

THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE IN IRAQ FROM 1914-1926: WHAT WISDOM
CAN THE UNITED STATES DRAW FROM ITS EXPERIENCE?

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MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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ABSTRACT

THE BRITISH EXPERIENCE IN IRAQ FROM 1914-1926: WHAT WISDOM CAN THE UNITED STATES. DRAW FROM ITS EXPERIENCE? by Matthew W. Williams, Department of Defense, GG-13, 118 pages.

This thesis examines the British experience in Iraq from 1914-1926. Britain invaded Iraq to secure its oil interests and to protect its lines of communication to India. The British initially defeated Ottoman forces and captured the Basra *vilayet* (province) in December 1914. Although Basra's capture accomplished the objectives that Britain had sought to achieve at the outset of the campaign, it was followed by an ill-advised advance to Baghdad that culminated in defeat by the Ottomans at Kut-al-Amara in 1916. The British regrouped, however, and resumed the offensive, capturing Baghdad in 1917 and Mosul in 1918. After the war, Britain managed Iraq as a League of Nations Mandate from 1920-1932. The British installed Iraq's first ruler, King Feisal I in 1921 and helped demarcate its northern border with Turkey in 1926.

This thesis explores the British military campaign in Iraq during World War I and its subsequent civil administration. The thesis will examine the actions Britain took during this time period and determine, what wisdom, if any, that the United States (US) can draw from these experiences in relation to its current efforts in Iraq. This study concludes that, if the US is going to accomplish its objectives in Iraq, it should base its future relationship with Iraq primarily by incentives and not coercion. Furthermore, any attempt by the US to simultaneously develop Iraq into an independent nation-state and maintain dominant, long-term influence will likely result in failure. Overall, if the US wants to accomplish its goals in Iraq, it should treat Iraq like an equal and strive to be the best friend it has never had.

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ACRONYMS

CIC	Commander-in-Chief
EIC	East India Company
IEFD	Indian Expeditionary Force 'D'
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOI	Government of India
UN	United Nations

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Iraq is an important country. Not only is it located at the crossroads of the strategically important Middle East, but it also has considerable oil reserves and multiple cities considered holy by Muslims. In March 2003, the United States (US) and Britain swept through Iraq and removed Saddam Hussein from power in less than three weeks. The US justified the invasion by claiming that Saddam Hussein's support of international terrorism, his alleged stockpile of weapons of mass destruction, and his regime all posed imminent threats to US vital and regional interests. Unfortunately, his regime's fall only ushered in a new type of threat to US interests. Hussein's removal prompted insurgents to direct daily small-scale attacks at occupying forces. Following the end of Hussein's rule in April 2003, the US and its coalition allies were faced with occupying a large Islamic country with a restive populace. Frequent attacks against US forces have resulted in more than 670 killed in action from 1 May 2003 to 29 May 2004. To best understand the challenges that the US faces today in Iraq, it is important to first understand Iraq's proud history.

Iraq has ancient origins. The country originated from the territory once referred to as Mesopotamia, or the "land between the rivers." Mesopotamia formed not only the center of the Middle East, but the civilized world as well. The ancient Sumerians, the people of the Tigris and Euphrates river basin, developed complex irrigation systems and probably created the first cereal agriculture, as well as cuneiform, possibly the earliest writing system. Mesopotamia's substantial water resources and fertile river valleys

allowed for the production of surplus food that served as the basis for the civilizing trend begun by the Sumerians. Their successors, the Akkadians, devised the most complete legal system of the period, the Code of Hammurabi.

Neither the US nor Britain was the first foreign occupiers of the territory that is now called Iraq. Due to its strategic location in the heart of the ancient Middle East, numerous foreign conquerors sought Mesopotamia (henceforth referred to as Iraq). The Islamic Arabs, Greeks, Mongols, Persians, and Ottomans all occupied Iraq. Despite its varied origins, probably the most important influence on present day Iraq was the conquest by the Islamic Arabs. In 637, an Arab army defeated the then ruling Persians near the present-day city of Qadisiyyah--a victory of great symbolic importance to Iraqis today. This battle led to the fall of the capital of the Persian Sassanids at Ctesiphon and the expansion of an Arab Empire led by Umar ibn Al-Khattab, the second caliph. Islamic in character, Umar primarily conquered new lands both to secure the unity of the *ummah* (Muslim community) and to enrich his treasury. However, he did not force non-Muslim subjects to convert to Islam (Armstrong 2002, 30). Umar subsequently built two garrison towns or *amsar* in Iraq at Al-Kufah and Basra, where Islamic soldiers were purposely segregated from their conquered populations.

Uthman ibn Affan succeeded Umar and became the third caliph in 644. He was a member of the powerful Umayyad family whose descendents ultimately ruled this Islamic Empire until 750. Mutinous Arab soldiers murdered Uthman in 656 because of his alleged nepotism and failure to provide the benefits that his soldiers thought they deserved. These mutineers claimed Ali ibn Abi Talib, son-in-law to the Prophet, as their

new caliph due to his family ties to Muhammed and his prior opposition to Uthman and Umar.

Ali subsequently led a civil war against Umayyad loyalists and made Al-Kufah his capital. He marched on Basra from Al-Kufah where he defeated opposition forces at the Battle of the Camel in 656. Muawiya, a powerful member of the Umayyad in Damascus, Syria was Ali's primary nemesis. Ali proceeded to Damascus in 657 to battle Muawya's forces. A fierce clash ensued but ultimately ended in a truce, as both sides agreed to arbitrate the secession according to the Quran. Arbitration took place six months later but proved inconclusive (Glubb 1960, 36).

In 658, Muawiya annexed Egypt and proclaimed himself caliph in Jerusalem. The Islamic Empire was now divided in two. Muawiya ruled Syria, Egypt, and Palestine; while Ali controlled Iraq and Persia. Frustrated at this division and convinced that only the assassination of both leaders would reunite all Muslims, a group of *Kharijites* or outsiders (they believed that the caliph should be the most committed Muslim, not the most politically powerful) tried to kill Muawiya and Ali in 661. Muawiya survived the assassination attempt but Ali was struck down outside his mosque in Al-Kufah (Glubb 1960, 36).

Undeterred, some of Ali's supporters proclaimed his son, Hasan, as the new caliph. But Hasan, the grandson of the Prophet, had no interests in continuing the bloody struggle of his father (he considered this struggle contrary to Muhammed's message), and agreed with Muawiya to retire to Medina. He died there in 669. Muawiya became the next caliphate and ruled from 661-80. He reunited the Islamic Empire, captured Rhodes,

expanded territory in North Africa, raided Sicily, and unsuccessfully besieged Constantinople (Glubb 1960, 43).

Muawaiya died in 680. Prior to his death, he appointed his son, Yazid I, as the next caliph. Dissatisfied with this succession, Ali's former followers called on Husein, Ali's other son, to assume the caliphate. Heeding this call and refusing to submit to Yazid's authority, Husein marched to Iraq to consolidate his support. Soldiers loyal to Yazid and the Umayyad family surrounded Husein and killed him outside of Karbala, Iraq in 680 (Armstrong 2002, 43). This event represented the second time that one of the Prophet's direct descendants had been killed in Iraq. Ali and Husein, both martyrs of Shia Islam, were buried in al Najaf, Iraq and Karbala, respectively.

The Abbasid faction, claiming to be descended from the Prophet's Uncle Abbas and his son Abdallah, overthrew the Umayyad dynasty in 750. In the period of the Abbasid caliphs (750-1258), Iraq was the center of a huge Islamic empire stretching from the plains of India in the east to present day Morocco. Abbasid Caliph Abu Jafar al-Mansur laid the foundations of his capital approximately sixty miles from the ancient city of Babylon and named it Baghdad. Baghdad eventually became a worldwide center of medicine, science, philosophy, law, and art. This great city regularly traded with lands as far away as Africa, Asia, and the Far East. Iraq's impressive legacy has been a matter of pride for all Iraqis, regardless of ethnicity, and this pride has contributed to the overall conflict between the Iraqi people and its subsequent foreign occupiers, including the British and Americans.

Following the Islamic Arabs, the Central Asian Mongols invaded Iraq and destroyed Baghdad in 1258. Not only did the Mongols destroy many Iraqi cities, but they

also ruined each city's sophisticated irrigation system. Even with the assistance of modern technology, Iraq has yet again to reach the level of agricultural productivity of the Abbasid caliphs. After the Mongol invasion, Iraq came under the rule of various administrators until the sixteenth century. In 1509, the Persian Safavid Empire expanded its territory and incorporated most of present day Iraq. Control of Iraq changed hands periodically between the Safavid Empire and the Ottoman Empire for the next 100 years. In 1638, the Ottoman Sultan, Murad IV, expelled the Persians and initiated a period of uninterrupted Ottoman rule until World War I. Iraq too benefited from the Ottoman Tanzimat era (period of administration, conscription, law, and public education reforms) of the 1860s, which included the establishment of private property. These reforms replaced the feudal system of land ownership and tax farms with legally sanctioned property rights.

Iraq was administered as three separate provinces or *vilayets* (Mosul, Baghdad, and Basra) under appointed Ottoman governors. This administration was structured on the country's ethnic makeup. Generally speaking, Iraq was populated by Kurds in the north (along with Christian Chaldeans and Assyrians), Sunnis in the central part of the country, and Shias in the south. There had also been a Jewish population in Baghdad until the state of Israel was established in 1948, after which the majority of this population immigrated to this new country. Overall, the Ottoman administration focused on the Tigris and Euphrates valleys where the majority of the population lived. During this period, the Sunnis gained the administrative experience that has allowed them to monopolize political power in the twentieth century. The Sunnis were able to take advantage of new educational and economic opportunities, while the Shias, kept out of

the political process, were impoverished. Binary politics became the basis for internal conflict in Iraq for many generations to come.

The British put an end to the Ottoman administration in World War I. British interest in the Persian Gulf region originated in 1622, when the East India Company (EIC) signed an agreement with Persia. The EIC used its navy to defend the Persian Gulf and expel the Portuguese, who had established a trading monopoly in the region. Since that early beginning, the security of Persia and the Persian Gulf had been of significant importance to the British for two main reasons. These were the continued preservation of the free and secure trade of Indian and British shipping (the Persian Gulf had been dominated by pirates for over a century, until three EIC military expeditions forced them to capitulate in 1819) and the prevention of any other European power, in particular Russia, from establishing its influence anywhere near India, including Persia. Britain suspected that an expansionist-minded, Tsarist-ruled Russia intended to impose a protectorate over Persia, in order to secure an ice-free port in the Persian Gulf. Since this possibility potentially threatened British interests in India, the British directed significant diplomatic efforts to thwart Russian influence in the area (Lunt 1982, 21).

The role Iraq has played in the religious, historical, and cultural development of the Middle East is a source of considerable pride to the Iraqi people; a key component to their self-identity, regardless of their ethnicity. This proud self-identity has a significant influence on how it views the outside world, including Britain and the United States. Similarly, the fact that its past occupiers throughout history have viewed Iraq as a prize to be exploited has further shaped its view of the British and US occupations.

Thesis Question

The US and its coalition allies are not the first foreign force to invade and occupy Iraq. The Greeks, Mongols, Persians, Ottomans, and British all invaded Iraq and dealt with periodic uprisings during their occupation. During World War I, some Iraqis fought with Amir Feisal and the British to defeat Turkish forces due to a promise of a post-war independent Arab kingdom. After failing to deliver on that promise, the British quelled a significant uprising by Iraqi insurgents in 1920. A low-level insurgency festered until 1931. The British eventually handed over the majority of power to the Iraqis by establishing a pro-British monarchy in 1932. Overall, the British faced similar problems during their invasion and occupation of Iraq that the US has experienced as well. What wisdom, if any, can the British experience offer to help US formulate its strategy in dealing with post-Hussein Iraq?

The thesis question is: What wisdom from the British experience in Iraq (1914-1926), if any, can the US use to help accomplish its current goals in Iraq?

Background or Context of the Problem and the Research Question

The US swept Saddam from power in a whirlwind operation that lasted for three weeks. The euphoria of a quick victory over a long-time foe quickly dissipated with the rapid emergence of an armed resistance to the US-led occupying forces. Coalition forces, the US in particular, have suffered daily attacks; casualties rose quickly. Considering the brutal oppression wrought by their former leader, it was a shock to most Americans (including the author) that the Iraqi people would either participate in or tolerate by others (foreign fighters) an attack on coalition forces, their liberators from Saddam Hussein. As the US is not the first country to occupy the territory that is now called Iraq,

what other country's occupation can the US examine to best determine what wisdom applies to the current situation? Britain's occupation is a potentially excellent case study to examine due to its recent experience in Iraq and the reality that many important factors (political, ethnic, and religious) during that time period have not significantly changed. Therefore, wisdom from that period may be valid for contemporary application.

Assumptions

Two assumptions are necessary to answer the thesis question within the time and length requirements set by the Director, Graduate Degree Programs (DGDP). First of all, wisdom must be definable. What constitutes wisdom? Is it an objective or subjective question? This thesis research must assume that wisdom can be defined and that it is relevant and can directly affect the strategy of the US administration of postwar Iraq.

The second assumption is closely related to the first – it must be assumed that historical analysis can provide insight to contemporary questions. By examining the past British administration, this thesis assumes that some conclusions can be derived that can provide the US wisdom to present and future stability operations in Iraq. These two assumptions and key definitions will be crucial in answering the thesis question.

Definitions

Several concepts, ideas, and terms will be defined in the thesis research. First, defining the conditions, circumstances and influences of the current operational environment in which US forces currently operate in Iraq is important to the thesis question. Second, establishing an acceptable definition of security is required. A safe and secure environment will probably be critical to the successful execution of the US mission in Iraq. What conditions constitute a secure environment? Third, defining the

term overmatching firepower is important as well. Both the British and US have utilized overmatching firepower to help accomplish its goals in Iraq. Finally, establishing the definition of wisdom is critical. By comparing historical analysis with the operational environment, one should be able to discern whether a particular outcome constitutes the term “wisdom” in the context of this research.

Limitations

The most important limitation or weakness of the research will be its lack of depth due to the time constraints and length of the thesis. I will only examine the British experience from 1914-1926. Although the British maintained a military presence in Iraq until 1958, their experience from 1914-1926 is the most relevant for the exploration of this thesis. During this time period, the British invaded Iraq, established the country as a League of Nations Mandate in 1920, and created a new civil administration. Although later actions would significantly shape Iraq’s future as well, events during this time period will set the foundation for the country’s independence and its long-term relationship with Britain.

Due to length constraints, this thesis will focus on Britain’s military campaign, its formulation of national-level institutions, and its management of the civil administration. The examination of the civil administration will center mainly on education, health, revenue collection, administration of justice, law enforcement, oil, and land policy issues. A complete study of the administration of justice will not be possible due to its depth, but its most salient points will be addressed. Other issues such as transportation, finance, communication, agriculture, archeology, and public works will not be examined. The communication between British civil administrators in Iraq and their superiors in India

and London will not be closely examined either. Although important, the high frequency of communication between British military officers and civil servants in Iraq and their chain-of-command in India and London makes it impossible to meaningfully address it in this thesis.

Similarly, existing sources on the British experience in Iraq do not provide many tactical details from the battalion level and below. Most of the historical records focus on the overall campaign and the actions of battalion sized units or higher. Specific actions and tactics, techniques, and procedures to quell civil disturbances or armed resistance to the British occupation are lacking as well. Available references concentrate on broad themes describing British counterinsurgency operations rather than specific tactics, techniques, or procedures. Therefore, the thesis will primarily address the actions of battalion sized units or larger in relation to conventional force-on-force or counterinsurgency operations. Similarly, only three or four accessible primary sources from the British colonial experience in Iraq have been identified. Although more primary sources may exist, they will be difficult to obtain due to their geographical location. Most of the primary sources are not available. Furthermore, very few sources on this subject from the Turkish or Iraqi point of view are available in English. This limitation will potentially hinder the breadth of my research as well.

Delimitations

While the limitations of the thesis minimize what will be included, delimitations focus the scope of the research. The research question has the potential to be broad, so several areas will not be considered.

The research will primarily investigate the strategic and operations levels. Due to the limited breadth of this thesis, it will not include many aspects of the tactical level. The author will attempt to focus on broad themes including the strategic and operational levels of war, the structure of national level institutions, and the details of the civil administration. Finally, the thesis requires the reader to draw contemporary conclusions from historical actions. Answering the research question requires the reader to acknowledge the continuity of history.

Significance of the Study

Answering the thesis and subordinate questions is potentially significant in several ways. First, the conclusions from this research topic could affirm current US stability operations in Iraq, or reject the current administration by the US as ineffective. If the US adopts new policies in the administration of postwar Iraq, it will have both short and long-term strategic effects. Due to the importance of the Middle East in general, and Iraq in particular, these effects could potentially alter the US strategy in prosecuting the Global War on Terrorism (GWOT). Second, insight learned from the prior British occupation can possibly save US lives by minimizing the conditions that prompt attacks against US forces. Finally, the study is significant because it can aid the military's transformation process. Due to the GWOT, the US military will likely find itself in more places like Iraq and Afghanistan, and it is imperative, therefore, that the US structure our forces and overall strategy accordingly to better meet the challenges of the current operational environment.

CHAPTER 2

BRITISH MILITARY INTERVENTION, 1914-1918

The outbreak of the First World War in August 1914 had permanent consequences for Iraq because it led to the collapse of the Ottoman administration and the eventual creation of the state of Iraq. The British declaration of war against the Ottoman Empire and its landing of an expeditionary force on the Fao Peninsula set the conditions for the eventual end of Turkish rule in Iraq. To best understand why the Central Powers and the *Entente* (Britain, France, and Russia) fought in Iraq, it is important to examine the prewar relationships of Germany, the Ottoman Empire, and Britain.

The modern relationship between the Ottoman Empire and Germany began during Chancellor Bismarck's administration. In the mid-1880s, the Chancellor dispatched civil and military advisors to assist the Empire's attempts to modernize along European lines. The Chancellor conducted this assistance discreetly so as not to provoke Russia and Britain, whom both considered the Empire to be within their spheres of influence. German businesses also exploited this new relationship to take advantage of new markets and raw materials on the Empire's eastern frontiers. Kaiser Wilhelm II assumed power in the summer 1888 and subsequently pursued a more proactive relationship with the Empire. Even after the notorious Ottoman massacre of tens of thousands of Armenians (1894-1896), which isolated Constantinople from the rest of the world, Wilhelm II continued to develop relations with the Empire. In a widely publicized affair in late 1898, he visited Constantinople, Syria, and Jerusalem and in a speech in Damascus, he even claimed to be the protector of over 300 million Muslims living under British and Russian

rule in Afghanistan, India, and central Russia (Fischer 1967, 121). Needless to say, this proclamation caused considerable consternation for British authorities in India, who were already delicately balancing the significant race and religious issues on the subcontinent.

To enhance German interests in the Empire, Wilhelm II subsequently authorized the construction of a railroad from Berlin to Basra via Baghdad. This railway had both economic and military purposes. The railroad's "aim, both commercial and strategic, was to provide a shortcut to India and the East by bypassing the Suez Canal, which could be closed to shipping in the event of war" (Hopkirk 1994, 28). This railway not only eliminated the British Royal Navy as a potential menace to German commerce in the Mediterranean but it also posed a threat to Britain's line of communication to India. Not surprisingly, Britain viewed the potential of this railway with alarm and subsequently formulated a deal with the Sheikh of Kuwait. The Sheikh promised not to cede any of his territory to any foreign power while the British government promised to protect the Sheikh's throne and guarantee his territorial sovereignty. Therefore, despite the railway, this deal ensured continued British access to the head of the Persian Gulf.

