

Abū Khaldūn Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī

THE DAY OF MAYSALŪN

A Page from the Modern History of the Arabs

Translated from the Arabic by Sidney Glazer



The
Middle East
Institute

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THE DAY OF MAYSALŪN

Abū Khaldūn

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A Page from the Modern History of the Arabs

Memoirs

With an Introduction Relating the Struggle
of the Powers for the Arab Lands and
an Appendix of Documents.

Translated from the Arabic

by

Sidney Glazer

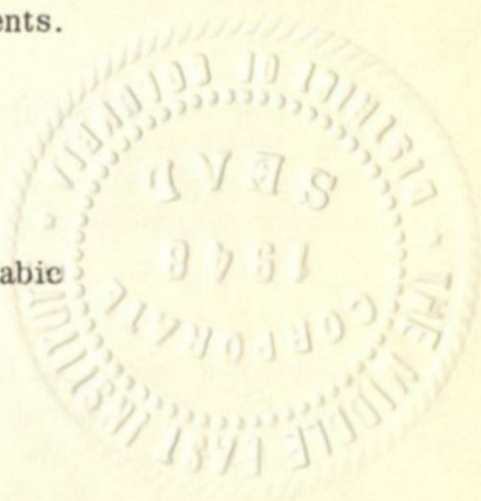
With a new preface to the English edition

by the author

The Middle East Institute

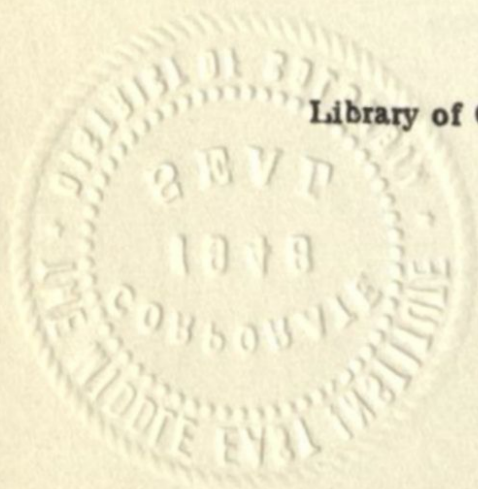
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Publisher's Foreword

The American Council of Learned Societies undertook the translation of the YAWM MAYSALŪN, of Ṣāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī, as part of its Near Eastern Translation Program. The work of translation had been done by Dr. Sidney Glazer under the auspices of this Program, when the Council discontinued that series of publications.

Now, by arrangement with the author, the Council, and Dr. Glazer, this Institute has the pleasure of presenting this modern classic in the literature of Arab nationalism to the English-reading public.

The Institute is also grateful to the Fuller Foundation, Inc., for assistance in making the publication possible.

New Preface to the English Edition

The French military occupation and mandate over Syria that started the Day of Maysalūn lasted a little over a quarter of a century, from July 24, 1920 to April 17, 1946. The events that took place in Syria during this phase of her history are highly significant. They serve as an excellent illustration of the struggle between renascent nationalism and colonialism cloaked by the mandate.

A series of political and economic operations designed to further the interests and ambitions of France and Frenchmen at the expense of Syria and Syrians, a series of protest and resistance movements sometimes amounting to armed insurrection, acts of intimidation and repression sometimes resulting in the destruction of villages and bombardment of cities—these, in summary, are the events that unfolded in Syria from the Day of Maysalūn until the Day of the Evacuation.

I have written this new preface specially for the English translation of my work in order to provide my readers with a rapid view, or rather survey, of the most important events in Syrian history "after Maysalūn."

French domination resulted in Syria's undergoing a series of amputations that ended in dismemberment in the full sense of the word.

To begin with, there was a major amputation when the country was partitioned between the French and British mandates. The partition line passed south of Jebel Druze and the Hawrān. That is why the French troops in their movements took care not to push south of this line and left all the territory there from Ajlun to Mulān to Great Britain, which established a principality that they baptized with the name of Transjordan. Thus, this vast stretch of land which formed an integral part of Syria before Maysalūn and of Ottoman Syria was detached by the two mandatory powers.

Secondly, the territory that remained under the French mandate was also destined to undergo several amputations:

(a) On September 1, 1920 (i.e., almost 40 days after Maysalūn) the French High Commissioner for Syria and Lebanon, General Gouraud, proclaimed the formation of Great Lebanon by annexing to the Lebanon of 1860 Beirut and Tripoli in the north, some districts of Tyre and Sidon in the south, and Baalbek, Biqaa, Rashiaya, and Hasbaya in the east. These four districts were an integral part of Syria before Maysalūn, and General Gouraud detached them to enlarge Lebanon.

(b) A week after the creation of Great Lebanon, on September 8, 1920, the General created by another decree a new state in the north, the state of Aleppo.

(c) What remained of Syria after the loss of its territories in the south, north, and west could no longer justify being called the "State of Syria." Hence it was christened the "State of Damascus." The very name of Syria was thus obliterated from this new political map.

(d) Two weeks after the State of Aleppo was created, on September 23, 1920, a new decree announced the birth of still another state, the "State of the Alawites."

(e) Several months later it was Jebel Druze's turn to be detached from the Damascus government.

Thus, during 1920 the Syria of the geographers, the Syria of the Congress of 1919, found itself divided into seven political entities: two under the British mandate (Palestine and Transjordan) and five under the French mandate (the states of Great Lebanon, Damascus, Aleppo, the Alawites, and the Druzes).

Thirdly, to complete the list of political creations we must add the sanjak of Alexandretta, which was endowed in 1921 with a special, almost autonomous, regime.

II

This partitioning of Syria naturally stirred up many protests and caused numerous difficulties. General Gouraud was quick to note them and to understand the need to take them into consideration. But he thought he could remedy the situation by a new creation. So in 1922 he decreed the formation of a Syrian Federation to include three of the independent Syrian states—those of Damascus, Aleppo, and of the Alawites. (It will be noted that the word "independent" was used in the decrees and proclamations of the High Commissioner in a special sense, i.e., "independent of one another" but dependent on the French High Commissioner).

It was a unique federation. The chief of one of the feder-states was a French military man. The chiefs of the two others were Arabs, but they had to be named by the High Commissioner. There were 15 members of the Federal Council, five for each state, but they were not representative. French and Arabic were the official languages used by the Federal Council. The Council's decisions could not be executed without the agreement and ratification of the High Commissioner or his delegate.

Under these circumstances the establishment of the Syrian Federation could not but stir up and intensify general discontent. The directors of the French mandate were naïve in thinking that all was going well and that everyone, except the Damascus politicians, was pleased with the new political map. Moreover, these directors had convinced themselves that the people in the other states that they created were happy to be separated from Damascus. Because of this conviction they wanted to consolidate the political creations of the mandate by a popular vote. Hence, they invited the population of Aleppo to elect deputies to a parliament set up specially for their state.

The elections were held toward the end of 1924 under the control and influence of French officials, civilian and military, and they sent to the chamber many persons known to be Francophiles. Nevertheless, the Parliament thus elected was quick to vote—unanimously—for union with Damascus.

Because of this unexpected development, the High Commissioner was forced to ratify the decision and to decree the union of the two states as of January 1, 1925. Thus, the name of the Syrian State was restored after an absence of a little over three years. After this experience, the High Commissioner was cautious in the matter of elections among the Alawites and Druzes. He kept them independent, that is to say, detached from the Syrian State.

III

These political and territorial operations of the French mandate in Syria were preceded by economic moves that were to have grave consequences. A decree of the High Commissioner published on the very day that the French troops entered Damascus required the circulation of notes issued by the Bank of Syria and Lebanon, with severe penalties for those refusing to accept them or impeding their circulation.

The currency used in transactions as well as savings were gold pounds, pounds sterling, and Egyptian pounds, which had the value of gold. This decree resulted in gold currency having to be exchanged for paper money issued legally by the Bank of Syria and Lebanon with no special cover. It would steadily draw Syrian gold to the basement of this bank and enrich its stock holders at the expense of the Syrians. Moreover, it linked the fortune of the country to the fate of the French franc. And as the value of the franc was to depreciate rapidly, Syria would suffer the direct repercussions and experience disastrous economic crises.

The following facts will serve to provide a fuller idea of the effects of the French mandate on the economy of Syria:

(a) As soon as the military occupation began, the High Commissioner imposed an indemnity of 200,000 gold pounds on the Syrian government.

(b) He charged to the treasury of the Syrian states created after Maysalūn the salaries and allowances of the French officials, civilian and military, whose numbers were to increase from day to day.

(c) The authorities of the Mandate heaped exceptional favors on French merchants and firms. And these favors naturally prevented the national economy from developing in a normal fashion.

In view of the foregoing, there is no doubt that the French mandate wrought havoc and even disaster on the Syrian economy.

IV

These acts and operations naturally could not but strengthen the protest and resistance movements which began with the start of the occupation in different parts of the country. These movements soon were organized both within the country and abroad.

The policy of intimidation to which the directors of the mandate had resorted in condemning to death most of the deputies of the Syrian Congress without even a court martial forced all the militant nationalists either to hide or flee to the nearest Arab countries. The latter formed a Syro-Palestinian Executive Committee, which convoked a Syro-Palestinian Congress at Geneva in order to be near the League of Nations and its Mandates Commission. The Congress gathered together many Syrians, Lebanese, and Palestinians. It drew up and presented a detailed report to the League of Nations. It also named a permanent delegation to maintain continuous liaison with the Mandates Commission and to take advantage of every opportunity to enlighten European public opinion on the events in Syria. The delegation set to work and started, among other things, to publish a monthly review entitled **La Nation Arabe**.

As for movements in the interior, they varied in different parts of the country, depending on the circumstances. There were grievances, complaints, protests, demonstrations, strikes, and guerrilla activity, which ended in an armed revolt of considerable scope. It began in the Jebel Druze but soon spread and eventually reached the outskirts of the capital, Damascus. The High Commissioner, General Sarail, stung by the defeats experienced by his troops, ordered the bombardment of the city by cannons, airplanes, and tanks. The three-day bombardment set an entire quarter of the city on fire and destroyed many buildings, including the ceiling of the celebrated pavillion of the Azm Palace, a masterpiece of Arab architecture. Unfortunately, the only thing that remains to recall it is a half-tone engraving in color and gilt found in Gustave Le Bon's famous **Histoire de la Civilisation Arabe**.

The bombardment of Damascus certainly aroused deep emotions in the entire world, especially among the Arabs. France sought to mitigate the effects by

replacing General Sarail with a diplomat High Commissioner, Henri de Jouvenelle, while instructing a military leader, General Gamelin, to subdue the insurrection by force in order to prepare the terrain for diplomacy.

V

The policy of "territorial partition, economic impoverishment, and dictatorial administration" was "intolerable and revolting" to the Syrians, especially since they had known a period of independence which, though brief, aroused many hopes and aspirations.

The Syrian Congress of 1919-1920 drew up a constitution to unite Syria, Lebanon and Palestine in a federal system. Moreover, it sanctioned an alliance between this Federation and Iraq.

The French mandate did everything possible to crush these aspirations. It divided Syria proper into several states, installing in each a system of administration that accorded no freedom of action to the native officials, and then overwhelmed the country with disastrous economic measures. These actions naturally disgusted the Syrians.

The evolution of Iraq also exercised an increasing influence on the Syrians. Prior to Maysalūn the Iraqis keenly envied Syria and found in its situations reasons for hope and action. But after a few years the situations were reversed and the Syrians began to envy the Iraqis. Iraq evolved quite differently from Syria, and by 1926 the differences were quite striking. Iraq experienced nothing comparable to the crises that upset the Syrian economy. It did not have to undergo any territorial dismemberment. And it emerged healthy and intact even from the grave crisis provoked by Turkish claims on the Mosul region.

It is true that Iraq was still far from satisfying all the national aspirations. However, it had made a good deal of progress in this direction. The treaty concluded with Great Britain, despite some serious shortcomings, left the Iraqis with considerable freedom of action. Moreover, Iraq had omitted a constituent assembly and a constitution. It still has a parliament and a senate, with a government party and opposition parties.

It is evident from the foregoing that Iraq enjoyed a political and economic situation that was infinitely superior to that of Syria. It is therefore easy to see why the example of Iraq could not fail to influence the aspirations and demands of the Syrians. This influence acquired particular force from the fact that the head of state in Iraq was King Faisal, who had been expelled by the French from Syria after Maysalūn, and that several of his closest collaborators were well known in Syria because of their service in the country before Maysalūn. The French were well aware of these facts, but they failed to understand their true significance. They inferred from them that the Syrians loved kings. That is why they thought they could dominate the country by using a son-in-law of an Ottoman sultan, whom they placed at the head of the Syrian government.

VI

After trying force and terrorism once more, the High Commissioner finally began to understand the need of convoking a constituent assembly to appease public opinion. The elections of April 1928 gave a large majority to the nationalists who formed a National Bloc. The commission appointed by the General Assembly of the Constituent Assembly finished its work in August and submitted a draft of a constitution. However, the Deputy High Commissioner intervened on the pretext that six articles of the draft were incompatible with the international commitments of France, and he demanded that these articles be deleted before

deliberations began. The demand was refused so the High Commissioner adjourned the sessions for three months. The negotiations that took place during these three months did not produce satisfactory results and the High Commissioner again called for an adjournment. Since no understanding was reached in three months, he suspended the Constituent Assembly sine die. This action exacerbated public opinion and caused great discontent.

The High Commissioner finally decided to end the dispute by making an astute diplomatic move in 1930. He promulgated the constitution without suppressing a single article, but added a new article (no. 116) that rendered the six articles in question completely inoperative. He published this constitution along with some other constitutions and regulations for the territories of the Alawites and Druzes and for the sanjak of Alexandretta. This was for the purpose of showing that France was intransigent on the matter of the territories detached from Syria and of the new states created. Public opinion was naturally not calmed thereby, especially since the example of Iraq was becoming quite formidable owing to the decisions of the League of Nations. As proposed by Great Britain, the mandate was solemnly abolished and Iraq was admitted to the organization. It goes without saying that under these conditions even the most Francophile of the Syrians could not defend French policy in Syria.

VII

The High Commissioner, Count de Martel, who succeeded Ponsot in 1934, noted that public opinion in Syria was fascinated by Iraq and even admired the treaty policy of that country. That is why he sought a similar treaty policy for Syria. He prepared a draft treaty which he submitted to the Syrian government. The government, whose members were devoted to France, hastened to approve and submit it to Parliament. The High Commissioner thought that Parliament would do the same thing because during the elections the French used every kind of pressure, intimidation, and maneuvering to get their friends elected. They succeeded in reducing the National Bloc to a small majority in Parliament.

However, the draft was designed to strengthen France's position and guarantee the interests of the French without conferring the slightest benefit on Syria and the Syrians. Consequently, the National Bloc deputies were able to influence a great many deputies so that when they drew up a resolution of rejection, they succeeded in getting it signed by the majority of Parliament.

Thus blocked, the High Commissioner returned to the policy of repression. He had a great many militant nationalist leaders arrested and then deported to remote regions of the country, holding them responsible for the demonstrations and troubles that were occurring. These intensified, despite all the repressive measures. The High Commissioner finally came to understand that he could not achieve constructive results without reaching an agreement with the National Bloc. He released the political prisoners and started conversations with the head of the Bloc to whom he communicated his government's readiness to receive at Paris a delegation to negotiate a "treaty of friendship and alliance."

The negotiations that took place in Paris in 1936 between the nationalist delegation and French officials ended satisfactorily for both parties and the treaty was initialed by the respective chairmen.

When the Syrian delegation returned to Damascus, preparations were made to elect a new Parliament. The Parliament elevated the head of the Bloc to President of the Republic. And the nationalist government, which was formed constitutionally, submitted the treaty to Parliament. Approval and ratification was unanimous.

But the French government acted in quite a different fashion. After two years of evasions and a series of new negotiations and new accords, it finally

disclaimed the treaty. Thus, the 1936 treaty remained a dead letter, despite its ratification by the Syrian Parliament.

Meanwhile, Syria was undergoing a major crisis over Turkish claims to Alexandretta. The Turks were far from constituting a majority in the region. An impartial inquiry could clearly prove this. But the French did nothing significant to protect Syrian rights in the affair. On the contrary, they used the sanjak as a bargaining counter. France, allied with Great Britain, was preparing to combat the Axis powers and she wished to bring Turkey into the war on the Allied side. That is why she made a number of concessions that ended, in 1939, in Turkey's annexing Alexandretta. Syrian public opinion naturally held France responsible for this great injustice to the country.

After the 1936 treaty was sabotaged, French troops and officials set out to foment trouble in order to strengthen their position in Syria. The Syrian government was unable to discharge its functions in the midst of such machinations and meddling so in May 1939 it submitted its resignation to the President of the Republic. The latter, after two months of reflection, decided to resign too, and he sent a letter to this effect to Parliament on July 7. These resignations delighted the High Commissioner, who hastened to decree the dissolution of Parliament and suspension of the constitution. He named a head of government to handle current matters. Thus did the High Commissioner assume all public powers.

Less than two months later World War II broke out and everyone realized that the purpose of all these measures was to prepare the country for the exigencies of the war.

VIII

When the French government capitulated and signed the armistice—following the defection of its armies and occupation of its capital by the Germans—the French troops in Syria and Lebanon as well as the officials of the High Commissariat remained loyal to the Vichy government and did not recognize the Free French. But after the 1941 events in Iraq, the Allied High Command decided to occupy Syria and Lebanon with the aid of the Free French, massing in Palestine the troops needed for this operation.

During the evening before the day set for the start of military operations, airplanes flew over the main cities of Syria and Lebanon to drop copies of a proclamation signed by General Catroux and addressed to the Syrians and Lebanese in the name of General de Gaulle. The preamble contained some phrases suggestive of mental reservations, but it ended by clearly declaring independence. Moreover, a British declaration issued in Cairo approved and supported independence.

The mental reservations mentioned above were not long in manifesting themselves. The representatives of the Free French wanted to restore the situation prevailing before 1939 and, perhaps, the clauses of the 1936 treaty. At any rate, they were far from renouncing the colonialist ambitions of their predecessors. That is why they did not decree general elections in Syria and Lebanon until 1943 after a great deal of evasion and Allied pressure. The elections gave each country a parliament, president of the republic, and a government, all eager for true independence.

However, the Lebanese Constitution, promulgated in 1926, contained several articles with independence. In addition, the Lebanese flag was actually an emblem of dependence because it was the French flag with a small cedar tree inserted in the upper corner near the fleur-de-lis. The government convoked Parliament to modify the articles of the Constitution and to choose a new flag.

The French authorities tried hard to prevent Parliament from meeting, but they failed and the legislative body approved the government's proposals. It adopted a new flag which bore no resemblance to the French flag. The general delegate of the French was angered by this "audacious decisions" and he ordered the arrest of the President of the Republic and President of the Council along with several deputies, who were detained in the ancient citadel of Hasbaya. Moreover, he named his own President of the Republic.

This arbitrary and oppressive act aroused public opinion in Lebanon and elsewhere in the Arab world. It angered and alarmed even the Allies because, besides the trouble it would provoke in Lebanon, it could gravely damage the cause of the war itself, for the Allies never stopped saying that they were fighting for the liberty of all peoples—and here you have a representative of their ally committing a serious crime against the liberty of a people whose independence it had proclaimed. Thus they decided to act promptly. They forced General de Gaulle to have the prisoners released and allowed to exercise the powers granted to them by the people. It will be noted that this act, which denounced the persistence of the colonialist spirit among the Free French, took place in 1943, i.e., while a large part of France was occupied by the Germans and the rest of the country, though apparently free, was actually controlled by the Germans. It was natural for this colonialist spirit to be manifested with more vigor after the liberation of France. That was what was to take place in 1945.

