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T. E. Lawrence:  
Theorist and Campaign Planner

A Monograph  
by

Major Lawrence W. Moores  
Armor

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School of Advanced Military Studies  
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by Major Lawrence W. Moores, USA, 55 pages.

This monograph analyzes T. E. Lawrence as a military theorist and campaign planner. It investigates whether Lawrence's development of his own theory of war assisted him in planning the Arab campaign during World War I.

The monograph focuses in four areas. The first section discusses the historical background of Lawrence and the Arab revolt. This section establishes the basis for Lawrence's understanding of war and of the theater of operations. In addition, it identifies the aims of the Arab revolt and why Arab actions were important to the Allied cause. The second section focuses on Lawrence's theory of war. This section explains his theory and how he developed it. The third section deals with how Lawrence's theory addressed the Arab's ends (desired end state for the war), means (use of the resources available), and ways (the method for employing the means to attain the ends). In a fourth and concluding section, the monograph proposes that T. E. Lawrence's development of a theory of war did assist him in planning the Arab campaign during World War I.

Lawrence's theory of war accomplished two functions. First, it clarified the past, what had happened in the Arab revolt to that point. Secondly, it helped Lawrence anticipate the future. A future that came to fruition because of Lawrence's ability to transcend his role as a theorist. Using his theory as a basis, Lawrence carried his rational approach to war into the development of an operational concept, the "war of detachment," and a fighting doctrine to fulfill it. With these means in hand, Lawrence devised a way to employ them. Logically, the way Lawrence devised was a campaign plan designed in accordance with his theory.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I.	INTRODUCTION.....	1
II.	BACKGROUND	
	THOMAS E. LAWRENCE.....	3
	THE ARAB REVOLT.....	6
III.	THEORY.....	9
IV.	LAWRENCE'S ENDS, MEANS, AND WAYS	
	ANALYSIS OF THE DESIRED END STATE.....	14
	ANALYSIS OF THE MEANS.....	16
	ANALYSIS OF THE WAYS.....	24
V.	CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS.....	36
	MAP 1. LAWRENCE'S 1909 TOUR OF SYRIA AND PALESTINE.....	40
	MAP 2. THE HEJAZ.....	41
	MAP 3. THE HEJAZ RAILWAY.....	42
	MAP 4. AKABA.....	43
	MAP 5. LAWRENCE'S CAMPAIGN PROPOSAL FOR PALESTINE.....	44
	MAP 6. THE ARAB REVOLT.....	45
	ENDNOTES .....	46
	BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	52

Wisdom prevails over strength, knowledge over brute force; for wars are won by skillful strategy, and victory is the fruit of long planning.<sup>1</sup>

## I. INTRODUCTION

Between 1914 and 1918 most of the world's attention focused on the battlefields in France. During this same time, however, men were also fighting on battlefields in Palestine. The actions in Palestine were part of a controversial British eastern campaign. While many people in England favored concentrating on the war in France without sideshows, others believed that the threat of the Turks seizing the Suez Canal required action in the east.

Whatever the merits or demerits of the British eastern strategy, the Arab revolt in Palestine was a valuable addition to the overall eastern campaign. The man who devised and inspired the Arab's campaign was Thomas Edward Lawrence, better known as "Lawrence of Arabia".

Most people know Lawrence as a practitioner of guerrilla warfare. Some even consider his leadership of the Arab revolt as a classic guerrilla action.<sup>2</sup> However, Lawrence did not lead the revolt. The Arabs had their own command structure. Lawrence's achievement was gained through advice and example; he made the Arab's struggle for independence an integral and valued part of the allied campaign to defeat Turkey.

While the popular image of Lawrence is that of a guerrilla, he was much more. He was responsible to the Commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force (EEF) for the synchronization of Arab



actions with the actions of the allies. Similarly, Lawrence felt responsible for assisting the Arabs in achieving their strategic aims. It is in coping with these dual responsibilities that Lawrence's brilliance emerges.

While his brilliance in guerrilla warfare is well known, Lawrence's brilliance as a scholar is not. As a youth, in pursuit of a well rounded education, Lawrence studied military history and theory. Armed with this theoretical knowledge, Lawrence could see that the Arab's military situation in 1916 did not follow traditional military theory. Faced with the uniqueness of the Arab situation, Lawrence developed his own theory of war. A theory that led to a unique operational concept, doctrine, and campaign design.

Though Lawrence became a great romantic hero, his literary work, Seven Pillars Of Wisdom, reveals his true greatness as a military theorist. Since the first publication of Seven Pillars Of Wisdom, many writers have attempted to discredit both Lawrence and his version of what happened during the war. Rumors charge him with sexual aberration, lying, and even spying.<sup>3</sup> If, however, we leave others to grapple with the legend of "Lawrence of Arabia" and merely consider what Lawrence said and did, then we will not only discover an expert in the practice of guerrilla warfare, but also an expert in military theory, strategy, and operational art.

This monograph will analyze Lawrence as a theorist and campaign planner. It will investigate Lawrence's development of

his theory of war and answer the question: Did Lawrence's development of a theory of war assist him in planning the Arab campaign during World War I?

To answer this question the monograph will focus in four areas. The first section will discuss the historical background of Lawrence and the Arab revolt. This section will establish the basis for Lawrence's understanding of war and of the theater of operations. In addition, it will establish the aims of the Arab revolt and why Arab actions were important to the Allied cause. The second section will focus on Lawrence's theory of war. This section will explain his theory and how he developed it. The third section will deal with how Lawrence's theory addressed the Arab's ends (desired end state for the war), means (use of the resources available), and ways (the method for employing the means to attain the ends). Finally, in a fourth and concluding section, I will use the weight of evidence from the analysis contained in previous sections to answer the research question. I will then discuss the implications of my findings on current operational concepts, doctrine, and training.

## II. BACKGROUND

### THOMAS E. LAWRENCE

While it is true that Lawrence rose from obscurity to become the legendary "Lawrence of Arabia", it is presumptuous to credit his remarkable accomplishments solely to natural abilities. Lawrence's own words have helped to create the misconception that he was unprepared for the tasks required of him. In Seven Pillars

of Wisdom, Lawrence says:

I was sent to the Arabs as a stranger, unable to think their thoughts or subscribe to their beliefs, but charged by duty to lead them.<sup>4</sup>

Nothing could be farther from the truth. It is doubtful if anyone could have been more suited by education and experience to perform the duties assigned to Lawrence.

Around the age of fifteen Lawrence began to read what he subsequently described as "the usual school boy stuff".<sup>5</sup> His reading included Edward S. Creasy's Fifteen Decisive Battles of the World, William F. P. Napier's History of the War in the Peninsula, William Coxe's Marlborough, Alfred T. Mahan's Influence of Sea Power Upon History, and George F. R. Henderson's Stonewall Jackson.

While studying at Oxford, where he earned first class honors in history, Lawrence's curiosity lead him to the works of Carl von Clausewitz, Henri Jomini, Karl von Willisen, Rudolf von Caemmerer, Helmut von Moltke, Colmar von der Goltz, Jacques de Guibert, Pierre de Bourcet, and Maurice de Saxe.<sup>6</sup> Of these many theorists, two were to have a major influence on Lawrence. First, was Carl von Clausewitz. When Lawrence compared Clausewitz to other theorist he found him to be "intellectually so much the master of them, and his book so logical and fascinating, that unconsciously I accepted his finality."<sup>7</sup> The second theorist that would impact upon Lawrence's subsequent accomplishments was Maurice de Saxe. In de Saxe, Lawrence found "broader principles"<sup>8</sup> than those of the other theorist.

Ultimately, to understand Lawrence's success is to realize how familiar he was with the terrain and the people within his area of operations. In 1909, Lawrence walked through Syria from Acre to Antioch and inland past Aleppo to the upper Euphrates River (see map 1). For three years (1911-13), he was a part of the British Museum Expedition to Jerablus on the upper Euphrates. During the expedition Lawrence worked on the excavation of the site of ancient Carachemish. He also visited Egypt and extended his walks through Syria.'

In the winter of 1913-14, Lawrence took part in the military survey of the Sinai desert.<sup>10</sup> Through constant travel and study Lawrence gained an extensive knowledge of the people and terrain of Palestine. During this extended period of travel he also perfected his linguistic skills in Arabic.

In 1914, after the outbreak of World War I, Lawrence received a commission as a lieutenant in the British Army. Assigned to Egypt in December, Lawrence found himself attached to the military intelligence staff concerned with Arab affairs. From 1914 to 1916, he worked on intelligence matters throughout the Eastern Theater. Up to that point, except for his intelligence work, Lawrence's interest in warfare centered mainly on the abstract. What he called "the theory and philosophy of warfare especially from the metaphysical side."<sup>11</sup> However, with the outbreak of the Arab Revolt in June of 1916, his concerns became more concrete.

## THE ARAB REVOLT

In 1916, when Turkey entered World War I as an ally of the central powers, Arab religious leaders in Mecca grasped the opportunity to revolt against Turkish rule. However, the Arab's aim in the revolt was nationalistic not religious.<sup>12</sup> The Arabs wanted to "extrude the Turk from all arabic-speaking lands in Asia."<sup>13</sup>

The British aims in supporting the Arab's revolt in the Hejaz fell into two categories. First were the political and economic aims of protecting British interests in the Suez Canal and in middle east oil. Additionally, the British wanted to take steps to counter anti-British feelings fomented by the Turks and Germans in Persia, Afghanistan, and Arabia. The second category of British aims dealt with the immediate operational situation in Palestine. A revolt by the Arabs could draw off Turkish troops from the front line in the Sinai as well as protect the flank of a British advance north from Egypt into Palestine.<sup>14</sup>

Sherif Husein of Mecca proclaimed the Arab revolt on 5 June 1916, with attacks on Mecca and Medina (see map 2).<sup>15</sup> On 10 June, the Arabs attacked the port of Jidda. With the help of the Royal Navy, Arab armies soon took Jidda and, subsequently, the coastal cities of Rabegh, Yenbo, and Qunfidha. By the end of September, except for Medina, the principal towns of the Hejaz were in Arab hands.