German assistance to the Empire increased significantly prior to World War I. Prior to the war, Germany dispatched General Otto Liman von Sanders to act as a senior advisor to the Ottoman military. By the summer 1914, Liman von Sanders led the German Military Mission, which consisted of thirty officers and forty enlisted soldiers. The Germans placed advisors throughout the Turkish Army's line units, training schools, and staff colleges (Erickson 2001, 11). Although Wilhelm II intended Liman von Sanders to take over the Ottoman military once hostilities started with the *Entente*, the Turks relegated him to an advisory position only. Overall, the Germans wanted the Empire to

accomplish two primary goals: (1) sever communications (via the Bosphorus) between Russia and her *Entente* allies and (2) ignite a pan-Islamic movement in the Muslim populations in English held territory in the East to force Britain to divert troops away from the critical Western Front.

In 1914, despite European assistance to aid its internal reform, the Ottoman Empire had been steadily weakening since the eighteenth century. The Empire continued to decline for various reasons: internal corruption; inability to modernize; disastrous wars against Russia, Italy, and Balkan nations; and inefficient management of colonial possessions. Britain also seized Ottoman controlled Egypt in 1882, following anti-European riots led by nationalist elements. The British feared that instability in Egypt threatened its access to the Suez Canal and its lines of communication to India. The Empire also lost nearly all of its European territory in the First Balkan War of 1912 and, as a result, its borders were more exposed to Greece and Bulgaria. Most of all, it was more vulnerable to Russia, its most bellicose neighbor in the East during the nineteenth century. Russia had armies in northern Iran and the Empire suspected it had designs on the Bosphorus Straits and even Constantinople itself. All in all, prior to World War I, the Empire was weakened both politically and militarily, its borders had contracted, and its leadership felt that the countries of the *Entente* had intentions of acquiring more of its territory.

On the eve of World War I, the Ottoman Empire was a constitutional monarchy led by a Sultan-Caliph and an elected parliament. Despite these democratic trappings, the Empire was, in reality, a one-party nation led by the Committee of Union and Progress (CUP). An inner circle of six-CUP members held the majority of power in the country

and the officer corps, civil officials, and key provincial businessmen and politicians constituted their power base. This small inner circle consisted of Talat Bey, Interior Minister, who had considerable power due to his influence within the party; Halil Bey, leader of the lower house of parliament, Cavid Bey, the finance minister; Cemal Bey, Minister of the Navy; Enver Pasha, Minister of War; and Said Halim Pasha, the Grand Vizier and foreign minister who wielded less influence and power than his formal titles suggest. Prior to their entrance into the war, this inner circle was split on whether to go to war and on whose side they should choose. Said Halim and Cavid mostly favored neutrality while Enver and Talat promoted intervention on Germany's side, the only major European power that offered to protect the Empire from Russia. Enver chiefly favored intervention on the assumption of a short war (Fromkin 1989, 122).

The inner circle that ran the Empire typically ignored its cabinet and usually made decisions in an informal or unofficial manner. This type of administration fostered both great personal initiative and intrigue among members of this inner circle. Unfortunately, this informal way of doing business has also left historians incomplete details of why exactly the Empire went to war against the *Entente*. However, enough evidence does exist to suggest that Enver and Cemal's influence over the armed forces helped sway their pro-intervention position over the more reluctant but less influential members of the CUP inner circle. In the end, the German supply of ships, money, and munitions helped propel the Empire on the side of the Central Powers. Enver thought the Empire could survive a short war with the majority of its territory left intact (Yasamee 1995, 259).

The Empire's alliance with the Central Powers forced the British to better protect previously less defended areas that had strategic significance. The Suez Canal in Egypt

and its oil facilities in southern Iraq were especially vulnerable to Turkish attack due to the lack of permanently based British troops. Consequently, Britain invaded Iraq to ensure both its access to strategic resources and the protection of its lines of communication to India, its primary colonial asset in the East.

Britain's reliance on strategic resources from the Persian Gulf began when oil was discovered in southwest Persia in 1908. The Anglo-Persian Oil Company was established in 1909 to exploit this discovery. The company built a pipeline from the Persian oilfields, winding its way near the Iraqi city of Basra, to a refinery located on Abadan Island in the Shatt-al-Arab, Iraq's only waterway access to the Persian Gulf. In 1912, the importance of Persian oil became even more significant when the Royal Navy switched from coal to oil as its primary source of fuel. Not only did the Royal Navy defend the Home Islands but it also helped ensure the lines of communication to Britain's far flung colonial assets. Overall, Britain's ability to defend its own territory and its overseas possessions depended on its unfettered access to Persian Gulf produced oil.

Potential Turkish or German activities in Iraq also threatened India. From 1639 to 1914, Britain had considerable economic access rights in the Basra *vilayet* and navigation rights on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Until 1914, British warships even had access to the Shatt-al-Arab. However, war with the Central Powers threatened that access and potentially put its lines of communication to India in peril. Similarly, British officials also feared a war with the Ottoman Empire could potentially foment anti-British propaganda in Iraq, Persia, Afghanistan and the Muslim populated areas of India and perhaps even an insurrection of the tribes located on the northwestern frontier between Afghanistan and

India. Any anti-British agitation or uprisings in these areas would significantly endanger British rule in India as well.

Unlike most of its European neighbors prior to World War I, Britain had a traditionally small, professional army. Economic restraints and reforms carried out after the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902) helped shape the British Army into a small, but highly trained force. Ten days after the outbreak of hostilities in August 1914, Britain sent only four divisions to the Western Front in France (Tuchman 1962, 201). Germany, in comparison, deployed seventy-three divisions against the Allies on the Western Front at the beginning of the war (Tuchman 1962, 164). Since it viewed the Western Front as its primary theatre of operations during the war, Britain did not have the will to deploy a significant number of troops outside of the European continent. Therefore, it fell upon India to secure the borders of its own territory and to dispatch multiple expeditionary forces to fight in Europe, Africa, and Iraq.

The British Army in India (hence referred to as the Army in India) was not designed or equipped to fight overseas. The “Army in India” Committee in 1912 submitted a “Majority Report” that stated the Army in India should only have three responsibilities: provide internal security, maintain India’s territorial sovereignty, and be able to defend against a great power (e.g., Russia) until reinforced by Britain. However, this report also recommended that forces of the Army in India should be organized and equipped to accommodate deployment outside of India if an emergency required it (Moberly 1923, 1:58). Events in Europe in 1914 intervened and prevented the Army in India from acting on this recommendation. Although Lord Horatio Kitchener, former Commander-in-Chief of India, enacted significant organizational reforms in the early

20th Century, the Army in India was still better suited to fight lightly armed, disorganized forces located on the northwestern frontier rather than a modernly equipped army in Europe or Iraq. Thus, in 1914, the Army in India possessed little modern weaponry, minimal modern equipment, small stocks of artillery ammunition, only four modern aircraft, and no wireless communications equipment (Kearsey 1934, 2). The Army in India also lacked reserve forces and a reliable means to draft replacement personnel. Furthermore, India's industrial base was so underdeveloped that it had to depend on Britain to provide expertise and manpower to expand its capabilities. Subsequent operations would also indicate that the Army in India had inadequate medical and transport capabilities as well. Overall, at the outset of hostilities in 1914, India was woefully illequipped and unprepared to carry out modern military operations overseas.

In August 1914, the Army in India had approximately 235,000 troops (76,000 British and 159,000 Indian) organized into seven and one-third divisions, five cavalry brigades, and other support type units. Although neither designed nor equipped to fight outside of the subcontinent, the Army in India subsequently dispatched multiple expeditions to meet its overseas requirements. Expeditionary Force 'A' consisted of more than two divisions to Europe and six brigades to Egypt; Expeditionary Forces 'B' and 'C' consisted of at least two brigades on both offensive and defensive operations in East Africa; and Expeditionary Force 'D' initially consisted of one division in Iraq, although the force there was later expanded. The remaining units in India maintained internal security and acted as a ready force to be sent to Iran or Afghanistan if required.

Although the British forces that fought in Iraq generally had capable leadership on the tactical level, their strategic leadership in India and London was initially inept. At the

outbreak of the war in August 1914, Winston Churchill, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Lord Kitchener, Minister of War, managed day-to-day operations in consultation with Prime Minister Asquith (1908-1916) and the rest of his Cabinet. Unfortunately, this arrangement during the first critical months of the war “provided no security for quick military decisions, while it offered every inducement to political debate and delay” (Robertson 1991, 2:151). In October, to better maintain central control and prepare plans for future contingencies, Asquith created a War Council that consisted of, “the Prime Minister, the Secretaries of War, India, and Foreign Affairs, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and the First Lord of the Admiralty” (Jennings 1959, 294-5). Although this Council directed the overall war effort against the Central Powers for the British, the Council did not have day-to-day oversight of the Iraq operation. Asquith changed the name of the Council to the Dardanelles Committee in 1915 and expanded its membership to twelve (Jennings 1959, 296). Regardless of the oversight mechanisms it tried to employ, Asquith’s government did not effectively manage the British war effort in 1914-1915.

In accordance with long-established convention, the British government in India directed and controlled all military operations based in that country. Consequently, due to the East India Company’s historical commercial activities in the Persian Gulf area, the Viceroy oversaw British interests in Basra prior to the war. Asquith managed the war in Iraq by delegating the responsibility of all operations to Lord Robert Crewe, Secretary of State for India (India Office) in London; Sir Edmund Barrow, the Military Secretary of the India Office; and Lord Charles Hardinge, Viceroy in Dehli. Unfortunately, Crewe and Barrow were not properly staffed to run military operations and they did not receive the

necessary information from local commanders in Iraq to make the most informed decisions. Furthermore, there was no clearly established division of responsibility between the India Office and the Viceroy. Both offices either micromanaged details of the operation that should have been decided by the local commander or they neglected to handle policy decisions that should have been formulated at their levels.

Furthermore, General Beauchamp-Duff, Commander-in-Chief of the Army in India, only answered to the Viceroy in 1914-1915, although the War Office and the General Staff of the Army in India regularly exchanged information on intelligence and technical matters. Kitchener and Beauchamp-Duff communicated directly early in the war, but correspondence was completely cut off after the first few months on “constitutional grounds” (Moberly 1923, 2:30). After 1914, all direct correspondence had to be coordinated through the Viceroy and the India Office first. This arrangement inevitably led to the omission or delay of communication between Kitchener and Beauchamp-Duff. Similarly, the naval forces required to support amphibious and other land operations in Iraq took orders from the Admiralty in London and its subordinate commands in the East Indies and the Persian Gulf, not the Viceroy.

This command structure adequately served the Viceroy during the Army of India’s limited campaigns in Abyssinia (Ethiopia), Afghanistan, Burma, Sudan, and the subcontinent during the nineteenth century (Beaumont 1977, 156). However, it did not function well in the complex, multifront war that Britain fought in 1914-1918. Ultimately, this non-unified command arrangement greatly complicated the strategy, objectives, and management of British military forces in Iraq. As Lord William Robertson would later comment, “Hence, India never knew from day to day what

demands the Home Government might make upon her; the War Office never knew what help India could render or might need; and sometimes it was impossible for anyone to say whether a given question was the business of the War Office or the India Office, or the War Council or the Viceroy” (Robertson 1991, 2:159).

With this dysfunctional command structure in place, the India Office warned the Viceroy in late September 1914 that he should prepare to send troops to the Basra *vilayet* in Iraq if the Ottoman Empire joined the Central Powers. No prepared operation plan existed, due to the potential pre-World War I political fallout at home and abroad if it were discovered that Britain had contingencies for operations in the Persian Gulf. The British people would not have tolerated its government formulating plans for a costly overseas expedition in the face of lean economic times at home. Similarly, the Ottoman Empire would have understandably viewed negatively any potential plans to seize its colonial possessions. The British were especially sensitive not to provoke the Ottoman Empire prior to World War I due to their desire to see the Turks remain neutral in any future conflict in Europe. Ironically, shortly prior to World War I, students at the Army in India’s staff college in Quetta considered operations against the Ottoman Empire in Iraq as a staff problem. However, the head staff at the college later dismissed possible operations in Iraq due to “the distances and difficulties of communications involved, with the lack of attainable decisive objectives and the forces that would be available” (Moberly 1923, 1:70). The head staff probably had little idea at the time how prescient its classroom observations would later prove to be.

In early October, as events in Europe suggested that the Ottoman Empire would soon join the Central Powers, the India Office ordered (via telegram) the Viceroy to

dispatch a brigade to the Persian Gulf as a precaution. Unfortunately, this order did not provide a specific mission or establish whether the India Office or the Viceroy would manage the day-to-day details of the expedition. Lord William Robertson made the following comment after the war, “There could be no stronger proof of mismanagement than this telegram, for what could be more conducive to trouble than to order the dispatch of an expedition without specifying what it was required to do and who was to ‘run’ it?” (Robertson 1991, 1:23). On 5 October the India office would later dispatch a more specific telegram ordering the expedition to occupy oil facilities at Abadan and show local Arabs that Britain intended to support them against the Turks. Regardless of this later telegram, it was an inauspicious start for the expedition and an indicator of events to come.

With orders to sail to the Persian Gulf as soon as possible, the Army in India’s Expeditionary Force 'D' departed Bombay on October 16th. This force consisted of the 16th Infantry Brigade of the 6th (Poona) Division. Brigadier-General W. S. Delamain, the Expeditionary Force 'D' commander, led a total of 4,731 officers and men (Moberly 1923, 1:346). Less than a week later, this force temporarily docked at Bahrain and awaited further orders.

If the seizure of oil facilities at Abadan seemed logical to the British, it came as a significant surprise to the Turks. Due to Britain’s limited military assets and the threat posed by the Germans in continental Europe, the Turks did not expect a British assault in Iraq. As an undated Ottoman Army document captured during the war aptly put, “How could England, with its little Army, add aggressive action against the Turks to her contest with the German millions?” (Moberly 1923, 1:352). Organizationally speaking, the 4th

Turkish Army headquarters was located in Baghdad. The 12th and 13th Army Corps were subordinate to this command. Prior to their entrance in the war, the Ottoman Empire stripped a significant number of these subordinate forces and sent them to Syria and Erzerum, Turkey. They later used these forces to conduct unsuccessful attacks against Egypt and Russia early in the war. The Ottomans thought the use of locally drafted forces and collaborative tribes would be sufficient to help the remaining regular forces defend Iraq from any internal or external threats.

By late October, the Turks had the following forces in Iraq: six infantry battalions of the 38th Division; one infantry battalion of the 26th Regiment; ten battalions of artillery; one squadron of cavalry; nine battalions and one company of Gendarmerie; and six battalions and eight companies of Frontier troops. These units constituted 17,000 rifles (soldiers), 380 sabres (cavalry), forty-four artillery pieces, and three machine guns. These forces were considered poor quality by even Ottoman standards. “The [Ottoman] troops [in Iraq] are described as being below establishment, ill-trained, ill-disciplined, and badly equipped, with no proper organization for supply and maintenance. Desertions were many and at one time, in Baghdad, they amounted to 1,200 in one day” (Moberly 1923, 1:353). Overall, the Ottomans were in a bad state in Iraq prior to the start of the war.

On October 29th, the Ottoman Empire attacked Russia in the Black Sea. On the 31st, the British Admiralty ordered the Chief of Naval Forces in the Persian Gulf to do the following: commence hostilities against the Turks; proceed up the Shatt-al-Arab to protect oil facilities in Abadan; and to land the expeditionary troops at Fao, just south of Basra. On the next day, General Delamain received orders from the Viceroy to land his

forces in Fao, in concert with naval authorities and to await reinforcements. Although the Admiralty and the India Office consulted on events in Iraq on their level, the taskings for the Army and Navy were issued in separate orders and the details of coordinating the joint operation were ultimately left to British authorities in theater. The failure to issue these orders jointly risked effective coordination and efficient management of resources.

Britain then declared war on the Ottoman Empire on November 5th and a small contingent of Royal Marines and three companies of Indian troops landed the next day on the Fao peninsula. By November 10th, Expeditionary Force 'D' had landed its entire force without any significant resistance. This potentially dangerous amphibious assault in hostile territory took place without any loss of life.

Meanwhile, in an attempt to spread insurrection and chaos throughout Muslim areas located in British, French, and Russian territory, Sultan Mehmed V declared “holy war” in Constantinople on November 11th. This *fatwa* (religious decree) promoted the killing of all Christians who did not have German nationality (Hopkirk 1994, 60). This proclamation was one element of Germany’s “Drang Nach Osten” or “Push to the East” where Berlin hoped it could eclipse Britain’s military and economic dominance. Berlin and Constantinople subsequently dispatched agents to both Persia and Afghanistan to try to convince national leaders to shed their neutrality and join the Central Powers. Ultimately, all of these efforts failed. “Mehmed V’s holy war was therefore a flop” (Keegan 2000, 218). Although scattered Muslim units in the British Army did rebel during World War I, this was more due to their deployment outside of India rather than a general rebellion against British rule. Britain’s Muslim subjects may not have appreciated London’s rule, but they did not seek to replace it with Ottoman rule either.

In southern Iraq, the small British force repulsed a Turkish counterattack on the 11th and consolidated their foothold. On November 13th, General Sir A. A. Barrett reinforced Delamain and then took command of the entire force. On November 17th, the 16th and 18th Brigades attacked Ottoman forces near Sahil, located south of Basra. The Royal Navy's *Espiegle* and *Odin* (armed sloops), *Lewis Pelly* (an armed yacht), and *Sirdar-I-Naphte* (an armed tug), supported the brigades' attack. The fighting was intense and the Turks suffered over 1,500 casualties. The remaining Turks fled and Barrett broke off the pursuit to tend to his own casualties strewn out on the desert battlefield. The British suffered approximately 489 killed and wounded (Moberly 1923, 1:124).

On the 20th, the Viceroy authorized Barrett to take Basra if he thought he could take the city with his present forces. He also authorized him to make an operational pause if he preferred to wait until after the 17th Brigade (the third brigade of his division) arrived in Iraq on the 28th. The order became moot because the Turks abandoned Basra the next day and withdrew to Amara. British forces entered the city in the evening of the 21st and officially took possession on the 23rd. Now fully up to three brigades in strength, they went on to capture Qurna in December. Qurna lies at the confluence of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, where they join to become the Shatt-al-Arab approximately forty miles above Basra. Thus, by capturing Basra and Qurna in little over a month, the British had quickly secured their oil resources in southern Persia and Iraq with relatively few casualties (Moberly 1923, 1:153).

This seemingly easy victory over the understrength and poorly prepared Ottoman forces in southern Iraq left the British with a dilemma. Although they had accomplished the significant strategic objective of securing their oil supplies in Iraq and Persia, they

were left with the question of what to do next. A potential threat to British forces in southern Iraq still existed due to the presence of the 4th Turkish Army (later redesignated the 6th Turkish Army in early 1915) in Baghdad and Mosul. Potential offensive operations northward would extend British control in Iraq and could potentially translate into better-protected lines of communication to India. British acquisition of more territory could also eventually secure oil reserves in northern Iraq and enhance their overall influence in the Middle East.

After the capture of Basra, Sir Percy Cox, the political officer attached to the British forces, sent a private telegram to the Viceroy recommending an immediate advance on Baghdad. This request was rejected due to the lack of available forces, although the subsequent advance on Qurna was approved. The Viceroy believed that at least one more division was needed to protect the lines of communication between Baghdad and Basra and to act as a reserve in case the Turks reinforced its forces and counterattacked. Additionally, the port facilities in Basra could not support an extended expedition up the Tigris, where Baghdad lay over 550 miles or 880 kilometers away. The port in Basra had “practically no quays or wharfage, and vessels were unloaded in midstream by primitive methods into native sailing craft. There were no warehouses available for the storage of goods, and accommodation for troops was also lacking” (Robertson 1991, 1:41). The rest of Basra also lacked the basic infrastructure (e.g., roads, hospitals, and sanitation services, etc.) to adequately support the movement of large quantities of men and material moving north. A British soldier who participated in the campaign made the following comment after the war: “as our offensive policy developed, there was no corresponding provision for transport, maintenance and supplies. As the

[Army in India] force grew, the discharging facilities of the port [in Basra] and the carrying facilities of the river became more and more inadequate to the increased demand” (Candler 1919, 1:127).