The independence of Syria, contrary to that of Lebanon, did not require a change of flag or modifications in the Constitution because the Syrian flag did not resemble that of France and, moreover, it combined the four Arab colors. The constitution was drawn up by a commission of the Constituent Assembly in a spirit of nationalism and independence. As for article 116 added by the High Commissioner, since it was considered illegal by the nationalists, it could be deleted without any formality.

On the other hand, Syria did have a number of territorial problems. The new government solved part of them quite satisfactorily. The regions of the Alawites and Druzes were completely annexed to Syria without any difficulty. The question of the four districts added to Lebanon was resolved in a spirit of Arab fraternity. The Syrian government decided to abandon any claims to them after reaching an accord to this effect with the Lebanese government. In communicating this decision to Parliament, the Prime Minister said in substance: Syria protested the annex of these districts because she knew that Lebanon was merely an instrument of French policy. Now, however, since Lebanon has definitely turned away from French policy and decided on complete independence, we will give up our claims to these territories and wish Lebanon all prosperity within its present-day borders.

The Lebanese Prime Minister communicated this fraternal gesture of Syria to Parliament and, thanking Syria, said: "Lebanon has an Arab face; it will be independent in the fullest sense of the word. . . Lebanon will no longer be either a dwelling place or a corridor of colonialism." The simultaneous proclamation of this new policy by Syria and Lebanon immediately put an end to the irredentism that was reigning in the north and south of Lebanon and it strengthened the country internally and externally.

X

Syria had many more important aims and concerns—to have a national army and to see the country rid of French troops. There were many Syrian soldiers and a fair number of officers, but they were dispersed among French units and commanded by French officers. They had to be regrouped and placed under

Syrian authority so that they could become the nucleus of the national army. The French troops had to get ready to leave the country after a suitable period of time. But the general delegate of France claimed that he had to conclude some agreements to safeguard the "economic, strategic, and cultural interests" of France and he submitted a draft of agreements to the Syrian government. The clauses were wholly incompatible with the independence proclaimed by France herself and approved and recognized by the Allied Powers—Great Britain, the United States, and Soviet Russia. Naturally, Syria could not make such restrictive agreements. The negotiations on the subject were inconclusive because the French, blinded by the urge to dominate that haunted them, were intransigent.

The delivery of France from German occupation revived the French spirit of domination because it enabled them to resume the policy of force with great vigor. They began to land new troops in Beirut to reinforce the military occupation of Syria and to force the Syrians to halt all resistance. The news of the landing angered public opinion, which was already impatient at the slowness of the political negotiations. Everyone understood the need to act. A general boycott was adopted to prevent the supplying of the French garrisons stationed all over the country. The French soldiers then began to seize supplies by force, breaking into shops and trampling the hedges of kitchen gardens and carrying away whatever they found. This naturally led to many clashes between the troops and local population.

The Syrian soldiers in the French army, no longer able to obey the orders of their officers or tolerate their oppressive actions, began to desert their garrisons with their arms. This too gave rise to skirmishes between the French soldiers pursuing the deserters and the mobs protecting them. Thus, the entire country became a battlefield.

The commander-in-chief of the French troops (Olivat-Roger) thought he could quell the resistance movements by a show of force. So he ordered the Syrian capital to be bombed. The bombardment of Damascus, which began at 6 o'clock in the evening of May 29, 1945, continued day and night for more than 36 hours. Cannons set up alongside of Mezza dominated the city. Airplanes flew overhead. Tanks drove through the streets throwing shells in all directions. Properties damage was considerable and thousands of civilians of all ages were wounded or killed.

Parliament was the most important object of the attack. Olivat-Roger knew that it was scheduled to meet that day at 5 o'clock in the afternoon. By besieging and bombarding the building at 6 o'clock he hoped to "trap" in one fell swoop all the deputies and most of the ministers. But as of that morning, the President of Parliament reached a new decision after consulting with the government and the deputies. The deliberations of Parliament under the existing conditions would be of little value. It was preferable for the deputies to go to their respective districts to strengthen morale and organize resistance. That is why at the time Parliament was besieged and bombarded, no one was present except the watchmen. The French soldiers savagely murdered them and looted all the offices with an indescribable barbarism.

The bombardment of Damascus was halted thanks to the intervention of Great Britain in the name of the Allied forces. Churchill, considering this act of violence against an open city would prejudice the Allied cause, decided on the occupation of Damascus by the Allied High Command in the Near East. He communicated this decision to General de Gaulle, requesting him to order his troops to stop what they were doing and return to their barracks. De Gaulle did so immediately.

These events were followed by a series of negotiations between France and Great Britain, on one hand, and between the latter and Syria and Lebanon, on the other. The matter was also brought up in the Security Council of the United

Nations and elsewhere. The negotiations proved fruitful in 1946 when it was agreed that the French and British troops would evacuate Syria and Lebanon simultaneously after a date decided in advance. Syria was evacuated on April 17, 1946 and it was decided that this day should be a national holiday.

* * *

Meanwhile, Arab nationalism had been making considerable progress and a "League of Arab States" came into being. Syria was the most fervent disciple of nationalism. That is why she wanted this occasion to be a Pan-Arab celebration. She asked each state that had signed the pact of the League to send a military detachment to Damascus to participate in the general parade. All the states did so. On April 17, 1946 these detachments marched down the Barada—Jordanians, Iraqis, Lebanese, Saudi Arabians, and Egyptians—with their flags. The crowds, drunk with joy, applauded frantically.

That day Syria became completely independent without being bound by any treaty calculated to diminish in any way her independence in any way or oblige her to permit a foreign power to establish and maintain military bases on her territory. This made the celebration of the "Day of the Evacuation" particularly important. It intensified the joy and deepened the enthusiasm of those present. Many of them recalling the "Day of Maysalūn" could rightly say:

"Maysalūn is avenged!"

Geneva, July 24, 1964

Preface to the Arabic Edition

The day of Maysalūn⁽¹⁾ is one of the most important days in the modern history of the Arabs, for the first Arab Government established in Syria since the World War collapsed on that day.

This Government was extremely short-lived because the interval between its formation following the entrance into Damascus of the armies of the Arab Revolt, and its termination by the French military occupation of this city, was less than two years: October 1, 1918 to July 24, 1920. Less than five months elapsed from the date of the official proclamation of independence to its final collapse: March 8 to July 24, 1920.

Despite its transiency, however, this Government possessed a unique greatness and splendor in that it was the offspring of the Arab Revolt and the beacon of its hopes. It was a modern Arab Government in every sense of the term, fully conscious of its Arabism, working unceasingly for Arab nationalism, and appreciating to the utmost the requirements of contemporary life. The efforts of progressive and thinking Arabs were directed toward the establishment of such a government, and upon it they focused their hopes and desires after many centuries of decadence and submission had followed the "glorious age of Arab independence."

The Day of Maysalūn witnessed the extinction of this ephemeral government as the result of a sly military attack launched after a protracted series of political maneuvers and stratagems.

We do not exaggerate when we say that this day was a turning point in the history of the Arab cause. The first chapter ended and a new one began. On this day the regular army that had been organized during the Arab Revolt was broken up. Thereafter the leaders of the Revolt and the protagonists of nationalism scattered in all directions and entered into a new life of struggle, arduous and ramified, which in various respects differed significantly from what had prevailed during the preceding phase.

Thus, we are completely justified in describing the Day of Maysalūn as one of the most momentous days in the modern history of the Arabs.

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It is a source of deep regret that the events of the Day of Maysalūn have not been accurately and fully written up or published until now. The most important pages of that day have remained unknown to the overwhelming majority of intellectuals, while much of what has been published concerning certain of its pages is in direct contradiction to the truth.

The principal reason for this, in my opinion, lies in the very nature of the circumstances obtaining on that day and the many surprises found on its final pages. Owing to the great speed and many complications characterizing the events just prior to Maysalūn, it has proved very difficult for most observers to

(1) Translator's note: Arab proper names and place names when generally familiar are given in the popular form, e.g. Faisal, Baalbek; all others are transliterated. The author's intra-chapter divisions (indicated by # # #) and most of his punctuation have been retained.

ascertain the complete details. After the battle, moreover, a good many of these men were dispersed throughout the Arab World and began a new and violent struggle which diverted them from thinking about assembling the relevant documents and publishing a report so that the people could learn the facts.

Fate decreed that at that time I should be in the center of the stage, a privileged position from which I could witness all the events at close range. This was due to my having been a member of the Council of Directors which functioned as a cabinet from its formation until the proclamation of independence, a minister in the first cabinet constituted after independence, and a minister in the second government that followed and remained in power until the Day of Maysalūn. Thus, I was able to obtain first hand information from the inception of the case until its end.

Furthermore, the last government had entrusted me with the responsibility for negotiating with General Gouraud after the advance of his forces toward the approaches of Maysalūn. Consequently, I was in a position to learn more of the details concerning the last page than any other person.

Finally, I accompanied King Faisal to Europe after his departure from Syria on the day after Maysalūn. This afforded me an excellent opportunity to make an intensive study of the various documents related to the case, both official and unofficial.

King Faisal asked me at that time to procure the services of a specialist in international law in Rome who, on the basis of the data and documents I was to furnish him, would make a comprehensive, formal deposition on the Syrian case in general and the French injustice on the Day of Maysalūn in particular. The King turned the papers and documents in his possession over to me. I then spent a month examining the pertinent items and wrote up a full account of the conversations and arguments between General Gouraud and myself before the Day of Maysalūn. After that I set down with meticulous care my recollections of the events that took place both on the days preceding the Battle of Maysalūn and on those following it.

The memoirs now before the reader date back to that period, or about a quarter of a century ago.

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The force of circumstances led King Faisal subsequently to turn his gaze toward Iraq and to continue his efforts for the Arab people in another arena. He considered it sound policy, after he had ascended the throne of Iraq, not to interfere openly in Syrian affairs before the situation in Iraq stabilized. Thus, he did not issue the formal report prepared in Rome and refrained from discussing Syrian questions for almost twenty years.

As for myself, fate decreed that I too was to go to Iraq with King Faisal. I was asked to lay a new foundation for the country's educational system, a difficult task that absorbed all my time and prevented me from publishing the mass of notes I had accumulated.

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But now. . . . owing to the chance of my being in Damascus on the 25th anniversary of the Day of Maysalūn, where I have witnessed new bloody events which will inevitably lead to the end of the ill-omened era that began with the Day of Maysalūn. . . . I consider it my duty to publish these memoirs.

I have felt it necessary to include a long introduction reviewing in summary form certain historical and diplomatic events, since these are indispensable for an understanding of Maysalūn and the basic factors involved. Maysalūn is not an isolated phenomenon; it represents only one page in the Syrian case. The

Syrian case itself does not stand alone, being part of the Arab case, which in turn is closely related to the Eastern question. Similarly, these are connected with and complicated by many other cases. Hence it is impossible to understand one without studying many others which at first glance might seem remote and unrelated to it. The history of the Arab East is full of events testifying to this truth.

For example, the rivalry between France and England over Egypt reached a climax after the French campaign that led to Fashoda; and it did not end until an agreement involving a compromise over Morocco was concluded between these two governments.

The dispute between Russia and France over the Holy Places in some parts of Arab Asia ended only after a war had broken out in Europe on the banks of the Danube and the shores of the Black Sea, and after a conference in Paris attended by many states.

The dispute between France and England on Syrian policy after World War I was settled only by a compromise affecting Mosul and its oil.

These facts were apparently unknown to most of those who wrote about Arab affairs in general and the history of Maysalūn in particular. In order to compensate for this defect, I deemed it necessary to preface my memoirs with a review of the events that culminated in the Day of Maysalūn. My book therefore is divided into two parts: (1) an analysis of the preliminaries, and (2) a description of the actual events. I have added an appendix containing the documents bearing on the most important events detailed in the second part. In the first part I have summarized what I learned from books and periodicals; in the second I have presented what I myself saw and recorded during the actual events.

Damascus, Syria

July 1945

PART I

PRELIMINARY FACTORS

Foreword

FRENCH ASPIRATIONS IN SYRIA

The history of French aspirations in Syria is a long one that dates back to the Crusades. The French are accustomed to look upon these wars as an achievement of their "great ancestors" and to regard the Latin Kingdoms which emerged here and there on Syrian soil during those wars as a part of their "glorious history." Naturally, therefore, they have developed an inclination to complete the work of those wars and to restore the ancient kingdoms.

This inclination made the French set themselves up as protectors of the Christians in the East in anticipation of exploiting them some day as a pretext for the seizure of Syria. France was impelled to multiply missions and found various religious and educational institutions throughout the Near East in general and the Arab East in particular. She continued to follow this policy with the utmost zeal even after the decision was made to separate religion and state and to make education secular; even after the clergy had been oppressed, its property confiscated, and an interdiction placed upon its engaging in education within France proper. She thus pursued a dual policy: to combat the clergy inside the country and to protect it outside, in accordance with Gambetta's famous dictum that "hostility to the clergy is not a product suitable for export."

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Strangely enough, the new imperialism pursued by France along the Mediterranean coast since 1830 has added to the ancient basic factor a new one that supports it in action and effect, although contradicting it in principle and essence. France subsequently sought to spread her influence over broad areas of Islamic territory and gradually to gain control over Algeria, Tunis, and Morocco. Thus, she has come to regard herself as the possessor of an "Islamic Empire" on the shores of North Africa. She naturally aims at ruling Syria too in the same new capacity in order to expand this "Islamic Empire," so her leaders explain, and consolidate the hold on Moslems by dominating the most important Islamic centers in Syria. Driven by the requirements of her "Christian policy" on one hand and by those of her "Islamic policy" on the other, France has become generally more concerned about Syria than any other nation and more eager to possess this country.

We are not exaggerating when we say that she began to view herself as the "legal heir" of the Ottoman Empire in Syria, that empire which for some time was deemed to be "fatally sick." Moreover, France had for many years been longing to include Egypt as well within her sphere of influence and control. She was recently compelled, however, to relinquish these hopes once and for all. This fact, we may say, increased the tenacity with which she still clings to her dreams of mastering Syria.

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Such desires inevitably brought France into collision with two serious obstacles: one, international rivalry; the other, Arab resistance. To the first France undoubtedly attached the fullest significance, for she exerted every effort and withheld no sacrifice to surmount it. Indeed, she inflicted the blow at Maysalūn only after obtaining by negotiation guarantees of non-interference

by any other government in her plans for Syria. As for the second obstacle, France never gave it the proper weight. On the contrary, she always minimized it. She imagined that the blow at Maysalūn would crush Arab resistance beyond repair. It never occurred to her that this resistance would mount after Maysalūn day by day until it drove France out of Syria completely.

If the Battle of Maysalūn may be regarded as the last chapter in the story of "the international rivalry that raged over Syria," then by the same token it is the first chapter of the epic of the "national resistance movement in Syria directed against the French." The chapters in this epic have continued to unfold uninterruptedly after Maysalūn. They will not cease until the task is ended and French forces are evacuated from every part of the country, even though more than a quarter of a century may elapse after the treacherous blow at Maysalūn.

THE INTERNATIONAL STRUGGLE FOR THE ARAB LANDS

Affairs in the Arab lands during the past century and the first two decades of the present century were treated by the European powers as a part of the "Eastern Question," i.e., the problem of "dividing up the territory belonging to the Ottoman Empire." The reason was that the largest and most important sections of the Arab lands had for many centuries been officially included within the borders of the Ottoman Empire which managed to extend its influence and control, actual or nominal, over all Arab Africa, except Morocco, and all portions of Arab Asia, except the heart of Arabia and Hadramaut. It was natural therefore in international relations for Arab affairs to be considered part of the Eastern Question.

There is no doubt that in the 18th century the Ottoman Empire entered a period of decline and disintegration which became particularly manifest during the 19th century. It was able to survive only by virtue of the struggle among the powers over how it was to be partitioned. This struggle was violent and complex, for most of the sections of the Ottoman Empire were coveted by several countries simultaneously. All the great powers had their eyes on certain areas where they strove to strengthen their influence preparatory to taking the necessary measures for seizure. Each power, of course, attempted to prevent the extension of its rivals influence not only in the places and regions it desired for itself, but in other places and regions as well, since it preferred in principle that these areas remain under the administration of the weak Ottoman Empire rather than fall into the hands of some strong European government. Thus, each greedy country bided its time, waiting to ambush the others.

There is hardly any need to add that the inevitable result of these international rivalries was a long preservation of the **status quo**. Indeed the phrase "preservation of the **status quo**" was initially an expression of the implied policy which all were obliged to honor, owing to the nature and pressure of circumstances, without negotiation, dispute, or treaty. After the Crimean War, however, the term became a principle of international diplomacy to which all the great powers gave clear and formal assent since preservation of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire was one of the most important provisions of the famous Treaty of Paris.

It goes without saying that the powers did not accept this policy from a desire to keep the Ottoman Empire intact, but rather from the fear that a conflict among themselves would gravely harm them all. They agreed to the **status quo** in order to await a favorable opportunity to realize their desires without risk, i.e. through negotiation and bargaining.

Thus, after the Treaty of Paris the powers began to deal with each other on the basis of "parallel compensation." It is no exaggeration to say that the

history of the Eastern Question developed into an endless process of haggling. The Arab lands belonging to the Ottoman Empire were among the most precious goods involved in the trading. We are fully justified, therefore, in swiftly reviewing the most important stages through which this international rivalry passed.

BEFORE THE WORLD WAR

The first action to disturb the *status quo* in the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire occurred at the end of the 18th century, when the French under Napoleon Bonaparte invaded the Levant. Egypt was easily taken and the campaign swept over the Sinai Desert to Syria, halting at the walls of Acre. The English saw in this a dangerous threat to their interests and to the future of their colonies. They responded by giving active aid to the Ottomans. France's fleet was destroyed at Abukir and a blockade imposed upon Egypt, which lasted until the country was evacuated. The French remained in Egypt from 1798 to 1802, i.e. only three years and three months. This enforced departure did not cause France to renounce the idea of occupying Egypt, as was proved by Napoleon's remark to the British representative during the Consulate, which he uttered less than a year after the evacuation: "Egypt will return to us sooner or later, either by dissolution of the Ottoman Empire or in agreement with it."

Napoleon's dictum subsequently became a principle of French diplomacy, remaining in force for almost a hundred years. France removed Egypt from her "zone of desires" only at the beginning of the present century when she was given a free hand in Morocco by the Anglo-French Entente of 1904.

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France inflicted a new blow on the Arab lands scarcely three decades after she had withdrawn her armies from Egypt. A powerful military expedition was dispatched to Algeria in 1830 which experienced no trouble in taking Algiers and destroying the local government. The people, however, put up stiff resistance as soon as the invaders advanced into the interior. This resistance mounted when Emir Abd al-Qādir took command. The French required fifteen years of mighty effort involving wars, various forms of repression, and the most repulsive atrocities before they were able to gain full control.

France's activities in Algeria did not encounter any international difficulties owing to the fact that England, which was the only power in a position to vie with her, found nothing in the situation to impair her interests or to hinder her domination of the Mediterranean; for she had occupied Malta, obtaining thereby an important naval base in the middle of this sea.

France's policy of severe repression, designed to crush Algerian resistance and extend her sway over the country, produced a sharp, negative effect upon European public opinion in general and upon English public opinion in particular. The ensuing resentment stirred up a stormy press campaign against the French, but this essentially literary criticism proved useless in preventing them from gaining control of all Algeria without foreign opposition. Thereupon they began preparations to use Algeria as a means of expanding both toward Tunis on the east and toward Fez on the west. However, it required half a century after the Algerian blow before they could actively undertake to implement this policy.