The Turks in Medina held strong positions, well protected by artillery. Meanwhile, from Syria, the Turks dispatched a

relief expedition of 15,600 men. With a rail link to Syria for sustainment, the expedition's arrival not only fortified Medina, but presented a significant offensive threat to the Arabs. The situation was critical for the Arab revolt. Fortunately, there were Englishmen in Cairo with experience in Arab affairs. Sir Reginald Wingate, Governor General of the Sudan, controlled allied operations to support the Arabs.<sup>16</sup> Lawrence was on Wingate's staff.

While on leave from Cairo, Lawrence succeeded in reaching the camp of Prince Feisal, one of Sherif Husein's sons, who commanded the front outside Medina. Lawrence's short observation of the situation enabled him, upon return to Cairo, to produce a convincing argument to support the Arabs with material and advisors.<sup>17</sup> Convinced of the need to support the Arab revolt, the British dispatched a group of advisors to the Hejaz. The advisors were to assist the Arab leaders and train a regular Arab army. Lawrence was assigned as an assistant to Feisal.

The situation confronting Lawrence was not encouraging. The Arabs had no indigenous army to face the well organized Turkish military forces. Furthermore, the various Arab tribes were neither unified nor well armed.<sup>18</sup> Husein had about 50,000 men under his control, but fewer than 10,000 had rifles.<sup>19</sup>

In December, the Turks began an advance to seize Mecca (see map 2). Because of the rugged terrain surrounding Mecca, the Turkish advance from Medina had to move through Yenbo and the Red Sea port of Rabegh. The Turks easily penetrated Feisal's forces

defending in what Lawrence had erroneously assessed as "impregnable" hills around Medina.<sup>20</sup> As the Turks continued their advance to Yenbo, Lawrence telegraphed the Royal Navy for assistance in defending the town.

Yenbo was a small town protected on all but one side by the sea. Beyond the town, a flat plain without any concealment stretched for a considerable distance. Naval gunfire could easily cover this area.<sup>21</sup>

Five ships concentrated in Yenbo, among them was a seaplane carrier.<sup>22</sup> As the Turks approached, seaplanes attacked them with bombs and machine guns. Outposts met the Turks about three miles out from the town. As the night of the expected attack approached the ships scanned the plain outside the city with search lights, but no assault came. The Turks, deterred by the British war ships, stopped their advance. Without the ability to use the approach to Mecca from Yenbo, and fearful of British naval forces and the regular Arab Army being trained by British advisors in Rabegh, the Turks were contained.

Having succeeded in stopping the enemy's army, Feisal and Lawrence sought to continue a traditional campaign against the Turks. Knowing that they could not attack the Turks directly in Medina, Feisal and Lawrence began operations to achieve two aims. First, they had to weaken the garrison in Medina so that it could be successfully attacked.<sup>23</sup> Secondly, they had to keep the Turks from moving north to Palestine where they could oppose the British.

Relying upon Clausewitz' assertion that lines of communication serve two functions: 1) as a source of supply and 2) as a route of withdrawal<sup>24</sup>, Lawrence and Feisal fixed their attention on making Medina vulnerable to capture by severing its umbilical cord, the Damascus-Medina railroad (see map 3). Therefore, they turned away from Mecca and marched north to capture Wejh from where they could cut the Turkish rail line.

### III. THEORY

In March 1917, while working to assist the Arabs in their struggle to cut the railroad and capture Medina, Lawrence fell ill. During a ten day convalescence at Aba Markha, he reviewed and contemplated the nature of the Arab revolt and the course it was taking. It quickly dawned on him that with the capture of Wejh the Arabs had won the war for the Hejaz. Unfortunately, in his words, no one "had the wit to see it."<sup>25</sup>

Prince Feisal's movement to Wejh threatened the Turks' line of communication with Syria. Instead of continuing their advance to Rabegh and Mecca, the Turks had to fall back to Medina. There they split their forces: one half defended the city, while the other dispersed along the length of the Hejaz railway to protect it from Arab actions launched from Wejh.

Initially, the Arab's and Lawrence's thinking were in concert. They believed that by beginning movement against the rail lines behind Medina, they could force the Turks into a battle. They were driven by the traditional military theories that stressed the destruction of the enemy. To rid the Hejaz and



other Arab lands of Turks, the Arabs would have to defeat the enemy in battle and seize Medina. Lawrence now realized that this would be a mistake. In his words:

We must not take Medina. The Turk was harmless there. In prison in Egypt he would cost us food and guards. We wanted him to stay at Medina, and every other distant place, in the largest numbers. Our ideal was to keep his railway just working, but only just, with the maximum of loss and discomfort. The factor of food would confine him to the railways, but he was welcome to the Hejaz Railway, and the Trans-Jordan railway, and the Palestine and Syrian railways for the duration of the war, so long as he gave us the other nine hundred and ninety-nine thousandths of the Arab world. . . . [His] pride in his imperial heritage would keep him in his present absurd position—all flanks and no front.<sup>26</sup>

With his realization that the Arabs defeated the Turks in the Hejaz without a decisive battle, Lawrence, not surprisingly, began to look for the "equation between my book-reading and my movements."<sup>27</sup> Lawrence, like his contemporaries, had come to believe in the dictums of theorists like Clausewitz and French general Ferdinand Foch. As actions on the front in France showed, current military thought envisioned the aim of an army as the defeat of the enemy force in battle. As Lawrence saw it:

Victory could be purchased only by blood. This was a hard saying for us. As the Arabs had no organized forces a Turkish Foch would have no aim. The Arabs would not endure casualties. How would our Clausewitz buy his victory?<sup>28</sup>

Lawrence was in a quandary. His formal education and beliefs in military theory were in conflict with his observations of war in the Hejaz. Therefore, with his analysis of the campaign in the Hejaz as a paradigm, Lawrence proceeded to juxtapose "the whole house of war in its structural aspect, which was strategy, in its arrangements, which were tactics, and in the sentiment of

its inhabitants, which was psychology. . . ."<sup>29</sup>

The first area of confusion for Lawrence to clarify was the relationship between strategy and tactics. To Lawrence, strategy and tactics were "only points of view from which to ponder the elements of war."<sup>30</sup> As he saw it, "strategy was eternal, and the same and true: but tactics were the ever-changing languages through which it speaks."<sup>31</sup> While a strategist could learn from "Belisarius as from Haig,"<sup>32</sup> a tactician's concerns were more transient. Tacticians (soldiers) had "to know their means."<sup>33</sup>

Lawrence organized his thoughts by separating strategic and tactical considerations. Using these two points of view to examine warfare, Lawrence defined three elements: 1) the algebraic element of things, 2) the biological element of lives, and 3) the psychological element of ideas.<sup>34</sup> To Lawrence, these elements pertained to all levels of war.

The algebraic element dealt with known invariables. It was purely scientific and analyzed the situation according to the laws of mathematics. The algebraic element or hecastics, as Lawrence termed it, dealt with fixed conditions like space and time, and inorganic things. An analysis of the algebraic element yielded information concerning terrain, mobility and average effectiveness of units, firepower effects of weapons, and logistics.

While Lawrence saw the algebraic element as calculable, the biological element or bionomics, as he called it, dealt with

uncertainty. It sought to analyze those factors in war that cannot be expressed quantitatively. Under this heading fell the various factors that make waging war an art: illogical variabilities, brilliance, heroism, and fear. Anything that made algebraic estimates uncertain due to the actions of individuals fell into the biological element.

The biological element dealt with "the breaking point, life and death, or less finally wear and tear."<sup>36</sup> It was

[t]he 'felt' element in troops, not expressible in figures, [it] had to be guessed at by . . . the greatest commander[s] . . . [who are those] whose intuitions most nearly happen. Nine-tenths of tactics were certain enough to be teachable in schools; but the irrational tenth was like the kingfisher flashing across the pool, and in it lay the test of generals.<sup>36</sup>

Lawrence thought that Foch and other theorists had elevated one aspect of bionomics, the killing of the enemy, above all other concerns in war.<sup>37</sup> Lawrence, however, saw killing as merely one means to reach the desired end. Bionomics did not limit itself to humanity. It carried over into material. In Lawrence's view the destruction of the enemy's will was paramount. If the enemy's will to fight could be destroyed by interdicting food, water, and other supplies, he would not have to be killed.

Lawrence's third category is the psychological element of war or diathetics, as he called it. The scope of the psychological element encompassed propaganda against the enemy, the motivation and conditioning of one's own soldiers, and the conditioning of neutral parties. Essentially, "it dealt with uncontrollables, with subjects incapable of direct command."<sup>38</sup>

Lawrence placed diathetics in perspective as follows:

We had to arrange their minds in order of battle just as carefully and as formally as other officers would arranged their bodies. And not only our own men's minds, though naturally they came first. We must also arrange the minds of the enemy, so far as we could reach them; then those other minds of the nation supporting us behind the firing-line, since more than half the battle passed there in the back; then the minds of the enemy nation waiting the verdict, and the neutrals looking on; circle beyond circle."

