefits which would accrue from the bounty of British administrative skills and of French culture!

#### ARAB PERCEPTIONS

The year 1908 was an important date in Turco-Arab relations. It saw the forcible assumption of power by the Young Turks, the appointment of Sherif Hussein as Emir of Mecca, and the establishment of the Arab Secret Societies--the Al-Ahd, and Al-Fatat. From 1908 to the outbreak of World War I the three branches of the Arab Renaissance--the Grand Sherif, the Al-Ahd and the Al-Fatat--worked towards Arab political independence in their various ways. Sherif Hussein initially concerned himself with reestablishing Sherifian authority in the Hejaz and later set his sights on achieving independence for the Arab provinces with the help of Great Britain. Major Aziz Ali al-Masri, the founder of the Al-Ahd Secret Society, formed by nationalistic Arab officers serving in the Ottoman Army, was of the view that Arab independence could best be achieved by the establishment of an autonomous Arab state within the framework of Ottoman unity, and modeled on the Austro-Hungarian. In his capacity as Chief of Staff of the Hashemite Arab Army in 1916, Aziz Ali's views for an autonomous Arab state directly clashed with Sherif Hussein's concept of complete Arab independence from Turkish rule. As a result of this wide divergence in the political objectives to be achieved by the Arab Revolt, Aziz Ali was dismissed and in December 1916 he was replaced as Chief of Staff of the Arab Army by a fellow member of the Al-Ahd, the less sophisticated but more flexible Major Jafar Pasha al Askari.<sup>28</sup>

The Al-Fatat's perception of the political objectives to be achieved were more in line with those expressed by the Grand Sherif, with the proviso that

an Arab Parliament would eventually be established in Damascus. On 23 May 1915, the Al-Ahd had drawn up a protocol--known as the Damascus Protocol--defining the conditions on which the Arabs would be prepared to cooperate with Great Britain against Turkey. Arab support would be forthcoming, provided Arab independence was assured on the defeat of the Turks. The provisions of the Damascus Protocol formed the basis for the Grand Sherif's secret negotiations opened with the British in July 1915.

In retrospect, the absorption of the Arab heartland "between the Mediterranean and the Persian frontier," to quote a clause from the San Remo Treaty of 25 April 1920,<sup>29</sup> marked the apogee of Anglo-French power in their quest for imperial dominion. From the Atlantic Ocean in the west to the South China Sea in the east, Anglo-French power was supreme, promises to the Arab's notwithstanding.

#### ENDNOTES

1. George Antonious, The Arab Awakening, pp. 33,34.
2. Ibid., p. 127.
3. Brigadier S. A. El-Adroos, The Hashemite Arab Army, 1908-1979, p. 17.
4. Antonious, p. 153.
5. Ibid., pp. 157, 158.
6. Ibid., p. 158.
7. Ibid., p. 248.
8. Ibid., p. 258.
9. Ibid., pp. 266, 267.
10. Ibid., p. 267.
11. Ibid., pp. 271-274.
12. Ibid., pp. 274, 275.

13. El-Adroos, p. 53.
14. Official (British) History, The Great War: The Campaign in Egypt, Palestine, 1914-1918, p. 14.
15. El-Adroos, p. 48.
16. Wavell, A. P., The Palestine Campaign, pp. 147-151.
17. Antonious, p. 59.
18. El-Adroos, p. 59.
19. Ibid., p. 58.
20. Jemal Pasha, Memoirs of a Turkish Statesman, pp. 60, 61.
21. El-Adroos, pp. 58-63.
22. Ibid., pp. 55-63.
23. Ibid., p. 65.
24. Ibid., pp. 77, 78.
25. Liddell Hart, The Real War 1914-1918, pp. 446-469.
26. El-Adroos, p. 48.
27. Ibid., pp. 52, 53.
28. El-Adroos, pp. 81, 82.
29. Antonious, p. 305.

CHAPTER III  
HISTORY OF THE MIDDLE EAST: 1920-1990  
ANALYSIS OF THE POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC FACTORS  
THAT INFLUENCED DEVELOPMENTS IN THE ARAB WORLD FROM  
1920 TO 1990 AND STRATEGIC PERCEPTIONS TO THE 21ST CENTURY

THE AFTERMATH OF WORLD WAR I AND ARAB UPRISINGS: 1920-1945

The San Remo Treaty of 1920 confirmed Anglo-French imperialist intentions in the Arab Asian homeland, and put paid to Arab nationalist desires for independence. Arab Asia was split into mandates at the dictate of London and Paris, and Sherif Hussein in the Hejaz was left to fend for himself as best he could against the depredations of an aggressive and expanding Wahabi tribal confederation led by Ibn Saud.

Arab reaction to the allied betrayal, was, as to be expected, violent. Iraq rose in revolt in 1920 and the rebellion was ruthlessly crushed by the British-Indian Occupation Force at a cost of 10,000 Iraqi and 2,200 British-Indian casualties. In Syria, resistance to the French mandatory power continued from 1920 to 1945, and self-imposed French rule stuck like a chicken bone in the administration's throat during the 25 years of occupation. Furthermore, the inclusion of the Moslem majority region of the Bekaa Valley into the newly formed French mandate of Lebanon caused violent protests, but to no avail. Sixty years after the imposition of the French mandate over Lebanon and Syria, Lebanon is torn apart by religious friction between the Moslem and Christian Lebanese.