To consolidate their position in southern Iraq, the British reinforced their forces with the 12th Indian Division. In March 1915, Army in India forces in Iraq were redesignated the II (Tigris) Corps and Sir John Nixon, former commander of the Northern Army in India, took command of this unit consisting of approximately 18,000 soldiers. Nixon had a low opinion of the Ottoman Army’s fighting capabilities and the Turks performance thus far in Iraq did nothing to discourage that belief. In future operations, this low opinion may have led him to ignore critical logistical requirements. Faulty intelligence also led him to underestimate how many Turks he faced in battle.

Prior to Nixon’s arrival in Iraq, Beauchamp-Duff not only ordered him to consolidate the British control of the Basra *vilayet* and British petroleum facilities in southern Iraq, but he also told Nixon to prepare for offensive operations against Baghdad. This order was neither coordinated with any authority in London or Dehli nor consistent with the intentions of the higher chain-of-command for British forces in southern Iraq. This represented a significant shift in the focus of this campaign, well beyond the limited objectives established at the beginning of the conflict. Unfortunately, other *Entente* operations in Western Europe, the Dardanelles, the Caucasus, Egypt, and Eastern Africa diverted London’s attention and prevented them from correcting this uncoordinated policy. Nixon subsequently marched northward (without improving his logistics in Basra), capturing Shaiba, Amara, Nasiriyah, and Kut-al-Amara by late September 1915. Lead elements of II Corps were now only 200 miles or 320 kilometers south of Baghdad.

Now that Britain had forces within striking distance of Baghdad, the Asquith government convened an interdepartmental advisory commission to decide what to do next. This joint War Office/Admiralty board, which had no day-to-day oversight of the land operation and, therefore, no knowledge of the poor logistical situation, recommended the following: no capture of Baghdad should be attempted; II Corps should be reinforced by two divisions; and this operation should not divert resources from the Western Front. The board recommended a temporary raid on Baghdad only although it is likely they would have ruled out any offensive if they had known the extent of the poor logistical situation (Robertson 1991, 2:37-9). Despite this report, the Dardanelles Committee recommended an attack on Baghdad with the intent of capturing it and ordered the augmentation of Nixon's troops with two divisions from the Western Front. Although Hardinge could have vetoed this recommendation, he left the ultimate decision to the II Corps commander. Nixon, ignorant of the number of enemy troops he actually faced (he never received the intelligence reports from the Imperial General Staff that stated the Turks had reinforced their troops facing II Corps and that he might eventually face as many as 60,000 enemy), discounting the significance of his logistical shortfalls, and assuming two divisions redeploying from Europe would augment him in a timely manner, directed General Townshend, the new 6th Division commander, to start his march on Baghdad by mid-November 1915 (Robertson 1991, 2:45-7). Although Townshend gave Nixon prior warning of his tenuous supply lines and the strongly entrenched enemy that faced him near Ctesiphon, he dutifully complied with the order to continue his advance north (Barker 1967, 95).

Other events in Europe prompted the Dardanelles Committee to embark on this risky operation in a secondary theater of operations. *Entente* setbacks in Gallipoli and Serbia, and the lack of meaningful progress on the Western Front prompted the Dardanelles Committee to view the capture of Baghdad as a potential “striking victory” in their overall struggle against the Central Powers (Robertson 1991, 2:42). Furthermore, Nixon (who stayed in Basra throughout the campaign due to illness), Hardinge, and Duff promoted to the Dardanelles Committee the possible benefits of capturing Baghdad, citing more secure lines of communication to India and the increase of Britain’s prestige in the Middle East. All in all, two factors ultimately caused disaster for Nixon’s forces in Iraq: 1) poor communications between decision makers in Iraq, India, and England and 2) the dismissal of significant tactical realities on the battlefield by commanders positioned far from the front.

Unfortunately for II Corps, the Turks had indeed significantly reinforced its forces in Iraq starting in summer 1915. General Nurettin Pasha (or Nur ud Din Pasha) took over the newly created 6th Army in Baghdad. The 51st and 52nd Infantry Divisions, both composed of combat veterans, arrived from Constantinople. Similarly, the 45th Infantry Division, composed of former Gendarmerie and frontier type troops, was established in Baghdad. In fall 1915, the Army in India faced a reinforced and more capable Turkish Army than it had faced earlier in southern Iraq (Erickson 2001, 112).

Townshend's 6th Division advanced north in early November, augmented by two battalions from the 30th Brigade of the 12th Division. In Ctesiphon, approximately twenty miles southeast of Baghdad, Townshend encountered a Turkish force of more than 20,000 combatants who were protected by two lines of deep trenches on both sides

of the Tigris River (Erickson 2001,112). Townshend had less than 14,000 troops (only 8,500 infantry) and despite his numerical inferiority, managed to eject the Turks from their first line of entrenchments and inflict significant casualties. Although Townshend achieved a tactical victory, the Turks prevailed by inflicting substantial casualties on the outnumbered British forces who were already at the tail end of a long, tenuous supply line. The British suffered more than 4,500 casualties and by November 26th Townshend was forced to withdraw, continuously harried by Turkish troops and Arab irregulars as he retreated south along the Tigris (Kearsey 1934, 53).

Townshend set up defenses at Kut-al-Amara in early December 1915 because his troops were too exhausted to retreat further and he thought he could withstand a siege at this position. Townshend, whose successful defense at Chitral, India in 1896 was legendary throughout the British Empire, thought he could hold off the Turks until relieved by Army of India forces redeploying from the Western Front. Unfortunately for the British, the Turks were masters of entrenchment warfare (as they had demonstrated at Gallipoli in 1915), and quickly encircled Townshend's forces with solid earthworks. The Turks subsequently repulsed three attacks by relief forces between January and April 1916. These relief attempts were hobbled by the inadequate logistical infrastructure in Basra that forced the British to send troops northward in a piecemeal and poorly organized manner. Although the British tried to negotiate and even purchase a face-saving truce to save the beleaguered garrison, the Turks would not accept anything less than total capitulation. Townshend (with the entire Poona Division) eventually surrendered in late April 1916 after running out of most of his food and fearing for the deteriorating condition of his wounded. Overall, "A total of 13,309 personnel

surrendered, including 272 British and 204 Indian officers, 2,952 British and 6,988 Indian soldiers, and 3,248 noncombatant troops” (Erickson 2001, 151). The British lost more than 25,000 garrison and relieving forces during the siege. Although the Turks treated Townshend well in captivity, most of the British prisoners were marched hundreds of miles into a brutal internment. Approximately 4,000 died in detention (Keegan 2000, 300-1).

The first phase of the British operations in Iraq was initially successful but it ultimately ended in disaster. Despite a string of impressive victories achieved by an ill-equipped Army inadequately designed for combat outside of India, the British could not overcome its numerous shortfalls in the end. The British had not surrendered en masse on that scale since the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. Overall, the British were defeated due to creeping strategic objectives; inadequate and uncoordinated command and control; insufficient offensive forces; poorly equipped and trained Army in India forces; poor logistics and medical care; faulty intelligence; and the overall underestimation of their enemy’s capabilities.

Before addressing the British reaction to this defeat and discussing the rest of the campaign, it is important to consider the conditions that the British fought in Iraq. The environmental conditions and the role of Arab irregulars are two major elements that have not been addressed in this thesis and they both gave the fighting in Iraq a distinctive quality. These unique characteristics are in significant contrast to the fighting that British soldiers found in France, the Dardanelles, or East Africa during World War I. Similarly, although the enemy and the weather conditions were similar for British units in the Levant, British forces in Iraq did not have the benefit of a mostly cooperative Arab force

or shorter supply lines like British General Edmund Allenby had in Transjordan and Syria.

During the summer in Iraq, temperatures can reach up to 125 or 130 degrees Fahrenheit. Even in the shade, the heat can be stifling and the cold desert temperatures at night adds to troop misery and sickness. In summer 1916, “the excessive heat made military operations impossible. Our [Army in India] troops were exhausted with sickness-fever, dysentery, boils, cholera, jaundice and scurvy” (Candler 1919, 1:284). Casualties from the heat sometimes reached epidemic proportions. In one case in summer 1916, 111 out of 139 soldiers from the British Highland Light Infantry became heat casualties even before they reached the front. Few of these men had ever traveled south of northern Scotland before they enlisted (Candler 1919, 1:288). Similarly, heavy rains and floods periodically menaced British forces and their commanders had to either adjust operations or cease them altogether. In mid-November 1914, General Delamain had to stop advancing because heavy rain “rendered the ground so heavy and muddy as practically to preclude any military movements” (Moberly 1923, 1:110). Inclement weather and flood waters also frustrated British attempts to relieve its beleaguered garrison at Kut-al-Amara (Moberly Vol. II, 398, 404). All in all, the excessive heat, the cold temperatures at night, and periodic heavy rainfall significantly affected the nature and tempo of British operations in Iraq.

The role of Arab irregulars also was unique to the British campaign in Iraq. Generally speaking, the Arab irregulars that fought in Iraq came from armed tribes in the rural areas of the country. The tribes “were found to be well provided with modern rifles...and were usually possessed of ample ammunition (Moberly 1923, 1:12). They

fought on both sides. The Arab irregulars usually fought for whoever paid them the most or for whoever they thought “was winning” (Moberly 1923, 2:301). They normally served in the role of harassing lines of communication, but they sometimes acted in a conventional manner as well. Both the British and Turks were deeply suspicious of these forces and normally dealt with them harshly (Townshend 1920, 199).

The Turks utilized irregular Arab forces throughout the campaign either through payment or coercion. Over 18,000 of these irregular forces, including 3,700 cavalry, fought with Ottoman troops during the fighting in the Basra vilayet (Moberly 1923, 1:217). At least 3,000 irregular Arab forces, commanded by two retired Ottoman officers, also fought with the Turks at Ctesiphon in November 1916 (Moberly 1923, 2:65). The British paid these forces as well, but mainly to secure their passive friendship. General Stanley Maude believed the British did not have the resources to manage these forces accordingly and thought they primarily menaced the population the British had come to liberate from the Turks: “owing to lack of time and the inadequacy of means for training them, their [Arab irregulars] influence for good will at best be small, whilst they will always present potential danger in the area of operations” (Moberly 1923, 4:11).

General Townshend best summed up the distrust of Arab irregulars felt by both Turkey and Britain. After watching a number of Arab villagers near Amara display white flags and enthusiastically greet British troops advancing against the Turks in 1915, he commented: “This is always the way with the Arab--the greatest turncoat in the world; he will always *salaam* to those he think are winning” (Townshend 1920, 69). Both British and Turkish soldiers suffered at the hands of Arab irregulars during the campaign, most often while they were retreating or if they were wounded and separated from their own

forces. Arab irregulars especially mistreated British captives after the fall of Kut-al-Amara: “death [of British captives] was largely due to the Arab soldiery and inhabitants, who looted our men perpetually and habitually ill-treated them. The Arab soldiery freely used sticks and whip to flog the stragglers on” (Moberly 1923, 2:461, 463). Not surprisingly, the poor treatment of his soldiers at Kut-al-Amara helped shape Townshend’s negative opinion of Arab irregulars: “Throughout my operations in Mesopotamia [Iraq], I ever found the Arabs merciless and cowardly scoundrels” (Townshend 1920, 199). Overall, the existence of Arab irregulars forced commanders on both sides to better secure their lines of communication and to view warily any supplication of loyalty by any of these forces.

The disaster at Kut-al-Amara prompted an investigation by the British Parliament. Although the Mesopotamia Commission, the investigative board convened by Parliament, attempted to lay the majority of the blame on Nixon and the British authorities in India, the main responsibility for this defeat lies with the Asquith government. Asquith and his Cabinet had oversight of the British administration in India and the authority to shape its structure and actions both in peace and in war. The British government, “had contrived a system by which India in peace kept a larger army than was justified by purely Indian reasons” and “there was a fiction that the army was for local purposes only and since India was a poor country her army was trained, equipped and organized for local purposes” (Mason 1974, 442). Furthermore, although Nixon and his superiors in India promoted the advance on Baghdad, it was the Dardanelles Committee that ultimately gave the go-ahead in hopes of a victory that would divert attention from the disaster in Gallipoli and other bad news on the Western Front and the

Balkans. Similarly, although the advance up to Kut-al-Amara was within the capability of the Tigris Corps, the attack on Baghdad represented a strategic shift in the campaign that required the Home Government to “become morally responsible for ensuring that this front was as well supplied as any other” (Mason 1974, 443). Ultimately, Asquith’s government failed to provide its forces in Iraq with the strategic guidance, manpower, and material means to achieve victory. The reason that the Parliamentary run Mesopotamia Commission had minimal criticism of Asquith’s coalition led government in this matter seems to be self-evident. Parliament certainly did not want to discredit the legitimacy of its own government during a time of war.

To remedy the numerous problems in Iraq, Sir William Robertson, the new Chief of the Imperial General Staff in London, streamlined the chain-of-command. The General Officer Commanding in Iraq reported now only to the Commander-in-Chief for India who answered only to Robertson on day-to-day military matters. In 1916, Asquith also restructured the Dardanelles Committee, limiting its membership to five and renaming it the War Cabinet. The War Cabinet retained oversight of the Iraq campaign through Robertson, along with all other fronts in the war (Jennings 1959, 297). The India Office in London and the Viceroy were no longer involved in the daily operations in Iraq. They were still involved in strategic policy for India, but Robertson now became ultimately responsible for what tactical and operational decisions were made in Iraq.

British forces in Iraq quickly assumed a defensive posture and they were ordered to hold as much ground as tactically feasible. Robertson named Maude as the General Officer Commanding of British forces in Iraq on July 28th. Maude quickly reorganized and retrained his forces and integrated reinforcements from France, Egypt, and India.

Maude also made considerable efforts to correct the logistical and medical deficiencies that had culminated in the defeat at Kut-al-Amara. He improved roads, built new railways, and purchased hundreds of boats, tugs, and launches.

By November 1916, Maude's forces consisted of two corps formations, one cavalry division, and one infantry division serving on the Euphrates Front in Nasiriya. The I Corps consisted of the 3rd (Lahore) and 7th (Meerut) Infantry Divisions, recently redeployed from France. The III Corps consisted of the 13th and 14th Infantry Divisions. The 15th Division was located in Nasiriya. Each division had two artillery brigades, plus sapper, miner, transport, and medical detachments (Kearsey 1934, 75).

By December 1916, Maude had made sufficient improvements in the health, training, transportation, and equipment of his forces to prompt reconsideration of offensive operations toward Baghdad. Considering Ottoman forces south of Baghdad to be comparatively weak and preoccupied with a westward thrust by Russian General Baratoff in northern Persia, Robertson and General Munro, now Commander-in-Chief in India, authorized Maude to march north. I and III Corps now consisted of approximately 50,000 combat troops while the 18th Corps (45th, 51st, and 52nd Divisions) of the Ottoman Army could only muster 10,500 soldiers to face them (Kearsey 1934, 75).

Thus, the British advance northward was launched on 13 December 1916 on both banks of the River Tigris. The British subsequently won the Battles of Khadairi Bend, Nahr-al-Kalek, and Second Kut. These victories forced the Turks to retreat and enabled Maude and his forces to capture Baghdad virtually unopposed on 11 March 1917.

Although various British intelligence reports of suspect origin claimed that the Empire planned to counterattack and retake Baghdad, no such threat materialized.

Britain's continuing uninterrupted run of victories ensured that no decrease in operations in Iraq could be realistically considered as Maude's reputation grew in the Middle East. On the contrary, operations were widened to stem threats from Turkish forces on the Euphrates, Diyala and Tigris rivers. Maude triumphed again at Samarra in April 1917 and continued his offensive at Ramadi. Robertson's admiration of Maude grew with each victory, "Maude, by a series of brilliant and daring manoeuvres, defeated and dispersed one Turkish force after another" (Robertson 1991, 2:81). Unfortunately, Maude died of cholera in early November 1917, probably due to tainted milk.

General Sir William Raine Marshall took Maude's place and subsequently scaled back operations in Iraq. The next year, Marshall directed the final significant British campaign on the Iraqi front. The Battle of Sharqat in late October 1918 led to the capture of the northern oilfields near Mosul and the ultimate defeat of Turkish forces in Iraq. During this last battle, the British effectively destroyed the Ottoman 2nd and 5th Divisions and took 11,322 Turkish prisoners (Mobley 1923, 4:319). The Turks evacuated Mosul on 10 November 1918 (Mobley 1923, 4:328).

Although victorious, the British had invested a large amount of men and material for an area of the world it considered to be a secondary theater of operations--the Western Front being the primary theater. The British suffered over 98,000 casualties, committed over 890,000 total combat and support personnel, but never faced more than six divisions of Ottoman troops the entire campaign (Robertson 1991, 2:82). Germany successfully drew significant numbers of British troops away from its main effort in Western Europe, just as it had hoped it would be able to do at the beginning of the war. As General Eric Ludendorff, First Quartermaster General of the German Army (1916-1918), wrote in his

memoirs after the war, “The stiffer the Turkish defence in Palestine and Mesopotamia [Iraq], and the larger the force absorbed in the English effort to achieve their object, the more our burden in the West would be lightened” (Robertson 1991, 70). Similarly, a British soldier of the Expeditionary Force ‘D’ made the following comment during the war, “We [Army in India soldiers] wished that we were killing Germans, the real menace to civilisation, and not these dupes, Arabs and Turks, whom they had drawn around them in a double coil of protection” (Candler 1919, 1:109).

With the defeat of the Turks in Iraq, the British had to decide how it would formulate its future policy in the region. The two strategic goals the British had sought to complete when Expeditionary Force ‘D’ first landed on the Fao peninsula in November 1914 – the protection of their oil supplies and the securing of their lines of communication to India – had been met. But these objectives were accomplished at great cost of British manpower, material resources, and prestige. Before the war ended, two significant agreements in 1916 helped shaped postwar events in Iraq. Although they were intended as short-term expedients, they had long-term consequences for Iraq and the Middle East.

The secret Sykes-Picot agreement between the British and French partially influenced the events that followed. This 1916 agreement sought to divide up the crumbling Ottoman Empire into French and British areas of direct rule and spheres of influence. Parts of Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, and Mosul, Iraq went to the French, while the rest of Iraq and parts of Saudi Arabia went to the British. Palestine was originally intended to become an international protectorate, although Britain ruled it as a Mandate after the war. Although the British suspected that Mosul had considerable oil production

potential at that time, this interest was sacrificed under the assumption (pre-1917 Revolution) that possible Russian expansion would make the city the target for future attack. The British War Office stated, “From a military point of view, the principle of inserting a wedge of French territory between any British zone and the Russian Caucasus would seem in every way desirable” (Fromkin 1989, 192). The British wanted the French to bear the brunt of any potential Russian expansion in that area. Therefore, Mosul went to the French and the British agreed to govern the rest of Iraq.

However, after the Bolshevik Revolution in 1917 and the end of the war in 1918, British Prime Minister Lloyd George and French Premier Georges Clemenceau renegotiated the Sykes-Picot agreement. Lloyd George asked Clemenceau to relinquish claims on both Mosul and Palestine and grant them to Britain. Although no formal notes were taken during the verbal renegotiation (conducted prior to the negotiations of the Treaty of Versailles), it is widely believed that Clemenceau made these concessions based on the assurance that Britain would provide a *quid pro quo*. “Apparently Clemenceau believed--wrongly, as it turned out--that he had obtained at least the tacit agreement of Lloyd George to support France’s claims in Europe in return for Clemenceau’s express agreement to grant Britain’s claims in the Middle East” (Fromkin 1989, 375). Clemenceau traded some of France’s claims in the Middle East in an attempt to ensure Britain’s support against Germany in Europe. Ultimately, this concession afforded Britain additional prestige by its new territorial possessions in the Middle East. However, it should be noted that neither leader apparently precoordinated this verbal agreement with their own Cabinets, which caused considerable turmoil in the formulation of the foreign policies of their respective countries after World War I.