In Lawrence's view the diathetic was the most abundant means at his disposal. His activities in this area were not bounded by material limits. Lawrence saw war not as just a matter of weapons and death but of ideas and intellect as well.

The end result of Lawrence's convalescence at Aba Markha was an original stream of thought that became a new theory of war. He produced a "plausible . . . body of principles offered to explain phenomena,"<sup>40</sup> by definition a theory. In this case the phenomena explained was war.

The theory of war that Lawrence developed owed much to his thorough knowledge of military theory. Clausewitz proposed three objects of war: the armed forces, the country, and the enemy's will.<sup>41</sup> While most practitioners of war were concentrating on Clausewitz' first object, Lawrence concentrated on the latter two. Lawrence became disgusted with the accepted doctrines of the European armies and their reliance on the teachings of Clausewitz. In response, he fell back on the "broader principles" he had discovered in the theory of de Saxe.

Lawrence balanced his understanding of Clausewitz with de Saxe. De Saxe warned of the perils of the blind, unthinking

adoption of military principles.<sup>42</sup> Lawrence's theory of war, like that of de Saxe, was against the compartmentalization of war. Lawrence looked at war as "antinomian".<sup>43</sup> It was subject to rules, perhaps, but definitely not laws. Of further significance to Lawrence was de Saxe's belief that decisive battles were unnecessary. De Saxe said:

I do not favor pitched battles, especially at the beginning of a war, and I am convinced that a skillful general could make war all his life without being forced into one. Nothing so reduces the enemy to absurdity as this method; nothing advances affairs better. Frequent small engagement will dissipate the enemy until he is forced to hide from you.<sup>44</sup>

Through his experience with the Turkish response to the Arab's move to Wejh, Lawrence now saw that de Saxe's practical point of view held the key to an Arab victory. His next step was to initiate a "new" war against the Turks.

#### IV. LAWRENCE'S ENDS, MEANS, AND WAYS

##### ANALYSIS OF THE DESIRED END STATE

To begin the new war, Lawrence clarified his desired end state. Not surprisingly, the elements of Lawrence's theory are discernable:

Now the Arab aim was unmistakably geographical, to occupy all Arabic-speaking lands in Asia [algebraic]. In the doing of it Turks might be killed, yet 'killing Turks' would never be an excuse or aim [biological]. If they would go quietly the war would end. If not, they must be driven out: but at the cheapest possible price, [biological] since the Arabs were fighting for freedom, a pleasure only to be tasted by a man alive [psychological].<sup>45</sup>

To achieve these aims it was imperative that the revolt spread north into Palestine. Palestine was the key to Syria, the northernmost Arab land. Syria also contains the city of Damascus.

Before the Arab revolt, Damascus was a center for the Arab independence movement and the scene of brutal Turkish counter-measures.<sup>44</sup> Arabs viewed Damascus as a paradise<sup>45</sup> and in Lawrence's mind "the Arab Movement would not justify its creation if the enthusiasm of it did not carry the Arabs into Damascus."<sup>46</sup> Because of this symbolic significance, the freeing of Damascus became an important psychological objective of the Arab revolt.

The clarification of just the Arab's aims was not sufficient for Lawrence to begin planning a campaign as he was serving two masters, one British and one Arab. As a British officer, Lawrence was responsible to the commander of the Egyptian Expeditionary Force, Sir Archibald Murray, to steer Feisal's army in a direction that supported the British in Palestine. In this role, Lawrence was to execute a major operation in support of the overall Palestine Campaign. Lawrence's second master was Feisal. In his role of advisor, Lawrence had to act in the best interest of the Arabs and assist in the direction of a campaign to achieve the Arabs desired end state. When the aims of his two masters coincided, as in the campaign in the Hejaz, Lawrence's job was easy. As the revolt moved north, Arab and British aims began to conflict.

The British aim was to defeat the Turks. However, the political end state they desired was significantly different than the Arab's. The British, in a secret agreement with France called the Sykes-Picot agreement, sought to divide the former Turkish holdings into mandates governed by the western allied powers.<sup>47</sup>

While the agreement acknowledged the Arab's claim to some former Turkish areas, the French would gain control of Syria and Lebanon.<sup>56</sup>

As time went by, Lawrence became increasingly ashamed of his dual role. He was in the difficult position of acting in the best interest of two parties while not being a traitor to either. Based on Lawrence's reputation and the personal trust established between Feisal and Lawrence, the Arabs accepted Britain's promises of fair treatment of Arab claims.

Faced with this difficult situation, Lawrence, an advocate of the Arab cause,

vowed to make the Arab Revolt the engine of its own success, as well as handmaid to our Egyptian campaign; and vowed to lead it so madly in the final victory that expediency should consul to the Powers a fair settlement of the Arab's moral claims.<sup>57</sup>

Lawrence faced the challenge of designing a campaign that: excluded the Turks from Arab lands (the algebraic element) at a minimum loss of Arab life (the biological element), freed the populace, and seized Damascus (the psychological element). All of this had to be done while supporting the British campaign in Palestine. Fortunately, the overall operational objective of defeating the Turkish army was the same for both of his masters.

#### ANALYSIS OF THE MEANS

With a clearly defined end state for his campaign, Lawrence proceeded to analyze the means available to him. His analysis took two forms. First, he identified the resources available and their characteristics. Secondly, he designed an

operational concept and doctrine that maximized the capabilities of his resource to produce an effective means. Characteristically, Lawrence used the three elements of his theory as a framework for his analysis.

Bedouin forces were algebraically the most militarily significant part of the Arab army. In Lawrence's words:

Our largest available resources were the tribesmen, men quite unused to formal warfare, whose assets were movement, endurance, individual intelligence, knowledge of the country, courage. . . . The precious element of our forces were Bedouin irregulars, and not the regulars whose role would only be to occupy places to which the irregulars had already given access.

The irregular bands Lawrence spoke of were constantly shifting in location and in number. The whole rebel army "took on the fashion of a feudal assemblage."<sup>33</sup> King Husein, residing in Mecca, kept out of the fighting, which he entrusted to his three eldest sons. Ali was south of Medina with approximately 8,600 men. Abdullah was east of Medina with 8-10,000 men and controlled 900 Egyptians and 700 irregulars at Rabegh. Feisal, with whom Lawrence traveled, commanded a force that varied from 2-8,000.<sup>34</sup>

Given the resources at his disposal, Lawrence had to determine the individual characteristics of the men in the force. He had to understand them as "humanity in battle."<sup>35</sup> This demanded an analysis of the biological element.

During the early stages of the campaign in the Hejaz, it was obvious that traditional terrain oriented missions did not suit the Bedouin. While attempting to secure the routes out of Medina and the avenues of approach to Mecca, Turkish forces



rapidly defeated the Bedouin. Only the actions of the Royal Navy at Yenbo and Rabegh saved Mecca from the Turkish advance. From these actions Lawrence concluded that "irregular troops are as unable to defend a point or line as they are to attack it."<sup>36</sup>

Without the capability to defeat the Turks in a conventional battle, Lawrence and Feisal moved to Wejh and began to raid the Turk's exposed flank. Lawrence discovered that the Bedouin were exemplary raiders. The randomness of the raids, the lack of specific terrain objectives, and the avoidance of enemy strength were typical of traditional Bedouin tribal warfare. Furthermore, the nomadic tendencies of the Bedouin minimized their vulnerability to Turkish counteraction.

Having identified the resources available, the Bedouin, and their characteristics, Lawrence proceeded to develop an operational concept and fighting doctrine. An operational concept and its associated doctrine are closely related to theory. While a theory of war seeks to explain a process, an operational concept is "... a broad concept which describes what operations are to be executed by Army forces on future battlefields."<sup>37</sup> It serves as "both an intermediate product and a part of the doctrine itself."<sup>38</sup> Therefore, doctrine is the end product of the process the theorist begins. It is the "condensed expression of [an army's] approach to fighting . . ."<sup>39</sup> Lawrence needed an operational concept and doctrine to employ his resources as a means. Both the operational concept and the doctrine produced by Lawrence emphasized his three elements of war.

Lawrence considered the space to forces ratio as the key algebraic element in the formulation of his operational concept and doctrine. He calculated the area encompassed by the conflict as approximately 140,000 square miles. Knowing that the Turks stationed garrisons of twenty men to cover each four square miles, Lawrence reasoned that the Turks would require 600,000 men to defend the area. The required 600,000 men were far above the 100,000 available to the Turks. Therefore, Lawrence concluded success was obtainable with the Arab force of 50,000 then available.<sup>60</sup>

Lawrence next considered how the Turks would deploy to defend the area. He reasoned that all regular armies were "like plants, immobile, firm-rooted, nourished through long stems to the head."<sup>61</sup> Thus, the Turks would likely defend "by a trench line."<sup>62</sup> Combining this belief with his analysis of the space to forces ratio, Lawrence concluded that by using mobility the Arabs could neutralize the Turks numerical superiority. He reasoned, "We might be a vapour, blowing where we listed."<sup>63</sup> As a "vapour" the Arabs would not present a target to the Turks.

It seemed a regular soldier might be helpless without a target, owning only what he sat on, and subjugating only what, by order, he could poke his rifle at.<sup>64</sup>

The Arab's mobility was an advantage to them only as long as they had space to fall back on. They could maintain this space as long as they had no vital points to cover. To Lawrence "[t]he virtue of irregulars lay in depth not in face."<sup>65</sup> The character of the operations he sought to impose on the Turks he likened to

naval warfare. Lawrence adapted Mahan's thought, "[h]e who commands the sea is at great liberty, and may take as much or as little of the war as he will," by adding: "he who commands the desert is equally fortunate."<sup>66</sup> Because of their mobility, the Arabs "commanded" the empty reaches of the desert. The desert gave the Arabs depth. With the Turks tied down to fixed posts, the Arabs could avoid confrontations by slipping back into the desert until the situation suited them better. Because of their superior mobility, depth also provided the Arabs with time.