In Palestine, British attempts to permit Zionist expansion at the expense of the Arabs added to the sense of betrayal of the Arab cause by the Arab's erstwhile allies of World War I. As was the case with Syria, the Palestine Rebellion against British occupation continued through the 28 years of British

rule. During a peak period of the rebellion (1936-1939), Arab casualties included 3,422 killed, 400 detained and 100 hanged for their opposition to mandatory rule. The Israeli government, with democratic tongue-in-cheek, continues to inflict the draconian measures of the British administration on the Occupied Territories, ignoring the UN and the Geneva Convention with telling effect. All the while, Washington urges "moderation" and a "sense of balance" between the ruthless Israelis and the oppressed Palestinians! As a direct result of British rule the Jewish population in Palestine has increased from a paltry 85,000 in 1914 to 650,000 Israeli Jews in 1948.

Elsewhere in Arab world the Arab populace struggled in vain against foreign rule. In Morocco, Abd el-Krim led a revolt against the Franco-Spanish forces from 1919 to 1926. In Libya, the Sanussi uprising, which began in 1913, was ruthlessly crushed by the Italians in 1931. The insurrection in Somalia, from 1900 to 1920 was suppressed by the colonial powers--Great Britain, France, Italy--and Somalia was divided into a British, French and Italian Somaliland. In short, in the aftermath of World War I, the Arab world from Morocco to Iraq was under foreign occupation, with the populace seething with discontent and attempting to resist the imperial powers, to no avail.

#### WORLD WAR II AND AFTER

In the aftermath of World War II most Arab states achieved independence, but not without a struggle. The Algerian War of Liberation lasted from 1954 to 1962, and the Suez debacle of 1956 put paid, forever, Anglo-French pretensions to imperial power in the Arab world. This resulted in the final withdrawal of the British from Aden in 1967, and from the Gulf in 1971. In the wake of Suez (1956), the USA took over the imperial responsibilities in the strategic but, volatile Middle East, with the Soviet Union laying out its

strategic and military stakes in the region. The arms shipment to Nasser's Egypt in 1955 brought the Soviet Union, which had recognized the new state of Israel in 1948, in direct conflict with the United States' surrogate in Arab Asia.

#### THE ARAB LEAGUE AND INTER-ARAB CONFLICTS

Though the Arab League was formed in Cairo in 1945, it was largely an organization with a head, but, no body. The Arab military debacle in Palestine in 1948 was largely its responsibility, for strategic planning for the first Arab-Israeli War was based on emotional appeals and rhetoric rather than an practical and logical military planning. Matters were made worse by interstate wrangling as to who was responsible for the Arab defeat at the hands "of a nation of shopkeepers."

In a sense, the Arab debacle in Palestine acted as a catalyst for Arab nationalist forces in the region, who blamed the existing Arab governments for their defeat and ignominy. The Arab-Israeli conflict gave rise to the forces of Nasserism, which filled the vacuum created by the grudging withdrawal of Anglo-French power from the Arab world. Unfortunately, the meteoric rise of Nasserism, with its pronounced nationalist undertones, encouraged Colonel Nasser to enlarge his strategic and political perception from a purely Egyptian to a Pan-Arab one, with disastrous consequences for Egypt and Nasser.

In his "strategic over-reach," Nasser fell into the trap that had misled the Anglo-French powers into believing that they were stronger than they actually were. The allied defeat in France in 1940 and the ignominious collapse of the British in Malaya and Singapore in 1942 should have brought the British and French to their strategic senses, but it did not. However, Vietnam, Suez and Algeria finally did. In his "strategic over-reach," Nasser

clashed with the monarchial and moderate Arab governments, and the poor performance and inability of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force to overcome the essentially tribal, Royalist forces in Yemen from 1962 to 1967 did little to contribute to his Pan-Arab image. Egypt's crushing defeat sustained at the hands of Israel in June 1967 signalled the end of Nasser's Pan-Arab dreams.

The June 1967 war did little to heal inter-Arab conflicts. With the introduction of Baathism, or Arab socialism, in Syria and Iraq, and a Marxist-Leninist regime in the Democratic Republic of South Yemen in 1968, the gap between the so-called socialist and monarchial states widened further. South Yemen openly supported the Popular Front for the Liberation of Oman and the Arab Gulf (PFLOAG) in its insurrectional war against neighboring Oman. Relations between the twin Baathist regimes in Syria and Iraq took a turn for the worse. Lebanon, the pressure cooker of the Middle East, blew its top in mid-1975.

#### THE SUPERPOWERS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

While the threat of nuclear self-destruction and the launching of Glasnost by the Soviet leader Milhail Gorbachev has eased superpower tensions somewhat, the historical imperative indicates that the confrontation on ideological grounds will continue, unabated. The three major geostrategic areas of potential conflict, in order of strategic priority are:

- o Central Europe, where NATO confronts the Warsaw Pact;
- o The Far East, which includes China, the two Koreas and Japan; and
- o The Middle East zone, extending from Egypt to Pakistan, but centered around Arab Asia.

While the Middle East is low in strategic priorities, it is currently the most volatile and unstable region in the world. Apart from acting as a lynch

pin between Central Europe and the Far East, its strategic position to the south of the "soft underbelly" of the Soviet Union, its oil resources, its communications astride international trade routes, and the apparently insoluble Arab-Israel conflict make it the most vulnerable region in the geostrategic confrontation between the superpowers.