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While France was engaged in the Algerian campaign, Mohammed Ali Pasha, Viceroy of Egypt at that time, rose up against the Ottoman Empire. Although the rebellion at first seemed to be a purely internal affair and of concern to none but the Turks, it soon developed into a far-flung movement that threatened the

very foundations of the Empire. Consequently, there were international repercussions and sharp disagreements. The Eastern Question reached a critical stage when the military campaign against Syria organized by Mohammed Ali under the command of his son Ibrāhīm Pasha resulted in the easy conquest of the country beyond the Taurus Mts. and penetrated into the heart of Anatolia up to the city of Kutahia. There was no Ottoman army in the field capable of blocking the march on the capital of the Empire and its capture.

France applauded Mohammed Ali's movement and energetically supported it with all the resources at her command. The Russians who sought to benefit from these events by offering to help check the advancing armies in return for certain concessions succeeded in inducing the Turks to conclude the famous treaty of Unkiar Skelessi. England was alarmed by the behavior of both countries and considered it advantageous to back the Ottoman Empire against Mohammed Ali. She worked to transform the Egyptian case into a European case and thus prevent any one of the great powers from exploiting the situation wholly in its own interests.

The above mentioned crisis, as is known, lasted almost ten years during which time French and British policies violently clashed. The British triumphed in the end because they were persistent in the use of a host of devices until they succeeded in forcing Mohammed Ali to retreat first from Anatolia, then from Syria, and ultimately to content himself with Egypt alone.

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The invasion of Syria by Mohammed Ali Pasha's troops during the course of his revolt against the Ottoman Empire as well as the ensuing local insurrections and externally-inspired agitation affected the area profoundly. France favored Mohammed Ali and set up a strong propaganda in his behalf against the Ottomans, while England, which supported the Porte, did the same for the Ottomans against the Pasha. French propaganda and intrigues naturally found their most fertile field among the Maronites, just as the English scored their greatest successes among the Druzes. Hence, the Maronites became Mohammed Ali's champions from the beginning of his rebellion, whereas the Druzes opposed him. The struggle between France and England was transplanted to the local scene in the form of Druze-Maronite rivalry, an ancient source of bitterness, now sharply intensified by this new factor. After the withdrawal of the Egyptian troops, Mt. Lebanon became the scene of distressing events and a bone of international contention.

The crisis which thus arose in Lebanon endured for almost twenty years, as England tried to prevent the French from resolving it unilaterally. She finally managed to have Lebanon placed under international control shared by herself, France, Russia, Prussia, and Austria. At the height of the tension in 1860 representatives of these countries met in Paris and agreed to send an expedition to Syria. They secured the approval of the Ottomans whom they desired to give aid in order to strengthen law and order. The duration of the action was not to exceed six months.

France equipped the army and the other four powers organized the necessary naval supporting forces. The consuls of all the governments concerned conferred in Beirut and prepared the draft of a special constitution for the administration of Lebanon. After approval by all the powers in 1861, it was forthwith declared operative. Lebanon was treated in accordance with this constitution as an "independent district" enjoying local autonomy administered by a Christian governor appointed by royal decree. This arrangement prevailed for more than half a century, i.e. until the outbreak of the first World War and the Ottoman Empire's participation therein.

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During the Lebanese crisis another issue arose which, although intrinsically less consequential, nevertheless became much more dangerous because of the resultant international complications.

I am referring to the affair of the Holy Places. Servicing these places in Jerusalem and Bethlehem is regarded as one of the most important functions of the local Christian sects. Hence, the Catholic and Orthodox monks used to engaged in sharp and often violent disputes over the various areas in which these places were located. France arrogated to herself the right to protect the Catholics, while the Russians did the same for the Orthodox. Both Governments would demand of the Ottomans certain privileges for their respective sects and protest the favoritism shown to their rivals.

The tension became particularly acute during the middle of the 19th century because Russia began actively to threaten the Ottoman Empire at the same time that England joined France in urging the Sublime Porte to reject the Russian demands. The dispute grew in intensity day by day until it culminated in a bloody war fought not in the Holy Land or any other Arab territory, but in Europe along the Danube River and the shores of the Black Sea. The cause was England's exploitation of the quarrel over the Holy Places as a means of halting the penetration of Russian influence in the Near East and, particularly, of preventing the Czarist fleet from dominating the Black Sea. She was able to mobilize considerable international military support for the "protection of the Ottoman Empire against Russian aggression."

The Crimean War ended in victory for the Allied armies and in the convening of a peace conference in Paris in 1856. The treaty concluded at this conference was based on the principle of "maintaining the integrity of the territory of the Ottoman Empire". Thus, the situation of the Arab portions of the Ottoman Empire remained in **status quo**.

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France was extremely eager to keep Egypt and Syria just as they were before these events. So much so that when invited to the Berlin Conference after the Russo-Turkish War, she refused to attend until she obtained from England a firm promise that items concerning Egypt, Syria, and the Holy Land would be excluded from the agenda.

However, scarcely five years later, in 1881, France inflicted another military blow against Arab territory by occupying Tunis and provoked a severe international crisis in the process. Italy, which had been anxious for a long time to seize and colonize Tunis, was enraged by this action but too weak to offer any effective opposition. Consequently, she threw herself into the arms of Germany and Austria, despite the dispute between the latter and herself over certain European regions, with the result that the Austro-German Alliance was expanded into the Triple Alliance.

England saw no purpose in exerting herself to thwart France in this matter because she was in the midst of preparations for the invasion of Egypt. Perhaps deep down she was happy over the Tunisian affair, for less than a year after France's embroilment she was in possession of Egypt.

Since the French at that time still regarded Egypt as belonging to their zone of influence, they were very upset at the action of the English. They protested sharply but futilely because the crisis engendered by the occupation of Tunis was not yet resolved. Moreover, the subsequent inclusion of Italy in the ranks of Germany and Austria doubled the German danger to France. In an attempt to calm the storm, England issued a statement explaining that the occupation of Egypt was a temporary measure designed to guarantee the security of the area and that her troops would be withdrawn once this was achieved. She then resorted to a variety of pretexts aimed at nullifying the effect of this declaration and pledge so as to prolong the occupation.

England was tireless in maintaining this position because she had ample scope for negotiation and bargaining in North Africa; for Tripoli, the object of Italy's desire, was still Ottoman, while Morocco, over which France was striving to spread her influence, remained independent and weak. Hence, it was possible to come to a settlement with the two powers through yielding the aforementioned regions by negotiation.

England experienced little difficulty in swiftly concluding the secret Italian Treaty of 1887 wherein it was stated that "if anything should arise to disturb the **status quo** along the Mediterranean, England would permit Italy freedom of action in Tripoli; in return, Italy would recognize England's freedom of action in Egypt." On the other hand, there were serious crises requiring protracted negotiation before England and France managed to reach an agreement allowing each other freedom of action in Egypt and Morocco respectively. France and Spain too had to do some hard bargaining over Morocco. Because of her geographic position Spain aspired to the northern part of Morocco and could be satisfied only by the offer of a sphere of influence there. The negotiations terminated in a treaty signed by the two countries in 1902.

Although England gave France and Spain a free hand in Morocco, she excluded the city of Tangiers and its port in view of their strategic location opposite the Strait of Gibraltar. She insisted on entrusting the administration of this city and port to an international commission of which she was to be one of the members.

Thus, it seemed to France that there was no obstacle remaining in the way of her occupation of Morocco at a convenient time. However, it was not long after the conclusion of these treaties that France was surprised by Germany's coming onto the Moroccan scene. The result was a dangerous international crisis, which France likewise managed to resolve by bargaining. She gave Germany her colonies in the French Congo in return for freedom of action in Morocco. The Franco-German settlement of 1911 was the last of the treaties reconciling the rivalries of the European powers for Arab Africa.

The struggle between France and England for Egypt, which began at the end of the 18th century and continued throughout the 20th, was naturally much broader in scope, since it included first the Red Sea and the Bab el Mandeb and then spread to the shores of the Arabian Peninsula up to the Strait of Ormuz and the Gulf of Basra. When Napoleon Bonaparte invaded Egypt in 1798, his intention was to use the country as a base for far-flung military operations—against India. Therefore, the English did not content themselves with frustrating the plans of the French in Egypt alone, but they strove to eliminate their influence all along the Arabian coasts because this region was important in securing the line of communications with India and the Far East. For the same reason they became greatly concerned whenever there occurred a crisis in Egypt that threatened to strengthen France's influence there or diminish their own.

England's Arabian coast policy had these two objectives: (1) to curb piracy in order to ensure the safety of navigation and commerce in the seas adjoining them, and (2) to extend her influence to the coasts and prevent another power from doing the same to any part thereof. England implemented this policy by concluding agreements and alliances with the sheikhs, chieftains, and sultans wielding power over the various portions of the littoral, either by means of bribes, threats and pressure, or by exploiting the disputes that arose among the sheikhs and emirs.

The first of the chain of agreements was signed with the Sultan of Muscat in 1798, i.e. the very year in which Napoleon invaded Egypt. In accordance with this agreement, the Sultan pledged himself to expel all the French from the territory under his control whenever England was in a state of war with France. The English then concluded an agreement with the sheikh of the Qawāsīm in

1804 and a general agreement with eight sheikhs in 1820. They equipped military forces to subdue the Qawāsim first in 1805, again in 1809, and finally in 1819. However, no attempt was made to occupy in permanent form any part of the Arabian Peninsula until 1839 when, just prior to the termination of the Egyptian crisis, she invaded Aden and turned it into a coaling station and harbor.

The occupation of Aden infuriated the French and provoked them to land troops at Cape Sheikh Sa 'īd located opposite the island of Perim. The English retaliated by landing troops on Perim itself. France was thus compelled to alter her plan and offer a proposal advocating the neutrality of the land and sea routes to India, with all nations assured free and equal access to them. England did not agree and Anglo-French competition in this arena lasted over half a century.

In 1854 when the French obtained a concession from the Khedive of Egypt Sa 'īd Pasha to dig the Suez Canal, the English signed a new treaty with the Sultan of Muscat whereby they occupied the Kuria and Muria Islands which dominates the Bab el Mandeb. France was again angered and responded by ordering a naval demonstration in those waters. The English countered with the final occupation of Perim (1858).

After this both sides thought it best to refrain from intensifying the bitterness, so they agreed to a joint declaration in which they pledged themselves to maintain the independence of the Sultan of Muscat (1862). But throughout the excavation of the Suez Canal, and particularly when it was opened in 1869, England felt that her interests in India would be in jeopardy as long as the Canal remained in the hands of a French company in a country loyal to France. To avert the danger, two long series of maneuvers were set in motion: (1) great efforts to strengthen the English position at the approaches to the Mediterranean Sea and the Arabian coasts by widening the occupation zone of Aden and extending protection to the adjacent regions, occupying Zeilah and Berbera on the western shore of the Red Sea, signing treaties with the emirs on the Arabian side and bringing them one by one under her wing until all Hadramaut, Qatar, Oman, Bahrein, and Kuwait were included; and (2) attempts to gain control of the Suez Canal itself, first through the purchase of the Egyptian Government's shares (1875), then by the occupation of Egypt (1882), thus ensuring complete mastery over the routes leading to India.

France did not reconcile herself to the **fait accompli** and actively opposed it. Toward the end of the 19th century she aggravated the problem by sending a military expedition to the southern Sudan via the Sahara which raised the tricolor over Fashoda (1898). At the same time she won a concession from the Sultan of Muscat to set up a coaling station in Oman. England reacted violently, demanding that the French withdraw their forces from Fashoda and that the Sultan annul the concession he had granted them.

Relations between the two countries entered into a bitter phase with the backing down of the French before the hardened determination of the English. But soon both felt the need of mutual understanding on all these questions and the resultant Convention of 1904 not only resolved Egyptian and Moroccan problems, but simultaneously ended the rivalry of the two powers on the Arabian Coasts as well.

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The situation in Arab Asia following the above-mentioned Convention did not create any difficulty between France and England, as it had done during the last century. The reason for the lack of conflict of interests here is that France focused her desires wholly on Syria, whereas England's policy in this area concentrated on gaining a mastery over the Arabian Coasts, especially the Gulfs of Aqaba and Basra.

An incentive to mutual understanding in the Near East was the threat to both powers posed by the spread of German influence in the Ottoman Empire. Germany obtained a concession from the Porte to extend the Haidar Pasha Konia Railroad to Bagdad via Aleppo and Mosul. In addition, she sought to continue this line on to Basra with branches from Aleppo to Iskenderun and from Aleppo to Meskeneh. The result was a sharp clash with both English and French influence and aspirations.

As soon as the English sensed the danger, they hastened to include Kuwait in their defenses in an attempt to block the German route to India. At the same time they lodged a strong protest with the Turks and insisted that the German concession be restricted to the city of Baghdad, showing thereby a keen determination to make southern Iraq their exclusive sphere of influence. France backed the English by giving the Porte to understand that she too opposed granting the Germans a concession to extend the railroad lines from Aleppo to Iskenderun and Meskeneh.

The situation in Arab Asia remained relatively stable until the outbreak of the "constitutional revolution" (i.e. the Young Turk revolution) in the Ottoman Empire. This revolution, which took place in 1908, wiped out the Hamidian tyranny and restored representative government to the Empire. It brought the Eastern Question into a new phase with dramatic suddenness, greatly bewildering statesmen all over Europe and upsetting their plans. The movement was in the nature of a fever that might save "the sick man" from death and quickly restore his health and energy. If successful it would deprive the great powers of their familiar techniques of influencing the Ottoman Empire and excuses for meddling in its internal affairs.

While the revolution aroused appreciation and admiration in certain circles and countries, it was viewed with fear and caution in diplomatic quarters and most countries. Some countries felt impelled to rush to solve the problems connected with the Ottoman Empire before the opportunity for effective action disappeared.

Austria had occupied Bosnia and Herzegovina since the Treaty of Berlin and was administering the provinces directly, although they were not formally annexed to the Empire. Fearing that difficulties would arise which might lead to the booty slipping from her hands, Austria was naturally eager to settle the case officially by legalizing the seizure.

Bulgaria behaved in like fashion. This country had been handling its affairs as though it were completely independent, despite the fact that it was nominally still under Ottoman suzerainty. Since it dreaded a change in status, it naturally hastened to proclaim its independence officially before the Turkish Government found a favorable opportunity to reorganize and regain its strength.

This is exactly what happened. During the first year of the revolution Austria officially announced the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to the Empire while Bulgaria proclaimed her complete secession from Turkey. These events were a hard blow to the new revolution and had serious effects throughout the Empire. Moreover, the annexation of Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria had an even more violent impact upon the Slavic world in general and the Serbs in particular because these provinces were Slavic and the Serbs had long coveted them. The well known diplomatic crisis that ensued was a major cause of the World War which broke out some five years later. Some people of the new regime managed to find consolation in the fact that these events merely legitimized situations of long standing.

Next, Italy assaulted the Empire when, relying on secret agreements with France and England on one hand and with Austria and Germany on the other, she quickly occupied Tripoli in 1911. She was able to gain control over the

center of the province and some of the coastal cities without difficulty, but encountered stiff resistance elsewhere. The Italians began naval warfare in order to drive the Turks from Tripoli. Then they besieged the coasts and invaded the Dodecanese Islands. All sea communications within the Empire, particularly between the Asiatic and European sections, were severed.

Precisely at this critical juncture of the Italo-Turkish war the Balkan states decided to exploit the opportunity to realize their own aims. Concerting among themselves, they declared war on Turkey and in a very short time seized all the Ottoman territory in Europe.

These events succeeded one another with great speed over a period of four years and plunged the Eastern Question into its severest and most complicated crisis. The policy of preserving the **status quo** was totally destroyed and along with it many of the disputes and tensions that had been accumulating for many years. The Eastern Question in most of its aspects was settled with a swiftness that has few parallels in history.

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While this political tempest was raging, France, of course, was not slow to appear on the diplomatic stage to raise her voice on the Syrian case and openly reveal her ambitions. She anticipated England in the matter and approached the Turkish Government with the request that it both guarantee her interests in Syria and enlarge the area of self-rule in Lebanon. She considered it advantageous to state her position publicly and in forthright manner in order to confirm the rights and interests she arrogated to herself there.

Poincaré who was the French Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs at that time used all his genius in this connection. After he discussed it with England through the French Ambassador in London and sent his demands to the Porte through his Ambassador in Istanbul, he delivered two long speeches on French foreign policy, with reference primarily to Syria, one before the Chamber of Deputies, the other before the Senate. He opened his remarks to the Chamber of Deputies on December 21, 1912 as follows:

"Events in the Balkans created a number of difficult and complex problems which Europe had been well aware of for some time, but for several reasons preferred to postpone rather than to solve. The traditional policy of our Government rested on the principle of the integrity of the Ottoman Empire. Maintenance of the **status quo** helped avoid or defer possibilities pregnant with unknown consequences. We were living, therefore, in a provisional state that we had almost grown accustomed to consider as permanent."

After reviewing Balkan affairs and Franco-Prussian relations, Poincaré turned to relations with England:

"Our relations with England have never been more trusting or closer than they are today. A segment of French public opinion has for some time been afraid that the British Government would under certain circumstances pursue a policy in conflict with ours and injurious to our interests. But Sir Edward Grey spontaneously declared that these fears are absolutely groundless and that he is as sincerely concerned as we are with maintaining the friendly accord now existing between France and Britain." (*Au Service de la France* V, p. 404).

Poincaré then went on to discuss the case of Syria. He referred to France's efforts on her behalf and concluded his remarks by saying:

"We are determined to defend unflinchingly our rights and interests. We are resolved to maintain the great traditions of France in the East. Above all, we will do everything necessary to safeguard that holy, intangible thing—our national honor."

Before the Senate, however, Poincaré's language was franker and more explicit:

"The Eastern Question, which for many centuries has been a dreadful enigma to us and which has entered into a new phase despite our efforts, will now be solved in a way that greatly comports with French views."

He then discussed the Ottoman Empire and after declaring that "it would lose its European territory, but would retain an extensive empire in Asia" he offered some advice on how its internal affairs could be reformed:

"I do not need to say that we have traditional interests in Syria and Lebanon in particular and that we are resolved to do everything to respect them. It gives me great joy and satisfaction to add that those people who are under the impression that there is a difference of opinion between the English and ourselves on the subject are wrong. The British Government have told us in all sincerity and friendliness that they do not intend to do anything in this area where they have no political or other ambition of any kind whatever. For our part, we are fully determined to maintain the integrity of the Ottoman Empire in Asia, but will not abandon any of our sentiments or relinquish a single one of our interests regardless of the dangers to which it may be exposed."

These candid statements definitely proved that France which was tied to Russia by an alliance and to England by a treaty of friendship had obtained from both powers firm pledges that they would not oppose her Syrian policy and would give her a free hand in this part of Arab Asia.

After this clear and open declaration France began to press Turkey to work out a speedy solution of the problems which would enable her to strengthen her position in Syria and make the country a privileged place in every sense of the term. The negotiations then undertaken by France and the Porte apparently didn't go forward too quickly. Nevertheless, they were eventually concluded to France's satisfaction just before the outbreak of the World War.

Poincaré referred in several places in his memoirs to the agreements fashioned in 1914. He stated that they finally demarcated the borders between the French and German zones of influence.

DURING THE WORLD WAR

At the outbreak of the war international policy vis-à-vis Arab Asia had reached a point of relative equilibrium. German influence was limited to the railroad route for the extension of which a concession had been obtained. Britain's influence and ambitions were confined to southern Iraq, France's to Syria. Russia's zone was far from Arab territory and restricted to the Straits and the eastern provinces. She was concerned only with keeping Jerusalem and the Holy Places neutral under international supervision.

France was the frankest of all in her intentions and the boldest in ambitions because, as proclaimed for years in the Parliament and through the Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs whom we quoted above, she had a privileged position and special interests in Syria and Lebanon. Both of these she was determined to defend for the sake of the glory and holy honor of France.