Time was the algebraic element underlying Lawrence's doctrine of mobility. As Lawrence observed:

Our cards were speed and time, not hitting power. The invention of bully beef had profited us more than the invention of gunpowder, but gave us strategical rather than tactical strength, since in Arabia range was more that force, space greater than the power of armies.<sup>67</sup>

Lawrence obviously considered the extended wearing down of the enemy to be fundamental to his doctrine. His aim was "to seek the enemy's weakest material link and bear only on that till time made their whole length fail."<sup>68</sup>

To wear the enemy down, Lawrence had to bear on the biological element, the material resources of the Turks.

In Turkey things were scarce and precious, men less esteemed than equipment. Our cue was to destroy, not the Turk's army, but his minerals. The death of a Turkish bridge or rail, machine gun or charge of high explosive, was more profitable to us than the death of a Turk. In the Arab Army at the moment we were chary both of materials and of men.<sup>69</sup>

From this premise, Lawrence became convinced that the Arabs must fight with an economy of force. They could achieve this by reversing traditional theories of war.

Orthodoxy had laid down the maxim, applied to men, of being superior at the critical point and moment of attack. We might be superior in equipment in one dominant moment or respect; and for both things and men we might give the doctrine a twisted negative side, for cheapness' sake, and be weaker than the enemy everywhere except in that one point or matter. The decision of what was critical would always be ours.<sup>70</sup>

To fight the type of battle he envisioned, Lawrence adopted a "war of detachment."<sup>71</sup> Since the Arab Army had few men, this operational concept with its related doctrine was a clever turning of weakness into strength. Lawrence's basic premise was:

We were to contain the enemy by the silent threat of a vast unknown desert, not disclosing ourselves till we attacked. The attack might be nominal, directed not against him, but against his stuff; so it would not seek either his strength or his weakness, but his most accessible material.<sup>72</sup>

Lawrence felt that the Arabs should never try to maintain or improve an advantage. Their rule was to defend nothing and to rely upon the "tip and run." Lawrence sought to inflict "strokes" on the enemy not "pushes." His ideal was for the Arabs to use "the smallest force in the quickest time at the farthest place."<sup>73</sup>

An implied requirement of the "tip and run" or "war of detachment" is near perfect intelligence. Lawrence constantly strove to plan in certainty. In Lawrence's mind, a general could start to overcome uncertainty through hard work. In a letter to his biographer after the war he said:

Will you . . . strike a blow for hard work and thinking? I was not an instinctive soldier, automatic with intuitions and happy ideas. When I took a decision, or adopted an alternative it was after studying every relevant--and many an irrelevant--factor. Geography, tribal structure, religion.

social customs, language, appetites, standards—all were at my finger ends. The enemy I knew almost like my own side. I risked myself among them a hundred times, to learn.<sup>74</sup>

Lawrence also relied upon intelligence to provide security for his operations. Only with a detailed knowledge of the enemy could Arab forces be secure from detection by the Turks. Security together with mobility were necessary to deny targets to the enemy.

In Lawrence's view security encompassed three components. The first, intelligence, sought to eliminate uncertainty. However, he realized this was impossible to achieve. To guard against uncertainty, Lawrence relied upon the second component, a reserve force. For him, "the possibility of accident, of some flaw in materials was always in the general's mind, and the reserve unconsciously held to meet it."<sup>75</sup> The third component, a secure base, recognized the psychological element of war.

Lawrence appreciated the fact that men could not fight all of the time. Therefore, he advocated the use of secure base areas as sanctuaries. As Lawrence put it, "[The force] must have an unassailable base, something guarded not merely from attack, but from the fear of [it]."<sup>76</sup> The British Navy provided the Arabs with such a base in Wejh and the other Red Sea ports. But Lawrence did not limit his concept of the psychological element to the Royal Navy's ability to secure ports.

Secure bases in the interior of the country were critical to the long ranging raiding parties. To secure these areas Lawrence relied upon his concept of "arranging mens minds." By

using "propaganda,"<sup>77</sup> he sought to convert the local populace to the Arab cause. To be a secure base an area must,

have a friendly population, not actively friendly, but sympathetic to the point of not betraying rebel movements to the enemy. Rebellions can be made by 2% active in a striking force and 98% passively sympathetic.<sup>78</sup>

For the Arabs, a "province would be won when we had taught the civilians in it to die for our ideal of freedom."<sup>79</sup>

Lawrence had many means available to "arrange the minds of men," but one stood above all others. To Lawrence "the printing press is the greatest weapon in the armoury of the modern commander."<sup>80</sup> The ability to use "each newly-discovered method of communication favoured [sic] the intellectual above the physical."<sup>81</sup> While the Arabs would be restricted by their algebraic weakness, their ability to influence the mind or intellect of the unconverted and the enemy was bounded only by their ability to print and distribute propaganda.

To summarize his operational concept, Lawrence proposed the following thesis:

Granted mobility, security (in the form of denying targets to the enemy), time, and doctrine (the idea to convert every subject to friendliness), victory will rest with the insurgents, for the algebraical factors are in the end decisive, and against them perfections of means and spirit struggle quite in vain.<sup>82</sup>

Lawrence, accomplished two significant tasks to this point. First, he clarified the Arab's desired end state. Then, he determined the correct means to use in achieving the end state. The last challenge facing Lawrence was to develop the way in which he would use the means to accomplish his ends. This last task

would require the development and execution of a campaign plan.

### ANALYSIS OF THE WAYS

The doctrine Lawrence developed would alleviate one of the aims of the Arab campaign, which was to minimize casualties. To achieve the aims of excluding the Turks and freeing Arab lands, the Arabs needed a plan with three phases. Lawrence and Feisal had to (1) move the revolt north by physically moving Feisal's Northern Arab Army, (2) force the Turkish Army out of Arab territory, and (3) occupy Damascus. The sequential operations of the campaign plan, characteristically, relied upon the three elements of Lawrence's theory.

In accordance with the thesis of Lawrence's doctrine, the movement of the revolt north required a new base of operations. The port city of Akaba was the location Feisal and Lawrence chose for this new base. The port was north of the Hejaz, close to the Suez Canal, and close to the Hejaz railway (see map 3). Akaba was also the only Turkish port left in the Red Sea. Its seizure would support British actions because without it the Turks could no longer mine the Red Sea or use it to support German submarine operations.<sup>23</sup>

The possession of Akaba, in itself, was immaterial. Lawrence's appreciation for the terrain as a part of his algebraic element of war dictated a broader objective than just the port city. In order for the Arabs to operate from Akaba against the Turks in Palestine and Syria, they would need to control the track leading eastward from Akaba through Wadi Itm and up onto the Maan

plateau (see map 4). This track was the only practical route for moving arms, ammunition, and supplies inland.<sup>64</sup> To gain control of this area would require a large scale attack. A seaborne attack of Akaba was infeasible since the Turks had gun positions in the hills around the town that commanded the approaches from the sea.<sup>65</sup> Furthermore, Turkish garrisons from Wadi Itm and Maan could quickly reinforce Akaba if required. Fortunately, Lawrence understood that "[t]he port of Akaba was naturally so strong that it could be taken only by surprise from inland."<sup>66</sup>

Lawrence's plan for the capture of Akaba relied upon his careful analysis of the strengths of the Arab's biological element and the doctrine used in a "war of detachment".

Our idea was to advance suddenly from El Jefer, to cross the railway line and to crown the great pass-Nagb el Shtar--down which the road dipped from the Maan plateau to the red Guweira plain. To hold this pass we should have to capture Aba el Lissan, the large spring at its head, about sixteen miles from Maan; but the garrison was small, and we hoped to overrun it with a rush. We would then be astride the road, whose post at the end of the week should fall from hunger.<sup>67</sup>

Lawrence's plan relied upon surprise to seize the Turks' weakest point. From this point the Arabs could cut the Turks' source of supply rendering them helpless.

Jeopardizing the plan was the Turkish force in Maan. Just as it could move to reinforce Akaba, so it could act against the rear of the Arab's planned attack.

[The] crux of our plan was the attack on Aba el Lissan, lest the force in Maan have time to sally out, relieve it, and drive us off the head of Shtar. If, as at present, they were only a battalion, they would hardly dare move; and should they let it fall while waiting for reinforcements to arrive, Akaba would surrender to us, and we should be based



on the sea and have the advantageous gorge of Itm between us and the enemy."

To accommodate the Turkish threat at Maan, Lawrence relied upon the psychological element. He arranged the minds of the enemy.

It was very difficult for the Arabs to keep their movements secret. As they moved through tribal areas the leaders of the Arab revolt would try to convert the local inhabitants to the Arab cause. Unfortunately, those left unconverted would often tell the Turks of the Arab force's movements. To combat this, Lawrence relied upon deception. First, small Arab forces went into Palestine believing that the objective of the current operation was to interdict the rail line closer to Damascus." As usual, the security of these decoy forces was compromised. This resulted in the Turks receiving false information. Another British advisor, Stewart Newcombe, devised the second part of the deception plan.

Newcombe . . . had contrived to lose official papers, including a plan (in which we were advanced guard) for marching from Wejh, by Jefer and the Sirhan, to Tadmor, to attack Damascus and Aleppo. The Turks took the documents very seriously. . . ."