Support for Israel in the United States appears to be unwavering. United States support for the moderate Arab states is heavily conditioned by the Zionist lobby in Washington. Disillusionment with the USA has led the moderate and monarchial states to turn for support and friendship elsewhere. Accordingly, the Soviet Union has taken advantage of Washington's "Israel, right-or-wrong" policy, to consolidate its political and economic influence in Arab Asia, to the detriment of U.S. interests. Countries like Jordan, who turn to the west for political, economic and military support are placed in a vulnerable position and have turned to the Soviet Union and the Republic of China for political and moral support in their dispute with Israel.

Thus, in the "Third Geostrategic Front," of the superpowers' global confrontation, U.S. influence is waning, and the Soviet Union and the Republic of China are cautiously moving in, in a deliberate and planned manner, to fill the vacuum created by Washington's overconcern for its surrogate in Arab Asia-Israel. West European countries like Great Britain, France, and to a lesser extent the consortium formed by the EEC's trading partners have accordingly made determined efforts to replace the United States as the main arms supplier to the pro-Western Arab states.

A new and important factor of far-reaching consequence is the entry of the Republic of China into the Middle East equation, in what was generally considered a U.S.-Soviet "preserve." In the next five to ten years, the political and economic influence of both China and Japan will grow at the



expense of the superpowers. To ensure strategic parity with an expansionist Israel, the Arabs could well turn to Peking and Tokyo for economic and military support. The ideological factor would count for nought, as Peking's relations with the Islamic Arabs are close and cordial. Pakistan could well act as the stepping-stone for China's growing influence in the Arab Middle East. In the consideration of strategic perceptions, the "China-Factor" cannot be ruled out.

#### THE FALLOUT OF THE IRAQ-IRAN WAR

The two important strategic lessons to emerge from the eight years of the Iran-Iraq war, were the ability of two medium Middle Eastern powers to wage a prolonged war of attrition and the pronounced division of the Arab world in their support for the contestants. Though the war ended in a strategic stalemate, with both the armed forces back to square one, manning their respective international borders, their national will to win and determination displayed was indeed, extraordinary. Despite crippling losses in manpower, equipment and the destruction of some cities, both powers managed to wage a "war of attrition" for eight long years.

The other important, political, psychological and economic factor to emerge was the extraordinary divisiveness prevalent in the Arab world itself. The moderate states of Saudi Arabia, Jordan, the Gulf Co-operation Council and a neutral Egypt were generous in their support of Iraq. Syria, Libya and to a lesser extent Algeria and South Yemen were open in their support of Iran. By closing its borders with Iraq and shutting down the Iraqi pipeline through its territory, Syria committed an act of hostility against its Arab neighbor, who was engaged in a life-and-death struggle with Iran. This was a very serious breach of the Arab solidarity implicit in the charter of the Arab League. The

breach between Baghdad and Damascus could well be exploited by a hostile Israel or superpower, to the grave disadvantage of a unified Arab front.

In the field of international politics, Soviet, French and West German support for Iraq is bound to be well-rewarded in the future by a grateful Baghdad. Tehran would in its turn, be beholden to China, North Korea, Japan and Pakistan for the military and economic support they extended, in various degrees. The countries to lose to both sides were perhaps the United States and Great Britain, whose motives were invariably suspect in Baghdad and in Tehran. But, the overall loser in the conflict was the Arab League itself. The rift in Arab ranks bodes ill for the future.

STRATEGIC PERCEPTIONS: 1990-2000  
SUPERPOWER PERCEPTIONS:  
THE USA'S PERCEPTIONS

Despite the thaw in relations in the Gorbachev era, the superpower "game plan" for global affairs and spheres of interest and influence in the Middle East continues unabated. A major U.S. strategic interest in the region is the security and survival of Israel. Apart from the Treaty of Strategic Cooperation, U.S. concern for Israel is reflected in its over-generous economic and military aid, (over a quarter of its global foreign aid), and its declared intention of ensuring Israel's military technological superiority over the Arab Armies.

First on the scale of priorities is the defense of the free world's oil sources and sea lanes in the troubled region of the Arab Gulf. As the interruption in the supply of oil to Western Europe and Japan would adversely affect the economic well-being and military preparedness of the USA's key allies, the Carter Doctrine specifically committed the United States to the defense of the Gulf region against a hostile power. The Carter Doctrine was

given military muscle by the introduction of the U.S. Central Command, a strategic command including Army, Air Force and Naval subcommands with a logistics base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. The ground force element includes Airborne, Marine and Infantry divisions based in the continental USA.

To give the semblance of an even-handed approach to the Arab-Israel conflict, the USA goes through the motions of supporting the moderate and pro-Western states of Jordan, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states and far-off Morocco and Tunisia, though the provision of sophisticated weapon systems is often denied to preserve Israel's superiority. In short, all else is subordinated to Israel's interests in the region.

Thus, until the turn of the century the first U.S. priority will be the defense of the oil-rich Gulf region against any hostile control, including any ground offensive into Iran and Iraq by the Soviet Union aimed at the warm waters of the Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The U.S.'s second strategic priority for the region will be very strong support for Israel, with the powerful Arab state Egypt neutralized by the Camp David Peace Treaty but kept in play by generous economic aid to an impoverished Egyptian economy. A third priority will be to ensure the political stability of the moderate Arab states against any radical or fundamentalist takeover which could possibly pose an added threat to oil or Israel.

#### THE SOVIET UNION'S PERCEPTIONS

The Soviet Union's perception of the Middle East region is very apparently greatly influenced by historical and geographical factors. In historical terms, the Russians have found security in territorial expansion, at the expense of its weaker neighbors or nationalist forces considered inimical to Russian interests. In geographical terms, the "soft underbelly" of the Soviet

Union extends from the Georgian Republic on the Black Sea in the west to the Tadzhik Republic north of the wild Hindu Kush mountains on the border of Pakistan and the Sinkaing province of the Republic of China to the east. The fact that over 40 million Soviet Moslems inhabit the region, adjoining the Islamic regions to the south, is a further cause for concern. In short, the Soviet Union considers itself more directly threatened in the region than does the United States.