#

Turkey's entrance into the war on the side of Germany and Austria against Russia, France, and England gave the Allies an opportunity to realize their aspirations in the Ottoman Empire in general and in the Arab portions in particular. France regarded it as a precious opening not only to gain what she wanted in Syria, but to reach out to the north as well. The reason is that in various treaties she agreed to limit her zone of influence to Aleppo in order to avoid a conflict with Germany which had obtained a concession to extend the railroad to Aleppo, then to Mosul and Baghdad. Since Germany had declared war on the Allies, France was naturally no longer satisfied with her previous aims, but sought to push them beyond the treaty-defined line to encompass all Cilicia, then northern Iraq, and finally the heart of Anatolia. She began negotiations with the Russian and British Governments with a view to broadening the existing treaties accordingly.

England interposed no objections in principle, although she felt that enlargement of the French zone in this fashion would actually authorize France to stretch her zone from the Sinai frontiers along the Palestinian Coast at least as far as Haifa. The English also spoke about the necessity of conciliating the Arabs by granting them in inner Syria different treatment from that in coastal Syria.

Diplomatic conversations among the three Allied powers regarding the distribution of the Ottoman legacy on this new basis started in the middle of 1915 and ended with the conclusion of two secret treaties, the first between Russia, France, and Britain (March 1916), the second between England and France complementing the first and carrying out its provisions (May 1916). The negotiations were evidently conducted with great difficulty in an atmosphere filled with anxiety, doubt, and improvisation.

France found herself constantly confronted by two British projects which she viewed as dangerously inimical to her interests in Syria. The first, occupation of Iskenderun (Alexandretta), was designed to block the German path to Egypt. The second was the alliance with Sherif Husain to ensure his revolt against the Ottoman Empire. France dreaded the consequences and fought both plans hard, but succeeded in forcing England to abandon only the first.

The selfish bargaining spirit which characterized the negotiations is clearly revealed to us in the published memoirs of Poincaré who was then President of the French Republic. We have thought it worthwhile to refer to them in order to learn the details of the French attitude toward the two projects and to discover the basic factors that dictated Allied policy with respect to Syria during the World War.

#

At the beginning of hostilities the Allies drew up a number of projects and plans to provide for every eventuality and decided what they had to do cooperatively in order to implement them. These included a scheme to land troops in the harbor of Iskenderun, from which point they were to invade Syria. The Allies agreed to entrust the command of these forces to a French admiral when the time for action arrived. However, they intended to execute the plan only after the second year of the war since, at the insistence of Russia, they decided to dispatch large expeditionary forces to attack the Turks through the Dardanelles and Istanbul. They naturally postponed consideration of Iskenderun as long as they were hopeful of reaching the capital directly via the Dardanelles.

The campaign failed and they were unable to capture the Dardanelles and march on to Istanbul, whereupon they returned to the Iskenderun operation. Lord Kitchener, after visiting the Dardanelles and confirming the failure of the campaign, suggested reconsideration of Iskenderun as the best alternative for the Allies under the circumstances on the grounds that a military occupation of the port would produce important results, among them destruction of Ottoman communications at the center. He thought that the campaign could be easily organized locally and its objectives attained by transferring two divisions of the troops engaged in the Dardanelles and two divisions currently stationed in Egypt.

This idea also harmonized with Arab hopes. The French, however, objected very strongly because they feared its effect on the future of Syria unless they themselves provided the large number of troops required. Since they were unable to do so owing to the military situation on the western front, the British Army and Navy would have had to conduct the campaign. The French, notably Poincaré, believed that this would gravely endanger their interests and influence, for occupation of Syria by the British might drive the Syrians into their arms. They argued against the project with all their strength and finally compelled the British Government to abandon it despite Lord Kitchener's tenacious insistence.

At a number of places in his memoirs Poincaré treats of the course of negotiations between France and England on this subject. On October 12, 1916 he remarked:

"A telegram came from Mudros bearing grave news. The British expect the Germans to march to Constantinople in the near future. They will be able to push the Turks from there toward Syria and Egypt and induce to redouble their call for holy war. Kitchener sees in this a serious threat to the Suez Canal, Egypt, and all North Africa. We cannot thwart the German strategy, he says, by any defensive action taken in Europe. We must try to halt it in a place far from there. The most suitable location is Alexandretta because it can be easily captured and the railroad lines cut by operations initiated at that point. This is the best way to defend Egypt and all Moslem Africa. Such are the considerations that led Lord Kitchener to recommend to his Government the prompt execution of his plan."

On the next day Poincaré added:

"The Cabinet discussed the Alexandretta project. There was unanimous agreement that it would be very dangerous to permit the British to carry forward the campaign proposed by Lord Kitchener. Our ambassador in London was instructed to oppose it."

From the entry of the next day:

"The British Government did not accept Kitchener's proposal, conceding that it required more discussion with us. Edward Grey told our ambassador Paul Cambon that he was greatly pained by our doubts as to the good intentions of the British Government."

On the 14th of the same month he wrote:

"The British Government telegraphed Kitchener, informing him that the Government was unable to share his views on the Alexandretta plan. Apparently Kitchener continued to find merit in it, especially after the final retreat from the Dardanelles, for he kept voicing his conviction that the defense of Egypt was a concern of all the Allies without exception and that the best means of achieving it was to capture Alexandretta and block the Turco-German advance on Syria."

The French, however, were no less stubborn in their opposition, as Poincaré noted on November 24th:

"The British Government has definitely abandoned the Alexandretta plan, stating that it is prepared to sacrifice the defense of Egypt, should circumstances so require, for the sake of guaranteeing victory on the western front."

Lord Kitchener had been deeply moved by the affair and on his way back to England met Poincaré in Paris. He emphasized the ease of taking Alexandretta and analyzed the necessity for the campaign, but to no avail. Poincaré recorded this meeting with Lord Kitchener on November 29th, but thereafter the memoirs contain no further reference to Alexandretta. Thus did France succeed in burying the project.

#

The British Government recognized from the outset that Turkey's joining the ranks of the enemy would drastically alter the course of the war by conferring on Germany the important advantages accruing from an ally in possession of a strategic location, naturally impregnable terrain, considerable military forces, and the potent spiritual resources inherent in the Sultan's being caliph of the Moslems, a factor that enabled him to exert great moral influence throughout the Islamic world. If Germany should induce him to proclaim a holy war against the Allies, the impact upon the English and French colonies, especially upon the locally recruited troops, might well be profound. For these reasons England sought to counterbalance the increase in Germany's strength from the addition of Turkey by utilizing the powers of the Arabs.

England was well aware of the fact that the nationalist idea had begun to affect the Arabs everywhere, chiefly the youth and intellectuals. Although she knew too that Syria was the focal point of Arab nationalism, she realized that a successful revolt could take place in the Hejaz alone, not in Syria or Iraq, because these provinces were major mobilization centers for the Ottoman Army to which the Government could easily rush reinforcements. Under the circumstances no hopes were entertained of a favorable outcome for an uprising originating in either country. Attention had to be directed to the Hejaz, the only place where an insurrection, if sanctioned by the Emir of Mecca, had a chance to make headway.

An alliance with the Emir of Mecca would also benefit the cause morally inasmuch as the Emirs of Mecca were chosen from the sherifs, i.e. descendants of the Arabian Prophet, and consequently enjoyed an important religious status. The sherif in charge of Meccan affairs was the only man capable of overcoming, or at least diminishing, the Sultan's spiritual influence. The English therefore began to negotiate on this matter with the Emir of Mecca who at that time was Sherif Husein Pasha. They knew very well that Arab aid could be obtained only

if they were urged to revolt for their independence. This involved making a firm pledge to help them found an Arab state, which necessarily implied both the relinquishment of some of their ancient aspirations in Arabia and the application of pressure on France to do the same in Syria. It meant, in other words, reconciling their own interests and French ambitions with Arab desires.

To achieve this objective was evidently going to be an exceedingly difficult task. Nevertheless, the British leaders addressed themselves to it with unusual speed. They undertook negotiations with the Emir of Mecca, Sherif Husein, at the same time that they commenced discussions with the Russians and French regarding the manner of apportioning the legacy of the Ottoman Empire.

Poincaré, who was President of France at that time, was greatly feared by these negotiations. He worked hard to prevent them, wishing ardently but vainly that they would fail. He then tried to get an explicit promise from Britain that French rights and interests would be safeguarded during the negotiations going on with the Emir of Mecca. Let us follow the various stages as noted in Poincaré's memoirs. Here is the entry for October 26, 1915:

"The English have just begun rather strange **pourparlers** with the Sherif of Mecca. They would promise him the caliphate in return for his pledge to help them against the Turks. The Sherif sent a representative to Cairo to discuss the matter with the British High Commissioner."

On the next day he wrote:

"At the same time that the British Government tells us about these negotiations—which may possibly be improper—it asks us to a conference to stabilize the Syrian frontiers. Since the discussions would undoubtedly result in a happy complement to our accords of 1912, Viviani decided to send Georges Picot, who was our consul general in Beirut, to London to take up these questions with the British authorities."

On November 3rd he wrote:

"Jonnard will go to London to argue against the project of an Arab empire, which apparently fascinates the British, and defend France's rights to Syria, as acknowledged in 1912."

On November 12th he wrote:

"The British High Commissioner in Egypt confided to our representative that he is greatly perturbed by the possibility of a combined attack on Egypt to be launched by the Senussis from the west and the Turks and Germans from the east. He said that it is necessary to take active measures to protect Egypt; hence an independent Arab state must be established."

He added the next day:

"Lord Grey once again spoke to our ambassador about the Arab empire. It seems that Great Britain has to establish it in order to counter the influence of the Turks. He gave our ambassador to understand that the Arabs are likely to demand some places that we regard as part of Syria. He leaves it to us to be as generous as we possibly can in this matter."

Poincaré returned to the subject about a month and a half later, on December 28, 1915, as follows:

"Briand informs his colleagues about the course of the negotiations in London concerning the Arab empire. This project so dear to our English friends will in the nature of things stir up the Syrian problem. The necessary instructions were forwarded to our ambassador Paul Cambon to communicate to Georges Picot, who has been entrusted with the defense of our interests in London. He is to maintain our influence in Syria and Cilicia in accordance with the terms of the

1912 agreements. Despite the objections of Lord Kitchener, the British Government represented by Sir Arthur Nicolson readily acknowledged our authority in Alexandretta, Adana, and Cilicia. He sought in return to have Syria and Lebanon placed under the suzerainty of the Sultan of Mecca, while we should retain the right merely to appoint the governor. This would mean laying the hand of this Sultan upon Moslem and Christian peoples who are neither accustomed to nor desire to be his subjects. In addition, the English want for themselves the right to build a railroad to Haifa; in other words, to create competition for the Alexandretta line. I am not enamored of the idea of this great Arab empire. I am afraid of its effect on our African colonies and I shouldn't like to see it become a reality. I described my fears to the Cabinet, but apparently there had been previous discussion of the subject and I was told that it was too late to take it up again." (VII, 363).

On January 4, 1916 Poincaré wrote:

"With much wit but little clarity Briand gave the Cabinet a review of the *pourparlers* going on in London about Asia Minor. England acknowledges our complete suzerainty over Alexandretta, Cilicia, and the hinterland as far as Mosul—included or not, I do not know. She likewise agrees today to the placing of Lebanon together with Beirut and Tripoli under our control. However, contrary to the accord of 1912, Syria does not remain ours but is to be given over to the Emir of Mecca. England, moreover, demands Palestine and Haifa for herself. Briand has demanded the reverse, i.e. the partition of Palestine between England and France and a condominium over the railroad which is to terminate in Haifa.

"Since the file on this subject has not yet been delivered to me, despite my request for it, I do not consider myself prepared to express an opinion on the various points. Nevertheless, I called the Cabinet's attention to the fact that while England is yielding to us the territory designated for German influence in accordance with the agreements that we concluded at the beginning of 1914 with Turkey on one hand and Germany on the other, at the same time she is asking for herself the region in which Turkey and Germany have already acknowledged her rights. Therefore, if a settlement is reached that does not give us complete satisfaction, Germany will certainly claim what we have acknowledged as hers. For this reason our recognition of England's claims must be conditional upon obtaining our portion complete and undiminished. Doumergue strongly supports me and Briand after some hesitation is coming around to our view." (VIII, 8-9)

Poincaré came back to the subject on January 11, 1916:

"Briand reviews for the Cabinet the state of the negotiations between England and ourselves concerning Syria and Palestine. The British Government flat refuses to withdraw from Haifa. Moreover, it desires the neutralization of Palestine, but concedes that Alexandretta is ours together with the entire hinterland as far as and including Mosul." (VIII, 23-4)

Two days later, i.e. on January 13th, he wrote:

"Georges Picot who is following the London negotiations concerning Syria tells me that the British Admiralty has not yet agreed to acknowledge our rights in Alexandretta and Cilicia. He believes that it will ultimately do so, but considers it impossible for England not to continue to claim control of Haifa, or at least to make Palestine neutral. As for Mosul, if the Russians do not agree to yield it to us, the English will claim it for themselves. Georges Picot hopes, therefore, that the Russians will agree willy-nilly to let us have it."

It is quite apparent from these excerpts that the English were negotiating with the Emir of Mecca, Sherif Husein, concerning the independence of the Arab lands at the same time that they were discussing with France the partition of these same lands. During the course of these talks France was able to augment

her portion considerably by including therein Cilicia and Mosul and extending her control up to Diarbekr; she not only did not relinquish the rights she claimed in inner Syria, but succeeded in annexing to her sphere of influence this part of Syria as well, even though it was placed under the rule of a single Arab emir or several Arab emirs.

France would not have been able to include Mosul in her portion had it not been for the dispute over the city that arose between Russia and England. The Russians at first did not agree to the French claim since they hoped to add it to their own sphere of influence. But the English made it plain that they regarded themselves as more entitled than the Russians to possess Mosul. It was agreed, therefore, that the interests of all concerned would be best served by giving the city to the French.

These details go far toward explaining many of the strange provisions which were introduced into the treaties concluded by the Allies during the war. They also help us to understand the most significant factors responsible for the modification of these treaties or for the non-implementation of some of their terms at the end of the war.

###

In the midst of these deliberations the Allies were presented with a third proposal, i.e. to aid Jemal Pasha, commander of the Turkish Fourth Army stationed in Syria, to revolt against the central government. The idea was advanced by the Russians who relied upon information derived from Armenian sources. The latter contended that Jemal Pasha was in constant conflict with the central government and that he was prepared to revolt if the Allies actively supported him; that he would cede the Straits and the European provinces to the Allies and convert the Ottoman Sultantate into a confederation composed of Syria, Iraq, Arabistan, Cilicia, Armenia, and Kurdistan, over all of which he was then to rule as Sultan.

The Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs started to correspond with his allies on this subject at the end of October 1915. It appears from the documents published by the Soviet Government after the communist revolution that Italy approved "if there were the slightest chance of success." Initially, France hesitated because, first, she doubted the possibility of Jemal's succeeding; secondly, she felt that the scheme would realize Russia's aims alone and deprive her of the territory previously promised (Syria, Palestine, and Cilicia); thirdly, she knew that England was thinking about the formation of an independent Arab government.

The Russian leaders, however, were able to convince France of the necessity of taking the idea seriously because they said that Jemal Pasha's revolution would weaken Turkey and facilitate the Allies' conquest of the country, even if it failed to achieve Jemal's objectives. France's aspirations in Syria, Palestine, and Cilicia could be easily reconciled while the various details were being worked out with Jemal. Indeed France could conduct the negotiations herself in order to safeguard her interests. On the strength of these explanations and assurances France agreed to the idea in principle and decided to discuss it with Jemal's emissaries in Cairo.

As for England, after some hesitation she decided not to participate in the negotiations "for the conversations begun between herself and the Arabs were proceeding in a very harmonious atmosphere."

The telegrams sent by Russia's ambassadors in Paris and London reveal that France was tenaciously clinging to Syria, Palestine, and Cilicia at the same time that she was manifesting displeasure at the talks going on between the English and the Arabs. The Russian ambassador in Paris wrote on December 29, 1915: "French public opinion cannot abandon Syria, Palestine, and

Cilicia which have been promised them." In similar vein he wrote on January 28, 1916: "Briand and his Government are unhappy at the secret negotiations going on between the English and the Arabs because the English are trying to gain their own ends without any regard for the interest of their allies." The Russian ambassador in London wrote on January 27, 1916: "The British Government is relying primarily upon the Arabs because it wishes to exploit their feelings of hostility toward the Turks and Jemal Pasha."

###

The negotiations among the Allied Powers concerning the three projects described above betray the powerful underlying clash of interests and ambitions. Nevertheless, the statesmen definitely felt that it was essential to come to an understanding on these matters in order to assure victory in the war. Accordingly, they finally managed after protracted bargaining to conclude the necessary treaties apportioning the inheritance of the Ottoman Empire of which the Arab provinces, needless to say, were among the most important and valuable sections.

###

The first of these agreements was signed by representatives of Russia, England, and France in March 1916. It defined the spheres of influence of each of the contracting parties and at the same time provided for the establishment of an independent Islamic government in the Arabian Peninsula over which Great Britain was to exercise supervision. Russia's sphere of influence was restricted to eastern and southern Asia Minor, with no Arab territory included. France's sphere embraced coastal Syria from al-Naqurah to Iskenderun together with Mt. Lebanon and Cilicia. England's sphere consisted of coastal Syria stretching from the Egyptian borders to al-Nāqūrah, southern Iraq from Baghdad to Basra, and the coast from the Persian Gulf to the end of the Red Sea.

A subsequent agreement between France and England provided for an Arab state or confederation of independent Arab states to be set up on the territory between the French and English spheres of influence.

As for Palestine and the Holy Places, they were to be placed under a special administration in accordance with a tripartite agreement to be concluded later. Likewise Iskenderun was to be a free port under an international administration.

It is apparent from the terms of this treaty that Russia was unwilling to concern herself with the details of the problems relating to Arab territory. She was content to reach an understanding with France and England on fundamentals, leaving it to her allies to handle the secondary issues by themselves.

###

France and England did not delay very long in settling these issues because the document which goes by the name of the Sykes-Picot Agreement (after Mark Sykes and Georges Picot, the English and French negotiators) was concluded on May 26, 1916.

Cilicia, Syria, Palestine, and Iraq were divided by this accord into five areas—three coastal, two interior. The coastal areas were shown in colors on a map appended to the Agreement—red, blue, and brown—and were known thereafter as the Red, Blue and Brown Areas, whereas the interior was left uncolored and designated Area A and Area B.

The Blue Area was allotted to France and embraced the territory stretching from al-Nāqūrah to Iskenderun.

The Red Area was allotted to England and embraced Baghdad and Basra.

The Brown Area was limited to Palestine and made an international neutral area.

In Areas A and B the Agreement provided for an independent Arab state or confederation of Arab states to be set up with an Arab as its head. France was accorded a "privileged position" in Area A, England in Area B. Each power was to have in its area preference in economic projects and local loans, and the exclusive right to supply the foreign advisors and officials requested by the Arab state or confederation to organize the affairs of that area.

France in the Blue Area and Great Britain in the Red Area were permitted, after agreement with the aforementioned Arab government or confederation of Arab governments, to establish such direct or indirect administration as they might deem appropriate.

The Agreement stipulated the creation of an international administration for the Brown Area, the form of which would be determined after consultation with Russia and in agreement with the other Allies and the representatives of the Sherif of Mecca.

Iskenderun fell within the French area, but its port was to be free as regards British Empire trade; Haifa came within the English area, but its port was to be free as regards the trade of France, her colonies, and the Arab state coming under her protection.

Each contracting party pledged itself not to relinquish any of its rights in the specified area or to cede them to any other power except the Arab state or confederation without the prior consent of the other party. Similarly, each contracting party pledged itself neither to acquire nor to permit a third power to acquire territory in the Arabian Peninsula.

The Agreement referred to the negotiations going on with the Arabs and stated that they should continue in the name of both Governments and in the same way as before in order to fix the borders of the Arab state or confederation of Arab states.