The second agreement in 1916 had considerable influence on the expectations of many Iraqis following the war. Hussein ibn Ali, an Ottoman vassal and sharif of Mecca, promised the British that he could lead a revolt against the Turks by Arab officers in the Ottoman army and other Arab supporters. He offered this revolt in exchange for British support of his rule of a post-war independent Arab kingdom. Reeling from the disaster in Gallipoli and desperate for any support that could help defeat the Turks, Sir Arthur McMahon, British High Commissioner in Egypt, promised Sharif Hussein in 1915 that Britain would support an independent Arab Kingdom if he could successfully produce this revolt (Busch 1971, 71-8). Hussein and his sons (most notably, Amir Feisal) subsequently led the June 1916 Arab revolt, marching northward from Arabia with British forces into Transjordan and Syria. Although the revolt did not prompt the massive uprising against the Turks that he had promised, Hussein and his followers expected the British to deliver on their pledge to support Arab independence after the Ottoman Empire disintegrated.

Furthermore, to convince the US of their commitment to self-determination, France and Britain issued a joint declaration, in early November 1918, promising the “complete and definitive liberation of the peoples so long oppressed by the Turks” and “the establishment of indigenous Governments and Administrations in Syria and Mesopotamia [Iraq]” (Busch 1971, 199). This declaration further raised the expectation among the Iraqi population for self-determination. Although the British and French had no intention of meeting these expectations, the British did find a potential suitor in Amir Feisal Hussein to satisfy their future political requirements.

Thus, these two agreements along with the Anglo-French declaration, as shallow as they were, set the foundation by which Britain approached its postwar actions in Iraq. These agreements also influenced how the Iraqi people viewed their new foreign occupiers. Unfortunately, the failure to meet the postwar expectations of the Iraqi people would cost the British dearly in the future.

CHAPTER 3

FORMATION OF THE IRAQI STATE, 1918-1926

Britain emerged from World War I in a strategically strong position. The military and economic power of its primary adversary, Germany, had been vanquished: its navy ceased to threaten worldwide British power; its army had been demobilized and her colonies given up; and its commercial interests around the world were crippled. Similarly, the end of Tsarist rule in Russia removed a threat to India and the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire enabled Britain (via the Sykes-Picot agreement) to acquire the choice pieces of its former colonial possessions. British Prime Minister Lloyd George best summed up Britain's formidable postwar standing in early 1919, "If you had told the British people twelve months ago, that they would have secured what they have, they would have laughed you to scorn" (MacMillan 2003, 43).

Despite its considerable strategic position, Britain had a reduced economic standing in the world. Significant wartime spending left substantial debt and its Treasury could not keep up with the expenses required to maintain a worldwide empire of over seventy-five territories. Unemployment, accompanied by a vigorous trade union movement, also put pressure on the British government. Therefore, to better its balance of payments and improve its overall political standing with the British people, Lloyd George's government demobilized most of the military, significantly reduced its defense spending, and cut costs in the management of its considerable overseas possessions.

By the end of World War I, Britain controlled Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul. While the future of the former Ottoman possessions would mostly be decided at Versailles in

1919, Britain had already begun to examine what it would do with the territories it occupied at the end of the war. Some of these territories offered considerable economic potential for Britain, but the influence of President Wilson's *Fourteen Points* made outright colonization a political impossibility (Dodge 2003, 5-7). Although Britain emerged victorious from World War I, Wilson's promotion of self-determination for former colonies and Britain's reduced economic position prompted Britain to seek a compromise in Iraq somewhere between annexation and complete withdrawal.

Although annexation was not a possibility, there were significant economic and strategic advantages to maintaining a presence in Iraq. Despite its desire to reduce overall expenditures, the Royal Navy's conversion to oil-burning vessels required Britain's continued dependence on foreign oil. However, Britain's conquest of Iraq and control of its oil reserves provided a potentially cost-effective and politically appealing alternative to importing oil from US and Mexico (Omissi 2001, 20). Proper irrigation in Iraq also had the potential to enable a substantial production of wheat (MacMillan 2003, 397). In addition to its economic possibilities, Iraq provided Britain with secure air and land lines of communication to India and a solid footing in the strategically important Middle East as well. Overall, despite the influence of Wilson's *Fourteen Points* and the state of domestic politics in Britain, a continued presence in Iraq offered Britain considerable economic and strategic advantages.

At the end of World War I, Britain's policy in Iraq and the Middle East as a whole was exacerbated by a lack of unity among decision makers. No consensus on how Britain should maintain its influence in Iraq could be reached. The Arab Bureau and Foreign Office; the Viceroy and India Office; the Treasury; and the Eastern Committee of the

War Committee all had disparate views on Iraq's future. The Arab Bureau favored indirect rule led by a Hashemite monarchy, while the Viceroy and India Office lobbied for direct rule to better protect the periphery of India's borders (Yaphe 2003, 385). The Treasury preferred the cheapest administration possible, regardless of its level of control; and the Eastern Committee, established in 1918 to formulate British policy in the Middle East, could not make up its mind on Iraq even though they supported self-determination with European advice for all other Arab areas in the Middle East (Busch 1971, 285). Unfortunately for Britain and the Iraqi people, no authoritative policy was declared until 1920.

Although the Viceroy and India Office lost control of the military operation in 1916, they continued to manage the civil administration in Iraq. Until the establishment of a definitive policy, the Viceroy and his subordinates controlled this civil administration. The challenges of integrating Iraq for this civil administration were considerable. Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul had never been ruled within one single administrative unit. The distinct geographical, ethnic, and religious characteristics of each *vilayet* had discouraged integration prior to the end of World War I. However, due to the political, economic, and strategic advantages of incorporating all of Iraq into one unified political entity, the local British authority decided to govern all three *vilayets* under one administrative arrangement. The initial responsibility for Iraq's governance fell to Sir Arnold Wilson, who served as acting civil commissioner from April 1918 to October 1920 (MacMillan 2003, 397).

Sir Arnold Wilson wanted to impose direct rule in Iraq. Although President Wilson's *Fourteen Points* had significant influence on policy makers in London, the

Viceroy and his subordinates in Iraq were, “cut off from the post-war European turmoil and insulated from the effects of Wilson’s liberal rhetoric” (Dodge 2003, 7). A proponent of the British imperial style of rule, Sir Arnold Wilson believed that the diverse Iraqi population would not be able to unify and cooperate sufficiently to rule themselves. Wilson believed that to “install a real Arab Government in Mesopotamia is impossible, and, if we attempt it, we shall abandon the Middle East to anarchy” (Busch 1971, 356). Furthermore, after the Anglo-French declaration in November 1918, he told the India Office that, “the country [Iraq] as a whole neither expects nor desires any such sweeping scheme of independence (Wilson 1931, 104). Wilson primarily argued that Britain should govern Iraq until it was ready to rule itself because “efficient, benign government was of far more benefit to the people than anarchical independence” (Busch 1971, 477-8).

The assumption of British control of the three former *vilayets* during and after World War I prompted varying reactions among the ethnic and political elites in Iraq. Although the majority of the population welcomed the removal of the Ottoman administration, they were wary of British intentions. As the British occupied Najaf and Karbala late in the war, a group of local leaders, Shia clerics, and tribal sheikhs formed the *Jam’iyya al-Nahda al-Islamiyya* (Society of Islamic Revival). The purpose of the group was to defend Islam against the British although it was also in reaction to the tight controls imposed by the military occupation. Their opposition resulted in the assassination of a British official in spring 1918, which prompted the British blockade of Najaf and the imposition of other punitive measures (Tripp 2000, 33-4). Sunni Iraqis formed an opposition group as well. A group of ex-Ottoman officers who fought with Amir Feisal during the Arab Revolt in 1916, formed the *al-‘Ahd al-‘Iraqi* (The Iraqi

Covenant) in 1918. Another predominately Shia based opposition group, the *Haras al-Istiqlal* (Independence Guard) formed in 1919. Both of these groups believed in an independent Iraq led by a Hashemite ruler (Tripp 2000, 40). Likewise, although the Kurds in the north initially welcomed the British, Wilson's administration eventually clashed with various Kurdish leaders as well. All of these groups provided the foundation and leadership for the eventual opposition to British rule in Iraq.

Not all in Wilson's administration in Iraq believed in direct rule. Gertrude Bell, Oriental secretary and key Wilson advisor, initially supported Wilson's position but later concluded that direct rule would not likely succeed in Iraq. The strength of the contemporary nationalist movements in Egypt, Syria, and India led her to promote limited self-rule in Iraq with British oversight (Tripp 2000, 39). To establish this type of government, she believed that the "British should work with the largely urban and Sunni nationalists to modernize the country and to end what she regarded as the reactionary and obscurantist influence of Shi'i clerics and their tribal followings" (Tripp 2000, 39). She therefore tried to work closely with the ex-Ottoman officers who served with Amir Feisal during the Arab Revolt to help realize her vision for the future leadership of Iraq.

Prior to the Treaty of Versailles negotiations in Paris in January 1919, Lloyd George's government recognized the Sykes-Picot agreement hindered their future policy goals in the Middle East. The British no longer sought a French presence in Mosul due to a perceived lack of threat brought by the end of the Tsar Nicholas II government. After the war, Britain wanted Mosul primarily for its potential oil reserves and Palestine as a buffer for the Suez Canal and a homeland for the Jews. Similarly, to partially satisfy their wartime promises to the Hashemite monarchy and fearing that the establishment of direct

French rule would be unwelcome by the local Arab population, the British wanted Amir Feisal to rule Syria (Fromkin 1989, 377-8). Feisal had already set up a temporary administration in Damascus alongside occupying British troops. These postwar goals would require the modification or cancellation of Sykes-Picot. Britain sought to amend the terms of this agreement, but knew its outright abandonment would alienate France and potentially put its hard earned gains in Iraq at risk. Consequently, Lloyd George verbally renegotiated this agreement and acquired Mosul and Palestine in December 1918. However, the fate of Syria was formally debated for many more months.

As the negotiations of the Treaty of Versailles began in Paris in January 1919, France maintained its desire to acquire Syria. Although Clemenceau waived French claim to Mosul (due to oil concessions by the British) and Palestine, he drew the line on Syria. The French had historical and commercial interests there. Frenchmen had fought alongside Christian Maronites during the Crusades and “had historically been the protector of the Christian communities throughout the Ottoman Empire” (MacMillan 2003, 392). French business interests in Lyon also desired Syrian silk. Most importantly, Clemenceau knew French public opinion would be outraged if he made another compromise to the British and relinquished claim to Syria (MacMillan 2003, 384-5). The French population had suffered greatly in the war and wanted a share of the spoils. When the Treaty of Versailles was signed in June 1919, there was no formal decision on Syria’s final status.

After several months of contentious debate between France and Britain, Lloyd George turned his back on his government’s promise of an independent Arab Kingdom and bowed to Clemenceau’s demands for Syria. He backed down for three primary reasons: his fear of further alienating France; the increasingly nationalist character of

Feisal's administration in Damascus--Syria's Congress proclaimed him King in March 1920; and the expenditure involved in maintaining a garrison in Damascus (MacMillan 2003, 405). Therefore, Britain and France signed the San Remo Treaty in April 1920; Britain took responsibility for Iraq and Palestine (which include Transjordan), while France assumed control of Syria (which included Lebanon).

All of these territories were governed under a League of Nations Mandate "A" Class, which called for eventual independence for each country within twenty-five years. This Mandate required Britain to ensure that Iraq eventually satisfied four criteria of internationally sanctioned sovereignty: (1) "that the state be 'capable of maintaining its territorial integrity and political independence,' (2) that it be 'able to maintain the public peace throughout the whole territory,' (3) that it have 'adequate financial resources to provide regularly for normal Government requirements,' and (4) that it have laws that afforded 'equal and regular justice for all'" (Dodge 2003, 31).

Although France and Feisal negotiated the future of their relationship, they could not reach an accommodation. In the Bekaa Valley, Arab irregulars harassed the French by sniping at their troops. There were clashes with French troops in other parts of Lebanon as well. In July 1920, the French sent Feisal an ultimatum to accept the Mandate and to punish those whom had attacked French forces. The French unceremoniously evicted Feisal's administration from Syria in late July after it refused to comply with the ultimatum (MacMillan 2003, 407).

Most Iraqis viewed the Mandate as an annexation and a betrayal of Britain's wartime promises of self-determination. Trouble soon followed. Shia clerics, tribal sheiks, and former Ottoman bureaucrats all feared for their overall standing under this

Mandate and rapidly established organized opposition to British rule. In March 1920, the *al-‘Ahd al-‘Iraqi* in Syria “declared the independence of Iraq under the kingship of Amir ‘Abdallah, brother of Amir Feisal” (Tripp 2000, 40). In April, Ayatollah Muhammad Taqi al-Shirazai issued a *fatwa* in Karbala “declaring that service in the administration was unlawful” (Tripp 2000, 41). In May, members of the *al-‘Ahd al-‘Iraqi* marched from Syria into Iraq and captured Tall ‘Afar. They then began a march on Mosul with the intention of fomenting a revolt. However, the British dispersed their forces before they arrived and the revolt never took place (Tripp 2000, 40).

At the end of June, al-Shirazai issued another *fatwa*, seeming to promote armed conflict. In an attempt to preempt any rebellion, the British detained several tribal chiefs in the mid-Euphrates region. These arrests had the opposite effect. Revolt soon took hold in the mid-Euphrates and spread from Karbala and Najaf to the lower Euphrates and most of Baghdad as well. Uprisings also took place in southern Kurdistan (Tripp 2000, 43). A significant feature of this rebellion was the remarkable cooperation between the Shia and Sunni communities. Both used mosques to promote anti-British agitation (Marr 1985, 33). The *Haras al-Istiqlal*, who had close ties to al-Shirazai, acted as a link between the Shia and Sunni Arab communities that sought independence (Tripp 2000, 40).

By July, Iraq was in full-blown revolt. There were approximately 130,000 rebels, of which 59,000 had rifles (Clayton 1986, 122). The British had only 29,500 combat soldiers suited for quelling this rebellion and they were scattered across the entire country (Wilson 1995, 271). Churchill despaired at the lack of troops available to restore order: “We are at our wits end to find a single soldier” (MacMillan 2003, 408). To augment the British land forces, the Royal Air Force provided two squadrons of light bombers and the

Royal Navy still had eight 100 ton armed vessels left over from the war (Clayton 1986, 120-4). In Rumaitha (150 miles south of Baghdad), rebels attacked government buildings, besieged the British garrison, cut the railway, and blocked reinforcements. The garrison had to be resupplied by air (Busch 1971, 406-7). The situation in northern Iraq became so tenuous for the British that General Aylmer Haldane, General Officer Commanding of British forces in Iraq, asked his military chain-of-command in London permission to use gas artillery shells. London denied his request (Jacobsen 1991, 348). To help quell the uprising, the British dispatched ground reinforcements from Iran and India (Clayton 1986, 123). Overall, the Royal Air Force played a significant role in support of ground troops by logging 4,000 flying hours and dropping 100 tons of bombs. It lost eleven aircraft and suffered fifty-seven damaged aircraft during the entire revolt (Jacobsen 1991, 352).

The rebellion eventually lost steam. Tribal sheiks in Kut-al-Amara and Amara did not participate in the revolt for fear of jeopardizing their British-granted landholdings. Similarly, Basra merchants did not want to support the revolt for fear of endangering their extensive business ties with the British. Furthermore, the rebels' geographical separation allowed the modernly equipped British forces to regroup and counterattack, eventually reasserting control (Tripp 2000, 44). By October, the rebellion was mostly over after the relief of Rumaitha and the surrender of Karbala and Najaf.

The rebellion cost both the British and Iraqis. The British suffered 450 soldiers killed (both British and Indian), 450 missing, and approximately 1,100 wounded (Busch 1971, 408-9). They also expended forty million pounds sterling (Marr 33). Approximately 6,000 Iraqis died in the conflict (Tripp 2000, 44). There were four main

reasons for the revolt: the failure of the British to deliver on their wartime promises of self-determination; Shia dissent; the political-economic insecurities of tribal sheiks and ex-Ottoman bureaucrats; and the overall lack of British troops, which allowed the revolt to gain momentum and spread. Sir Henry Dobbs, British High Commissioner in Iraq (1923-8), also stated that he believed excessive taxation was one of the main causes of the rebellion (Dodge 2003, 123). The biggest losers of the rebellion were Wilson and the Shias. This rebellion discredited Wilson's support of direct rule and ensured his eventual replacement. The Shias lost significant influence in the development of Iraq's future because the British viewed the Shia *mujtahids* (religious scholars) as being one of the main instigators of this revolt and thus untrustworthy (Tripp 2000, 44).

From a counterinsurgency perspective, the British drew from experiences ranging from the Indian frontier wars to the Boer War to quell the revolt. Haldane's conduct of operations mirrored instruction articulated in British General C.E. Callwell's *Small Wars* (first published in 1896), the definitive work of nineteenth century British counterinsurgency doctrine. The revolt demonstrated that cavalry could still play a role against a lightly armed foe in a desolate environment and the value of using armored cars in conjunction with infantry forces. The uprising also showed the limitations of aircraft against irregular forces and the overall limited capabilities of the Army in India outside the subcontinent (Jacobsen 1991, 358-9).

The cost of suppressing the rebellion motivated the British government to allow the Iraqis to take a more active role in governing their own country, albeit with substantial British influence. The rebellion increased the total number of troops to 102,000 total soldiers (17,000 British and 85,000 Indians) in Iraq at the cost of an

estimated thirty million pounds sterling annually, a financial commitment deeply unpopular with the British public (Omissi 2001, 24). Overall, the British sought to maintain its Mandates in the Middle East by allowing more self-determination, subsidizing select Arab rulers (e.g., Ibn-Saud of the Arabian Peninsula, the Iman of Yemen, etc.), and providing a security presence primarily through the Royal Air Force, believed to be a low-cost alternative to stationing large numbers of ground forces (Omissi 2001, 25-6).

Sir Percy Cox replaced Wilson in October as the High Commissioner under the new Mandate. It is important to note that, even without the rebellion, Wilson would have been replaced due to his insistence on direct rule, which was in conflict with the prerivolt preferences of the Eastern Committee and the Foreign Office (Busch 1971, 403). Cox first selected Sayyid ‘Abd al-Rahman al-Kailani, *Naqib* (Sunni religious leader) of Baghdad, in November as the president of an interim council of ministers working under British oversight. This council consisted of twenty-one Iraqi notables (mostly Sunnis, but some Shias, Christians, and one Jew) from all three *vilayets*. Although democratic in appearance, the British appointed members of this council who they thought would support their interests (Marr 1985, 34). The majority of the Iraqi administration was predominately Sunni, because the British sought to draw upon their experience gained from the former Ottoman administration. The Shias were mostly left out of the new government because they had little administrative skill (due to the discriminatory practices of the Sunni dominated Ottoman administration) and the British thought they lacked reliability due to their role in the rebellion (Tripp 2000, 45).

After the creation of this short-term government, the India Office and the Viceroy lost the control of the civil administration in Iraq. The newly created Middle East Department of the Colonial Office assumed oversight of the Mandate. Churchill, recently appointed Colonial Secretary, convened the Cairo Conference in March 1921 to organize the future policy of Britain's Mandates in the Middle East. In Cairo, Churchill decided to establish a monarchy led by Amir Feisal and a joint defense composed of an Iraqi Army, the Royal Air Force, and British-led Levies (Hemphill 1979, 94). The British thought the Iraqis would view Feisal favorably due to his Sharifian lineage and his leadership during the Arab Revolt in 1916. They also thought he would have no significant opposition (the British deported his only potential rival--Sayyid Talib of Basra) and would be agreeable to British direction (Tripp 2000, 47-8). Additionally, they tried to legitimize Feisal's installation by holding a phony plebiscite in Iraq, in which 96 percent of the population supported his rule (Marr 1985, 36).