Thus, the Soviet Union's primary aim would be to ensure that its strategic "underbelly" is not further threatened by U.S. intervention. This threat could be neutralized by extending Soviet influence, whether political or military, to the further shores of the region--specifically to the warm waters of the Arab Gulf and the Indian Ocean. The Soviet presence in the Marxist states of South Yemen and Ethiopia and its attempted occupation of Afghanistan reflect the historical Soviet attempt to achieve security through expansion. The United States' reaction to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan was to shore up the defenses of Pakistan, and to ensure that the Soviet advance was checked in the mountainous terrain of Afghanistan by supporting the Afghanistan Mojaheddin Freedom Fighters. Interestingly enough, it was the Soviet's ignorance of Afghan history and of the national psychology of its devout Moslem and tribal inhabitants that would finally lead to the Soviet withdrawal of the bulk of its forces in February 1989.

In pursuance of its policy of strategic balance in the Middle East, the Soviet Union will continue to extend political, economic and military support to its client states of Syria and South Yemen, while at the same time attempting to woo the pro-Western Arab states away from their friendship and dependence on the United States. The Soviet Union's greatest strategic asset in the region remains the USA's unequivocal and one-sided support for Israel

in the Arab world. It is certain that Moscow will continue to attempt to exploit the USA's strategic "Achilles' heel," Israel.

#### ISRAEL'S PERCEPTIONS

Like the Soviet Union, Israel suffers from a pronounced threat complex from the Arab states, although its expansionist and aggressive policies have brought the death and destruction on neighboring countries, that its policy of Tohar Haneshek (Purity of Arms) implies. With Israel's obsession with security, the United States plays a major role in its defense preparedness--supplying the means for "Tohar Haneshek." Thus, Israel's strategy depends heavily on its deterrent strategy: Israel must maintain and demonstrate its warlike personality as that of a "Biting Beast."

The basic ingredients of Israel's deterrent strategy appears to be influenced by:

- o Arab hostility and aggressive intentions focused on a glaring inferiority of Israel's population of 4.5 million compared to the Arab's 100 million;

- o The size, complexity and division of the Arab world, however, reduces the significance of Israel's inferiority in numbers to manageable proportions;

- o The inability of the Arab states to coordinate their defense effort and offensive capability for a preemptive would encourage a change in Arab strategic perception from a long, drawn out war of attrition (the German Ermattungstrategie) to that of short and decisive war of annihilation (the German Niderwerfungstrategie);

- o Despite Israel's deterrent strategy, the possibility of a major war with a combination of Arab states in the next five to ten years is a distinct possibility;

o To achieve its strategic and economic goals, it would be necessary for Israel to develop and organize a foolproof mobilization plan. A standing (active) army of some 140,000 regulars and conscripts, can be reinforced by 500,000 reservists<sup>1</sup> in a 48-hour mobilization period. The sophisticated mobilization plan would enable the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) to initiate an Offensive War of Movement, based on primacy of air and armored forces.

Additional safeguards or deterrent devices, incorporated in its deterrent strategy, would be clearly defined "security margins," or "red lines," the crossing of which by the Arabs could precipitate war. These "red lines," which would act as strategic trip wires for the IDF, could include some of the following:

o A concentration of Arab forces on its borders, or in the confrontation states, like Syria or Jordan. This would include the deployment of forces from the outside to Syria or Jordan;

o An inordinate level of crossborder guerilla activity. The alleged purpose of Operation Peace for Galilee in 1982, was to stamp out PLO guerilla activity directed at Israel from bases in South Lebanon;

o An attempt to deny water resources or interference with sea and air routes to and from Israel;

o The introduction of ICBM's or other sophisticated weapons which pose a direct threat to Israel; and

o An attempt to develop a Nuclear or a Chemical Warfare capability.

Despite the strategic threat implicit in Israel's "deterrent strategy," the possibility of an Arab attack by the combined forces of the Unified Arab Command would always be present. The Ramadan War of October 1973 not only demolished the myth of Israeli military invincibility, but made a mockery of Israel's much vaunted but hollow strategic concept of deterrent strategy and

of the "collapse theory." But Israel's most effective strategy would continue to be one of the "Biting Beast" syndrome, relying on the triad of first strike, massive retaliation and counter-city targeting. In the final analysis, if conventional deterrence fails, a rational Israeli course would be to "go nuclear." However, this would expose Israel's congested cities of Tel Aviv and Haifa to attack by Arab ICBM's or SCUD's carrying chemical warheads. Arab planners are aware of Israel's sensitivity to human casualties--the Achilles' heel of its otherwise plausible "deterrent strategy."

ARAB PERCEPTIONS AND JORDAN'S ROLE:  
ARAB PERCEPTIONS

As Arab nationalists had rid themselves of Anglo-French rule in the aftermath of World War II, the forcible implantation of a Zionist state in the body politic of the Arab homeland understandably caused a violent reaction in the Arab world. At the end of World War I Arabs had been doublecrossed by their erstwhile Anglo-French allies, and following World War II, an embryonic and sickly Arab League was confronted with an alien state in their midst with western connivance and support.