With the Turks in Maan held in place by the deception, the Arab's operation to seize Akaba was almost assured of success.

Despite the brutal month long trek through the desert to reach the objective area, the small Arab force that left Wejh grew to over five hundred Arab volunteers. The operation developed as conceived with the Arabs destroying the garrison at Aba el Lissan, thereby panicking the Turks in Maan. The Arab force then drove toward Akaba and through the Wadi Itm. By the time the Arabs

reached Akaba their ranks had swollen to two thousand. The Turkish garrison of three hundred, with their guns pointed seaward, could do nothing but surrender. On 6 July 1917, the Arabs rushed through a sandstorm into Akaba, securing the new base of operations for the Arab Revolt. Lawrence left immediately for Cairo to inform the EEF of the Arab's victory and to acquire the shipping necessary to bring the remainder of the Northern Arab Army to Akaba.<sup>21</sup>

The general ignorance of the value of Arab actions permeated the EEF.<sup>22</sup> Sir Archibald Murray, the commander, had only begrudgingly devoted resources to the Arab cause.<sup>23</sup> However, by the time Lawrence arrived in Cairo with the news of the capture of Akaba the EEF's leadership had changed. Murray was replaced by Sir Edmund Allenby, a man more amenable to working with the Arab revolt.

Establishing a secure base of operations at Akaba completed the first phase of Lawrence's campaign plan. Now, before entering Damascus, he would have to drive the Turks from Palestine and Syria. To complete this phase, he would have to work in concert with British aims. As Lawrence saw it:

Our capture of Akaba closed the Hejaz war, and gave us the task of helping the British invade Syria. The Arabs working from Akaba became virtual right wing of Allenby's army in Sinai. To mark the changed relation Feisal, with his Army, transferred to Allenby's command. Allenby now became responsible for his operations and equipment. Meanwhile we organized the Akaba area as an unassailable base, from which to hinder the Hejaz railway.<sup>24</sup>

Lawrence clearly understood, as the quote above indicates, that the objective for the second phase of the Arab's operation

was to bear on the Turks' material assets. For Lawrence this meant engaging in a "war of detachment." The Arabs sought to interdict the Hejaz railroad, which carried the Turks' supplies, by conducting raids out of the vast desert to the east of Palestine. Lawrence envisioned

[c]amel raiding parties, as self-contained as ships, could cruise without danger along any part of the enemy's land frontier, just out of sight of his posts along the edge of cultivation, and tap or raid into his lines where it seemed easiest or most profitable, with a sure retreat always behind them into an element which the Turks could not enter."

With this general concept in mind, Lawrence proposed a way to combine the British campaign to seize Palestine with the Arabs' major operation to drive out the Turks. In a report to General Allenby's staff, Lawrence outlined a concept for the combined operation. Prior to the seizure of Akaba Lawrence conducted an extensive reconnaissance of the area in which the Arabs would soon operate. Based upon discussions he held during the reconnaissance with the leaders of the northern Arab tribes, Lawrence wrote:

I am of the opinion that given the necessary material assistance Arab forces can be arranged about the end of August as in the sketch map attached [see map 5]. These levies will not (any more than the Hedjaz Beduin) be capable of fighting a pitched battle, but forces 1,2,4 and 5 may be able to ensure a cessation of traffic on the railways in their areas, and forces 6 and 7 should suffice for the expulsion of all Turkish posts in their districts, and the occupation of all ways of communication. Force 3 is our striking force (of perhaps six thousand not bad men) and may be able to rush Deraat [where the Palestine and Hejaz railroad join], or at least should cut off the garrison there and hold up the line in the neighborhood. I would propose to cut the bridge at Hennemah [railroad crosses Yarmuk valley] from Um Keis by force 2, if possible, as a preliminary action, and if Damascus could be taken over by a part of force 3 it would mean a great accession of strength to the Arab cause.

These various operations fortunately need not be accurately concerted. If they took place in numerical order (as in the map) it would be easiest—but there is little hope of things working out just as planned. If they come off the L[ines] of C[ommunication] of the Turkish force in the Jerusalem area would appear threatened—but I do not think the Arabs can be advised to take action unless the E. E. Force can retain the Turks in front of them by a holding attack, to prevent large drafts being sent up to the Hauran. Force 3 is capable of only one effort (lasting perhaps 2 month). . . .

From this report it is clear that Lawrence was focusing his efforts on the destruction of the enemy's material assets, his biological element. One can also see Lawrence's adherence to his theory's three elements in designing the plan.

From the map Lawrence included with his report (see map 5), it is plain that Lawrence's intent was for the Arabs to operate in depth throughout the theater, using the desert as a sanctuary. Algebraic factors precipitated such a design. It was best for Feisal and the Arab army to leave the Mediterranean coast to the EEF. The coastal regions would be inaccessible to bedouin raiding parties, which could not operate very far from the protection of the inland desert. Furthermore, it would be extremely difficult for Arab irregulars to work in coordination with a European regular army." The objectives of the plan also belie Lawrence's concern with the space to force ratio. The objectives are well dispersed and represent weakly defended and undefended targets (see map 6).

Many of the targets are undefended railroad track sections. The railroads served two biological functions for the Turks. First, it was the means by which they moved their supplies.

Secondly, along with the telegraph line which ran beside it, the rail line allowed the scattered Turkish garrisons to communicate with each other. Victory was easier for the Arabs when the enemy had lost his will to resist, either because of a lack of supplies or because of the fear and uncertainty which ensued when communications were lost. Lawrence's aim was to weaken the enemies biological element such that they could no longer defend.

The uncertainty of conducting war with irregulars is also reflected in Lawrence's plan. The Arabs lacked the ability to conduct sustained operations. Furthermore, they could not coordinate their activities very well. Because of these and other organizational limitations, the plan was deliberately flexible and relied upon the British being able to conduct a sustained "holding attack."

Lawrence's concept for British actions, along with his overall scheme of maneuver, reveals that he was looking forward to attaining the psychological objective, Damascus. When operations in the north began, Arab forces had to give priority to the regions east of the Jordan River designated by Britain and France as future areas of Arab self-government. Any attempt to seize lands outside these areas might undermine allied sympathy for post war Arab claims.<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, a "holding attack" by the British along the heavily defended Mediterranean littoral would give Arab forces, ranging across desert tracks as far north as Hama, an advantage in a race with the British for Damascus.

The operation Allenby designed to achieve his initial aim of

capturing Jerusalem", and his subsequent aim of seizing Damascus<sup>100</sup>, was remarkably similar to that proposed by Lawrence. However, the "holding attack" envisioned by Lawrence was expanded in Allenby's plan. Allenby's initial challenge was to break out of the Gaza-Beersheba line. The heavily defended Turkish line contained the British in Gaza and blocked any operation aimed at Jerusalem.

As part of Allenby's plan, the Arab's were given objectives to cut the critical rail network at Deraa. This caused some consternation in the mind of Lawrence. The Arabs relied upon the support of local tribes when executing their operations. In order to completely sever the rail net at Deraa, the Arabs would have to incite a general revolt among the people in the area. If the revolt failed the people would be at the mercy of revengeful Turks. The local Arabs were not Bedouin, able to melt back into the desert if actions went astray. "Deraa's sudden capture, followed by a retreat, would have involved the massacre, or the ruin of all the splendid peasantry of the district."<sup>101</sup> The Arabs had to be sure of a British success.

Lawrence's analysis of the British algebraic and biological elements convinced him that Allenby's plan involved too much risk for the Arabs.

I weighed the English army in my mind, and could not honestly assure myself of them. The men were often gallant fighters, but their generals as often gave away in stupidity what they had gained in ignorance. Allenby was quite untried, sent to us with a not-blameless record from France, and his troops had broken down in and been broken by the Murray period.<sup>102</sup>

To alleviate the matter, Lawrence proposed to take a Bedouin raiding party to destroy the large railway bridges in the Yarmuk gorge. If this was accomplished at the moment of Allenby's attack in Gaza, the Turks' line of communication and axis of withdrawal to Damascus would be cut. Allenby agreed to this amended plan and set 5 November as the date of execution.<sup>103</sup>

The subsequent raid was a disaster. Inadequate intelligence caused delays in approaching the objective area. The delays compounded the party's lack of sustainment. In the end, Lawrence neither massed sufficient forces in the objective area to accomplish the mission, nor could he support the forces he had gathered. As a result, the Turks guarding the rail line were able to drive the raiding party off.

After returning from the Yarmuk raid, Lawrence went to Allenby's advance headquarters expecting criticism. However, the British were already within striking distance of Jerusalem and, fortunately for Lawrence, Allenby "was so full of victories that my [Lawrence's] short statement that we had failed to carry a Yarmuk bridge was sufficient, and the miserable details of failure could remain concealed."<sup>104</sup> While Lawrence was with Allenby, news arrived that the Turks had pulled out of Jerusalem. On 11 December, the Allies marched into the Holy City.

Lawrence's failure in the Yarmuk mission was indicative of the operations that followed.

After the capture of Jerusalem, Allenby, to relieve his right, assigned us a limited objective. We began well; but when we reached the Dead Sea, bad weather, bad temper and division of purpose blunted our offensive spirit and broke

up our force.