Feisal's government had significant limitations. He ruled a country that was not sovereign. Both Shias and Kurds alike distrusted him due to his Sunni heritage. Most significantly, most Iraqis doubted his reliability due to his past association with the British. This association would be a basis of opposition to the monarchy until its eventual overthrow in 1958. In general, Feisal had major challenges to overcome if he was to succeed and maintain power. His two biggest issues were securing the gradual independence of Iraq and the integration of a diverse country that had never been governed before as a single administrative unit (Tripp 2000, 48-50). To buttress his support within the country, Feisal filled the high offices of his government with many of the ex-Sharifian officers who fought with him during the Arab Revolt in 1916 and served

with his temporary government in Syria. Many of these officers were Ottoman educated Iraqis who “soon achieved a position in Iraqi politics second only to that of the British and Feisal” (Marr 1985, 36). Overall, Feisal’s administration used a patronage system to maintain both its power and stability in tribal areas.

To give the appearance of an equal arrangement between two independent nations, the British defined its relationship with Iraq through a treaty. The negotiations for the Anglo-Iraqi treaty began in February 1922 and lasted for nearly eight months. The British wanted the treaty to be a confirmation of the Mandate, which the majority of the Iraqi population opposed. The Shias especially disliked this treaty because it would “consolidate a [Sunni dominated] state over which they had no control and which might habitually ignore their interests” (Tripp 2000, 52). Feisal opposed this treaty as well because it made him appear as the symbol of British domination in Iraq. He discreetly encouraged antitreaty opposition, which prompted Abd al-Rahman to resign. Feisal subsequently suffered appendicitis and had to temporarily abdicate his power. Cox took advantage of the power vacuum by imposing direct rule in the interim. With no major Iraqi leader to impede him, Cox suppressed radical newspapers and political parties, banished multiple opposition politicians, and bombed tribal insurgents in the mid-Euphrates. These actions demonstrated to Feisal that the British were determined to take whatever measures necessary to ensure the treaty served their interests. In September, Feisal returned and restored Abd al-Rahman to his former position. Seeing no viable alternative, Feisal signed the treaty with the British in October (Tripp 2000, 53). The Anglo-Iraqi treaty had a twenty-year duration.

The Anglo-Iraqi treaty gave the British control of Iraq's foreign, security, and financial policy. The British also required Iraq to pay half of its residency requirements, "which not only placed Iraq in a state of economic dependence on Britain but helped retard its development" (Marr 1985, 38). The treaty also dictated that the Iraqis appoint British officials in eighteen governmental posts to serve as advisors and inspectors. Although this treaty gave the Iraqis highly visible positions of responsibility, the British had the final say in nearly every major aspect of the government. In return, Britain promised to provide military aid and to help Iraq satisfy the League of Nations' requirements for Mandates to earn independence (Marr 1985, 38).

Although the Anglo-Iraqi treaty accompanied promises by the British government to further reduce overseas expenditures, the Chanak crisis in the eastern Dardanelles led to the end of the Lloyd George government and a significant policy change toward Iraq. Turkish military forces surrounded British military forces in the Chanak neutral zone during the fall 1922 due to the British government's policy of supporting Greece against Turkey. Italy and France refused to help the British due to their fear of being dragged into another conflict, prompting Churchill to declare that the British Empire would reinforce Chanak (Dodge 2003, 23). Churchill's declaration, uncoordinated with Lloyd George or the rest of his Cabinet and viewed negatively by a British public still waiting for the dividends of peace, "alienated the white dominions and damaged imperial unity" (Dodge 2003, 24).

Critical of his foreign policy, Conservative party candidate for Prime Minister, Bonar Law, rebuked Lloyd George for his overseas commitments and accused him of imperial overreach. He stated that "we cannot alone act as the policeman of the world,"

a sentiment that resonated with the British public (Dodge 2003, 24). Law and other prospective Members of Parliament (MP) promoted the reduction of British forces in Iraq as a part of their election campaigns. The Chanak crisis rallied the public to the Conservative party and it won the election in November 1922. Law became Prime Minister (Dodge 2003, 24).

In December 1922, Law set up a committee to decide what to do about Iraq. Parliament seriously discussed evacuating Iraq and Sir Percy Cox was recalled to London to testify before the committee. Cox argued that British “policy in Iraq was working, would bear dividends great enough to justify its continuance, and that, if prematurely curtailed, the result would be disastrous” (Dodge 2003, 25). He also stated that a withdrawal “would lead inevitably to anarchy, a rise in Russian influence and ultimately the return of the Turks” (Dodge 2003, 25). Cox’s testimony prevented a complete British withdrawal but the Chanak crisis prompted the Law government to reduce the twenty-year Anglo-Iraqi treaty commitment in Iraq to “a period of four years after a peace treaty had been signed with Turkey” (Dodge 2003, 25).

The final component of building the Iraqi nation-state took place with the Constituent Assembly. The Constituent Assembly ratified the Organic (which embodied the constitution) and Electoral Laws in March 1924. The constitution was a compromise between the requirement of a strong executive and the need to give influential sections of the emerging Iraqi polity (most notably, the sheikhs) a “stake in the new order” (Tripp 2000, 58). The constitution gave the king the power to delay or dissolve parliament, to pick the prime minister, and to choose his ministers on the basis of the prime minister’s recommendation. Every law needed his confirmation and he could issue executive

ordinances concerning finance, security, and the execution of the term of the treaty with the British when parliament was not in session. The parliament was composed of a senate, whose members were chosen by the king, and an elected chamber of deputies. Additionally, the cabinet “was responsible to the chamber of deputies and the chamber could force the government’s resignation by a simple majority vote on a motion of no confidence” (Tripp 2000, 58).

The election law divided the country into three electoral districts and provided for a two-step indirect election. Primary electors were male taxpayers twenty-one and older who elected secondary electors (1 for every 250 voters). The secondary electors had to live in one of the three electoral districts. Once elected, these secondary electors voted in their district headquarters for the individual whom they wanted to serve in the chamber of deputies. Unfortunately for the democratic process in Iraq, both “the large districts and the two-step process allowed for considerable government intervention in the election process, which successive government were not slow to implement” (Marr 1985, 39).

The constitution became the law of the land and endured with a few modifications until the monarchy was overthrown in 1958. “It was a well-designed instrument to foster Britain’s indirect control” (Marr 1985, 39). Although partly symbolic, the king became an instrument the High Commissioner used to ensure British interests. The British also ensured the sheikhs, whom they had done much to empower, had a large parliamentary membership. Not surprisingly, the constitution failed to gain legitimacy with the majority of Iraqis “partly because Iraqis were never given real responsibility in the government and partly because they came to regard it as an instrument of foreign manipulation and control” (Marr 1985, 40).

Although the Anglo-Iraqi treaty and Constituent Assembly helped define the internal government, the Iraqis needed an army to maintain stability and protect its borders. Not only did the nascent country still lack internal unity, but it also had external threats from Turkish irregulars, Kurdish tribesmen, and Wahhabi incursions (Hemphill 1979, 89). Jaafar Pasha al-Askari, an ex-Ottoman officer, served as the first Minister of Defense and helped form the Iraqi Army. In 1922, the Iraqi Army commissioned 250 ex-Ottoman officers and had a total of 3,500 soldiers. Although nominally independent, the Iraqi Army was organized, trained, and equipped along the British model (Hemphill 1979, 97-8).

In October 1922, to assist the Iraqi Army, the British established an air control system in which the RAF provided the majority of security, augmented by a land force of British officered Levies. The British hoped that this system would be cheaper than garrisoning large numbers of ground troops in Iraq (Omissi 2001, 29). The first Air Officer Commanding was John Salmond who led “eight squadrons of aircraft, nine battalions of British and Indian infantry, besides local levies, armoured cars, pack artillery, and supporting units” (Omissi 2001, 31). Sir Henry Dobbs believed this arrangement would provide the majority of Iraq’s internal and external defense because he “did not visualize the possibility of Iraq alone ever being able to defend herself against external aggression, and favoured a limited role [for the Iraqi Army]” (Hemphill 1979, 95).

The British-led Levies represented a key component of this air scheme. The Levies were a gendarmerie type force, which traced its origins to a small group of Arab Scouts in Nasiriya that the British used to collect intelligence on the Turks. During World

War I, this mostly Arab unit also provided reconnaissance and escort functions for the British military and civil administration. In October 1918, the Levies were formally organized under one command consisting of two branches: a *Striking Force* in each administrative area to serve as an armed reserve and a *District Police* subordinate to each political officer. The total forces consisted of 5,467 mounted and dismounted personnel. The Levies chiefly functioned as an internal security apparatus where they served “the executive needs of the Civil Administration” (Browne 1932, 2-4).

In August 1919, the Levies were reorganized again. They were divided into three Area Headquarters in Mosul, Baghdad, and Hillah, and expanded their ranks to include ethnic Kurdish and Turkomen personnel. Christian Assyrians were also incorporated in April 1921. Organizationally, mounted units consisted of 100-man squadrons and 25-man troops while the dismounted units had 100-man companies and 25-man platoons (Browne 1932, 4-5). In November 1919, the British formally declared that the Levies would be trained to conduct “rapid advances, flank attacks, advanced and rear-guard action, and marsh fighting. For work in the river areas, work with aeroplanes, armoured cars, and gun boats. They also trained for mountain warfare for the northern areas and for desert warfare anywhere west of Iraq” (Browne 1932, 5). The British principally attempted to mold the Levies into a multifunctional, native force unit capable of conducting operations in a combined arms environment.

The establishment of the Iraq Army in 1921 prompted the British to limit Levy recruitment to Assyrians only, and Arab or Kurd volunteers were required to enlist in the army. The British chose the Assyrians due to their superior fighting qualities and their mistrust of Arabs and Kurds, which made them loyal and dependent on British support

(Lunt 1982, 31). Most Iraqis resented the Assyrians due to their unwillingness to assimilate and their subservient relationship with the British. Iraqi politicians thought the Assyrian relationship with the British promoted dependence and the Iraqi Army “likewise saw them [the Assyrians] as an insult to unity and independence” (Hemphill 1979, 106). This resentment of the Assyrians would boil over shortly after Iraq’s independence in 1932. The British intended to gradually phase out the Assyrian Levies as the army eventually became self-reliant and independent.

The Levies participated in multiple operations throughout the country from 1918-23 to help quell threats to the British and the new Iraqi government. In 1919, the Levies participated in British operations against Kurdish Sheikh Mahmud al-Barzinjah, which ultimately resulted in his capture. The Levies also stayed loyal to the British and helped restore order during the revolt in 1920, even though they were under great pressure from their fellow Iraqis to change sides. “Intensive propaganda was leveled at them by their own people, including female relations. They were openly insulted in the streets and coffee shops, and called infidels. They fully realized they were cutting themselves off from their own people” (Browne 1932, 10). During the revolt, the Levies lost seventy-three killed in action and were awarded fifteen medals for gallantry (Browne 1932, 13). The Levies similarly conducted multiple operations against various Kurdish factions in 1921-23 and defensive operations to deter Turkish aggression in 1922-23 (Browne 1932, 18-34). These operations were closely coordinated with the Royal Air Force and remaining regular British Army units. Fully integrated in Britain’s combined armed operations in Iraq, the Levies “seldom took the field without close support from bombing

and fighter aircraft” (Lunt 1982, 35). During this critical time, the Levies were an important component of Britain’s air control scheme in Iraq.

The RAF represented the primary element of the British air-scheme to guarantee internal and external order in Iraq. In an era of rapidly declining defense budgets and domestic pressure to downsize its overseas commitments, the British used the RAF because it was a cheap, asymmetrical method of accomplishing its goals. RAF aircraft were mobile and practically invulnerable to tribesmen whom were usually only armed with rifles (Dodge 2003, 131-3). The British deployed RAF aircraft against reluctant taxpayers, uncooperative tribes, and foreign forces (e.g., Wahabbis) threatening Iraqi territorial sovereignty (Dodge 2003, 156).

The first bombing demonstration took place in late 1923. The bombing resulted from the failure of Sheikhs Kashan al Jazi of Barkat and Azzarah Ma’jun of Sufran to pay back taxes and turn in 300 rifles per tribe as a penalty for late payment. The RAF indiscriminately bombed Bakrat and Sufran for two days and nights with incendiary bombs. Approximately 100 men, women, and children and many horses, cows, and sheep were killed. The bombing prompted the sheikhs to pay the taxes but few weapons were turned in, reflecting the inability and unwillingness of the sheikhs to handover that many weapons. Furthermore, the sheiks raised the majority of the money to pay the tax debt through money lenders, further indebting the sheikhs and other members of the tribe (Dodge 2003, 153-4).

The British also used the RAF throughout the Mandate against other recalcitrant tribes in the mid-Euphrates and Kurdish populated areas. Although an effective means of collecting taxes, quelling tribal revolts, and maintaining territorial sovereignty, the

indiscriminate RAF bombing had long-term consequences. Instead of encouraging cooperation and helping maintain social cohesion, the bombing forced many tribe members in Barkat and Sufran to resettle to other tribes not under threat. This migration disrupted national integration and did nothing to encourage the handover of weapons. Consequently, the British learned that bombing “could not co-opt tribes but could only punish them” (Dodge 2003, 156). Similarly, Peter Slugget, a Middle East historian stated, “perhaps the most serious long-term consequence of the ready availability of air control was that it developed into a substitute for administration. Several incidents during the mandate period indicate that the speed and simplicity of air attack was preferred to the more time-consuming and painstaking investigation of grievances and disputes” (Towle 1989, 22). Overall, although the RAF served the guarantor of internal and external order, the bombing terrorized the populace and did little to endear individual Iraqis to the British or their central government.

The British did not always resort to bombing to ensure order. They also used other means of quelling dissent and punishing armed resistance to the British occupation. British political officers and soldiers used the following measures to help maintain order: fines, bribery, deportations, selective arrests, capital punishment, confiscation of property, show of force operations, blockades, and the severing of the water supply to targeted cities. In early 1918, the British imposed a fine of 50,000 Rupees and 500 rifles on a local sheikh in Najaf after he incited a mob to ransack British offices and fire on RAF aircraft. The British eventually cut off the water supply to Najaf until the rifles were handed over and confiscated the sheikh’s house in lieu of the fine (Candler 1919, 2:212-

3). The British also blockaded Najaf in spring 1918 after the assassination of a British officer, as described earlier in this chapter.

In addition, the British resorted to hostage taking during the war. During the siege at Kut-al-Amara in 1915-6, Townshend believed that the local inhabitants had buried or concealed weapons and were only waiting for a signal from the Turks to attack the British from within the city. As a precaution, he detained local leaders and threatened to shoot them if local inhabitants rose against the besieged British garrison. The British also shot twelve looters to discourage this activity in the future (Barker 1967, 129-30).

Regardless of the sometimes draconian nature of British actions, there is no evidence that long-term hostility by the Iraqis resulted as a consequence. The Iraqis had been occupied for nearly 700 years prior to the war and thus often subject to brutality at the hands of their Mongol, Turkish, and Persian occupiers as well. The punitive measures that the British took during their occupation, with the exception of the RAF bombings, were either similar to or lesser than what they would have suffered under previous occupiers or even during the conflicts within their own Arab tribal communities. Therefore, although the RAF terrorized the populace beyond anything they had ever experienced before, there is no evidence that the other means that Britain used to maintain order or punish resistance resulted in long-term resentment against the British (Wilson 1930, 242).

In 1923, Britain and Iraq agreed that Iraq would be responsible for its defense while British assistance would be gradually reduced. The agreement also required that 25 percent of Iraq's budget would go to defense spending. Despite the Iraqi Army's nominal autonomy, the British identified its requirements and finances; trained and armed its

forces; and monitored operations via “joint consultation.” As with the civil administration, this arrangement translated into outright control by the British (Hemphill 1979, 94-5).

Another obstacle to the integration of the three *vilayets* into the new Iraqi state was the status of the Kurds, who comprised the majority of the population in Mosul. The Kurds were a different ethnicity than their fellow Arab Iraqis and they spoke an Indo-European language. Due to their unique ethnicity and culture, the Kurds have always sought autonomy so that they could handle their own affairs and retain their national identity. Following the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire, the victorious Allies initially promised the Kurds autonomy in the Treaty of Sevres in 1920. The treaty called for an autonomous Kurdish state and “had stipulated that the Kurds of Turkey and Iraq could apply for admission to the League of Nations within a year” (Marr 1985, 40). Unfortunately, Mustafa Kamal’s emergence in Turkey effectively canceled this treaty after he secured control of the Kurdish areas in the eastern part of his country.

The British had attempted to establish an autonomous Kurdish area in Mosul as early as 1918. They appointed Mahmud to lead this area in Sulaimaniyya due to his local political standing and extensive landholdings, but he eventually alienated the British by attempting to become a legitimately independent ruler. The British subsequently captured Mahmud and removed him from power in May 1920 (Marr 1985, 41). However, Kamal’s claim on Mosul and the Turkish military’s forays in the *vilayet* in 1922 prompted the British to reinstall Mahmud “to re-establish some kind of authority in the region which would act as a bulwark against further Turkish encroachment” (Tripp 2000, 54). The British evicted Mahmud from Sulaimaniyya again in July 1924 due to his attempt to

establish an independent state and for collaborating with the Turks (Marr 41). Mahmud fled to Persia and conducted a guerrilla war against the British and Iraqi government until his capture in 1931 (Tripp 2000, 55).

The Iraqi government decided on the end state in Mosul prior to Mahmud's expulsion. In the summer of 1923, the Iraqi government guaranteed that "Kurds would be appointed in Kurdish areas and that the Kurdish language would be employed in Kurdish territory, and it instructed officials to proceed with the elections in all Kurdish areas under their control" (Marr 1985, 41). This declaration represented the Kurds' formal integration into Iraq. By 1924, the Kurds had dispatched delegates to the Constituent Assembly in Baghdad (Marr 1985, 41). As for Turkey's claim on northern Iraq, the Allies and Turkey signed the Treaty of Lausanne in 1923, which settled Turkey's postwar boundaries but left the final determination of Mosul up to the League of Nations. In July 1925, a League of Nation's commission recommended that Mosul remain in Iraq and that the Iraqi government should allow the Kurds to govern themselves "to develop their cultural identity through their own institutions" (Tripp 2000, 59). This recommendation prompted the Turks to drop all formal claims on Mosul and allowed the British and the Iraqi government to settle the Kurdish question for the time being. The border between Turkey and Iraq was demarcated in 1926.

In conclusion, Britain's wartime promises had significant consequences after World War I. Amir Feisal expected Britain to deliver an independent Arab Kingdom but Sykes-Picot forced the Lloyd George government to initially renege on its promises. However, France's assumption of control in Syria provided Britain with an opportunity to satisfy both Feisal's desire to rule an independent nation and Iraq's demand for self-

determination. Much to the chagrin of the Iraqi people, Feisal's assumption of the throne was a facade of self-rule.

The formation of the Iraqi state primarily served Britain's interests. The British cobbled three disparate *vilayets* together to take full advantage of Iraq's strategic and economic potential. To ensure this contrived nation remained intact and continued to do its bidding, the British installed a ruler they could influence; formulated a national-level governmental structure to ensure its dominance; established a security apparatus dependent on its support; and placed its own officials in all levels of the government to make sure that the Iraqis did their will. Not surprisingly, the majority of the Iraqi Army's officer corps (nearly all ex-Ottoman trained) and their Iraqi counterparts in the civil administration resented the '*al-Wad ' al-Shadh*', or "the perplexing predicament which gave an outward appearance of self-rule whilst preserving the essence over state and army alike" (Hemphill 1979, 101). This resentment endured and guaranteed the British and the monarchy it installed would be continually challenged in the future.