###

The English undertook negotiations with the Arabs without obtaining authorization from their allies. They established contact at the start of the World War both with members of the Party of Decentralization living in Cairo and with the sons of Sherif Husein as they passed through Cairo on their frequent trips between Constantinople and the Hejaz. Later they engaged in direct correspondence with Sherif Husein Pasha himself, the Emir of Mecca.

During the course of the preliminary conversations and correspondence it was made clear that Great Britain was prepared to help the Arabs achieve their independence. The English also agreed to restore the caliphate to them.

The correspondence between the English and the Emir of Mecca reached an active stage in the middle of 1915 while Sir Henry McMahon was serving as British Agent in Egypt. On July 14, 1915 Sherif Husein sent him a memorandum outlining the conditions under which the Arabs would join the Allies and launch their revolt. He asked above all "that England recognize the independence of the Arab countries in their entirety from Mersin and Adana up to the Indian Ocean and from Persia and the Persian Gulf up to the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea." He agreed, for his part, to Aden's retaining the *status quo* and added that "the Arab Government will accord England preference in every economic project, all things being equal."

Sir Henry McMahon wrote a letter on August 30, 1915 in which he reiterated "the desire of His Majesty's Government for the independence of the Arab countries and their inhabitants," but declared that "discussions on the details of boundaries would be premature" because "the time is short and the war in progress; moreover, the Turks still effectively occupy a large part of the said lands."

Sherif Husein, however, strongly protested this last and in his answer of September 9, 1915 stated: "These boundaries are not one man's and thus subject to negotiation and settlement after the war; rather, they represent the claims of a people who believe that their life requires such boundaries." He added that the Arabs desire "only those areas inhabited by Arabs like ourselves" and not "areas inhabited by a foreign people." He noted finally that "those boundaries are the proposals of an entire people who believe them to be necessary to guarantee their economic life."

McMahon was compelled therefore in his note of October 24, 1915 to touch on frontiers. He said that he had submitted the question to his Government and on the basis of its reply could state: "Mersin, Adana, and portions of Syria lying to the west of Damascus, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo are not purely Arab and so must be excluded from the proposed borders. . . The British Government is prepared to recognize Sherif Husein's definition of the borders subject to the said modification."

He then alluded to Great Britain's agreements with the Arab leaders and to France's interests in the portion of Syria lying to the west of the four cities just named. He continued with the following guarantees:

"On behalf of the British Government and in its name: first, England is prepared to recognize the independence of the Arabs and afford them assistance within the proposed boundaries subject to the aforementioned modification; second, England recognizes the unity of the Holy Places and will defend them against all external aggression; third, the British Government will offer the Arabs when necessary everything that they may require in the way of help and advice and cooperate with them in establishing the most appropriate type of governments in the various Arab regions."

In return, McMahon requested that "the Arabs agree to use only British citizens when in need of various kinds of advice and aid." He added: "Baghdad and Basra require special administration and supervision in order to protect them from foreign aggression and to safeguard British interests there."

Sherif Husein replied on November 15, 1915 that he "no longer asks for the inclusion of Mersin and Adana within the Arab Kingdom in order to facilitate agreement and serve Islam," but that "it is impossible to relinquish Beirut and the rest of the Syrian coast because they are purely Arab territories where there is no distinction between Moslem Arabs and Christian Arabs inasmuch as both are descendants of one ancestor. We Moslems shall follow our master Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and the other caliphs who in harmony with the religion of Islam commanded us to recognize that the Christians have the same rights and obligations that we do. Christians in the Arab Kingdom shall enjoy the same privileges as the Moslems in so far as they are consonant with the general public interest."

With reference to Iraq, Sherif Husein said that since it was a center of the Arab Kingdom and a cradle of Arab culture and civilization, the Arabs could not abandon it. "In our desire to facilitate agreement," he said, "we consent to yield for a short period of time the lands now occupied by British troops in consideration of a sum of money to be paid as compensation for the period of occupation of the said area."

In his reply dated December 13, 1915 McMahon expressed satisfaction with the Sherif's willingness to exclude Mersin and Adana from the boundaries of the Arab countries and his assertion that the Arabs were determined to follow the precepts of Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb and the other early caliphs with respect to the rights of Christians. "As for Beirut and the rest of the coast," he continued, "the Government of Great Britain have fully understood your statement on that area and have taken it under advisement; however, since the interests of their ally France are involved in the area, the questions call for special study. We

shall therefore communicate with you again on this matter at the appropriate time." He concluded by reaffirming that "Great Britain has no intention of signing any peace that does not include among its basic conditions freedom of the Arabs and their liberation from German and Turkish domination."

This letter was followed by a number of others. At the end of his last message dated January 30, 1916 McMahon wrote: "And now. . . the Arab countries have decided to cooperate with us in defending the vital cause of right and freedom. We pray God that the result of our common effort may be a lasting friendship that will bring joy and happiness to all. . . We are very glad of your attempts to persuade the people of the necessity of allying themselves to our movement and of refraining from assisting our enemies. We leave it to your discretion to determine a favorable occasion for taking more extensive measures."

It is a known fact that the Arab Revolt was proclaimed four months and ten days after this letter was written (June 10, 1916).

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The passages quoted from the memoirs of Poincaré, President of France, and the telegrams of Izvolsky, Russian Ambassador in Paris, show clearly that the French leaders were displeased by the negotiations with Sherif Husein because they realized that the Arab movement would affect their interests adversely not only in the Arab territories which they were coveting for the future, but in those territories which they had controlled for decades. Nevertheless, the French Government had to go along with the English in this matter and when the Arab Revolt actually broke out they thought it worth while to establish friendly relations with the leaders of this Revolt. They sent a diplomatic delegation and a military mission to the Hejaz in order to exploit the movement to the fullest as a means of engaging Turkish troops and at the same time to prevent it from developing in a way that would harm French interests and ambitions in Syria.

But how could this be done? How could the two objectives be achieved simultaneously? The only seemingly feasible way of minimizing the damage was to confine the Revolt to the Hejaz and keep it from spreading northward. At first this policy struck most of the French statesmen as sound, but the Chief of the Military Mission to the Hejaz, Brémond, who came into direct contact with the intellectual currents prevalent there and sensed the hopes agitating the leaders of the Revolt, became aware of its impracticability. The Hejaz had developed into a gathering place of free Arabs serving as representatives of the various parts of the Arab World, and a large number of Iraqis and Syrians were to be found among the revolutionaries. If the movement did well in the Hejaz, it would naturally spread to Syria and Iraq too. The Allies had to realize beyond the shadow of a doubt that a successful revolt in the Hejaz would harm their own interests elsewhere and it was therefore incumbent upon them to strive to limit its impact to the Hejaz proper.

General Brémond himself advanced this theory in his book published in 1931, *Le Hedjaz dans la guerre mondiale*. In a report submitted to General Headquarters at the end of 1916 he observed: "The return of the Turks to Mecca would inflict great losses on the Allies who must therefore do everything they can to prevent this from happening. However, the Arabs' occupation of Medina will also be harmful to Allied interests because it will arouse in the Arabs yearnings for unity and hopes of independence. For this reason the Allies should not desire the fall of Medina or help the Arabs capture it." (p.96)

Brémond was apparently not satisfied merely with sending this report to his Government. He even tried to bring the commanders of the British Army in Egypt around to his way of thinking. French General Headquarters, however,

appreciated the broader military and political exigencies more than the head of their mission did and urged him to abandon the idea. Marshal Joffre sent Brémond a telegram as follows:

"(1) France and England have just signed a treaty that includes as a matter of principle the establishment of an Arab confederation embracing Damascus, Homs, Hama, Aleppo, and Mosul. It appears from your telegram that you fear the Arabs' occupation of Medina on the grounds that it would encourage their aspirations in Syria.

"(2) This fanciful situation came to the attention of the English and the Sherif and has led them to suspect that we are trying to ignore the agreement we signed with them. This might prejudice the further development of our activities in the east. You must therefore not take a position that would favor such an interpretation.

"(3) Furthermore, the French Government regards the fall of Medina as likely to reverberate throughout the Arab World and possibly provoke an uprising of the Bedouin tribes and Druzes, which would contribute to the success of our eastern plans by accelerating the disintegration of the Ottoman Empire." (p. 97)

This telegram was not enough to allay the apprehensions besetting the Chief of the French Military Mission. On the contrary, they increased as the Arab Revolt gained strength and the danger of a return of the Turks to Mecca vanished. Evidently Brémond kept on trying to persuade the British, for he claims that a considerable number of them shared his views and spoke about the necessity of letting the Arabs fend for themselves in the struggle against the Turkish army besieging Medina.

English policy, however, was proceeding in a totally different direction. It was seeking to utilize the rebel army in operations in northern Hejaz, Transjordan, and Syria. It is common knowledge that Lawrence was the kingpin in this English policy. The plan he drew up was in flat opposition to Brémond's views and desires.

When Brémond saw the rebels' forces abandon the siege of Medina and move northward under the leadership of Emir Faisal, he became convinced that France's interests and position in Syria could be assured only by occupying the country from the sea. The operation would be rather simple, he thought, for France had many troops stationed in Port Said, her possessions in the Indian Ocean, and especially in Indo-China. These men could be transported by old ships and used for a sea-borne invasion of Syria. Brémond was so engrossed with this idea that he decided to return to France in order to persuade the authorities. He apparently knew nothing of Lord Kitchener's obstinate advocacy of the plan to attack Syria from Iskenderun or of France's reaction to it.

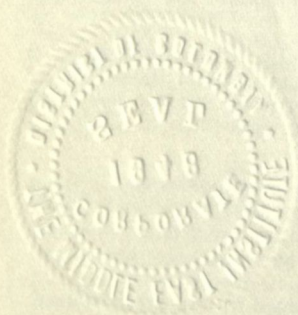
Brémond arrived in Paris and had interviews with Minister of Colonies Henri Simon and Premier Clemenceau as well as with General Weygand and Marshal Foch in a futile endeavor to convince them of the necessity of adopting his proposal. He wrote in his book that Clemenceau said to him: "I don't have a conquering spirit." Foch remarked: "The time has passed! The time has passed! We have too few ships to carry out such an operation."

Brémond's views circulated so freely that they reached the ears of the leaders of the Revolt. He told King Husein on May 7, 1917: "There were rumors in the middle of April in the camp of Emir Faisal that France had equipped 60,000 soldiers for an invasion of the Syrian coasts in the very near future. Emir Faisal has been very worried about an occupation of Syria by the French without the help of the Arabs, declaring that under such circumstances he would fight the French after the Turks. These rumors are rife among the retinue of Emir Faisal. Since the Emir is doubtless unaware of what is being said in his

name, it would be worth while to draw his attention to such rumors and gossip." Brémond then added that King Husein promised to write to the Emir. (p. 145)

As we all know, General Brémond's efforts to gain support for his plan failed. The armies of the Revolt under the command of Emir Faisal crossed the northern frontiers of the Hejaz and fought the Turks in East Jordan, thereby helping the British troops battling in Palestine. They continued on to the north cooperating with the British until they reached Damascus and liberated all Syria.

Thus, when Turkey was compelled to sign an armistice with the Allies on October 31, 1918, all the Arab countries were out of the Ottoman Empire, Palestine and Iraq having been freed by British soldiers alone, Syria by the combined operations of British and Arab troops.



(2) The war lasted a long time and the prevailing situation was vastly different from that at the time the Agreement was signed. Failure to take cognizance of the fact would be in flat contradiction to the logic of events.

Great Britain sought to modify the sections dealing with Palestine and Mosul. Palestine, at Russia's request, was to have been placed under an international administration, but now there was no valid reason for honoring the relevant terms. England had suffered many losses in the bloody battles to conquer Palestine and so came to view it as a right to keep the country for herself. Furthermore, British Foreign Secretary Balfour had promised the Zionists that the English would establish a national homeland for the Jews in Palestine. Fulfillment of this promise too clearly required that Palestine remain under their control. It is very likely that the prime purpose in making the pledge was to ensure this control.

As for Mosul, England had agreed to cede it to France out of fear of Russian designs. The occupation of Mosul was likewise achieved through British arms alone after the difficult Iraq campaign. All this justified, in English eyes, reconsideration of the Agreement.

The differences of opinion and clash of desires between the English and French were not limited to the Arab World alone, but concerned many other eastern and western matters. Clemenceau, who was the French Premier during the peace negotiations, was fully aware of the losses that France might suffer if the tension should continue unabated and therefore considered it advisable to clarify some of the problems. He startled Lloyd George, the British Prime Minister, by asking:

"Tell me quite frankly—what do you want from us? Tell me, and I'll do my best to get the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to agree!"

"We want Palestine and Mosul," Lloyd George replied unhesitatingly and with equal frankness.

France did not find it difficult to renounce the idea of making Palestine an international area and agreeing to cede it to England. But to give up at the same time Mosul, which had been promised her by the Sykes-Picot Agreement, was another story.

France, as was to be expected, didn't yield to England's demands except after protracted bargaining for guarantees of suitable compensation. This compensation inevitably involved Syria since France was particularly irritated by those terms of the Agreement which provided that "interior Syria be independent." No proof was needed to show that independence of the interior zone would naturally have a deep effect on the coastal zone and create major problems in administering it. The government to be set up in the interior would desire and certainly lay claims to the coastal zone, especially since this latter was less than 50 kilometres wide and its population Arab too. Moreover, independence of the interior was likely to produce in the souls of the coastal people a yearning for independence that would drive them to revolt against their rulers.

It was to the advantage of an ambitious France to extend her sway over interior Syria by annulling those provisions of the Sykes-Picot Agreement which might impede this development. England, of course, would not concur unless France accepted her claims.

The differences of opinion between the Allies lasted until the pressure of events literally forced them to reconcile their conflicting desires.

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France's share of the territory of the Ottoman Empire was extensive and heterogeneous with respect to nationality and geography. When the French laid

claim to all the far-flung region that embraced Syria, Cilicia and northern Iraq as far as Mosul and Diarbekr, they never reckoned on resistance by the local population. They thought that the Turks were going to lose all their power while the Arabs would be unable to gain any. The possibility of encountering violent opposition from both the Turks and the Arabs scarcely occurred to them. Within a year after the end of the war, however, France came to the realization that she could not subdue the entire region by fighting the Arabs and the Turks at the same time. Either Syria or Cilicia would have to be abandoned.

It appears that some French statesmen and economists were deeply impressed by Cilicia because its mountains and rivers promised a glowing economic future. Another argument in its favor was that France could very easily reassemble there all the Armenians scattered by the Turks and with their aid peacefully govern the country.

Nevertheless, when the French found themselves in a position where they had to choose one of the two regions, their unhesitating preference was Syria. Robert de Caix, who was regarded as one of the leading formulators of Syrian policy, explained it this way: "If France was compelled to make her decision purely on material benefits and calculations, Cilicia would necessarily be the choice. But France has for many centuries been bound to Syria by traditions and spiritual ties to which she must cling; and if it is essential to save Syria, France will give up Cilicia."

This indeed was France's operating principle. She quit Cilicia and worked out an amicable settlement with the Turks which reached the stage of active help when she gave them her surplus arms and equipment in Cilicia. Mastery over Syria was regarded as fulfillment of an historic task—the preservation of glory and national honor, as Poincaré put it after the Balkan crisis that preceded the World War.

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Another factor impelled the French to adopt this policy of peace with the Turks, namely, the resurgence of bitter Anglo-French rivalry throughout the Near East. The Allied occupation of the Straits and Constantinople after the armistice strengthened Britain's influence in the Orient and aroused France's fears of losing her spiritual authority in Turkish territory. The Greek invasion of Anatolia, which was encouraged and protected by the British, reinforced these fears markedly. Writers and publicists began to speak about the dimming of France's star in the East along with the diminution of Turkey's power. The noted author Pierre Loti, for example, expressed his burning grief in a book entitled **La mort de notre chère France en Orient**. Thus, French public opinion became conditioned to the necessity of actively working for mutual understanding with Turkey. French government officials serving as observers in Constantinople surreptitiously helped the Turks against the British in the belief that Turkey's weakness would lead to the disappearance of French authority in the country. They felt it their duty to check the spread of British influence and prevent Greek domination of the country.

For all these reasons the French sought to come to terms with the Turks. They concluded an armistice which was a prelude to the treaty providing for their evacuation of Cilicia.

Implementation of the Sykes-Picot Agreement encountered yet another obstacle, the repeated promises of the Allies and the famous principles of Wilson. As the war progressed and their situation became more critical, the Allies began to feel the need of inclining world opinion to their side. Consequently, they made declarations in which they avowed the justness of their cause and their aversion to expansion and imperialism in the hope of winning helpers and friends on the one hand and undermining the enemy's morale on the other. Over and over

again they said that "they do not desire expansion, nor do they aim at annexing any territory, overtly or covertly." Such statements increased noticeably after the United States joined the Allies because President Wilson urged them to proclaim their war aims frankly, just as he himself had done in the case of America, which, he said, entered the war only as a service to humanity. Furthermore, President Wilson did not content himself with this alone, but enunciated the 14 principles or points that the powers should follow after the war, including the right of self-determination for all peoples. On various occasions French and English statesmen also uttered similar sentiments, some of them specifically intended for the Arabs to whom they publicly promised freedom and independence.

The terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement contradicted these promises and declarations, not to mention the commitments made to King Husein. If it was easy for the Allies to break their promises to King Husein owing to the secret nature of the negotiations, it was another thing to repudiate their public declarations, especially President Wilson's principles. Nevertheless, political shrewdness and imperialist ambition were not slow in finding a way out of this difficulty. The system of mandates and trusteeships that were invented at the time permitted the detested face of imperialism to wear a deceptive mask. This system relied in spirit essentially upon the right of peoples to self-determination and required plebiscites as well as a regard for the popular welfare.

Wily diplomacy proved able to surmount these obstacles too-by a variety of means and pretexts. When Wilson proposed a plebiscite for the Syrians, representatives of France and England objected on the grounds that the situation in the country was unfavorable to carrying it out. President Wilson insisted on sending an American commission to Syria to consult with the people in his name and personal capacity and to determine their views. The result of the inquiry clearly opposed the ambitions of the two governments in that it revealed the Syrians' genuine desire for absolute independence within the country's natural borders and their overwhelming rejection of France's interference in local affairs, even though it were indirect through the device of a mandate. Unfortunately, the developments in American politics which caused Wilson's fall from power and led to America's isolationism made it easy for France and England to conceal these facts and ignore the plebiscite completely. This enabled them to use the mandate to attain their objectives in the Arab countries provided, however, that they agree among themselves.

An accord was not long in coming. France at last yielded her claim to Mosul and accepted England's wishes with respect to Palestine. England in turn gave France one-fourth of the government shares of Mosul oil and abandoned her support of the independence of interior Syria where she allowed France freedom of action in violation of her commitments to King Husein, indeed in violation of the principles embodied in the Sykes-Picot Agreement. The two then induced the Council of Four to assign mandates for Syria and Lebanon to France and mandates for Palestine and Iraq to England.

The blow of Maysalūn was the inevitable consequence of this long chain of political negotiations and international agreements. To realize her ambitions in Syria all that remained for France to do was to mass troops, issue an ultimatum, and occupy the country by fire and steel.

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In brief, France was determined to extend her authority to interior Syria at all costs. She did not hesitate to sacrifice some of her aspirations in other countries in order to overcome the obstructions blocking her path in Syria. She ceded Mosul to Great Britain, agreed to the placing of Palestine under exclusive British mandate, and concluded an armistice with the Turks as a preliminary to the evacuation of all Cilicia. She was guaranteed thereby non-interference by

the English in her plans for Syria. Once the political groundwork had been laid, only the actual military measures for the occupation of the country, with or without bloodshed, had to be taken. This is the truth about France's position just before the Day of Maysalūn.