Understandably, Israel was perceived as the Arabs' "Enemy Number One," and identified as Al-Istimar or the "Imperialist Devil." Though the political and strategic perceptions of each other were, in fact, grossly exaggerated, Israel adopted the "Mailed Fist" policy towards the Arabs. It was Arab and Israeli perception of each other, that led inexorably to the self-fulfilling prophecy of war between the Arabs and Israel. Thus, the perennial and deep-seated antagonism and rejectionism between the two peoples has resulted in a policy of "Evolution of Diplomacy," injected by a concept or strategic deterrent of "Force Diplomacy." But, as history has shown, no amount of military power can

enforce a political solution against the will of the people, whether Algerian, Vietnamese or Palestinian.

#### JORDAN'S ROLE IN THE REGION

In the historical sense, the Hashemites have been on the firing line of the Arab drive for independence ever since the turn of the century. In 1908, Sherif Hussein bin Ali, in his capacity as Grand Sherif of Mecca, crossed swords with the Young Turks, only to be betrayed by his Anglo-French allies after the defeat of Turkey. From 1920 onwards, Amir Abdullan of Transjordan had to battle with an imperialist mandatory power and the rise of aggressive Zionism in Palestine. After the Arab-Israel Wars of 1948, 1956 and 1967, King Hussein of Jordan had to guide his minuscule kingdom through dangerous waters. At times his Arab neighbors were a greater threat to his Kingdom than the Israelis! The most serious challenge to Hashemite rule was the Palestinian insurrection of 1970 that plunged Jordan into a disastrous civil war, with a Syrian force invading northern Jordan. Despite the grave twin threats posed by a belligerent Israel and Arab hostility, King Hussein has adopted a policy of moderation and pragmatism, which has advocated a peaceful settlement to the problem of Palestine.

With the political experience and leadership of over 80 years in the most volatile region in the world, the Hashemite Kingdom has not hesitated in taking a lead in Arab and international affairs. It would be fair to say that the idea of an International Peace Conference to solve the problem of Palestine on a permanent basis originated from King Hussein.

Thus, apart from his kingdom's central strategic location in the region, King Hussein has made determined efforts at presenting an United Arab Front to the world--a by no means easy task! Jordan has established good relations



with Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the Gulf states, and the bitter Baathist's rivals-- Syria and Iraq. The fact that Amman has hosted two Arab League Summit Conferences in 1980 and 1987 is indicative of Jordan's key role in attempting to smooth over differences between opposing Arab regional blocs and individual states of the Arab League.

In addition to maintaining good relations with non-Arab countries like Turkey and Pakistan, Jordan's relations with the USA, the Soviet Union, China and West Europe are close and friendly. Though U.S. support for Jordan and the Arab cause is lukewarm and ambivalent, King Hussein has kept the lines to Washington open. Jordan could thus act as a conduit for an exchange of views between the USA and western Europe on the one hand, and the more radical and anti-western Arab states on the other.

In short, Jordan, apart from serving as the strategic lynchpin of the region, acts as a moderate and stabilizing force in the less-than-happy relations that currently exist between the USA and the Arab world. Like his great-grandfather, Sherif Hussein, and grandfather, King Abdullah, King Hussein is prepared to accept political responsibility and to play an active role in the furtherance of peace and security for the region. King Hussein, is no drawing-room strategist floating hypothetical schemes, but is "up-forward" in the international firing line. There is no ducking of responsibility or avoiding hard, difficult and unpopular decisions.

#### AN ANALYSIS OF STRATEGIC PERCEPTIONS TO 2000 AD

An analysis of the historical processes, motivated by Arab nationalism since 1900 and the prevailing political environment indicates the probability of a sixth Arab-Israeli War, (the Lebanon War of 1982 being the fifth), in the next five to ten years. Because the Israeli government, confident of U.S.

support, would reject outright any solution of the Palestinian right to self-determination, it will be only a matter of time before the West Bank is absorbed into Eretz Israel. Since the Arabs are equally determined to ensure the establishment of a Palestinian state in the Occupied Territories, three hypotheses are possible. These are:

o Hypothesis 1: A Peaceful Settlement - A peaceful settlement of the dispute, with the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank in confederation with Jordan. At a later stage, Israel could be included in an Arab Economic Community on similar lines to the EEC (European Economic Community);

o Hypothesis 2: A "No-War, No-Peace" Scenario - A "No-War, No-Peace" scenario, with Israel content to maintain the status quo by the "Diplomacy of Force," would inevitably lead to an all-out war. The on going Intifada would ensure that Israeli plans to hold on to the Occupied Territories would be thwarted, and it could well result in the forcible ejection of the Arab population into Lebanon and across the River Jordan into Jordan. A third exodus from Palestine would unquestionably lead to war;

o Hypothesis 3: War or the "Final Solution" - Despite Israel's technological superiority, a sixth Arab-Israeli War appears inevitable. The sixth Arab-Israeli War would, however, be totally different in character to all the former conventional wars, as ICBM's, chemical and nuclear weapons could well be introduced by either side, as a last resort, in the form of a preemptive strike, or, in the form of a counteroffensive to overcome a strategic setback. While Israel would be in a position to severely maul the Arab military and economic infrastructure, an Arab "spasm" ICBM/SCUD strike against Israel's congested population centers would in turn, result in horrendous civilian casualties. The sixth Arab-Israeli War would thus be a

"war of annihilation" that would, of necessity, to be fought to the bitter end. It would be a regional nuclear and chemical Armageddon.