CHAPTER 4

MANAGEMENT OF THE CIVIL ADMINISTRATION, 1914-1926

Although the formulation of Iraqi national-level structures demonstrated many of the obstacles Britain faced after World War I, the challenges of running the civil administration revealed even more difficulties. The successful management of issues such as education, health, taxes, justice, and land policy were equally as important as the establishment of an executive ruler and creation of a national security apparatus. Therefore, to best understand the British experience in Iraq overall, it is important to examine the details of British civil administration as well.

British civil administration in Iraq from 1914-1926 can best be divided into three phases: 1914-8, 1918-20, and 1920-6. These periods encompass Britain's initial intervention in 1914, the end of the war in 1918, and the demarcation of the northern Iraqi border with Turkey in 1926. The British began their civil administration in Iraq with the limited objective of maintaining law and order (1914-8), then moved to a more ambitious agenda of a direct type of rule (1918-20) and progressed, to an eventual incremental drawdown and handover of government to the Iraqis (1920-6).

When the Army in India's Expeditionary Force 'D' landed in Iraq in November 1914, British authorities had very little empirical knowledge of the three *vilayets*. Although many British civil servants and military officers based in India had served in the Persian Gulf sometime in their career and even spoke fluent Arabic, most were not familiar with the cultural and social realities in the *vilayets* (Dodge 2003, 73). They tried to fill this void by drawing on their past colonial experiences in India and elsewhere.

Some of this knowledge proved valuable for the British, such as the importance of rapidly establishing rapport with local residents and the tolerance of some local customs. However, the misapplication of these experiences, especially in terms of land policy and the administration of justice, had negative long-term effects on Iraq and the British occupation itself (Dodge 2003, 63).

Britain's efforts to establish a civil administration began with the capture of Basra on 23 November 1914. This represented the beginning of the first phase (1914-8) of Britain's civil administration in Iraq from 1914-26. Although British authorities had no orders to create a permanent administration in Iraq, many British soldiers and civil servants assumed that Britain would eventually annex Basra due to its strategic significance (Dodge 2003, 10). Accordingly, the British gave the Iraqis in Basra no indication they were anything but a liberating force. Sir Percy Cox, chief political officer of Expeditionary Force 'D' declared to the local Iraqi population in Basra "the British flag has been established--under which you will enjoy the benefits of liberty and justice both in regard to your religious affairs and your secular affairs" (Wilson 1930, 311). General Barrett appointed Major D'Arcy Brownlow, Deputy Judge Advocate-General of the 6th Division, as military commandant for Basra. A political officer assisted him and Brownlow had the authority to develop a civil administration without interference from local military commanders (Wilson 1930, 12).

Brownlow's first order of business was the reestablishment of law and order. The departure of the Turkish administration had left a security vacuum. The Turkish police and gendarmerie had vanished and government buildings were looted. "Forty-eight hours after the Turks had left, not a single government building outside Basra possessed doors

or window-frames” (Wilson 1930, 13). Similarly, piracy on the Shatt-al-Arab had resumed and armed bands of criminals operated in the date groves from Basra to Fao (Wilson 1930, 13). Reacting to this rise in criminality, the British Provost-Marshal deployed a police force primarily staffed by Indians, who were mostly Punjabi Muslims. The Indian police officers operated effectively due to their overall law enforcement abilities and their ability to quickly learn and speak the Arabic language (Wilson 1930, 13).

Although many Basra residents were accustomed to working with the British due to economic relationships originating with the East India Company, the overall establishment of a temporary civil administration was complicated by the lack of official records left by the Ottoman administration. The Turks took as many official records as they could take with them when they fled Basra (Bell 1920, 5). Furthermore, the former Turkish civil administration was rife with corruption and inefficiency. The turmoil associated with Turkey’s entry into the war had also put the Ottoman administration in Basra in further disorder in the weeks preceding the British intervention (Bell 1920, 6). Similarly, not only did the entire Turkish civil service in Basra disappear with the arrival of British forces, but local Iraqis were afraid to assist the new civil administration due to their assumption of retribution if Turkish forces returned. Overall, local Iraqis had the “fear that the Turks might ultimately return and vent their wrath on those who had taken service under an alien and infidel enemy” (Wilson 1930, 13). Until the British could demonstrate to the local populace that the Turks would never return, recruitment of their service was difficult. This phenomenon later proved true in Baghdad as well.

Therefore, Brownlow had to create an effective civil administration with neither the assistance of complete historical records nor the complete cooperation of the local population, still fearful of the return of the Turks. Both international law and expediency required the British maintain the overall Turkish system in the short term, albeit without the widespread corruption and inefficiency of the former administration. The British inherited a Turkish administration, which consisted of several departments: Department of Pious Foundations (*Waqf*), Land Records (*Tapu*), Crown Lands, Customs, Ottoman Public Debt, Excise, and Tobacco Regie. With the exception of Customs, Brownlow assumed control of these redundant and inherently inefficient departments. He also controlled educational institutions and municipal finances (Wilson 1930, 70). He combined these departments of the former Turkish administration in some cases and temporarily eliminated the Tobacco Regie, but the overall structure remained (Bell 1920, 7). Only the ex-official members of the local population whom the British considered honest remained employed. Most records in each administrative department remained in the Turkish language; although receipts and all other official business were changed into Arabic, an adjustment that the local population welcomed (Bell 1920, 6).

The civil administration also arranged for the billeting of British troops, veterinarian services, and the introduction of a new currency. The British paid fair rent for all local housing that billeted their soldiers. However, to ensure sanitary conditions, the British forced all local inhabitants to vacate these buildings. Not surprisingly, this requirement caused friction and ultimately became one of the principal grievances of the local population against the British occupation (Wilson 1930, 14). To further ensure sanitary conditions for an expeditionary force that depended on animal transport, British

veterinarians inspected all local horses, mules, and donkeys in Basra within a few months. Animals that were suspected of disease were either quarantined or destroyed, with the civil administration providing compensation. The British set up a free animal clinic, which also proved to be very popular with the local population as well. The veterinarians were effective and the service animals of the British forces were thereby protected (Wilson 1930, 14-5). Furthermore, the British changed the primary currency of exchange. The Turks fled Basra with as much the silver and gold as they could transport and the Turkish Lira stopped being used. As a consequence, the British introduced the Indian Rupee and exchanged it with the Lira at a rate fixed by proclamation. This means of establishing the exchange rate caused consternation with the local populace (Wilson 1930, 15).

After the first four months of occupation, the local population in Basra responded positively to the British even though the Turkish military was still close to the Basra *vilayet*. Trade recommenced and the bazaars were busy. Most importantly, the British had managed to restore law and order. Overall, British successes in its early civil administration in Iraq were facilitated by Britain's long-standing commercial activities in the *vilayet* and "were the best answer which could be given to Turkish propaganda and reflected no little credit on the native population" (Bell 1920, 6).

Subsequent victories in Qurna in late 1914 and Amara, Nasiriya, and Kut-al-Amara in 1915 required the British to expand their civil administration. Deputy military commissioners were established in each of these newly occupied cities along with assistant political officers (Bell 1920, 6). However, the fall of Baghdad in 1917 ushered in a new phase in the British occupation of Iraq. Despite his protests, the British

government ordered General Maude, General Officer Commanding of Iraq, to make the following proclamation in his name as he assumed control of Baghdad: “our Armies have not come into your Cities and Lands as Conquerors, or enemies, but as Liberators. Therefore, I am commanded to invite you, through your Nobles and Elders and Representatives, to participate in the management of your civil affairs in collaboration with the Political Representatives of Great Britain . . . so that you may unite with your kinsmen in the North, East, South, and West” (Wilson 1930, 237-8). This declaration further demonstrated the rift between the Foreign Office and the Viceroy on future policy in Iraq. The Foreign Office continued to promote the possibility of an independent Arab kingdom, something that the Viceroy and Maude opposed (Busch 1971, 146).

Now that the Turkish administration in Baghdad had disappeared, the British set out to build the framework of a temporary administration distinct from Basra. Due to the Sykes-Picot agreement, the Asquith government assumed in 1917 that Basra would eventually be ruled by a predominately British regime, Baghdad would be a British protectorate led by an independent Arab government, and the French would eventually control Mosul. In May 1917, the British government ordered Maude to set up a primarily Arab government in Baghdad separate from Basra with British officials serving only as advisors (Wilson 1930, 241).

The British faced many of the same challenges as they had in Basra. Nearly every Turkish official fled with retreating Ottoman forces and what records they could not transport they destroyed. The retreating Turks also ransacked the bazaars and pilfered gold and goods from local businessmen (Candler 1919, 2:119-120). Similarly, the British also found it very difficult to recruit local residents to assist the new civil administration:

“Every Arab in Baghdad knew that those inhabitants of the country who had taken service with the British . . . at Kut had been tortured and put to death” (Wilson 1930, 241). Until local residents were convinced that the Turks would never return, they feared cooperating with the British. Furthermore, unlike the residents in Basra who were mostly Shia and poorly treated by the Turks, the majority of the population in Baghdad were Sunni and enjoyed better overall treatment by the former Ottoman administration. Many of the locals who had served in the Turkish civil service still felt loyal to their former masters. “Many [civil servants] had been educated in Constantinople; all had been taught to regard Constantinople as their cultural centre. From the Golden Horn in the past had come favours to many individuals; the Sublime Porte still enjoyed prestige” (Wilson 1930, 241). Overall, the predominately Sunni population, many of whom had cooperated and benefited from the former Ottoman administration, did not welcome the British as openly as Shia dominated Basra.

Maude did not delegate the affairs of the civil administration to the military governor or his chief political officer. In accordance with direction from the Lloyd George government, he initially put the city under martial law in March 1917 and formed a minimal civil administration until a definitive policy on Baghdad’s future could be decided (Busch 1971, 147). Furthermore, he “did most of the General Staff work himself” and tasked his principal staff officers to organize the civil administration (Wilson 1930, 240). Maude appointed General C. J. Hawker as the Military Governor of Baghdad and attempted to micromanage his work and many facets of the civil administration. He and Sir Percy Cox also disagreed on the policy toward local Arabs. Cox wanted to extend British influence to pacify the countryside in the Baghdad *vilayet*

but Maude did not want to disperse troops far outside the city due to an expected Turkish counterattack (Busch 1971, 149). Cox's job thus became increasingly difficult due to Maude's command style and their differences in policy (Wilson 1930, 240). Cox could not even communicate with the War Cabinet without coordinating his telegrams with Maude first (Busch 1971, 148).

To solve the impasse between Maude and Cox, the Lloyd George government, in consultation with General Robertson, decided to make Cox "Civil Commissioner" in July 1917, and authorized him to send reports on the political and economic situation directly to the War Cabinet. However, "Maude would still have the higher authority, and the reports would still pass through his hands" (Busch 1971, 151). This change in designation signaled the Lloyd George government and the Viceroy's support of Cox, but Maude still had the final overall authority. This conflict became moot after Maude died in November 1917. Maude's replacement, General Marshall, and Cox cooperated more harmoniously (Busch 1971, 151).

The British imposition of new measures also created some friction with the local populace. From 1917 to 1920, the British tried to billet as many soldiers and government civilians in Baghdad as possible, for both climatic reasons and administrative convenience. Over 190 houses on the Tigris, once occupied by local notables, were used for billeting. Although the British paid rent at the prewar rate plus 10 percent, the scale on which these houses were occupied caused resentment by local residents. Furthermore, cordon searches, the enforcement of sanitary measures, and the frequent issuance of regulations, often viewed as arbitrary by the local populace, were also sources of frustration. Maude and his principal staff officers made no observable attempt in

Baghdad to apply the experiences learned by Brownlow in Basra (Wilson 1930, 242). Despite the irritation caused by some of the British policies, most residents in Baghdad tolerated their new occupiers but were slow to trust British officials. “Of hatred [toward the British by Baghdad residents] there was none, of bitterness remarkably little, but confidence was of slow growth” (Wilson 1930, 242).

After a pause in operations, General Marshall continued north and subsequently captured Tikrit in July 1918 and Kirkuk (it had been previously occupied by the British for a temporary period in May 1918) in October 1918. The Battle of Sharqat in late October led to Mosul’s evacuation by the Turks on November 10th. Due to Sykes-Picot, the British originally assumed that the French would eventually take over the Mosul *vilayet* and, consequently, only expected to set up a temporary military administration. Marshall appointed Lieutenant Colonel Leachman as the military governor of Mosul and the political officer in charge of the Mosul *vilayet* (Wilson 1930, 21).

British forces had an easier time of creating a civil administration in Mosul than they did in Basra or Baghdad. The end of formal hostilities between Turkey and Britain prompted the former Ottoman authorities to leave most of their historical civil administration records intact. Additionally, the fate of Mosul would not be formally decided until 1923 and many Turks wanted Mosul to remain under Turkish control. Therefore, many former Ottoman officials stayed in Mosul after British forces arrived rather than evacuating the city (Bell 1920, 49).

Although the Turks had signed an Armistice with the British, Ottoman officers were still selling military supplies, burning some civil records, and even recruiting irregulars to resist British influence in the *vilayet*. Leachman quickly ensured law and

order in Mosul by raiding the houses of former Turkish officials, enforcing a nightly curfew with deadly force, and shooting a few looters. He also appointed local notables to official positions, complete with good salaries. Leachman ordered these officials to provide a local police force until a permanent force could be established (Wilson 1931, 21).

Cox departed Iraq in early 1918 and Wilson, his deputy, assumed control of the civil administration. He led the British administration as acting civil commissioner from 1918-20. This period represented the second phase of the British civil administration of Iraq, from 1914-26. Due to the lack of a coherent policy from the Lloyd George government, Wilson initiated a direct type of rule and drew from his colonial experiences to formulate the civil administration. Consequently, he attempted to rule Iraq “modeled largely on Britain’s imperial structure in India” (Marr 1985, 31).

The British controlled the administration of the country at the highest levels. Additionally, due to the postwar ambiguity concerning Mosul’s final status, the British maintained its civil administration in that *vilayet*. Wilson abolished elected municipal councils established by the Ottomans and installed political officers in sixteen administrative districts. Assistant political officers served in major cities. As a consequence, the number of British officers involved in the Iraqi administration increased exponentially. In 1917, only fifty-nine British officers served in the civil administration, but by 1920 there were 1,022. Iraqis occupied fewer than 4 percent of the senior governmental positions in 1920 (Marr 1985, 32).

Wilson organized the overall civil administration into seven departments, two of which he directly controlled: revenue, finance, judicial, public works, health department,

education, and police. The revenue department consisted of the special taxes, irrigation, agriculture, survey, and land registration subdepartments. The finance department was made up of customs, government presses, and enemy trading subdepartments. The judicial system administered the Iraqi Code for city dwellers and the Tribal Criminal and Civil Disputes Regulations (TCCDR) for tribal or rural subjects. These two systems of justice will be addressed more in depth later in this chapter. The railroad and telegraph subdepartments made up the public works department while the health department consisted of the medical and quarantine subdepartment and weather bureau. Wilson supervised the education and police departments directly (Wilson 1931, 170-1). His governing policies and the structure of his civil administration demonstrated that, in contrast to Britain's wartime declarations, little self-determination existed in Iraq after World War I.

The details of how the British ran each civil administrative department is a study in of itself and will not be covered fully in this thesis. However, the examination of the reorganization of the health and educational systems is important. The educational system ultimately played an important part in Feisal's subsequent administration and helped lay the institutional foundation of Iraq's *faux*-nationalism. It was through this foundation that Feisal's education minister promoted a pan-Arab philosophy transplanted from Syria. Similarly, the British used the revitalization of the Iraqi health system as proof of their benevolence toward the Iraqi people and a tangible benefit of their administration of the country.

The British inherited a dysfunctional education system in Iraq. Although the Ottoman educational system appeared well organized on paper, the British found it

poorly administered in practice. Overall, the intent of the Turkish educational system was to “Ottomanize the Arabs” (Bell 1920, 11). Although most Iraqi children could speak and write Turkish, their Arabic grammar was poor; their knowledge of history, geography and arithmetic was inadequate; and they had almost no knowledge of mathematics, science, the antiquities, literature or art (Wilson 1931, 173-4).

The British reorganized the educational system by focusing on primary schools first. Major H.E. Bowman, head of the educational department in Iraq and former head of the same department in the British administration of Egypt, concentrated on appointing and training qualified teachers. The war had removed most of the teachers of the old system and there were not enough trained teachers to staff the remaining primary schools. Unfortunately, these reforms were impeded after the capture of Baghdad because the primary schools there “were nearly all looted by the mob” (Bell 1920, 12). No school was reopened without having a qualified teacher. Along with finding qualified teachers, Bowman revamped the curriculum to include instruction in the Arabic language for most schools and Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish in regions where those languages were spoken. Some schools also taught English, but only as a second language.

Bowman also promoted religious instruction dependent on the student’s preference or family faith, in contrast to the old Turkish administration where only Sunni Islam was taught. He organized troops of Boy Scouts and promoted education for females, something practically nonexistent under the Turks. He also did away with the old uniform code that required male students to wear European-style clothes and a fez. He encouraged Arab-style dress and did not allow schools to fly the British flag or its students to swear allegiance to Britain or any other nation (Wilson 1931, 175-7).

The British eventually developed secondary schools as well, although parochial and denominational schools were the main providers of this level of education. The British intended to establish secondary education in larger towns to provide an eventual path to government service (Wilson 1931, 175). In reference to *maktabs* or Islamic religious schools, the British continued to support their existence, normally through *Waqf* funds left over from the Ottoman administration (Bell 1920, 11). Despite their support of the *maktabs*, the British administration had a contemptuous view of their educational value. In 1924, Dobbs stated: “[the *muktabs*] keep alive the mullas [*sic*] at the expense of the eyesight, health, and intelligence of their pupils” (Foster 1935, 257). This policy of support for the Islamic schools is consistent with the British tolerance of all other religious schools that operated in Iraq (e.g., Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, etc.). Bowman also continued supporting commercial and technical schools and managed to open a training college for teachers and a law school in Baghdad by 1920. Overall, despite the lack of resources, the British attempted to provide an efficient and well-rounded educational system that tried to accommodate all ethnicities and religions.

Sati al-Husri, Feisal’s Director-General of Education from 1923-7, subsequently used this educational foundation to “establish a coherent and controlled national ideology throughout the school system” (Hemphill 1979, 92). Al-Husri, a Syrian ideologue of Arabism, promoted pan-Arabism throughout the educational system in an attempt to unify the disparate ethnicities and religions of the Iraqi population. During his tenure, the curriculum of each school celebrated Iraq’s proud history and made “analogies and prefigurations of Iraq as the Arab Piedmont or Prussia” (Hemphill 1979, 92). This school of thought permeated all levels of the educational system and helped foment nationalistic

passions in Iraq. This nationalism was inherently anti-British and its proponents continually challenge the monarchy until its end in 1958.

The British also had to revitalize the Iraqi health system. Although the Turkish system allowed for a twenty-bed hospital in each major city of every *vilayet* plus a few outpatient (dispensary) doctors and pharmacists, the war had completely disrupted Ottoman health service. When the British entered Baghdad in 1917, they only found “a few medical officers and some French nuns who nursed the sick in the Baghdad hospital” (Foster 1935, 263). To best protect friendly forces and provide for the local population, the British quickly set out to rebuild the infrastructure of the Iraqi health system.

By the end of 1920, the British had built a health system staffed by more than 1,000 personnel: 10 percent British, 14 percent Indian, and 76 percent Iraqi. Twenty-eight hospitals and fifty-one dispensaries were operating full time and municipal health departments were located in Basra, Baghdad, and Mosul. Similarly, specialist institutions (e.g., Ophthalmic, Pathological, etc.) operated in Baghdad and Basra. To stem the spread of disease, the British established a port health department in Basra and a quarantine station at Khanaqin. Overall, between 1921-1926, Iraqi hospitals and dispensaries admitted 100,813 total inpatients and 6,151,852 total outpatients respectively (Foster 1935, 263-4). As early as 1920, the British successfully implemented measures to improve the health system that were considered “indeed remarkable” (Bell 1920, 114).