INTERNAL CONDITIONS

The revolt which erupted in Mecca at the end of the second year of the war, i.e. on June 10, 1916, was not a Hejazi but an Arab Revolt in every sense of the term. It aimed at the independence of all Arab territory and the formation of a new Arab government that would prepare the nation for a genuine revival and restore its former glory. The flag devised by the leaders clearly symbolized this lofty purpose in that each of its four colors was emblematic of the successive eras of the Arab Empire during its past supremacy. Men from the various parts of the Arab World—Syria, Iraq, Palestine and the Hejaz—Christian and Moslem alike, participated in the Revolt and performed the tasks assigned to them.

The Revolt began in the Hejaz owing to the natural result of geography, economics, and history. The Hejaz was remote from mobilization points of troops and principal lines of communication. Mecca was separated from the Medina terminal of the Hejaz Railway by a wide desert no less than 400 kilometres in length. However, its proximity to the port of Jidda on the Red Sea provided ready access to the outside and the Allies. These factors contributed to the success of the Revolt and prevented its suppression by Turkish troops before it gained sufficient momentum.

The Hejaz, moreover, was populated with armed tribes whose centuries-old addiction to warfare facilitated the task of getting them to revolt and join the conflict.

The Emirate of Mecca enjoyed great historic prestige which enabled it to organize and direct the Revolt. Sherif Husein Pasha, the last Emir, had acquired considerable personal influence during his long rule because he neglected no opportunity to strengthen the emirate vis-à-vis the local Turkish authorities. This made him the ablest and most suitable spiritual leader of the Revolt.

These then are the various elements that decreed the Hejaz as the starting place of the Revolt.

The French, for their part, used this fact to disparage the uprising by characterizing it now as the Hejazi Revolt, now as the Sherifian Revolt.

The Revolt moved toward its basic objective. The Arab forces crossed the traditional borders of the Hejaz and step by step advanced northwards until they entered Damascus. From there they pursued the Turks up to Aleppo and beyond. The arrival of Arab soldiers in Damascus was wildly acclaimed all over Syria. Syrian cities unfurled Arab banners and announced their affiliation with the Revolt and obedience to the orders of the Arab High Command even before they saw a single Arab battalion marching under the standard of Faisal the Great. Even Lebanese cities joined the movement and hoisted Arab flags over government buildings and private dwellings. The Arab Command needed to dispatch only an officer or two with a handful of soldiers to the important cities in order to organize affairs there.

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To the misfortune of the Arabs, all this happened during the last days of the World War. While the Arab troops were moving into Damascus and other

Syrian cities, the Balkan front collapsed with the surrender of the Bulgarians. Recognizing that the situation was beyond repair and that there was no hope of victory, the Germans began to discuss ways of obtaining an armistice and peace. They told the truth to the Turks and counselled them to end the war as soon as possible.

When the French learned about the German efforts to conclude an armistice and sensed that the danger to their country had been averted, they revealed their ambitions by protesting to the English against the invasion of Syria by the troops of the Arab Revolt and demanded the right to occupy their section of the said territory. The British High Command in Cairo then ordered Emir Faisal, leader of the northern army, to hold the Syrian coasts to the French forces.

This was the first of the painful blows suffered by the Arab Revolt in general and the Syrian cause in particular. Surrender of the coast to the French meant taking the initial step to implement the Sykes-Picot Agreement after the British had previously declared it to be inoperative.

A fierce storm of indignation broke out in patriotic circles. The English tried to calm the situation by describing these arrangements as purely military and non-prejudicial to the future of the country. Furthermore, they do not imply its political partition, the English said, because self-determination will be one of the principles of the peace conference to be held when the hostilities are over.

The High Command's instructions were carried out. French troops disembarked first in Beirut on October 8, 1918, then in the other ports from Tyre to Iskenderun. Arab flags were lowered in all the coastal cities, although no others were raised in their places.

The British ordered Syria to be divided into three military zones: eastern, western, and southern, to be administered by the Arab, French, and British, respectively. Emir Faisal as commander of the northern Arab army officially took over the eastern zone which then comprised present-day Syria, except for the province of Latakia, Transjordan, and the districts of Hāsbayā and Rāshayā in the Biqāf. The western zone included the coastal governorates as far as al-Nāqūrah. The southern zone consisted exclusively of Palestine. After the surrender of Turkey French troops occupied Cilicia, which was known as the northern zone. The French Headquarters was thereafter called the "Supreme Headquarters of the French Armies in the East and Cilicia."

It is clear from the above that the Arab Government in Syria began its existence under inauspicious and harsh circumstances because it was dealt a severe blow at the outset when it was split from the seaboard, deprived of customs, and all harbors and coastal mountains were placed under the administration of the French Army. Since France had for long centuries been desirous of dominating Syria, she naturally tried at first to strengthen her influence and stabilize her position in the western zone. After that she used every diplomatic strategem, propaganda device, and intrigue to create confusion and weakness in the interior zone in preparation for eventually gaining control of it.

It was the task of the revolutionists to found amidst these grave difficulties a new government in a country that had suffered the horrors of war for many years. They had to cope with the machinations of the French and then resort to every conceivable method to drive them from the occupied coasts and thus secure the bases of survival for their youthful government. An obvious preliminary was a bitter struggle between those on the seaboard and those in the interior, a struggle that had to last until one side or the other won a decisive victory.

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The French began their work of destruction by agitating the Christians and making them apprehensive about the Moslems. They asserted that the army

engaged in the Revolt was a Bedouin, Hejazi army and that the government to be formed by it would surely be a religious, reactionary regime that would guide itself by the Islamic law codes and restore the situation of 60 years ago, annulling the rights of the Christians in the process. The fact of the matter is that everything pointed in precisely the opposite direction. The leaders of the Revolt were not Bedouins, and a considerable number of them were Christians. The government organized in Syria never gave a thought to religious coloring; indeed many posts and functions were entrusted to non-Moslems. Such prominent officials as the Director General of Justice, the Counselor General of Finance, and the Director General of Public Security were Christians. Emir Faisal ibn al-Husein used to say on every possible occasion: "Religion belongs to God, the country to everybody."

Yet the French did not desist from their insidious efforts to subvert the simple folk and terrify the Christians. Their propaganda inevitably found some listening ears among the ignorant and fanatic. Nevertheless, the spirit of patriotism and the nationalist idea permeated the entire country, arousing latent hopes and desires in most of the people.

Day by day pessimism yielded to optimism which became marked during the early stages of the Peace Conference in Paris. People were familiar with President Wilson's pledge to Emir Faisal: "If the people demand independence as a right, I shall permit no government ever to dominate Syria." They knew too that the President had decided to strengthen this promise by sending a commission to study conditions in the country and consult with the population regarding their wishes. Such news revived and fortified the hopes of even the cynical. Arrival of the Commission of Inquiry created fresh waves of enthusiasm. The overwhelming consensus of opinion in favor of independence, as manifested during the questioning, made optimism soar to new heights.

Soon, however, other news with portents of a distressing change in policy toward Syria began to arrive. The Anglo-French Agreement of September 15, 1919 provided for the evacuation of British forces from the western and eastern zones and their replacement in a section of the latter by French forces. This section lay to the west of the Sykes-Picot line and included the districts of Hāsbayā, Rāshayā, Baalbek, and the Biqā'. It remained outside of the occupation zone of the Arab army. The Arabs were to be in exclusive possession of the remaining portion of the eastern zone, just as the French army alone would control all the territory west of the aforementioned Sykes-Picot line.

Beyond the shadow of a doubt, this meant implementing the Sykes-Picot Agreement in full. Publication of the news provoked a fierce reaction in the country, for everyone was impatiently awaiting the day when all foreign armies would be withdrawn from Syria, particularly the French forces from the western zone. Hence, the astonishment at the order decreeing extension of the French occupation zone to the east at the expense of the zone of the Arab operation.

Yielding to the order and consenting to the replacement of British troops by French in the said zone would signify an abandonment of nationalist desires and a retreat before French desires. The Government therefore decided to stand firm. Vigorously protesting the order, it notified the British and French commanders that French troops would not be permitted to enter any portion of the eastern zone and that they would be resisted, if necessary, by force of arms.

This show of firmness bore the hoped-for fruit since the French renounced their plan. All agreed to a compromise solution whereby the given zone would remain apart from the military occupation zones, with responsibility for the maintenance of order being vested wholly in the Syrian police. Nerves were soothed and hopes revived. Nevertheless, French behavior in the western zone,

which they occupied, and their intrigues in the eastern zone, which they coveted, and their increasingly strong role in international diplomacy continued to keep fears alive. The nationalists felt that the French could be fought and driven out of the country not by political means alone, but by armed rebellion. Indeed, soon afterwards there were clashes with the French forces throughout the western zone. The Danā-dishah in Tell Kalakh, Emir Fā'ūr in Marj 'Uyūn, Sheikh Sālih al-'Alī in the Nusairi mountains, and Kāmil al-As'ad in Jabal 'Āmil organized the most important of these uprisings.

The Government became aware at this time of the need to expand and strengthen the regular army. Since it believed that this could not be done on the traditional voluntary recruiting basis, it submitted a bill on universal compulsory military service to the Syrian Congress, which was constituted—a little before the arrival of the American Commission of Inquiry—of representatives from the three zones in Syria. The Congress enthusiastically approved the bill by unanimous vote (December 1919). The Government further showed its deep concern for national defense when it promptly enlarged the military school that had been established as soon as the Government was set up following the liberation of the country.

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When the crisis over the replacement of British troops broke out, Emir Faisal was in Paris negotiating with Premier Clemenceau for a treaty to regularize the relations between the two countries. The discussion reached an advanced stage, for Clemenceau had apparently made a tremendous effort to limit the area of French ambitions. He felt that he had shown the maximum indulgence of which any Frenchman could be capable without betraying his country's cause and historic aspirations. He therefore told Emir Faisal with his well known frankness: "I advise you to settle for this treaty and sign it while I'm in power; for I assure you that it is impossible for me to be followed by any government that would be even partially satisfied with what I'm willing to accept now."

Emir Faisal was placed in a dilemma. Though personally inclined to sign the treaty, his advisors and members of the retinue differed very sharply, some favoring the idea, others strongly warning against it. Consequently, he decided to do nothing until he returned to Syria and informed himself about the situation and public opinion. He told Clemenceau that he would make up his mind after consulting with leaders in the country.

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The news of these deliberations and the results reached Syria before Emir Faisal's return and created great uneasiness. Upon his arrival he found the atmosphere electric. Since everyone seemed to be excited, he put the treaty to one side, despite his belief in its value, and surrendered to the tide flowing in the country.

Most of the Syrian intellectuals and politicians were thinking along new lines and inclining to the idea of producing a **fait accompli** by an immediate proclamation of independence without waiting for the Peace Conference to determine Syria's fate. The position of the army and government in Syria was anomalous. The army was legally still part of the Allied forces and, like all the other troops stationed in the Near East, subordinate to Marshal Allenby's command. The Syrian Government was still legally a military administration ruling the country in accordance with international law as applied to the administration of occupied enemy territory. It was very strange to consider the Arab army in Syria, like the French, part of the occupation forces. It was even stranger to consider Syria occupied territory with respect to the Arab army and to the government, which was composed of people from the country itself.

This bizarre situation could be corrected only by saying frankly and openly: "We proclaim to the entire world that this country is our country and we are independent in it." This action was necessary for another reason. The military government administering the occupied enemy territory was actually impeding progress and preventing the governmental apparatus from being set up with the freedom that it required. Indeed, when it was decided to create a "Council of Directors," Commander in Chief Marshal Allenby objected, saying: "You have no right to do that because it would mean the formation of a civil government, whereas international law requires you to rule the country by a military administration." The Arab leadership was compelled to confess that "this Council of Directors is purely an advisory group assisting the military governor in his functions." A declaration of independence was the only way to overcome these obstacles. Public opinion thus came to focus on the idea of declaring Syria independent with Emir Faisal ibn al-Husein as her constitutional king.

The Syrian Congress representing all sections of the country passed a resolution to this effect. It was read to the people from the balcony of the city hall in Damascus and officially communicated to the Allied governments on March 8, 1920.

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The independence proclaimed on March 8th was not restricted to the eastern zone under the active administration of the Syrian Government, but was applied equally to the western and southern zones under the administration of the French and British armies, respectively. The resolution of the Syrian Congress proclaimed the total independence of Syria within her natural boundaries and demanded that the Allies withdraw their troops from all the occupied zones, including Palestine and Lebanon.

This proclamation meant abandoning the policy of a "Greater Arab State," which was the ultimate goal of the Arab Revolt, in favor of the policy of a "United Syrian Kingdom," which appeared to be more in conformity with the exigencies of world diplomacy. Nevertheless, the principle of Arab unity not only was not ignored, but was clearly referred to in the resolution. Emir Faisal in his opening address to the Syrian Congress on March 6, 1920 said: "And before I close my remarks at this immortal session, I should like to remind you of your Iraqi brethren who fought beside you and suffered so much for the fatherland."

The Congress in its historic resolution declared: "Whereas the Arab Revolt took place in order to liberate the Arabs from Turkish rule and the factors supporting the independence of Syria are the same as in Iraq; and whereas there exist linguistic, historical, economic, natural, and racial bonds between the two regions which make each indispensable to the other, we demand the full independence of Iraq with a politico-economic union between the two regions."

A little before that an "Iraqi Congress" composed of Iraqis then living in Syria met, made contact with the Syrian Congress, and concerted a plan to secure the independence of Iraq and unite the two regions. The said Congress passed a declaration of Iraqi independence similar to that of Syrian independence, which was likewise read to the people from the balcony of the city hall in Damascus after the reading of the resolution of the Syrian Congress on March 8, 1920.

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The concern of the leaders of the Revolt and of the Syrian and Iraqi statesmen for Arab unity as well as their belief in the need to separate the Iraqi case from the Syrian in view of international politics are also evident in the joint resolutions relating to the flags. These required that the flags of the new Arab kingdoms stripped from the Ottoman Empire be identical in basic form and color as a symbol of their singleness of purpose and striving; the banner of the Revolt

to remain, as it was originally, the flag of Hashimite Arabia (i.e. the Hejazi Government), with a single white star added to its red triangle for Syria and two stars for Iraq.*

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The declaration of independence occasioned great joy throughout Syria and was received with immense satisfaction in all the other Arab countries. However, it angered the Allies, particularly the English. They considered it an act of insubordination and rebellion against Headquarters, a contravention of the provisions of the Peace Conference, and an attack on its competence.

Lord Curzon, British Foreign Secretary, was most offended by the references in the declaration to Palestine and Iraq. In a violent telegram he protested that "Great Britain does not concede any group in Damascus the right to speak about Palestine and Iraq."

Thus, the Allies did not recognize the independence proclaimed in Syria. They continued to regard King Faisal as a "Hashemite Emir" governing the country in his capacity as a commander of the Syrian case to the Peace Conference. It became known subsequently that at that time French and British diplomats were about to conclude their protracted and complicated bargaining and had already begun to carry out the prearranged plans.

Events now followed one another swiftly as tension between France and Syria mounted day by day. The French started forcibly to repress the manifestations of nationalism in the western zone, while they intensified their intrigues, espionage, and use of **agents provocateurs** in the eastern zone. They inspired hired newspapers in their zone to attack Syria and defame the Sherif and the Sherifians. They warned incorruptible patriotic newspapers to couple any reference to Faisal's name with the epithet of king, closing down those which refused to comply and punishing the editors. Mosque preachers were forbidden to allude to King Faisal in the Friday sermons; they were forced to pray only for the Caliph of the Moslems, Sultan Wahid al-Din. Those nationalist preachers who disobeyed were imprisoned and then exiled. Needless to say, all these moves by the French, which the Syrian Government had to protest, merely increased popular hatred and encouraged insurrectionist sentiments.

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The disputes that arose between Syria and France went beyond what was mentioned above to grave questions of economic and military nature. First, the French established a new bank called the "Bank of Syria and Lebanon" and gave it the right to issue bank notes. They brought a considerable quantity of paper from France which they ordered to be treated as official currency for "compulsory circulation" in the country. This decision contravened the simplest principles of

*We know that it survived as the banner of the Hashimite Arabian Government until its collapse. The Iraqi flag retained more or less the form stipulated in the aforementioned declaration of independence, but deviated somewhat after the Constitution was promulgated. The red triangle became a rhombus when the top was cut off; the white area was transferred to the center.

The official Syrian flag changed considerably during the period of the mandate. The French at first devised a special flag for each of the petty governments they sought to establish in Syria. The tricolor was introduced into all the flags. However, the constituent assembly which met in 1928 restored the four Arab colors to the Syrian flag and replaced the red triangle with three red stars set on a white background extending to the center.

international law because it tampered with the economic structure of the country in wholly arbitrary fashion. Trade among the people was normally based on gold. With the coming of the British army a large quantity of Egyptian pounds and pounds sterling equal in value to gold entered the country. Circulating the notes printed by the French meant substituting this paper for the country's gold. The Syrian Government denied France the right to issue and circulate such currency in the western zone and at the same time they prohibited its introduction into the eastern zone. The money question was to be one of the most important points on which General Gouraud would later seek satisfaction in his ultimatum. Brought into Syria by means of iron and fire, this currency was destined to be a source of incalculable economic injury to the country.

Secondly, the Kemalist Turks had besieged the French garrisons stationed in Urfa, Kilis, and Aintab. Needed reinforcements could not reach these garrisons through Cilicia owing to the ruggedness of the terrain and the winter snows. The French High Command wanted to use the railroad passing through the eastern zone. Accordingly, the Syrian Government was requested to permit the troops and supplies to move up via Rayyāq and Aleppo in order to fight "the common enemy." However, the Syrians refused, saying: "We proclaimed our independence, but up to now you have failed to recognize it. For this reason we consider it our duty to remain neutral in the struggle between the Turks and yourselves." This dispute too was subsequently to serve General Gouraud as a pretext for sending his ultimatum.

#

While the relations between France and Syria were thus worsening daily, European diplomacy continued its normal opportunistic course, ending in the San Remo decision which required Syria and Lebanon to be placed under French mandate and Palestine and Iraq under English mandate. This was a severe blow to the dearest wishes of the country and the people were profoundly moved by it. Angry public demonstrations impelled the Government to take active measures to protect the country's independence and realize its holy aims. After the Cabinet was forced to resign, its successor immediately announced that it was a "defense Cabinet" which had assumed power for the sake of defending the country's independence with all its power.

King Faisal sent a letter to the new Prime Minister on May 3, 1920, saying: "We have charged you with the formation of a new Cabinet whose main purpose shall be to maintain security and order within and to defend the rights of this country against all those from without who wish it harm or who try to stand in the way of its sacred independence." Similarly, in his letter approving the Cabinet he asked it to strive "to realize the desires of the people by taking the most effective measures to defend our sacred independence."

The Cabinet proceeded at once to enact a law authorizing a national loan to provide funds for the defense effort. It also broadened the military conscription law to include the entire population. Various patriotic groups began to function. Local uprisings throughout the western zone increased in violence and range.

The French meanwhile were organizing an attack on the eastern zone in order to compel it to accept the mandate and acquiesce in its provisions. Their parliament passed the necessary appropriation bills to equip an expeditionary force. The Ministry of War sent military units one by one to Beirut in preparation for an invasion of the eastern zone from the south. The High Command concluded an armistice with the Turks, thus making it possible to withdraw the bulk of their forces from the Turkish battlefield and mass them on the Syrian borders for an invasion of the eastern zone from the north. The troops assembled under the command of General Gouraud for the purpose of executing the mandate numbered

100,000 men, according to a statement made in Parliament after the events of Maysalūn.