The sixth Arab-Israeli War would not be decided by armored divisions, F-15's, chemical warfare or nuclear warheads, but by the will of the people. The nation with the stronger will and determination will win. For in the words of Sherif Hussein bin Ali, the moral and psychological factors, in war or revolution, are more important than the purely physical.<sup>2</sup>

#### ENDNOTES

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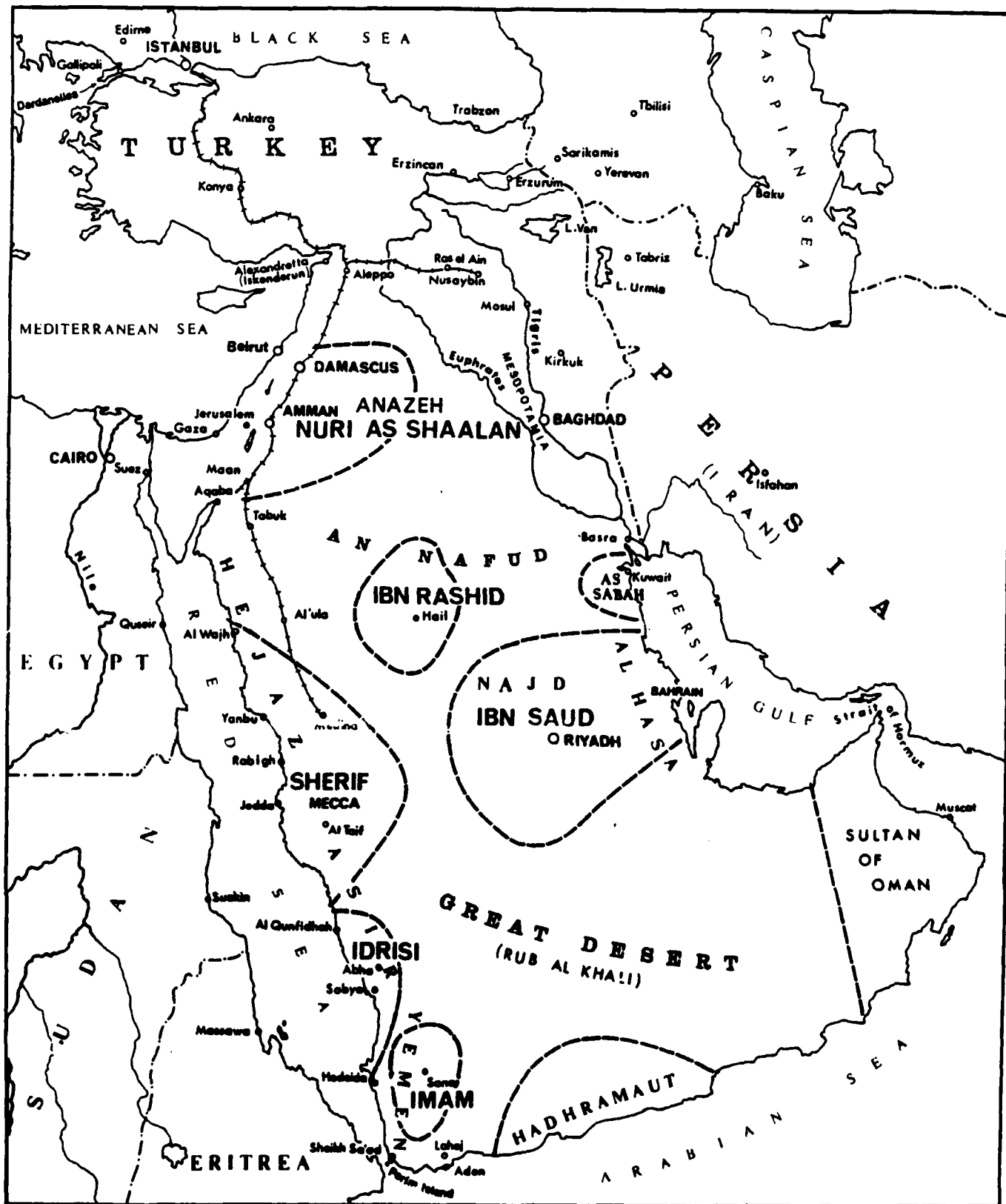
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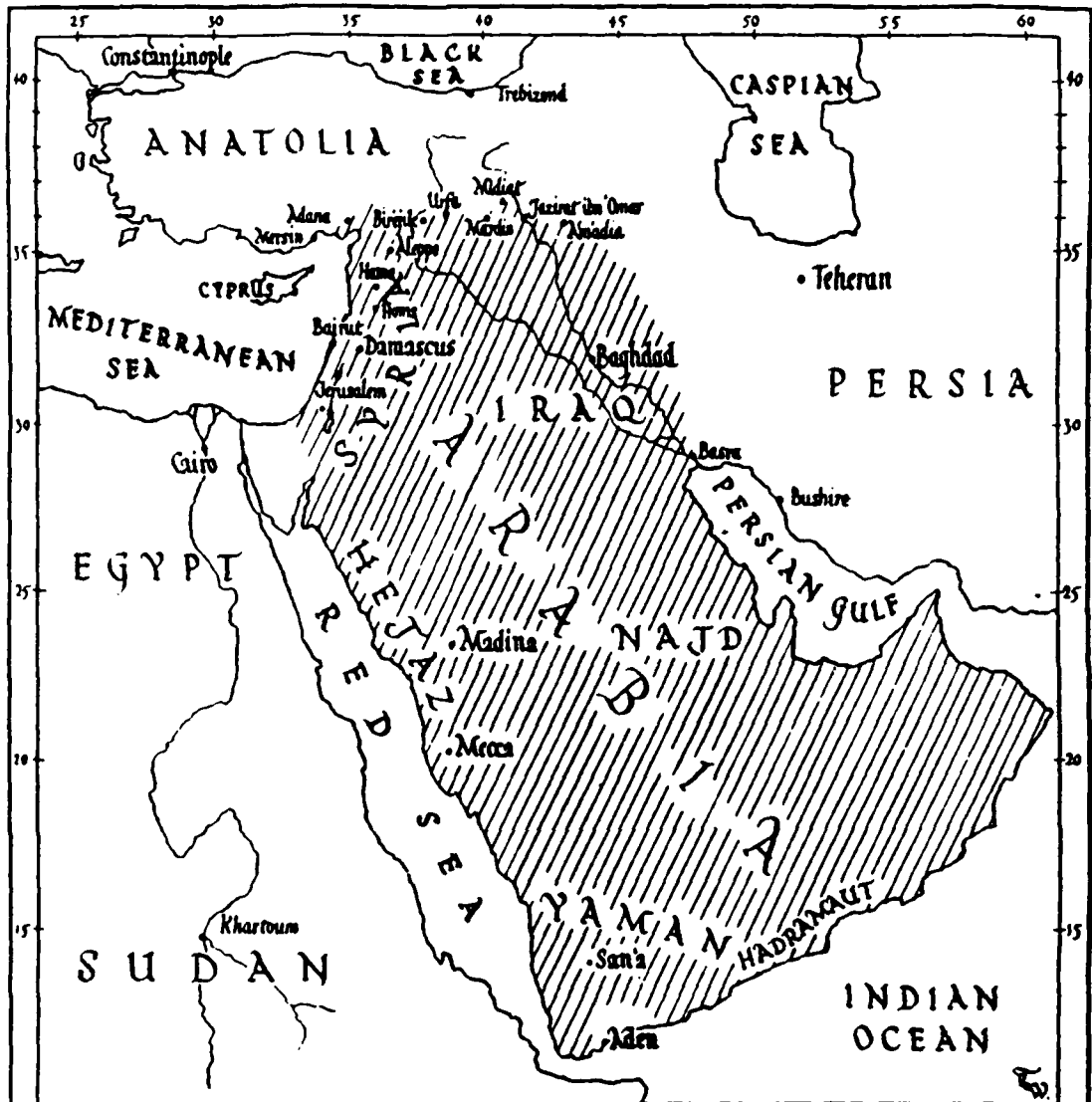
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Map 1  
 Arabia, Syria and the Ottoman Empire, 1914