I had a misunderstanding with Zeid [the leader of the Arab irregulars], threw in my hand, and returned to Palestine reporting that we had failed, and asking the favour of other employment. Allenby was in the hopeful midst of a great scheme for the coming spring. He sent me back at once to Feisal with new powers and duties.<sup>105</sup>

Lawrence's ability to accurately assess the algebraic and biological elements of the combatants began to fail him. While the fighting was in the Hejaz, Lawrence's war of detachment yielded splendid results. In Palestine, however, the density of Turkish troops to space had risen dramatically. The Arabs could no longer rely upon the desert to protect them and the local populace lacked the protection offered by a nomadic life. The Turkish positions were better protected than before which necessitated larger forces to attack them. Unfortunately, the single base in Akaba was too far away to support a larger force. In order to continue a war of detachment, the Arabs had to move their base north and protect it with regular troops. While these facts seem to have eluded Lawrence, Allenby possessed a clear vision of future Arab actions and empowered Lawrence to oversee their execution.

Allenby sought to improve the Arab's capabilities against the Turks by providing the Arab army with a limited number regular forces. These forces included aircraft, armored car, artillery, and camel mounted cavalry units.<sup>106</sup> With these units Allenby saw the Arabs moving north to a base in Azark from where they could support the final major operation of the war, the seizure of Damascus.

Allenby's campaign to seize Damascus is considered by some



to be a classic campaign.<sup>107</sup> The main objective of the Arab forces would be the railway junction at Deraa. The isolation of Deraa would cut the Turkish lines of communication.

From the Arab's point of view, this plan had significant risk. Feisal would once again be subordinate to Allenby. All Arab actions would be subject to British objectives and timing. This meant that an Arab occupation of Damascus could be jeopardized by unforeseen changes in the situation. Unfortunately, the overwhelming superiority of the British in the algebraic and biological elements dictated that the Arab aim of seizing Damascus would be subordinated to British operational plans. The British plan sought to destroy the Turkish Army. In Allenby's mind, the honor of seizing Damascus would fall to the force in the best tactical position after routing the Turks.

When Allenby launched his offensive along the coast on 19 September, Arab operations inland had already begun.

Our mobile column of aeroplanes, armoured cars, Arab regulars and Beduin [sic] collected at Azark, to cut the three railways out of Deraa. The southern line we cut near Mefrak; the northern at Arar; the western by Mezerib. We circumnavigated Deraa, and rallied, despite air raids, in the desert.

Next day Allenby attacked, and in a few hours had scattered the Turkish armies beyond recovery.<sup>108</sup>

In addition to successfully cutting the Turkish rail lines at Deraa, the Northern Arab Army played a decisive role in the destruction of the Turkish Fourth Army.<sup>109</sup> The operational impact of this action is apparent from a comment by General Allenby

On Sept. 26 . . . the enemy could have formed a force capable of delaying my advance [to Damascus]. The destruction of the remnants of the IVth Army and the capture of the additional 20,000 prisoners, prevented any possibility of this.<sup>110</sup>

Arab concerns that they would not be the first to occupy Damascus were unfounded. Their forward position at Deraa gave them the best approach to the city. When the lead elements of Allenby's army finally reached Deraa, the combined formation of British and Arab forces began its march to Damascus.

We moved behind Deraa to hasten its abandonment. General Barrow joined us; in his company we advanced to Kiswe, and there met the Australian Mounted Corps. Our united forces entered Damascus unopposed [on 1 October].<sup>111</sup>

The Arab's occupation of Damascus was the final operational objective of Lawrence's campaign plan. On 4 October, Lawrence left Damascus and never returned.<sup>112</sup> His wartime mission was over. The Arabs had fought and won the campaign to liberate their land. Seizing the final objective of the campaign had little military significance. However, the psychological victory of liberating Damascus incited the Arab populace with the spirit of Arab nationalism.<sup>113</sup> This last victory provided needed legitimacy to the Arab cause. By taking Damascus and establishing local Arab governments throughout the recently freed areas, the Arabs put themselves in a position of strength. A position they would need in the future when battling at the peace table with the Allied powers for control of their own lands.

## V. CONCLUSION AND IMPLICATIONS

### CONCLUSION

This monograph began by discussing Lawrence's education and experience in military theory and history. Relying upon this extensive background Lawrence developed general ideas and principles which he believed described the dynamics of the early days of the war in the Hejaz. He refined these initial thoughts based on his own experiences in the war, thereby completing a new theory of war. This new theory accomplished two functions. First, it clarified the past, what had happened in the Hejaz to that point. Secondly, it helped Lawrence anticipate the future of the Arab revolt.

The future Lawrence envisioned for the Arab revolt came to fruition because of Lawrence's ability to transcend his role as a theorist. Using his theory as a basis, Lawrence carried his rational approach to war into the development of an operational concept, the "war of detachment," and a fighting doctrine to fulfill it. With these means in hand, Lawrence devised a way to employ them.

Logically, the way Lawrence devised was a campaign plan designed in accordance with his theory. Therefore, T. E. Lawrence's development of a theory of war did assist him in planning the Arab campaign during World War I. Furthermore the implications of Lawrence's success provide valuable lessons to current and future operational level commanders and planners.

## IMPLICATIONS

The value of understanding Lawrence's accomplishments during World War I lies in two areas. First, Lawrence's education, and knowledge of history and military theory exemplify the necessity for military leaders to study their profession. Without his extensive education, Lawrence would not have been able to recognize that traditional theories of war were not applicable to the Arab situation. While the Arabs may have been able to adapt their methods to suit the immediate situation, Lawrence's grounding in theory and history permitted him to "juxtapose" prevailing theory against his own experience to develop his own theory of war. Ultimately, it was this new theory that guided the course of the successful Arab campaign.

The lesson from this example is that without a firm grounding in theory and history modern soldiers lack the tools to adapt to evolving methods of warfare. While one may be able to change methods for the short term, the ability to adapt the basic theory on which one's military doctrine is formulated permits a soldier to completely remodel his ways and means to more efficiently attain the desired ends.

The second, and perhaps the most important, contribution of Lawrence is his theory itself. It provides a unique visualization of future war. As previously discussed, many view Lawrence as a prophet of irregular warfare. However, his theory holds many insights into other methods of war.

As force levels in the world's militaries continue to

decrease, the space to forces ratio in potential theaters of war increases. This key algebraical consideration of Lawrence's drove him to his operational concept of the "war of detachment." In modern terms this translates to a need for extremely mobile forces capable of operating over wide areas.

In the areas over which forces will operate in the future there are numerous targets that are necessary for modern cultures to exist. Late twentieth century societies' and armies' biological elements rely on not only railroads, but air, and sea lines of communication as well. In addition, few if any modern societies can function without electric power and electronic communications. This expansion of potentially critical high payoff targets lends significant credibility to Lawrence's dictum of defeating an enemy by raiding the enemy's biological element where it is easiest or most profitable.<sup>114</sup>

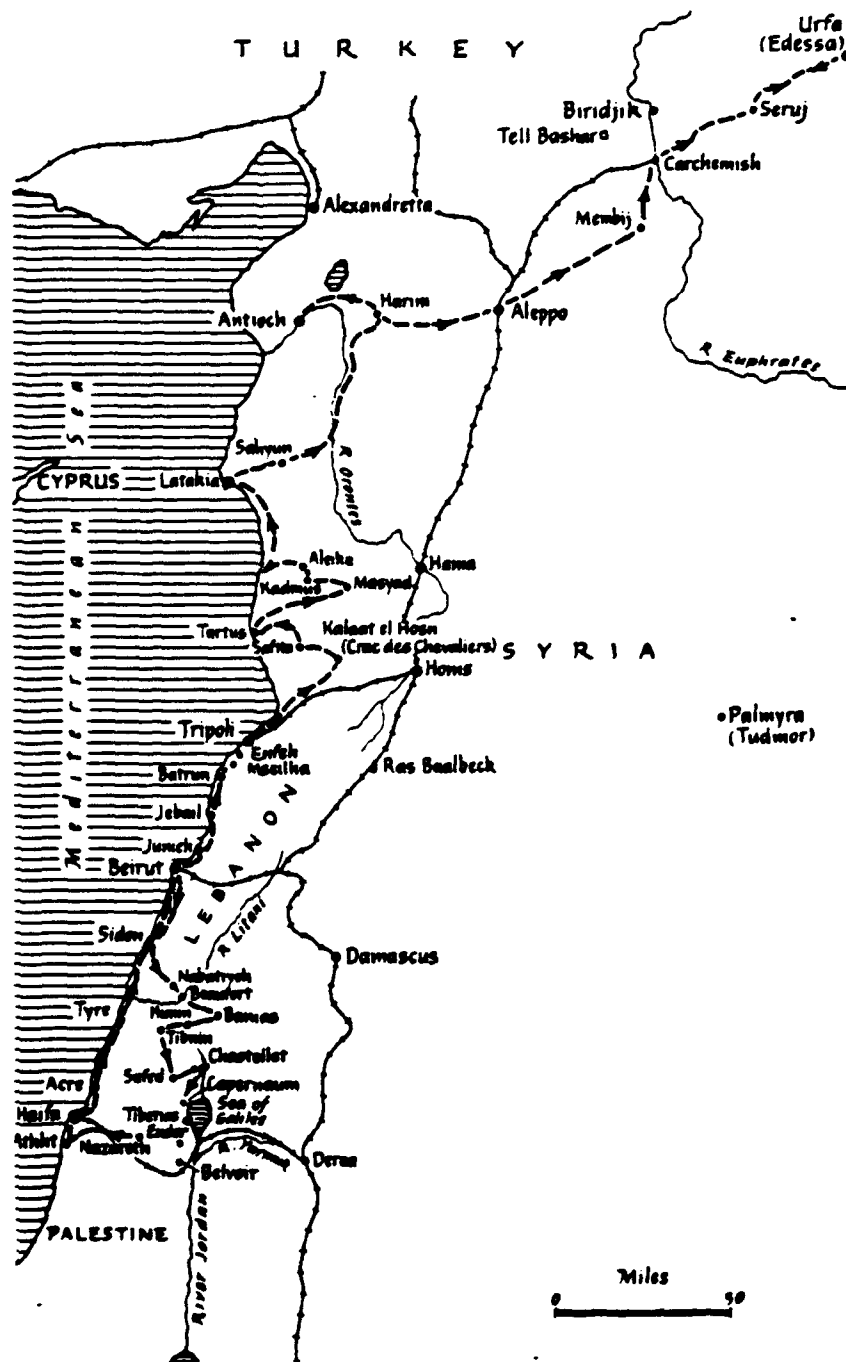
Finally, the modern era marks a period of increased need to "arrange the minds of men", Lawrence's psychological element. Without mobilizing national will most western democracies are militarily impotent. Similarly, the need to recruit allies gains significance as force structures decline. The media remains at the forefront of the battle for mens minds. In Lawrence's day the printing press was the primary means to win the battle. Today it is the electronic media.