The British Government repeatedly invited King Faisal to Europe since the day when independence was proclaimed. However, in view of the statement issued by the Syrian Congress, officials of the Syrian Government and members of the Congress deemed it unwise for the King to go to Europe alone prior to international recognition of Syria's independence and of himself as King. They preferred instead to send a delegation of ministers to start the negotiations to bring this about. The delegation was actually chosen, but while the members were busy drawing up a plan of action, French military preparations became apparent. Thereupon King Faisal decided to go to Europe by himself, despite the preceding considerations, and sent Nūrī al-Sa'īd to Beirut to obtain General Gouraud's consent. This was withheld since, as was subsequently revealed, the General was getting ready to strike the fatal blow. He merely said: "We have claims that we shall advance in a few days; we cannot authorize the Emir's trip to Europe until they are satisfied." Then he added, ominously: "If the Emir goes by another way, France will absolutely refuse to recognize him or negotiate with him in any fashion whatever."

The claims mentioned by General Gouraud were to be sent to the Syrian Government on July 14, 1920 in the form of an ultimatum, with the ensuing crisis to endure until the Day of Maysalūn.

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Now that we have concluded our introductory remarks, it is worth while to cast a glance at the moral and intellectual situation prevailing in Syria just before the Day.

It is a known fact that the nationalist idea in Syria remained more or less latent throughout the war. The parties and societies organized to realize it confined themselves chiefly to aiding the Revolt against the Turks and working to ensure its success. They felt little need to worry about or prepare for what would come afterwards. The entrance into Damascus of the army of the Revolt and its total occupation of Syria within one month abruptly produced a revolutionary new situation about which the people were not geared to think effectively. Therefore, the planners and administrators in Syria had to assume exceedingly complex and crushing burdens. These men had lived for years in a state of intellectual siege which was not conducive to obtaining adequate and accurate information on the realities of world politics. The suddenness of developments led to utter confusion. Some people were unfailingly optimistic, while others went to the extremes of pessimism. Some gave vent to the wildest of desires, and some feared the most insignificant of problems. Some oscillated between fervid optimism and morbid pessimism, depending on circumstances and events. Moreover, a few still felt an emotional attachment to the Ottoman regime; there were also a few who believed in the necessity of alien rule.

Unquestionably, these conditions are the natural concomitants of every political revolt and every unexpected revolution. They usually subside with the passage of time as thoughts become settled and sound minds and constructive elements take over. The reverse of the normal, however, occurred in the case of the Arab Revolt; for the confusion engendered by the new situation not only continued, but became worse with each day. The reason is that the Revolt collided with the formidable obstacle of foreign diplomacy without gaining any outside support.

It is true that the English aided the Revolt in its early stages, but they did so hesitantly and never without reservations. They provided the troops of the Revolt, for example, with supplies and ammunition in very stingy fashion, doling

them out only to the degree they considered necessary to carry out the activities they themselves wanted. Moreover, even this meager help rapidly dwindled after the war because Great Britain had designs on a large portion of the country, the same land for which the Revolt was launched.

England was undoubtedly sincere in her aversion to seeing France dominate Syria. She nevertheless found herself compelled to go along with French aspirations in Syria and Lebanon owing to her intentness on ruling Palestine and Iraq.

The basic objectives of the Revolt could have been attained only by thwarting the ambitions of these two countries, which were the major victors in the war and which, following America's withdrawal from the European diplomatic scene, were the only powers able to manipulate world politics in behalf of their special interests. The leaders of the Revolt had to work under these complicated and adverse circumstances, to formulate and, even more difficult, execute plans to ensure its success. Their problems were aggravated by chaotic internal conditions.

Sound policy required the classifying and arranging of problems in order of importance with a view to sacrificing, if necessary, some of the lesser objectives for the sake of the greater. But how could this be done? Each group of intellectuals and politicians was related to a country that had special problems created by international ambitions and they felt therefore more sensitive to these problems than to those of the other countries. A Palestinian, for example, regarded Zionism as the major enemy, whereas a Syrian held French aims to be the greatest of dangers to the Arab cause, and an Iraqi spoke of the need to revolt against the English before anything else. Everyone could present hundreds of proofs for the correctness of his position.

Besides this welter of beliefs resulting from the nature of things and the fact that all concerned were absolutely sincere, there was the confusion caused by moral weakness, French intrigues, a spirit of reaction, and treachery of those with private grudges.

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This then was the situation in Syria when, after considerable bargaining at her expense, the two great colonial powers reached an accord among themselves. This then was the moral atmosphere in Syria at the time of the arrival of the French ultimatum that led to the events of Maysalūn.

PART II

FACTS AND MEMOIRS

Introduction

THE CRISIS OVER REPLACEMENT

The memoirs I am about to set forth on the following pages are limited to those directly concerned with the Day of Maysalūn. However, I thought it a good idea to begin with a portion of my notes bearing upon another crisis that occurred some eight months prior to the Day of Maysalūn as a result of the decision to replace the British troops with French troops in certain sections of the eastern zone. The reason is my belief that this decision was the first attempt by the French to attain the objectives that were spelled out in their ultimatum delivered just before the Day of Maysalūn. I may say that the events leading up to the Day were actually military operations designed to crush the uprisings that broke out in the eastern zone in connection with the crisis over replacement of the British troops.

November 1919

Late one evening some time after my retirement from active service, I was at my home reading when Yāsīn al-Hāshimī surprised me by calling. He seemed greatly upset by the developments of the past few days. "I have come to ask you to stop thinking about education for the present," he began. "I want you to attend tomorrow's meeting of the Council of Directors and help to avert the danger now facing us."

Several months ago I had submitted my resignation as Director General of Education because of a difference of opinion with the Military Governor General over many matters concerned with the course of governmental procedures in general and the organization of education in particular. The dispute came to a head at the end of October when I felt that I could no longer do useful work. I decided therefore to resign in order to escape the consequences of acts conflicting with cherished principles and plans.

Emir Zaid, who was then the deputy of his brother Emir Faisal, did not accept the resignation and asked me to continue. However, under the circumstances I thought it unwise to retain administrative responsibility and so, despite the pressure exerted by Emir Zaid and my many friends, resigned. It was during this period of retirement that Yāsīn paid me the visit mentioned above.

Yāsīn spoke fervently in an effort to convince me of the necessity of putting off educational matters and promptly returning to the field of political action. He explained the crisis in foreign relations which arose while I was in seclusion. The English decided to withdraw their troops from the western and eastern zones and have French troops take their place in the districts of Rāshayā, Hāsbayā, and Baalbek. They have informed us of this decision, Yāsīn said, and of their intention of carrying it out soon. French occupation of these districts in accordance with this decision would mean executing the terms of the Sykes-Picot Agreement in its entirety. If we permit them to take this step now, we shall definitely lose every hope of correcting the situation later on. Therefore, we must at all costs prevent the occupation of these districts.

"The Military Governor General," he added impassionately, "is inclining to appeasement not resistance; our other colleagues are very frightened and hesitant. You must come to the meeting tomorrow so that we can overcome the spirit of defeatism and decide to fight. I think you will agree that the matter is extremely serious and must come before anything else, however important it may be."

He concluded with these words:

"If you aren't present at the meeting, I'm afraid we won't get the necessary majority to vote for resistance. So I beg you to lay aside for the time being your concern with education and help us handle this situation right away."

The crisis, as Yāsīn described it, moved me deeply and I found myself forced to admit that it had to take precedence over all the considerations that had impelled me to resign and go into retirement.

"Do you think our army is strong enough to put up a real fight?" I asked Yāsīn.

"I haven't the slightest doubt of it!" he answered unhesitatingly.

I knew that Yāsīn possessed considerable military ability which both Turkish and German officers fully appreciated. I had no choice but to rely on his judgment and hasten to discharge the duty laid upon me in this emergency. I told him that I would abandon my retirement the following morning. I came to the meeting of the Council of Directors where I vigorously supported the idea of all-out resistance. I succeeded in overcoming the spirit of timidity and defeatism so quickly that even the Military Governor General was forced to go along with us in the decision to fight.

The Government promptly adopted the measures necessary to forestall the occupation of the above-mentioned districts. The English and French Governments were simultaneously informed that an advance by French troops into any part of the eastern zone would lead to bloody clashes and have the gravest consequences. The Allies tried to soften the effect of their decision by characterizing it as a temporary expedient that would not in any way prejudice the final settlement. This explanation deceived no one and failed to dispel the general nervousness about the future of the country.

Another step taken by the Government was to convoke the General Syrian Congress in order to obtain an expression of public opinion on this momentous issue. The Congress met on October 22, 1919 (no sessions were held after it had presented its views to the American Commission of Inquiry) and listened to an address delivered by the Military Governor in the name of Emir Zaid. A subsequent secret session resulted in a firm resolution that "duty to the people whose hopes and desires it represented required them to defend the unity and independence of their country". The resolution concluded by proposing "a declaration of the absolute independence of Syria. . . free from the blemishes of a protectorate or trusteeship, within the borders defined by the Syrian Congress in the resolution submitted to the American Commission of Inquiry".

All newspapers, parties, clubs, societies, etc., showed great enthusiasm and through a host of articles, demonstrations, and speeches endorsed the idea of defending the country and its independence. At the same time considerable correspondence and discussions went on between Damascus and Beirut on one hand and between these two cities and Paris on the other, and between Emir Faisal and M. Clemenceau in Paris. The French were ultimately forced to renounce their plan and to content themselves with sending liaison officers to Hāsbyā, Rāshayā, and Rayāq.

The British evacuated their troops from these districts and all parts of the eastern zone without French troops moving in after them. Thus, the crisis was resolved in favor of Syria.

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Later on when I studied King Faisal's papers and read the account of his meetings with Clemenceau, I learned that the question of replacing the British troops had interested the French long before the crisis. Clemenceau spoke to Emir Faisal about it at the end of his first journey to Paris and before the Commission of Inquiry went to Syria. He said to him during their conversation at the War Ministry on April 16, 1919:

"The British will withdraw from Damascus and Aleppo, and I should like our forces to take their place."

"I can't agree to that," said Emir Faisal promptly, "because Syria can do without foreign soldiers. If she happens to need them later on, she will not hesitate to ask you for a helping hand."

"I don't want to occupy the country," Clemenceau replied. "I say that only because of the present situation. If it were up to me, I wouldn't argue for a moment; in fact, I would agree to do everything you wanted. However, the French people would not be pleased if no trace of France's presence in Syria were to remain. If France were not to be represented in Syria by her flag and troops, the people would consider it a disgrace, like the flight of a soldier from the battlefield. We don't want to send a large force, only a few troops. . . and there will be no objection to placing your flag alongside ours."

There you have it—France's failure to be represented in Syria by her flag and soldiers would be regarded by the French as something shameful, like flight from battle!

In the light of these words spoken by Clemenceau seven months prior to the crisis over replacement, I found it strange that he should give up the occupation at the crucial moment. I decided to do some research on the subject and discovered the following facts: (1) the French at that time lacked sufficient manpower to impose their will upon the Syrian Government; (2) they had not as yet reached an agreement with the English that would assure them freedom of action in interior Syria; and (3) Clemenceau was then trying to negotiate a treaty with King Faisal reconciling Arab aspirations and French interests. As long as he was hopeful of solving the entire Syrian problem by means of negotiation and mutual understanding, he did not think it sensible to befog the atmosphere by occupying a few small cities. Be that as it may, Clemenceau refrained from carrying out the decision to replace British with French troops and the several districts were kept under Syrian administration and surveillance by Syrian security police until the crisis over the ultimatum occurred.

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French politicians, principally Poincaré, bitterly criticized Clemenceau's approach and asserted that France's retreat in this matter was the root cause of all her subsequent difficulties in Syria until the Day of Maysalūn.

THE CRISIS OVER THE ULTIMATUM

July 1920

News reaching us from Paris and Beirut told of France's massing large numbers of troops on the frontiers of the eastern zone. Likewise secret reports prepared by the Directorate General of Security indicated that myrmidons of the French and their agents were carrying on extensive propaganda in various sections of the eastern zone. Many traitors, officials and non-officials, were on the French payroll, working to spread dissatisfaction and despair among the citizenry.

As against this, the recruitment of soldiers in the eastern zone was proceeding apace. The Ministry of Defense issued a series of communiqués to inform us of the progress made throughout the country. Newspapers kept on publishing fiery articles to intensify patriotic sentiment. From time to time there were noisy mass demonstrations in the streets and public squares designed to show the readiness of the populace to make whatever sacrifices might be necessary to preserve the independence and honor of the country.

Everything pointed to the imminence of a grave crisis that would determine the fate of the country once and for all. After the months of hesitation and expectancy following the announcement of the armistice and the end of the war. On July 11th the tension exploded with the news that a French ultimatum was on the way.

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Having decided to travel to Europe to present the Syrian case to the Peace Conference, King Faisal deputized Nūrī al-Sa'īd, who was a member of his retinue at that time, to go to Beirut and ask General Gouraud to make the necessary arrangements. The General refused, stating that he had prepared a formal ultimatum for issuance within a few days and that he would not allow the King to travel to Europe until he accepted the conditions set forth therein. He mentioned to Nūrī al-Sa'īd the most important of them, viz.: (a) placing the Rayāq-Aleppo Railroad under French management; (b) acquiescing in the French mandate; (c) halting the draft and discharging those already in uniform; (d) accepting the paper currency printed by the Syrian Bank; and (e) punishing the criminals who have continuously showed enmity toward France.

The terms of the ultimatum created an uproar in official government circles as well as among all classes of the population. The Government's attitude toward these demands could be easily predicted from the events of recent months. The existing regime had been in power since the publication of the San Remo decisions regarding the mandate when it openly declared that its basic task was to organize and perfect the means of defending the country's independence. In this connection it took a number of active measures which were all approved by the General Syrian Congress in behalf of the people. Consequently, the Government had no alternative now but to reject the French demands. It was deemed wise to seek help by appealing to the conscience of the civilized world and the principles of the Allies and to ask that the case be submitted to arbitration. Prompt action was taken without waiting for the ultimatum to arrive officially.

In addition, the Government decided to reveal its attitude to the nation and the world from the platform of the General Syrian Congress. On July 13th the Congress heard an explanatory statement, which ended as follows:

"Having protested General Gouraud's behavior, which does not comport with that of an ally, and requested referral of the case to international arbitration, our Government now proclaims to the people and to the entire world from this platform that:

"(1) We desire nothing but peace and the preservation of our independence and honor on which we shall tolerate no blemish;

"(2) We reject every accusation that seeks to stigmatize us by creating the false impression that we are trying to damage the good relations between our ally and our allies;

"(3) We do not refuse to negotiate and will do so at any time. Indeed, the delegation headed by His Majesty the King is ready to depart to continue the discussions. We will accept any solution that does not infringe our independence and honor and is based on right and independence;

"(4) We are fully prepared and unalterably resolved to defend our honor and prerogatives with all the strength God has given us.

"This then is our present position, gentlemen, just as we have outlined it to you. God is with us, for we desire only our right and the defense of our existence."

The official ultimatum arrived on the day after this statement was read. The French apparently decided to deliver it on the anniversary of their great revolution, of which they are inordinately proud and which they assert is the source of the freedoms of the whole world.

The document begins with a long preface containing a review of events since the withdrawal of the British troops and charges the Syrian Government with organizing guerrilla bands to harass the French and stir up hatred among the people. It then lists the conditions—the same ones transmitted orally to Nūrī al Sa'īd—which the Syrians must fulfill, noting that freedom to administer the Rayāq, Baalbek, Homs, Hama, and Aleppo stations along with the city of Aleppo itself.

These five conditions, the ultimatum adds, are offered "as an invisible whole" which must be accepted or rejected *in toto*. The answer is to be returned within four days, i.e. before midnight of July 18th. Should the terms be accepted, orders must be given to the Syrian authorities not to hinder the French forces as they proceed to occupy the above-mentioned stations. Likewise before July 18th, the necessary decrees must be issued to carry out the other conditions. The conditions in their entirety will have to be complied with by the end of the month.

In the event that they are rejected, the ultimatum warns that the French Government will have complete freedom of action and, moreover, will not be satisfied with the reasonable guarantees requested therein. Responsibility for the misfortunes likely to befall the country will rest squarely with the Damascus Government alone.

All indications were that Damascus would become the primary military objective. Since the distance between this city and the French centers was extremely short, no more than 60 kilometres, the position of the Government would very quickly become untenable. I therefore suggested to my colleagues in the Cabinet that we move the treasury along with important documents to Dir'ā in anticipation of transferring the Government there too should the need arise. However, 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī vehemently opposed my idea, saying: "You don't know the

people of Hawrān; by God they'll butcher us." He repeated this remark several times and passed his right hand over his left in imitation of the motions of slaughter. Each time I urged the step as a precautionary measure, I was greeted by al-Durūbī's gesture. Since all the others, including Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah, refused to take my proposal seriously, I decided not to insist.

###

Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah worked very energetically and with a show of great optimism. He even wanted to issue official communiqués on military developments. We objected and advised a delay in order to avoid creating the impression that we were initiating hostilities after we proclaimed to the world our readiness to submit our case to arbitration.

Yūsuf concluded the necessary arrangements and then told us the names of the combat leaders. Mijdal ʿAnjar, the most important front, was placed under the command of Emir Zaid with Yāsīn al-Hāshimī as his chief of staff. Yāsīn had been interned by the British after the crisis over the evacuation. He was released two months later and returned to Damascus where I met him several times. Since the last occasion was more than a month ago, I thought it appropriate to visit him before his departure for the battlefield. I left his home utterly bewildered.

"Our army as it is now cannot defend the country." Yāsīn told me frankly and emphatically. "It cannot hold out against the enemy for more than two hours."

This statement flatly contradicted the spirit of optimism that radiated from Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah.

"Didn't you tell me at the time of the crisis over the replacement of the British troops that we could easily defend ourselves?" I asked.

"Yes, but the situation has changed radically since that date," he quickly replied. "The French have brought in reinforcements, whereas we have done practically nothing. . . The guns which passed before you during the parades. . . we have only a very small number of shells for them. They wouldn't be enough for a battle lasting over an hour. I can tell you that in case of regular warfare the army would be without ammunition in less than two hours."

As I left, confused and demoralized, I decided to call on Muṣṭafá Niʿmah, a simple and well-intentioned man whom I got to know quite well during his service as Deputy Military Governor General. I asked his opinion of the military situation.

"We will fight when we are ordered to do so. . . without thinking about whether we will win or lose," he said calmly.

"But I should like to know," I cried, "if we have the matériel to carry on a serious war."

"The truth is we do not have enough," he answered with remarkable simplicity. "However, God, praise be to Him, will help by enabling us to capture supplies at the first clash between our forces. We will then fight the enemy with what we take from him, just as we did in the battles of Tripoli in North Africa."

I was shocked by what I heard because I fully realized that the battles to be fought in the mountains and on the plains of Syria could not be compared to those that took place on the shores and deserts of Tripoli.

###

Following this conversation I thought it my duty to have a frank talk with Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah. I reported Yāsīn's views and asked if they were based on fact.

Yūsuf didn't conceal anything from me. "My dear friend," he answered in Turkish, "I was bluffing. . . to fool the French."

"But you see that things have passed the stage of bluff. We are now facing a real threat. Can we repel the enemy by force of arms?"

"If King Faisal had gone along with us from the beginning, we could have done something. . . but now. . ." he said sadly.

The gravity of our position then became clear to me. The eastern zone which we controlled was cut off from the sea and surrounded on all sides by French or British occupied territory, except for the deserts of Nejd and the Hejaz. This made the supply problem very difficult, especially as regards shells, since it necessarily depended on the attitude of France and England. Both would naturally refuse to help. Moreover, the English were always parsimonious with supplies for the Arab army, even during the war. Our weakness in ordnance was pronounced, but every effort to remedy it proved futile. Hence, when Syria was surprised by the ultimatum her army lacked the resources to stand up to an organized enemy for more than a few hours.

This unexpected revelation of our military weakness forced me to revise my thinking about the crisis. Rejection of the conditions of the ultimatum would lead to a war in which our army would be swiftly crushed and Syria lose everything, including honor, and come under the direct administration of the French. The interest of the country, therefore, dictated acceptance of the ultimatum, followed by an attempt to lighten the pressure by negotiation and discussion.