Brigadier S.A. El-Adroos, The Hashemite Arab Army, 1908-1979, p. 663.

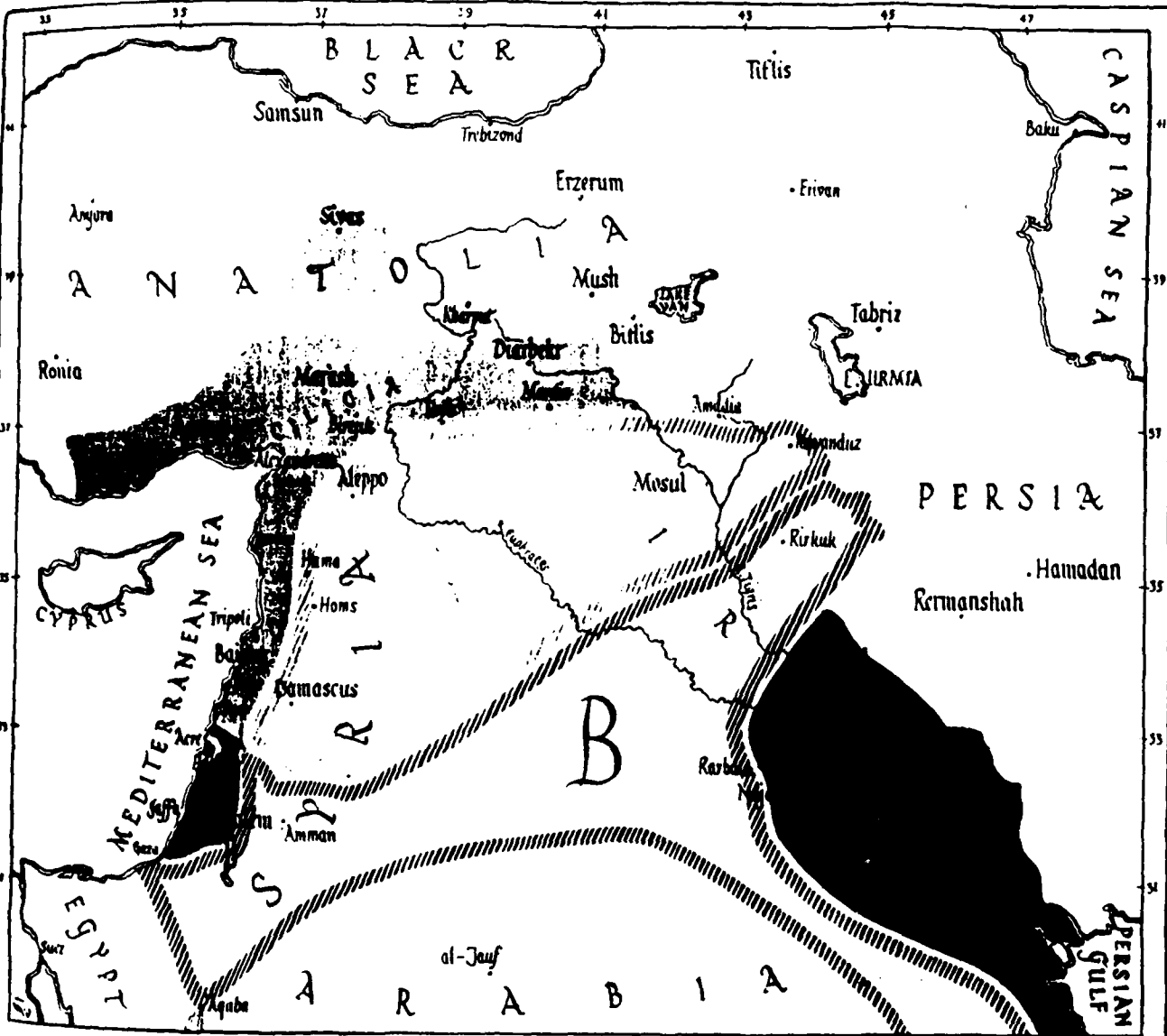


## THE EASTERN ARAB WORLD

*The shaded portion represents the area of Arab independence as defined in the Sharif Husain's note of July 14, 1915*

George Antonious, The Arab Awakening.

Map 3