Despite these successes in health and education, the rebellion against British rule in 1920 and the realities of declining budgets motivated the British to quickly find a means of reducing its investment in Iraq in terms of manpower and material resources. However, the British still wanted its influence to endure in Iraq due to its economic and

strategic possibilities. Therefore, from 1920-6, the British had to devise a means of maintaining law and order in the country without substantial military forces. The period represents the third phase of the British administration in Iraq from 1914-26. In October 1920, the military occupation formally ended and Cox returned to assume the role of High Commissioner. He served until 1923. Sir Henry Dobbs replaced Cox and served as High Commissioner until 1929.

The British initiated the process of turning over all-governmental institutions to the Iraqis to satisfy its obligations to the League of Nations Mandate. “Sir Percy Cox had to find a way of forming a governing structure that would publicly devolve power to the population while codifying Britain’s position over the Mandate regime” (Dodge 2003, 16). Cox restored administrative districts and municipal councils that existed under the Ottomans. Although all Iraqi governmental institutions had British advisors, Iraqis began to replace British political officers in the administrative districts (except in southern Kurdistan). As a consequence, the number of British and Indian officers significantly decreased from 1920 to 1923. During this time period, British government of India officers decreased from 2,035 to 1,270 personnel and British government officers dropped from 364 to 181 personnel (Dodge 2003, 182). Thus, the British turned over substantial power to tribal sheikhs and lower governmental authorities to help maintain law and order.

The investment in power to the tribal sheiks was inherently problematic. During their occupation of Iraq, the Turks purposely empowered individual tribesmen and tribal subgroups to weaken the prestige and legitimacy of existing tribal leaders. This policy of “divide-and-rule” prompted internal and external tribal rivalries that worked to the

advantage of the Ottoman administration (Glubb 1960, 70-2). Thus, by the time the British arrived in Iraq in 1914, the sheikh's role in relation to the rest of the tribe was unclear (Dodge 2003, 128). This reality did not prevent the British from empowering the sheikh. Consequently, the British gave tribal leaders a status in Iraqi society that they had never enjoyed before and this empowerment consequently impeded national integration in the long term.

In return for obedience and the maintenance of law and order in their tribal areas, sheikhs were initially given a monthly salary along with the authority to occasionally regulate commercial traffic in their sector. As budgets declined, the British issued grants of land instead. If an individual sheikh did not cooperate, he could be stripped of his authority and his tribe could lose land and formal recognition by British authorities. Most importantly, the sheikh or other lower government authorities were given the ability to arbitrate judicial matters and control land policy (Dodge 2003, 84-5).

Therefore, the British administered two separate systems of justice for the Iraqis. The system that applied to each Iraqi depended on his social class or where he lived. The legal system for Iraqis considered to be tribesmen or rural dwellers was called the TCCDR. The legal system that applied to townspeople or urban dwellers was referred to as the Iraqi code or Iraqi civic law. The political officer for each administrative district (and later local Iraqi government officials) decided which system applied to each individual Iraqi.

During the military occupation, international convention required that the British maintain the existing laws in occupied territories, but the disappearance of the Turkish courts forced the British to make an adjustment. The British could not efficiently

administer Turkish law (grounded in the Napoleonic Code) for the following reasons: 1) communication with higher level courts in Turkey had been severed; 2) the official hierarchy upon which the courts depended ceased to exist; and 3) Turkish law (conducted exclusively in Turkish) had been poorly administered in Iraq because it was often corrupted and had little public acceptance or understanding (Wilson 1930, 67).

Therefore, when the British captured Basra, they had to create the Iraqi *Occupied Territories Code* (Iraqi Code), an ad-hoc justice system for the Basra *vilayet*. Details of the Iraqi code will not be fully addressed in this thesis. Generally speaking, this legal system was a combination of Indian and Turkish law. Courts convened in April 1915 and were conducted in Arabic. Yet by the time the British captured Baghdad in March 1917, the Turks had emptied the courts of their vital records--looters “broke into the court building and rifled its contents” (Foster 1935, 213). Due to the uncertainty of Baghdad’s future when British forces arrived, Maude was not allowed to administer the Iraqi code and the looting had made the immediate opening of civil courts impossible. Consequently, the British imposed martial law in Baghdad until the end of 1917. During this period of martial law, military or political officers oversaw all criminal cases involving the local populace (Foster 1935, 213).

The British intended to continue the administration of Turkish law in Baghdad, but practicality prompted another adjustment in the law. In 1918, the British introduced elements of the Egyptian code (also grounded in the Napoleonic Code) into the existing Turkish law to best fit the conditions in Baghdad. This new ad-hoc civil law was later applied to Basra and Mosul in 1919 as well (Foster 1935, 214). This modification of the Turkish law endured until the end of the monarchy in 1958. These new courts tried

capital crimes and virtually all other penal (criminal) and civil (monetary) cases except crimes against British forces. Only the General Officer Commanding of British forces in Iraq, in coordination with the chief political officer, had the authority to order the death penalty (Wilson 1930, 68-9). The British also improved the efficiency and integrity of the administration of this law by reducing the number of courts, carefully screening judges, and raising judge's salaries (Bell 1920, 101).

By 1919, Courts of First Instance were set up in Baghdad, Hillah, Baquba, Basra, and Mosul. Three judges oversaw each court; a British judge served as the President of the court, accompanied by two Iraqi judges. In penal cases, Courts of First Instance were made up of four classes of courts: 1) Courts of Session that held unlimited jurisdiction; 2) Magistrates of the First Class (political officers and British judges) that could pass sentences of imprisonment not exceeding two years; 3) Magistrates of the Second Class (assistant political officers) that could pass sentences of imprisonment not exceeding six months; and 4) Magistrates of the Third Class (anyone appointed by the civil or high commissioner) that could pass sentences of imprisonment not exceeding one month. In civil cases, Courts of First Instance held unlimited jurisdiction but Small Cause (Small Claims) courts, commonly known as Peace Courts, handled cases involving lower levels of monetary liability. The Court of Appeal in Baghdad served as the final court of appeal for both penal and civil cases. A British judge, also accompanied by two Iraq judges, oversaw this court as well (Wilson 1931, 171-2).

Iraqis living in rural or tribal areas were subject to another code articulated in the TCCDR. This code endured with few changes until the end of the Mandate in 1932. It was first drawn up by Sir Henry Dobbs in 1916, sanctioned by British forces in 1918, and

formalized by royal decree in 1924 (Dodge 2003, 92). The British enacted the TCCDR partly due to their romantic view that the tribal sheikh ruled in a vertical structure, was democratically elected by his fellow tribe members, and was unspoiled by modernity (with all of its associated complexities and corruptions) unlike his city dwelling counterparts (Dodge 2003, 92-93). This code originated from the policy of British Colonel Robert Sandeman, who served as the Deputy Commissioner of the Dara Ghazi Khan district in Baluchistan in the northwestern frontier of India in the nineteenth century. His model of “humane imperialism” in 1875 “recognized the dominion of tribal shaikhs and ruled through them” (Dodge 2003, 121-3). Dobbs became familiar with this code because he worked as Revenue and Judicial Commissioner in Baluchistan from 1909-11 (Dodge 2003, 94). Despite the fact the TCCDR had been formulated to apply to one specific population with its own unique ethnic, social, and economic characteristics, the British applied it, with no discernable modification, to the Iraqis as well. Thus, “the Baluchistan and Iraqi tribes were conceptually homogenized into one undifferentiated group” (Dodge 2003, 94).

The TCCDR enabled the local political officer to refer cases to “a *majlis*, or tribal court, consisting of sheikhs or arbiters selected according to tribal usage. Unless the findings of this body were manifestly unjust or at variance with the facts of the case, the Political Officer would pass judgment in general accordance with it” (Bell 1920, 15). This overall system of justice was based on tribal custom, collective responsibility, and punishment (Dodge 2003, 96). Overall, the “punishments which may be awarded under [the TCCDR] are limited to fine and imprisonment. A death sentence cannot be passed except by the ordinary Criminal Courts [overseen by the British]” (Bell 1920, 100).

Capital punishment was not used in settling tribal related disputes for fear of fueling blood feuds. Instead, if a member of a tribe committed murder against a member of another tribe, the guilty member's tribe, not the individual member who committed the crime, would be required to pay a fine (blood money). Critics of this policy argued that collective punishment only penalized the collective group and did not deter the individual who committed the crime (Dodge 2003, 96). The use of this code in Iraq was due to the British colonial belief that the tribesman, wherever British imperialism found him, "could therefore be regulated under a much simpler code of law: his innate honesty and straightforward life would make this by far the best approach" (Dodge 2003, 94).

The British also allowed Islamic (Sharia Law) courts existing under the Turkish administration to remain. These courts settled marriage, divorce, family relations, and inheritance (successions) matters. A Court of Revision (*Mejlis Tamyiz*) was set up in Baghdad to handle appeals from these Islamic courts (Wilson 1931, 172). Proceedings in these Islamic courts also took place in the Arabic language.

The British also radically altered the role of the sheikh in relation to land policy. During the course of the occupation and Mandate, land policy became the central issue in Iraq for two reasons: revenue and order (Dodge 2003, 107). Despite its importance, British land policy from 1914-1926 was "confused and contradictory, lacking any overall coherence or direction" (Dodge 2003, 107). The British ultimately authorized the sheikh to manage land leases, agriculture production, and the collection of taxes from the lower levels of Iraqi society. This land policy became another way for the British to purchase social order (Tripp 2000, 52). The British believed that this mechanism would help keep law and order and help minimize their overall military commitments. The sheiks in

Amara and Muntafiq, both of whom profited from this arrangement, kept their regions quiet during the occupation (Dodge 2003, 111-113). Overall, in utilizing the sheikh, “the British modernized his interaction with society based on revenue collection and land ownership, so imposing a new utilitarian dynamic between state and sheikh and between sheikh and *fallah* [peasant]” (Dodge 2003, 120).

The empowerment of the sheikh to control both an administration of justice and all aspects of land policy significantly altered the social structure of Iraqi society. While the sheikh had a nebulous relationship with his fellow tribesmen under the Ottoman system, the British gave him a clearly defined role that he never had before. “By imposing precisely defined requirements on the role of the shaikh, and by demanding an instrumental relationship between him and members of his tribe, the British decisively transformed the shaikh’s place in Iraqi society and the character of his political role” (Dodge 2003, 84-5). Despite the romantic view that the British held of Iraqi tribal sheikhs, they were just as susceptible to corruption as any other authoritative figure, regardless of their location. The weak Iraqi government led by Feisal maintained this system as well due to its dependence on sheikhs or other low-level government administrators to maintain law and order in the countryside. And there was no mechanism in place to check any possible abuses committed against the lower levels of Iraqi society. This overall British policy ultimately impeded integration and weakened the development of Iraq’s fragile national institutions.

The British dominated the exploitation of Iraqi oil as well. Before World War I, the Ottoman government had authorized the Turkish Petroleum Company (TPC), an oil consortium, to prospect for oil in Iraq. After the war, Germany and Turkey had to forfeit

their shares in TPC to the Allies. British, Dutch, French, and American oil companies subsequently became majority shareholders in this company. Although Iraq was promised a 20 percent allocation of oil revenues in 1920, the Iraqi government relinquished its share in exchange for enhanced royalty payments and the construction of a refinery and pipeline (Tripp 2000, 60). This agreement permitted the TPC authority to explore, produce, and market oil in Iraq for seventy-five years (Al-Eyd 13). The Iraqis made this exchange in 1925 after Britain suggested that it might make substantial concessions to Turkey over the Mosul *vilayet* if Iraq did not give up its 20 percent claim. Under the terms of the concession, TPC remained a British-registered company and had all rights to exploration in all of Iraq, excluding Basra. Also, the TPC had to select a fixed number of plots and begin drilling within a few years afterwards, paying the Iraqi government a mutually agreed upon sum for each metric ton of oil drilled (Tripp 2000, 60). Exploitation and production did not take place until 1927 (Marr 1985, 42). In 1938, the exploration and drilling rights to the Basra *vilayet* were leased to the Basrah Petroleum Company (BPC), a TPC (renamed the Iraqi Petroleum Company in 1929) affiliate (Al-Eyd 14). Thus, due to British governmental and commercial maneuvering, Iraq did not have control of or the ability to fully benefit from its potentially lucrative petroleum assets.

In conclusion, the British arrived in Iraq ill prepared to conduct both military and civil affairs beyond the Basra *vilayet*. Although the majority of the Army had minimal knowledge about Iraq, most military officers and civil servants serving in Expeditionary Force 'D' had prior Persian Gulf service, experience in civil administration, and the ability to speak the Arabic language. Despite their overall lack of preparation, however,

they did have successes. The following policies or actions helped the British accomplish their goals in Iraq: rapidly establishing law and order, maximizing existing governmental infrastructure, tolerating some of the local customs, facilitating economic activity, speaking the local language, and improving the quality of life by revitalizing the education and health systems. Without these accomplishments, the British would have had a much more difficult time defeating the Turks and developing Iraq as an independent nation-state consistent with the requirements of the League of Nations Mandate.

The lack of consistent direction from London and India, however, continually frustrated the attempts of British military commanders and political officers to execute a coherent policy in Iraq. The extensive looting that regularly followed the evacuation of Turkish military forces, coupled by the already poorly developed infrastructure, also impeded British civil administrative efforts. The British domination of Iraqi oil exploration and production limited economic expansion and slowed national development as well. Similarly, Britain's failure to deliver on its frequent promises of liberty caused the Iraqis to distrust their new occupiers.

The most important issue negatively effecting the civil administration was the wholesale application of a tribal code originally meant for tribes in the northwestern frontier of India to the rural population in Iraq. This policy effectively prevented the separation of the executive and judicial branches of government. Additionally, the empowerment of the sheikh subjected the lower classes of society to the potential tyranny of midlevel officials designated by the British administration or the subsequent Iraqi government. Overall, Britain's land policy and administration of justice impeded the

integration of the Iraqi polity because it failed to provide a direct link from the central government to the individual Iraqi and thus prevented the individual Iraqi from identifying with the central government. Although the British promised liberty and a benevolent civil administration to all Iraqis, it ended up only privileging a select minority and oppressing the majority by proxy.

CHAPTER 5

ANALYSIS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The British experience in Iraq from 1914-26 is a case study in mismanagement of military forces and civil administration. What began as a limited operation with narrow objectives evolved into an extended campaign with significant strategic goals. The British attempted to execute this campaign with Army in India forces that were inadequately designed for combat outside of the subcontinent, poorly managed, too little in number, and inadequately supported. In 1916, the first phase of this campaign culminated in the largest mass scale surrender by the British since the Battle of Yorktown in 1781. Not until its deficiencies were corrected did British forces in Iraq regroup and evict the Turks from the county in late 1918. Britain subsequently assumed a League of Nations Mandate to develop Iraq into an independent nation-state.

To make an assessment of the challenges and obstacles the British faced from 1914-26, an examination of the military intervention, their formulation of the nation-state, and the details of their civil administration is required. Once this examination is complete, it is important to define important terms and identify wisdom from the British experience that apply to Iraq. From this wisdom, the author will suggest recommendations that may help the US accomplish its stated goals in Iraq.

The British invaded Iraq to secure its access to strategic resources and to protect its lines of communication to India. The British continued to occupy Iraq after the war to take advantage of its economic potential, maintain a foothold in the strategic Middle East, and to protect its lines of communication to India. Declining budgets, domestic pressure,

and resistance to the occupation forced Britain to resort to short-term expedients.

Patronage and the use of violence became the short-term expedients that Britain used to accomplish its goals in Iraq.

Britain appointed Amir Feisal and permitted the installation of ex-Sharifian officers in the top levels of government on the assumption they would be most open to British influence. They also made this government dependent on British financial and military support to stay in power. British patronage also extended to local sheiks or lower-level governmental officials to ensure law and order in the rural areas. When national or local level instruments failed to maintain order, Britain used overwhelming firepower to quell dissent. The RAF used incendiary bombing to punish armed resistance or tax delinquency, which often resulted in the traumatizing and dispersion of civilian populations. Overall, the British formulated national-level structures in Iraq that transparently formalized their long-term dominance.

Thus, these short-term expedients had long-term consequences for Britain and Iraq. Patronage and systemic violence created a weak democracy that was dominated by a foreign power, incapable of maintaining internal or external order, and void of interethnic or social integration. Consequently, Britain's postwar actions resulted in a resentment of the occupation, the promotion of a nationalist movement, and the ultimate eviction of the British installed monarchy. The use of patronage and violence also set the conditions for political instability and the assumption of power in the postmonarchy era by Saddam Hussein, a despotic, authoritarian leader who also used terror to maintain power and quell dissent.

When comparing the experiences of the British and the US in Iraq, many parallels are evident. During their military campaigns, both the US and Britain endured the following: poor weather in a desert environment; extended lines of communication; irregular forces; prisoners of war; a local population initially fearful of cooperating due to the possible return of the former government; and the lack of a coherent policy following the cessation of hostilities. Both countries also promised the Iraqis that their military campaigns represented liberation from their despotic rulers. The US and Britain also had similar experiences during their occupation of Iraq: inadequate local infrastructure; inheritance of a dysfunctional civil administration; a local population that welcomed the fall of the former government but was suspicious of the intentions of its new occupiers; significant looting once the former governmental authorities disappeared; periodic uprisings; a simmering low-level insurgency; Iraqis who assisted the occupation forces tainted with the “collaborator” label and scorned by many of their own people; and the initial installment of a native government hand picked to support the goals of the occupying force.

Although there are many parallels between the British and US experiences, there are, however, important differences. First, although the US and Britain both had a considerable worldwide strategic position following the cessation of hostilities, Britain was in a far worse economic situation. Thus, unlike the US, Britain did not have the financial resources to support a robust or long-term military presence in Iraq. Second, although the US has suffered criticism at home, the majority of the US population supported the war and tolerates the current occupation in Iraq. In contrast, after World War I, a war weary British population did not support a long-term occupation in Iraq due

to its desire to see the dividends of peace. These two important differences significantly influenced Britain's formulation of the national level institutions and its civil administration. Thirdly, although members of the Iraqi population conducted attacks against both countries, the US has also suffered attacks by foreign fighters whose primary goal appears only to kill Americans. The British only suffered attacks by foreign forces (e.g., irregular Turkish forces, Wahabbis, etc.) on the periphery of the nascent Iraqi nation. These foreign forces Britain faced primarily focused on acquiring Iraqi territory. Lastly, international convention considered the British invasion of Iraq legal and Britain had a League of Nations Mandate (1920-32) to develop Iraq into a viable nation-state. On the other hand, the US did not have formal United Nations (UN) approval to invade Iraq and the international community only tacitly accepts the continued presence of US forces due to the assumption of a short-term occupation. This difference is important because it demonstrates that the US will probably have less time to accomplish its goals in Iraq than Britain had after World War I.

To best answer the thesis question, it is critical to define the following terms: wisdom, security, overwhelming firepower, and current operational environment. The most appropriate definition of wisdom in the context of this thesis is the following: an intelligent course of action. The word security or the term secure environment can best be defined as an operational environment where robust force protection measures are not required and freedom of movement is unimpeded. The term overwhelming firepower is defined as having an advantage in terms of firepower without having a numerical superiority. Lastly, and most importantly, defining the current operational environment in Iraq is critical to answering the thesis question. The best definition for the current

operational environment in Iraq is a low-level insurgency against coalition personnel and Iraqi security forces or governmental officials, characterized by random car bombings, selective assassinations, kidnappings, and ambushes. Iraqi Insurgents consist of former regime members or sympathizers, foreign fighters (transnational terrorists), hired assassins, and disgruntled individuals. Insurgents lack a coherent, unified chain-of-command or ideology but they share a common goal of evicting coalition forces from Iraq through the use of violence. This insurgency is also accompanied by politically motivated interethnic and intraethnic violence that either purposely or incidentally involves coalition or Iraqi security forces.