In summary, Lawrence's theory of war is as relevant today as it was when he conceived it in 1916. In the end, a critical study of Thomas Edward Lawrence, and his unique approach to war yields

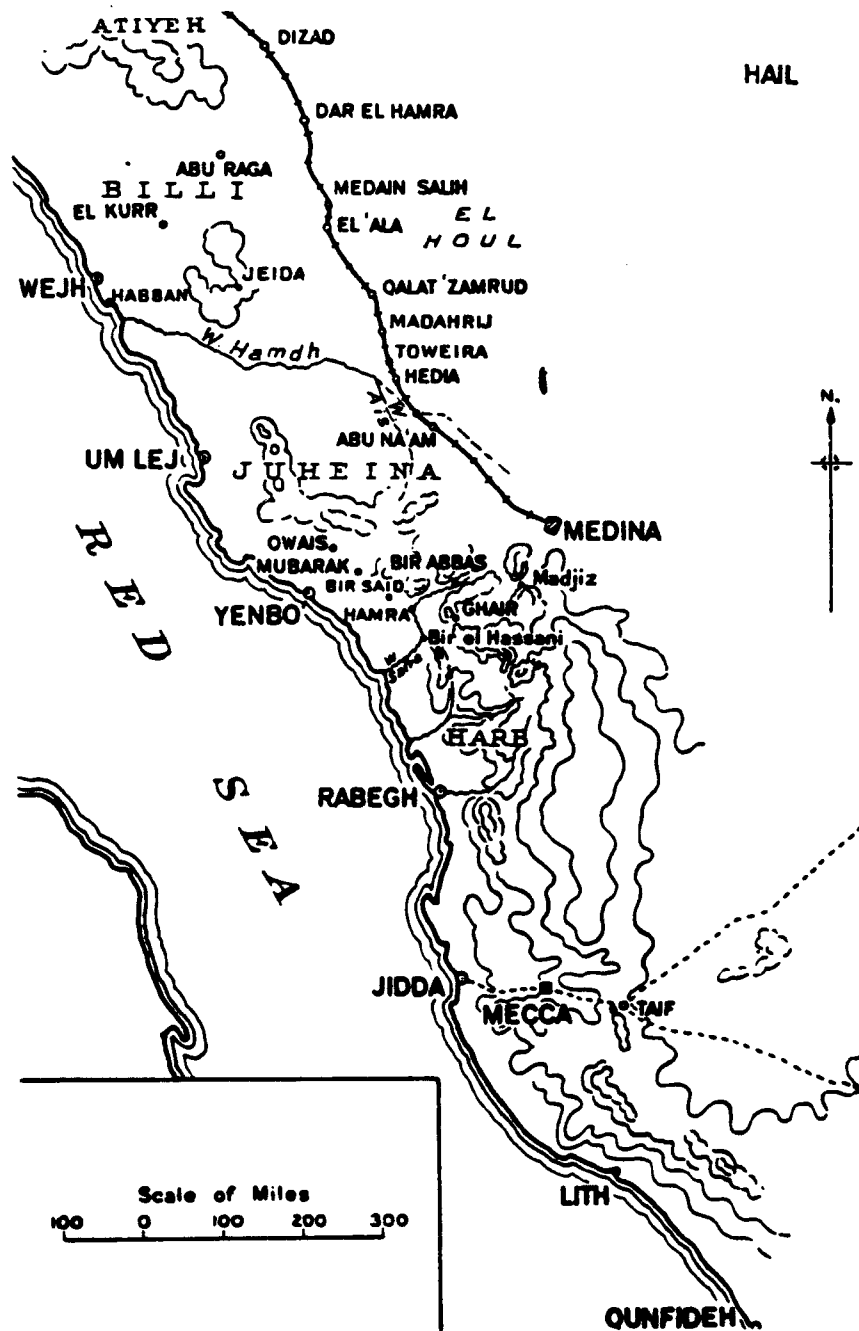
valuable lessons for modern military leaders and operational planners. It also satisfies one of Lawrence's last requests:

Do use me as a text to preach for more study of books and history, a greater seriousness in military art. With 2000 years of examples behind us we have no excuse, when fighting, for not fighting well.<sup>115</sup>

Map 1. Lawrence's 1909 tour of Syria and Palestine. From Jeremy Wilson, Lawrence of Arabia. (London: Heinemann, 1989), Map 1.

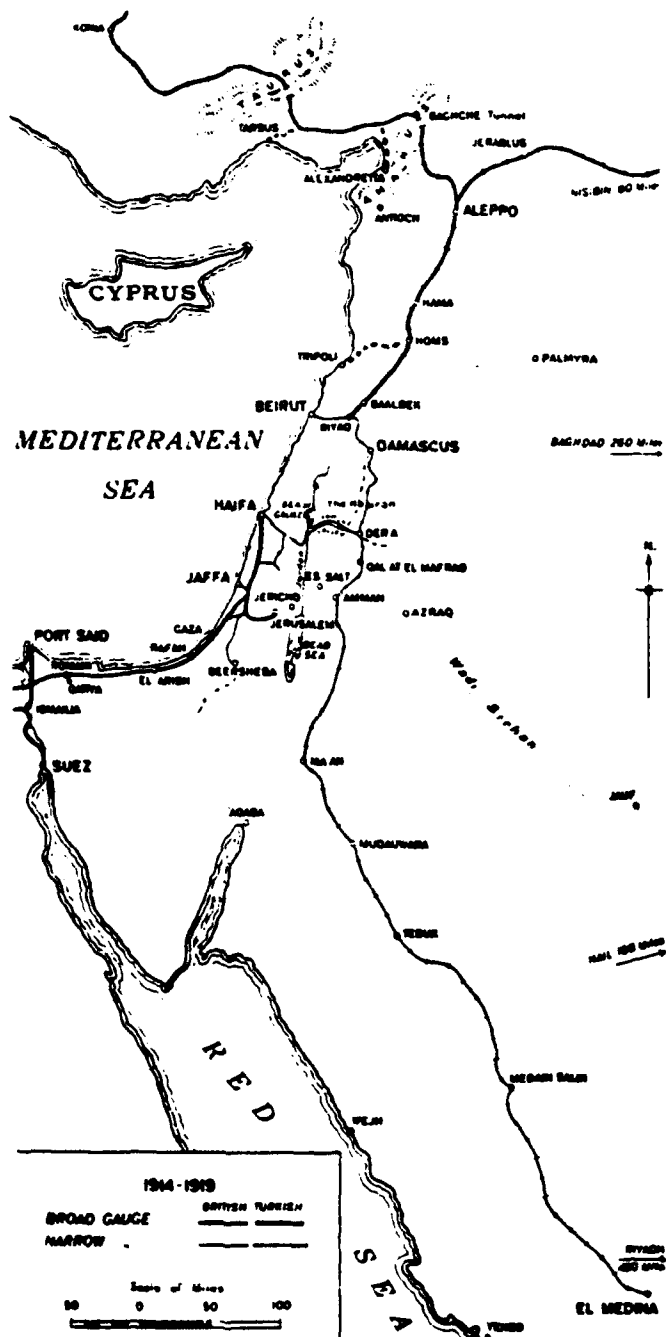


Map 2. The Hejaz, From Basil H. Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence,  
(New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934), Map 4.