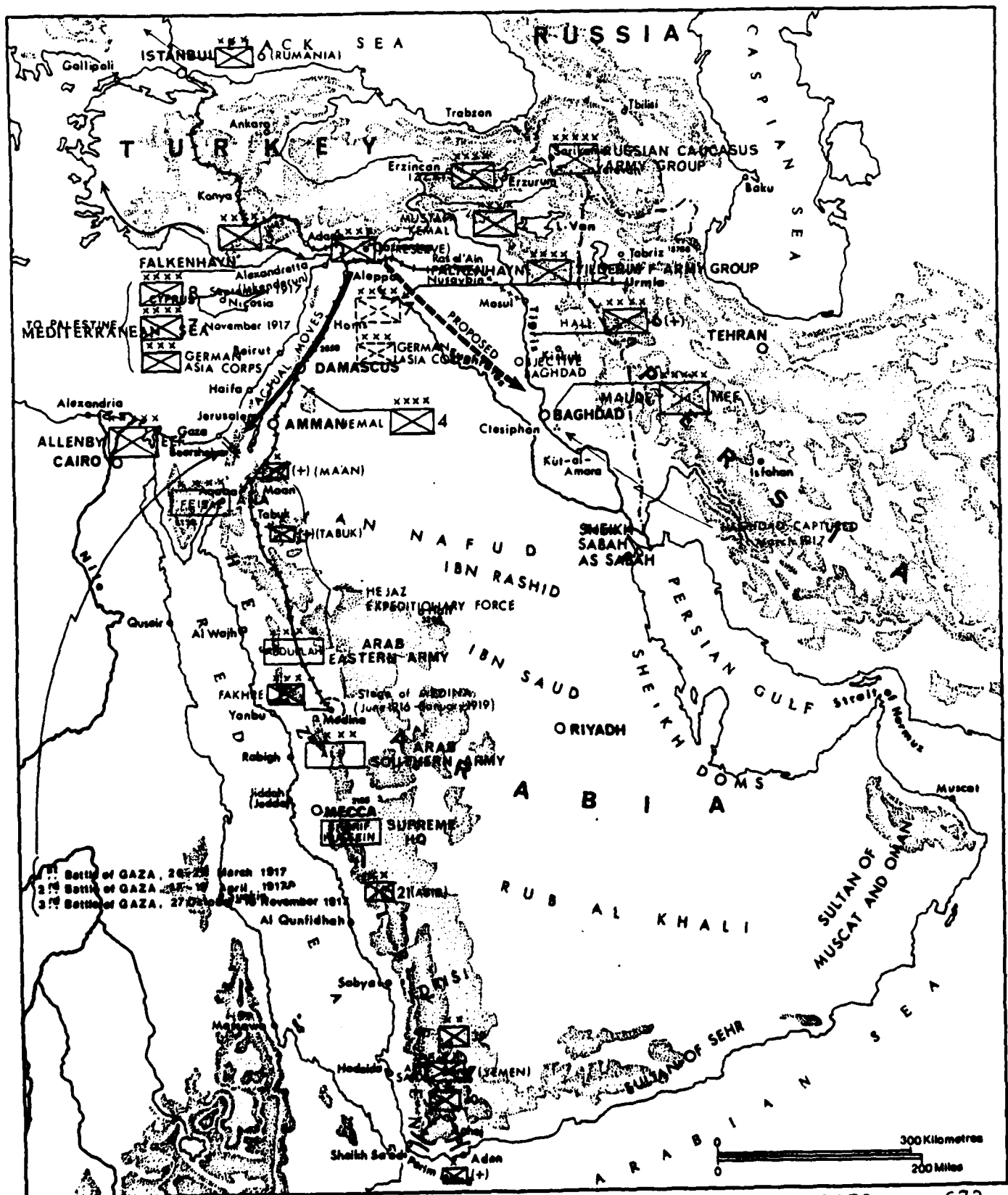
## THE PARTITION OF SYRIA AND IRAQ AS DEVISED IN THE 1916 ("SYRES-PICOT") AGREEMENT.

George Antonious, The Arab Awakening.





'YILDERIM': Planned Objectives and Dispositions  
August 1917



Brigadier S.A. El-Adroos, *The Hashemite Arab Army, 1908-1979*, p. 672.