The British experience in Iraq from 1914-26 offers wisdom but no cure-all for the problems the US currently faces in Iraq. This wisdom has application for both military operations and civilian administration. The military application of this wisdom reinforces the importance of strategy, unity of effort, unity of command, the linkage of ends, ways, and means, standing operational plans, proper training and use of forces, intelligence dissemination, and the dangers of encouraging nationalism as a short-term expedient. First, the British did not have a unified strategy to wage the war. Due to long-standing convention, Kitchener and India initially fought separate campaigns resulting in the misallocation of manpower and resources away from Britain's primary efforts in Western Europe. The British never completely corrected this flaw during the war. Secondly, the British government initially failed to produce a streamlined chain of command conducive to the dispatch of timely and coordinated orders to joint forces in the field. This failure resulted in uncoordinated and unclear policy direction; Beauchamp-Duff's initial orders to Nixon to prepare for an advance on Baghdad were the most significant example. Once

Robertson corrected this deficiency and Maude improved other manpower and logistical problems, British forces ultimately achieved victory. Thirdly, the lack of an overall joint force commander could have led to a significant lack of coordination between land and sea forces in theater. The close coordination between multiple Army commanders and Royal Navy Captain Sadler during the campaign was an example of harmonious joint force cooperation. Ineffective coordination would have exacerbated the initial defeat and impeded the eventual victory. The British experience provides an excellent case study to demonstrate the importance of clear, unified strategic guidance and effective joint force command. The existence of a unified command plan and a Goldwater-Nichols type national command arrangement would have undoubtedly minimized the myriad of command and control problems Britain encountered in Iraq.

Similarly, the British government did not initially provide its forces in Iraq the logistical support sufficient to enable victory. The British failed to link their ends, ways, and means and thus the Army in India did not have the organic logistical capability to conduct an expeditionary campaign encompassing over 500 miles in a desolate environment. Likewise, despite its strategic significance, the British did not have a pre-prepared plan for military operations in Iraq. This oversight undoubtedly hampered the Army in India's preparations for the landing at Fao. Although significant reforms had taken place early in the twentieth century, the Army in India was not well suited to conduct an extended campaign outside of the subcontinent in 1914 as well. The Army in India also did not receive all the intelligence available to the Imperial General Staff in 1914-15. This oversight led Nixon to underestimate the number of enemy that faced Townshend south of Baghdad in 1915. Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, the British,

desperate for additional support in the Middle East, promised Sharif Hussein in 1916 an independent kingdom in exchange for an Arab force to fight against the Turks. Although this promise served a short-term expedient, it excited nationalist fervor in the Arab world and greatly complicated British goals in the Middle East in the long term. Once the British had empowered and encouraged Arab nationalism, they found it impossible to control it.

The application of this wisdom to the civil administration of a military occupation suggests the benefits of tolerating local customs, the immediate enforcement of law and order, facilitating commerce, providing equal rights under the law, and improving education and health care. This wisdom also demonstrates the negative aspects of civil administration by the billeting of soldiers in private houses, imposition of sanitary measures not consistent with local customs, and intervening in the local economy. First of all, the British benefited greatly from the Arabic language ability of many of its Army in India officers. This skill facilitated the ease of communication and greatly enhanced rapport with the local population. Secondly, the Army in India generally tolerated local customs (e.g., religious or social practices, etc.). This policy also helped build rapport with the local population. Thirdly, the British tried to make the restoration of law and order their first priority. Not only did this policy restore security and helped put the local population at ease but it also facilitated commerce. The British also made a good faith effort to provide a just law to the occupied territories. These ad-hoc law codes helped fairly settle disputes and thus enhanced the legitimacy of the British occupation. Lastly, the improvement of education, health, and veterinarian services improved the quality of

life of the local population and further helped legitimize the British occupation in the eyes of the Iraqis.

On the other hand, the British took other measures that the local population viewed negatively. First of all, the billeting of large numbers of soldiers in private housing caused resentment. Secondly, the enforcement of other measures (e.g., sanitation, etc.) unfamiliar to the local population also caused bitterness. Thirdly, the promises of liberation raised the expectation that the British were later not willing to meet. Contrary to these promises, not only did the British remain in control of national affairs, but they also imposed direct control of the local administration as well. Lastly, the local populace resented the artificial control of exchange rates by the British. This control undoubtedly gave the impression that the British were trying to profit at their expense. Although some of these policies annoyed the Iraqis, there is little evidence to suggest that these measures caused long-term resentment or resulted in attacks against British forces.

The violent resistance that did take place against the British occupation offers wisdom for the U.S as well. The conditions that resulted in violence against the British were mostly due to national-level policies rather than administrative methods or security measures carried out on the local level. The British continuously promised the Iraqis liberty from the Turks as soon as they landed at Fao in 1914 and even encouraged Sharif Hussein in 1916 to lead an Arab force as the vanguard of an independent Arab kingdom. After the war, when the British failed to deliver on their promises of liberty and self-determination, organized resistance formed and resulted in the revolt in 1920. The British eventually quelled the revolt (at great cost and prestige) but its occupation and the Arab government it installed was continually challenged until its overthrow in 1958. If the

British had delivered on their promises of liberty and helped form an independent Iraqi government (nondependent on British security and finances) shortly after the war, then the British presence in Iraq might not have been resented and so violently opposed. It is also possible that a rapid turnover of power would have generated gratitude that might have facilitated long-term British influence.

It is important to note that, in contrast to the British, the US is also faced with a threat from foreign fighters, armed with modern weapons (e.g., remote controlled high explosive devices and armor piercing rocket propelled grenades, etc.). Jordanian-born, Al-Qaeda operative Abu Musab al-Zarqawi has been linked to bombings of the UN headquarters and the Jordanian Embassy in Baghdad in 2003 and numerous other attacks in Iraq (Raddatz 2004). The British did not have to deal with this type of threat from 1914-26. Regardless of how positively Iraqis view the US or its policies toward its country, it is highly unlikely that foreign fighters will cease their attacks as long as there is a US presence in Iraq. Due to the lack of cultural familiarity by the majority of US troops, it is also improbable that the US will be able to defeat this threat alone. If past US counterinsurgency experiences during the Indian Wars in the West, Philippines, and South Vietnam are applicable to the current situation in Iraq, it is imperative that the US empowers Iraqi security forces to help eliminate the foreign fighters. Only through the cultural knowledge possessed by Iraqi security forces and their familiarity with the local area that will help ensure the defeat of this threat. Cooperation by local Iraqis to identify and report on foreign fighters will be critical as well.

If the US is to reduce the conditions that promote violence, it must formulate national-level policies that are transparent and beneficial to the Iraqis. A clearly defined

end state accompanied by a roadmap outlining short- and long-term benchmarks to reach that final end state will reduce ambiguity and thereby reduce violence against US forces. When force is required, it should be precise and as minimally destructive as possible because large-scale destruction traumatizes the population and creates resentment against the occupying forces. Lastly, collective punishment should be avoided because it does little to punish or deter the guilty and it also fosters bitterness toward occupation forces. Overall, if the US is to minimize the conditions that cause violence against its forces, its occupation must be as temporary, benevolent, nonintrusive, and transparent as possible.

Although there is significant wisdom to be gained from the British experience, it must be applicable to the goals the US has established for Iraq. After removing the Hussein-led Baathist regime, the US has declared that it wants to, “seek a stable, unified Iraq that is at peace with its neighbors; free of weapons of mass destruction and ties to terrorism; and led by a broad-based, representative government that is on the path to democracy” (Eisenstadt 2003, 68). The accomplishment of these goals can be facilitated by drawing on the wisdom from the British campaign and Mandate from 1914-26.

Despite the considerable security challenges and the fact that Iraq is a proud Islamic country in the Middle East, it is possible for the US to accomplish the above-stated goals. If the post-Cold War experience in Eastern Europe is any indicator, it is the countries that have little or no history of democracy that yearn for it the most. Therefore, even though Iraq has been under a brutal dictatorship since 1968 and has almost no history of political pluralism, it is sufficiently modern and sophisticated enough to develop into a viable democracy. The US should first encourage Iraq to have a government that is accountable to a just law and not to individual rulers. Additionally,

Iraq should have the following: the rule of a just law (common or civil); political pluralism; free press; free markets; equal rights for minorities and women; a military accountable to civilian rule; and associative networks.

Associative networks are the links between state and societal actors through interpersonal, media, and/or interorganizational ties (Chalmers 1997, 545). Associative networks are the key components of a viable civil society and can consist of the following: city councils, neighborhood groups, mosque or parish councils, organized labor, political action committees, independent media outlets, or public advocacy organizations. The establishment and development of associative networks are critical to Iraq's ability to build a civil society. If Iraq fails to develop these groups, it will be more difficult for the Iraqi people to hold its government accountable for its actions. No meaningful associative networks existed under the monarchy or Hussein and thus the Iraqi people did not have the popular institutions to check the power of the executive branch of government.

It was folly for the British to build a sovereign nation while simultaneously trying to control its policies (Dodge 2003, 27). They failed and had to resort to a system of patronage and violence to accomplish their goals in Iraq. These policies not only ensured the resentment of the local population and the eviction of the British and the monarchy it installed but it also instilled violence in the society that endures to this day. Therefore, if the US is to accomplish its goals in Iraq, it should not simultaneously try to create an independent government while installing mechanisms to ensure its long-term influence over Iraq. Instead, it should offer significant incentives and disincentives to the Iraqis to establish a free-market, pluralistic society (complete with associative networks) open to

strategic and economic engagement with the entire world. It is only through the establishment of a viable sovereign nation, capable of maintaining its own internal and external defense, that the US has a chance of generating gratitude among the Iraqis. And it is this potential gratitude that will be the best facilitator of US long-term goals.

The most important and potentially effective course of action will be to offer numerous incentives. Carrots should include the following: Most Favored Nation trading status; assistance via the Agency for International Development; assistance with obtaining aid or favorable loan packages from the International Monetary Fund and/or World Bank; Foreign Military Sales; International Military and Educational Training program; Joint Combined Exercise Training; Mobile Training Teams; security cooperation and possible alliances; monetary compensation for use of ports and airfields, etc. To enhance the legitimacy of our relationship, the US should also encourage the Iraqi government to put certain elements of its association to a plebiscite (e.g., basing rights, security relationships, etc.). If the Iraqis do not want the US to have basing or access rights, then the US should respect their wishes and not try to coerce any agreements beneficial to the US

However, the US should offer disincentives as well. Although the US should not micromanage the internal and external policies of Iraq, the US should warn the Iraqis that the following actions will have negative consequences: mistreatment of minorities within Iraq; support for international terrorism; development of WMD; violation of the sovereignty of Iraq's neighbors; and closing Iraq's strategic resources to the free market. If the Iraqis fail to abide by one or more of these requirements, the US should hold open the possibility of returning to Iraq to do one or all of the following: destroy its security

forces, topple its government, open Iraq's territory to annexation by its neighbors, or politically and economically isolate the country from the international community.

Regardless of what course of action the US follows and how well it carries it out, there is no guarantee that the US will accomplish its objectives in Iraq. Furthermore, any attempt by the US to simultaneously develop Iraq into an independent nation-state and maintain dominant, long-term influence will likely result in failure. Despite what incentives or advantages the US may offer Iraq, the Iraqis may refuse its offers of assistance or alliance. Notwithstanding this possibility, the US has a unique opportunity and should base its future relationship with Iraq primarily on incentives and not coercion. And the US must prepare and be able to accept it if the Iraqis refuse the diplomatic, economic, military, and informational benefits of cooperation. The US should not look on their possible refusal necessarily as hubris, irrationality, or xenophobia but as the reasonable choice of a sovereign country. As Middle East Historian and Professor David Fromkin once said, "We [Americans] tend to overlook a basic rule: that people prefer bad rule by their own kind to good rule by somebody else" (Kandell 2003, 47). The US should be prepared to accept this fact. Overall, if the US wants to accomplish its stated goals in Iraq, it should treat Iraq like an equal and strive to be the best friend it has never had.

ILLUSTRATIONS



Figure 1. Iraq at 1914

Source: Unimaps; available from <http://www.unimaps.com/iraq/iraq1914/>; Internet; accessed 15 May 2004.

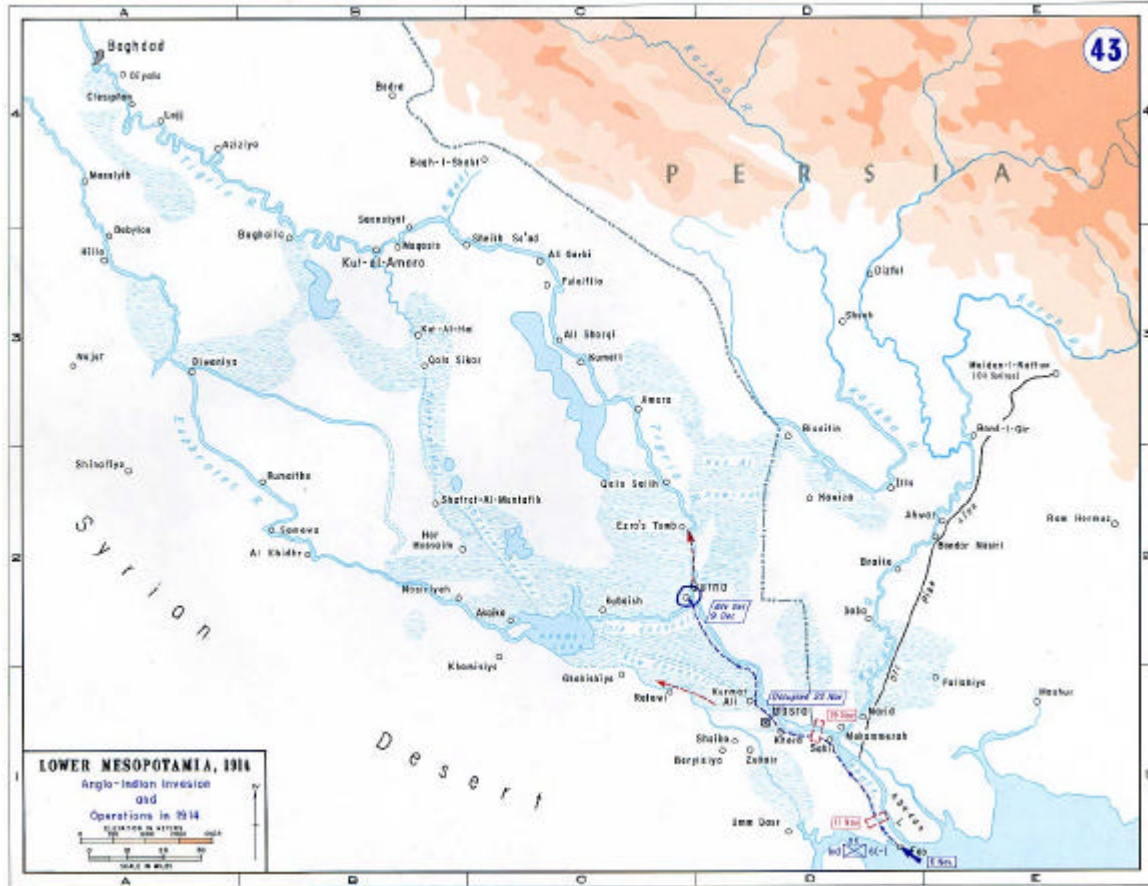


Figure 2. Map of Lower Mesopotamia, 1914

Source: United States Military Academy Department of History Atlas Library, Maps of World War I. <http://www.dean.usma.edu/departments/history/web03/atlas/great%20War/great%20war%20%20pages/great%20war%20map%2043.htm> Accessed 15 May 2004.

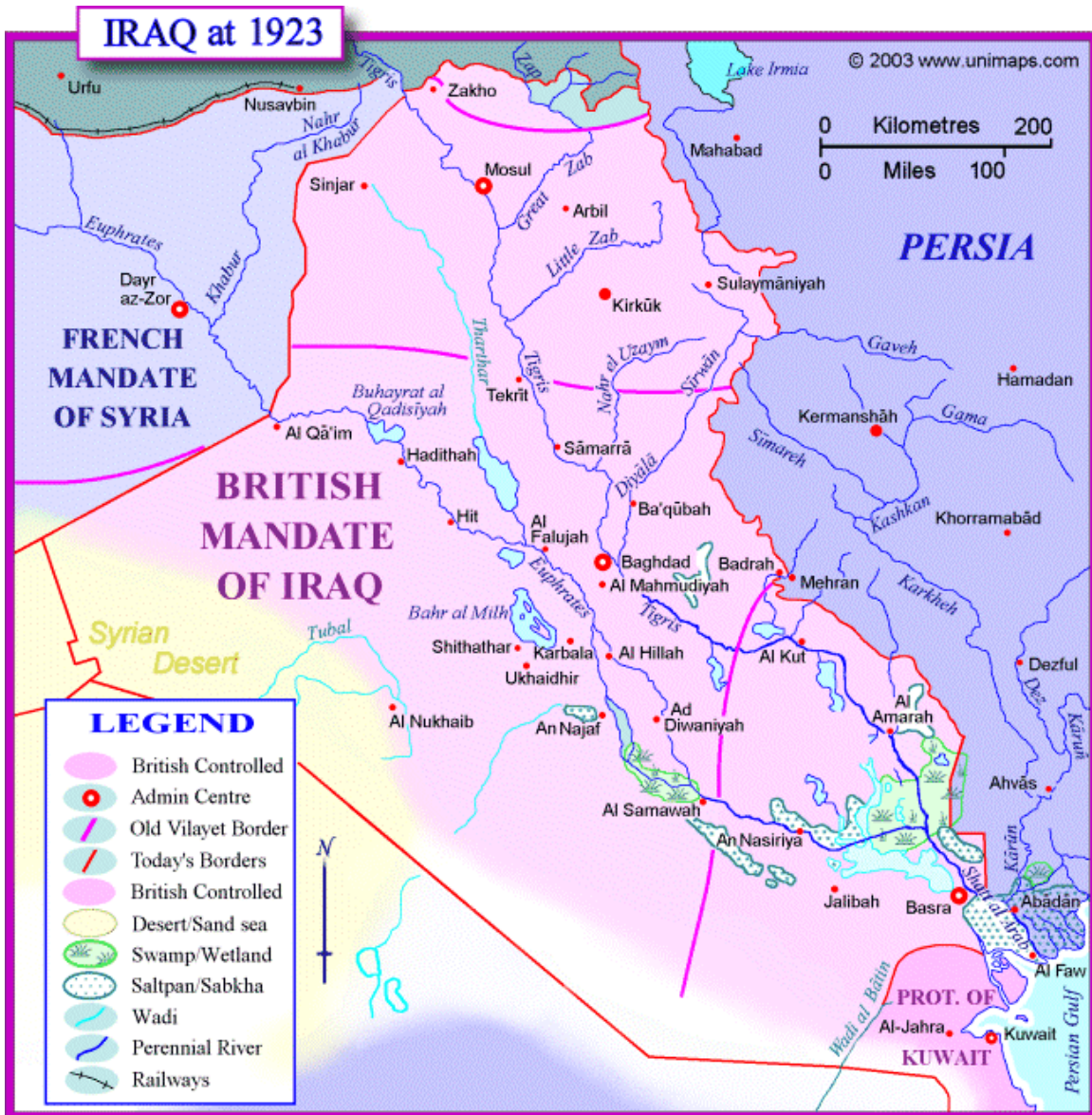


Figure 3. Iraq at 1923

Source: Unimaps; available from <http://www.unimaps.com/iraq/iraq1923/>; Internet; accessed 15 May 2004.



Figure 4. Iraq 2002

Source: United Nations Map December 2002; available from <http://www.reliefweb.int/w/map.nsf/wPreview/7595A360CC94BC2585256CAD006C498D?Opendocument>; Internet; accessed 16 May 2004.

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