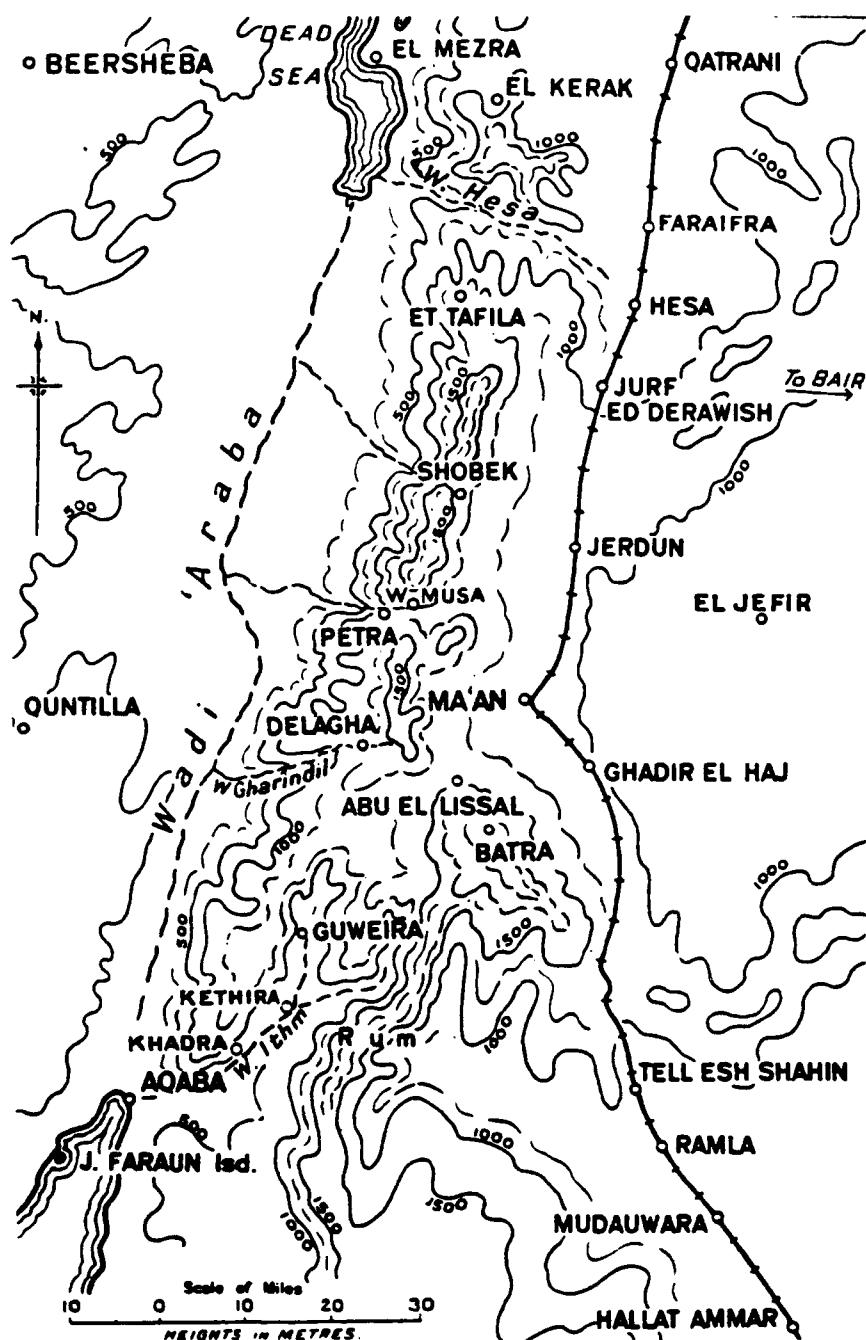




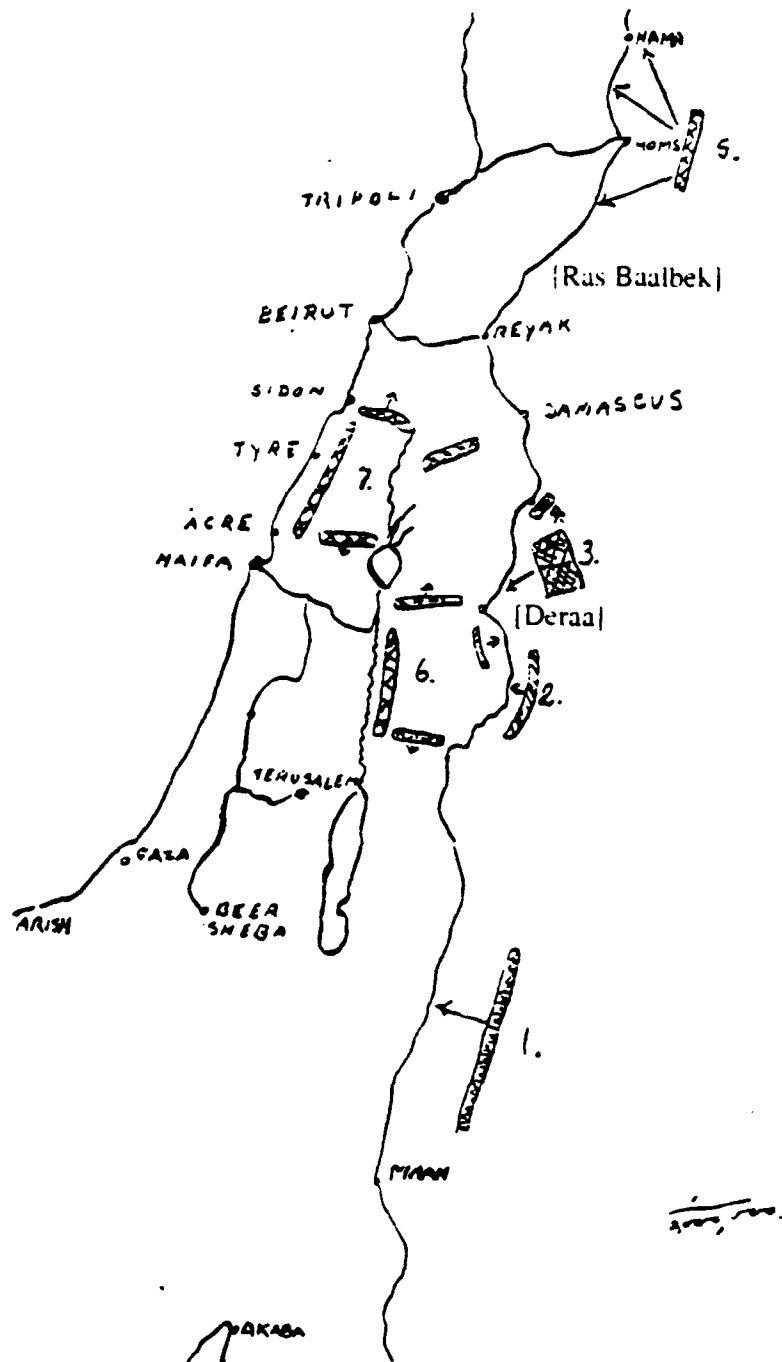
Map 3. The Hejaz Railway. From Basil H. Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence, (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934), Map 2.



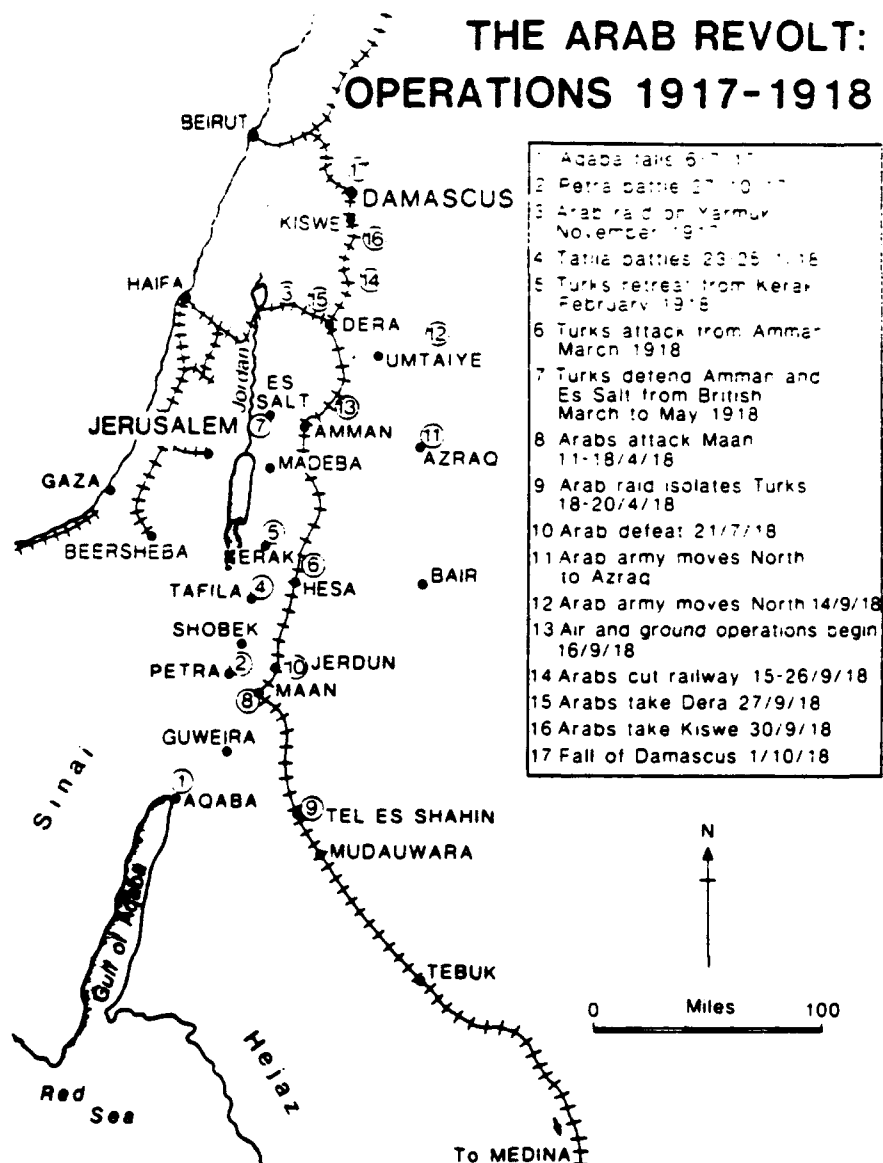
Map 4. Akaba. From Basil H. Liddell Hart, Colonel Lawrence. (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1934), Map 6.



Map 5. Lawrence's campaign proposal for Palestine. From T. E. Lawrence, The Letters of T.E. Lawrence, (London: J.Cape, 1938), p231.



Map 6. The Arab Revolt. From David L. Bullock, Allenby's War. (London: Blandford, 1988), p 87.



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