Once I made up my mind to this effect, I hastened to communicate with my colleagues. I learned that most of them had become depressed by the ultimatum even before they found out about the critical military situation, but they didn't dare to disclose their feelings to one another. When the matter came out into the open, they eagerly supported acceptance of the conditions.

As for King Faisal, I discovered that he too shared this view. After a meeting with Yāsīn al-Hāshimī he felt more convinced of it than before. He was fortified by British advice not to reject the ultimatum. Nevertheless, he wanted to be sure, so he invited the army chiefs to a conference from which he emerged satisfied that active resistance was an impossibility. Thus, there was unanimity of opinion regarding the necessity of accepting the conditions.

#

Along with the ultimatum General Gouraud sent a letter in which he explicitly demanded a new government. As he wrote: "I cannot be confident that the pledges which I have the honor to request of Your Royal Highness will be implemented if the present Government is to be responsible therefor. Its remaining in office implies hostility to France since it has struggled to drag your country into the horrors of war."

It was imperative that our cabinet resign immediately and be replaced by another, which would be best headed by Yāsīn al-Hāshimī. King Faisal then summoned Yāsīn and gave him this assignment. He also wrote to General Gouraud asking for a two-day extension of the ultimatum. The General agreed and set midnight of the 20th as the new deadline.

Yāsīn, however, hesitated a long time. I learned from him later on that he wanted to make contact with the French in order to discover their intentions before he made a final decision. Since he was unsuccessful in this attempt, he thought it advisable to be excused from forming a cabinet, saying that it would be better to have the old ministry accept the conditions and then form a new one when the crisis over the ultimatum passed.

The government therefore remained in power until the last day stipulated in the ultimatum for acceptance or rejection of the conditions. It decided upon acceptance on the afternoon of the 20th and adopted all the necessary measures to carry out the conditions, including the issuance of orders to demobilize the army.

After we concluded our work Fāris al-Khūrī groaned and said philosophically:

"There is no doubt that we have done everything required by our patriotic duty and the welfare of the country, but the people won't appreciate it; they will maintain that we lost the chance for victory. There will always be some who will say 'they should have rejected the ultimatum and chosen war and struggle.'"

ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shahbandar demurred. "No. . . the people will appreciate it sooner or later and know that we saved them from a disaster. They will realize that our action entitles us to their full esteem."

As for myself, I paid no attention either to al-Khūrī's observation or Shahbandar's refutation because I sincerely felt that we had performed a painful duty and I didn't want to think of anything beyond that.

The government's decision created a tremendous stir in public opinion because very few were familiar with the real reasons for it. The people claimed that the government acted the way it did simply out of love of office. They did not know that General Gouraud's letter demanded a new government and that accepting the ultimatum meant at the same time agreeing to the change.

Boisterous street orations called for the fall of the government and urged the people to defend themselves. One mob rushed to the Citadel in an attempt to break in and arm themselves with the guns to be found there. Yāsin al-Hāshimī himself had to go to the Citadel and calm the demonstrators. Another mob milled through the streets in the direction of the royal palace shouting "Down with the government." Occasionally, a voice could be heard accusing Faisal of treason and asking him to abdicate.

The King was terribly distressed by these demonstrations. When he heard that they were moving upon the palace, he became angrier than he had ever been before and screamed "I will not be intimidated." He wanted to order his bodyguard to disperse the crowds. Only after enormous effort did we succeed in averting the danger by preventing the bodyguard from leaving the palace and the rioters from approaching it. We remained in the palace until past midnight soothing the nerves of the King on one hand and adopting measures to pacify the people on the other.

I returned home just before dawn and as I lay in bed completely worn out, I could not help but think about the onerous burdens that were to weigh us down in the days to come. I believed that our cabinet would definitely resign, myself included. My mind then became engrossed with thoughts of the civil struggle with the French that was likely to begin after the conclusion of the military phase.

###

The next morning we were startled by reports that the French army had marched from Shutūrah and Zaḥlah to Mijdal ʿAnjar, Wādī al-Ḥarīr, and then moved on toward the capital without encountering any resistance because of the Syrian army's demobilization and withdrawal from Mijdal ʿAnjar.

The occupation of Mijdal ʿAnjar and Wādī al-Ḥarīr was not mentioned among the conditions listed in the ultimatum and so news of this French operation had the stunning impact of a thunderbolt.

King Faisal summoned Colonel Cousse, the French liaison officer, for an explanation. Cousse was obviously bewildered and unable to say what these movements meant. He promised to leave at once to obtain an explanation and to try to halt the advance of the troops.

We awaited Cousse's return with impatience. We prudently decided to stop the demobilization and instructed the units to remain where they were pending the issuance of new orders.

Cousse returned in the afternoon. He said: "The telegram accepting the conditions of the ultimatum was late in reaching General Gouraud because wires were cut in the region of Sarghāyā. The General ordered the advance before he got the telegram."

Colonel Cousse then suggested that a government official be sent to ʿĀlayh to reach an understanding on the matter with General Gouraud. I don't know why everyone immediately agreed that this mission should be assigned to me. King Faisal, who was present at the meeting, applauded the idea and ordered his secretary ʿAwnī ʿAbd al-Hādī to prepare the necessary credentials. He asked me to come to his office before leaving the palace to pick up the letter and get some instructions.

Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah approached and whispered in my ear: "I am going to the front to do what I can to organize the troops, so please get me as much time as possible." I promised to do my best, bade him good-by, and went to King Faisal's room.

He read to me two telegrams of which we knew nothing. The first was sent by him to General Gouraud on July 18/19, 1920, and stated that he had decided to accept the conditions; the second, General Gouraud's answer, thanked the King for accepting the conditions and asked him to send a final telegram of acceptance mentioning the conditions in detail. These two telegrams were of the utmost importance because they invalidated the General's pretext, as reported by Cousse, for issuing the order to advance. After I copied them carefully, I left the room to get ready for the vital task assigned to me at this critical juncture.

When I returned to the ministerial chamber to say good-by, it was suggested that an army officer go along in case something connected with military matters should arise. I had hardly expressed assent when ʿAbd al-Raḥmān Shahbandar, who had been talking in a corner of the room with Jamīl al-Ulashī, came over and advised me to take Jamīl.

I knew that Jamīl was a member of the retinue of His Majesty and that he had previously been his representative in Beirut. Since our personal contacts consisted of little more than a few sporadic conversations, I was unfamiliar with his character or views. However, I saw no need to worry about this owing to my conviction that military questions would not be a topic of discussion with General Gouraud.

#

En Route to ʿĀlayh

I left Damascus in the afternoon in an open car together with Colonel Toulat and Jamīl al-Ulashī. The car moved very slowly because of the cars, mule and camel caravans, and detachments of soldiers crowding the road. Sometimes the car had to stop until the pedestrians made way for us. When our progress at al-Dīmās was blocked by soldiers, al-Ulashī asked them where they had come from, where they were going to, how many they were, and what they were doing. Since Toulat understood Arabic, I felt that these questions were dangerous. I said to al-Ulashī in Turkish:

"Don't forget that our friend knows Arabic. He may benefit from these questions by learning a good deal about our military situation. So don't ask any more questions."

At this warning al-Ulashī desisted, but the next time we stopped he pretended to have forgotten what I had told him and began to interrogate the soldiers again. I repeated my caution in a sharper tone:

"Didn't I tell you not to ask such questions? You're a soldier and ought to realize the harm that might result from what you're doing."

When the car came to a halt for the third time, I decided to admonish him in advance. Al-Ulashī refrained from questioning the soldiers. Instead, he started to babble with Toulat in some foreign language, apparently harshly criticizing the advance of the French troops.

"The matter isn't important," said Toulat. "I think it can be easily solved. The army should stop where it is. . . but let the officers and general staff enter Damascus, as spiritual compensation, and the whole thing will be settled."

Al-Ulashī vehemently disputed Toulat's statements. I had to warn him against quarreling and expressing an opinion on any subject.

After we crossed Khān Maysalūn and reached the foothills overlooking the Wādī al-Zurzūr, we noticed a large number of soldiers. We learned that Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah selected this place as a new front and had already begun to fortify it by having trenches dug throughout the area.

They told us what happened there several hours ago. A French vanguard with two tanks reached the entrance to the Wādī al-Qarn just before sunset. Our men immediately responded with rifle and artillery fire, forcing them to retreat. No one knew where they encamped. This indicated that we were close to the French base of operations and would soon meet some of their units. As I was walking to the car after bidding farewell to our men, Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah took me under the arm and whispered:

"I repeat what I asked in Damascus: get us as much time as you can."

###

Our car descended the slope at half speed because of the ruggedness of the terrain, then crossed the Wādī al-Zurzūr into the Wādī al-Qarn whose twisting roads extended throughout its length. As the evening shadows lengthened, we had to go much more slowly than before. After penetrating several kilometres into the heart of the valley, we came upon a column of French soldiers with two tanks cautiously retreating. When the leader saw Colonel Toulat, who was wearing his French army uniform, he approached us and in a tone of bewilderment mingled with excitement described what had happened. "They fired on us and forced us to pull back. . ."

Toulat immediately got out of the car and walked over to the side of the road with the officer. He rejoined us shortly, saying: "We shall soon reach headquarters."

###

We wound our way through the Wādī al-Qarn until we reached the desert of al-Judaydah. We saw many lights in the distance and surmised that the headquarters were located there. Upon our arrival at the encampment Colonel Toulat went off to find the commanding officers. He returned after some time and escorted us to the main tent where we were introduced to General Goybet, leader of the expedition, and Colonel Pettelat, General Gouraud's chief of staff.

"The government accepted all the conditions in the ultimatum and demobilized the army," I began. "You can vouch for that since you didn't encounter a single military unit all along your line of march. The operation is apparently the result of an unfortunate misunderstanding. I am now on my way to meet General Gouraud in Ālayh and I should like you to halt your troops right where they are now until I see him."

"We are soldiers," Colonel Pettelat objected, "and know nothing about diplomacy—we never think about it. We were ordered to march, so we marched. We can't stop our advance now, which is proceeding according to plan, for some diplomatic reason."

"Nevertheless," he added less sharply, "since we are responsible for military actions, we can arrange a 24-hour truce with you, provided that you accept certain conditions."

With that he led me to a large bed on which was spread a detailed map illuminated by a lamp. Putting his finger on the site of the encampment, he said:

"This is where we are now. I see no harm in stopping here until the morning of the day after tomorrow if you fulfill these two conditions: (1) the valley passing under the foothills of Khān Maysalūn shall be considered as the dividing line between the two forces—the Arabs to move behind it and the French to gain freedom of action in this direction; and (2) supplies needed by the French troops here shall be transported by railroad from Rayāq to al-Takīyah station." Pettelat kept pointing to the valley, the station, and the railroad.

"If you do not accept these two conditions," he concluded, "we shall be forced to continue according to plan."

What I knew about the present Syrian military situation left me no room for hesitation in accepting them. I then returned to the foothills of Maysalūn where I conveyed the truce terms to our leaders. Yūsuf al-Āẓmah and Emir Zaid were obviously delighted at my arrangements with the French.

###

We went back to al-Judaydah and continued on to Ālayh. When we crossed the desert of al-Judaydah and entered the wadis behind it, we began to meet caravans of automobiles, mules, soldiers, and cannon moving toward al-Judaydah. We had to stop from time to time, so our progress through the Wādī al-Ḥarīr was extremely slow.

We reached al-Murayjāt at dawn. There were piles of ammunition and equipment on both sides of the road. We made Ālayh several hours later and drove into a large garden. Toulat led us to a corner facing the sea and Beirut. He left us to ourselves for a while and when he came back announced that General Gouraud was ready to see me in his office.

###

In Ālayh—with General Gouraud

General Gouraud was standing in front of a large desk. We shook hands—he used his left hand—and he motioned me to sit down on the chair placed opposite his desk. I noticed that the right sleeve of his jacket hung empty from the shoulder and I recalled that he had lost his right arm during the Dardanelles campaign. The General sat in military fashion, erect and head high.

After reading the letter of credentials signed by King Faisal, he began to speak in a quiet, dry voice. He enumerated one by one the items listed in the ultimatum using the identical words, as though reciting the text from memory.

without the omission or addition of a single detail. He then told "how he was forced to send the ultimatum and how he agreed to extend the time by two days." He then came to the answer of acceptance.

"I waited for it until midnight. . . and even a little longer," he said. "Since it failed to come, I ordered the army to march. The telegram announcing acceptance of the conditions arrived half an hour later."

I listened attentively until he paused. "You must have known at the same time that the telegram had been delivered to your representative in Damascus six hours before midnight."

"Yes," he replied promptly, "I did know that, but the telegram was unfortunately delayed en route more than ten hours. I found out later that the delay was caused by a guerrilla band which cut the telegraph lines between al-Zabdnānī and Sarghāyā." He added sternly: "Since the policy followed by your Government encouraged the formation of such bands, the responsibility for the delay must naturally rest with you."

I decided to elaborate. "Your representative surely knew that the government did not content itself with accepting the conditions; it even sought to implement them by ordering demobilization of the army and withdrawal of the units from their positions. As a result, the people became so resentful that they had to be restrained by force. Your officers must have observed with their own eyes evidence of compliance with the conditions from the first step forward that they took, since they encountered no military resistance in strategically important Mijdal 'Anjar, or throughout the Wādī al-Ḥarīr, despite its naturally impregnable position."

"Yes," Gouraud said, "I know all that and admit it; but what could I do? The telegram didn't arrive in time."

I then thought of reminding him of the personal telegram which King Faisal had sent him.

"But, General, you undoubtedly remember that King Faisal sent you a telegram, dated July 18/19, to say that he had accepted the conditions in their entirety. You certainly received it, as proved by the fact that you answered him with an expression of satisfaction and gratitude. . ."

"Yes, but I asked him to confirm the contents of the telegram officially," he interrupted. "Likewise my request was not limited to accepting the conditions, but included executing them as well."

"The request mentioned in the ultimatum merely required that a start should be made in implementing it, and this is what has actually happened. As for implementing everything, the ultimatum itself provided a much longer time than that. The time limit has not yet expired; in fact, according to the text, it extends to the end of the month."

"But the telegram which I sent in answer to the Emir's asked for official confirmation of the acceptance with the conditions specifically mentioned."

"The details that you asked for were pure formalities. I believe that the delay in the arrival of a telegram containing such formalities, once you had received the King's explicit message, did not justify the French troops' occupation of the positions relinquished by the Syrians in accordance with the terms of the ultimatum."

The General came back to his original contention. "Be that as it may," he said, "the telegram was late in coming and I couldn't wait any longer than I did."

I thought it wiser to change the subject. "Let's disregard this," I said. "You admitted that the telegram of acceptance reached you half an hour after issuing marching orders. Shouldn't you then have issued an order to halt the march?"

"You're not a military man," he said smiling slightly, "and so you can't properly appreciate the significance of certain problems. When an army has begun to move, it just can't stop anywhere. It must first come to a place that is protected against all contingencies and contains sufficient water for the men and animals. No expert would deny this basic principle of warfare. Therefore, it wasn't in my power to order a halt half an hour after the order to march was given."

The General was now smiling broadly. He shook his head in such a way as to reveal his strong belief in the force of his excuse.

Immediately recognizing the powerful weapon that he had handed me, I said: "Let's forget the past, General. Your army is now bivouacked in a place where all the desired conditions of security and supplies are assured. There is nothing to prevent you from ordering it to return at once to where it came from."

This argument, which had apparently never occurred to him, upset his composure and he screamed: "Ah! ca non. . ." He began to shake. "We can't trust you any longer. . . and it is our duty to insist on new guarantees."

He then reached over to his desk and took a memorandum from one of the drawers. Waving it in the air, he said: "There are the guarantees we are now demanding."

He placed the memorandum on the desk and, having in the meantime recovered his composure, began to read it in a very calm tone:

"Even though the desired confirmation did not arrive within the stipulated time, in view of the arrangements previously made by the Emir to implement the ultimatum's terms, the General is willing to halt the march under the following conditions:

"(1) The Damascus Government shall publish the attached proclamation which will explain the march on Damascus—how it began and how it halted."

The General then picked up another paper, likewise prepared in advance, and read to me the "proclamation" concerning the French advance—this despite acceptance of the conditions of the ultimatum, demobilization of the army, and withdrawal of the military units from their positions—which he demanded that the Damascus Government issue in its own name.

As I listened to the text of the proclamation, I could not help feeling that General Gouraud realized his action was a breach of the basic foundations of international law and a violation of the simplest of moral principles. He wanted to free his conscience from this responsibility by a long proclamation which would justify and excuse the march on the grounds that it was unavoidable. And this through the voice of the Syrian Government itself!

General Gouraud went back to the memorandum proper and enumerated the following conditions:

"(2) The expedition shall continue in the region to which it has come—that bounded on the east by the Takīyah River—until the terms accepted by the Emir are fully carried out. Military operations will be progressively reduced as implementation of the terms proceeds.

"(3) During this period of time the military shall have complete control over the Rayāq-Takīyah Railroad.

"(4) The Sherifian detachments stationed west and north of the above-mentioned river, including the Biqā', shall be withdrawn from their positions toward Damascus. Police shall be assigned to this region under the command of French military authorities in order to assure the safety and well-being of the troops.

"(5) The aid extended by the Damascus Government to the guerrilla bands operating in the western zone, especially Sheikh Sālih's men, must be halted immediately.

"(6) The disturbances caused by these guerrillas and the events that occurred in Damascus on July 21st have enhanced the danger resulting from arming the population. It is necessary, therefore, for the armed soldiers to deliver their weapons to depots. Disarming of the general population is to follow by states.

"(7) A French mission accredited to the government shall be set up in Damascus with the following authority:

"(a) Temporary

"To serve as a 'control committee' charged with supervising the execution of the terms accepted by the Government.

"(b) Permanent

"To study ways of applying the French mandate in the eastern zone, i.e. cooperation in organizing and facilitating the affairs of government departments and public utilities.

"This committee under the chairmanship of Colonel Cousse will at first consist of the following subcommittees:

"Military

"Fiscal (for taxes, accounting, government property, surveying activities, and the post)

"Administrative (for public welfare and health)

"Economic (for agriculture, mines, and public works)

"Justice

"Public education."

Then General Gouraud came to the last condition, which he read with great solemnity:

"(8) In case any one of these articles is not carried out or an act of hostility is committed against the French army anywhere at all, the expedition will regain its absolute freedom of action."

"These are our terms," he said, handing me the memorandum.

It was crystal clear that the French had not deviated one bit from the idea of occupying Damascus. On the contrary, through these conditions they were trying to fashion a pretext to launch another campaign and strike a new blow. The last article, in particular, gave them ample scope for the realization of their aim, since the person who made the telegram's delay an excuse to march and seize strategic positions after their abandonment by the Syrian army could use it whenever he wished to justify another blow. . . as long as the occurrence anywhere of any act of hostility whatever gave him the right to advance. . . and occupy Damascus in a single operation.

I fully realized all this as I listened to the General read the memorandum, so I merely said: "I am greatly astonished by these new demands because we agreed

to all the conditions in your ultimatum and began to carry them out in accordance with your request. We can't see any justification for these new conditions and demands."

"These aren't new conditions," he countered, "but new guarantees which we consider it our duty to obtain."

It was obvious that an argument on this point would be useless. "Words," I said, "don't change the facts of the case in the slightest. You set new conditions and under the circumstances I have no alternative but to go back to Damascus and submit them to my King and colleagues."

"No," he objected strongly, "I see no reason for postponing a solution of the matter because the Emir has vested you with full power."

He picked up the letter of credentials which he had placed on the side of the desk and began to read it aloud: "We have sent our Minister of Education Şāṭi' al-Ḥuṣrī to you with full authority." He repeated the line and said: "You see the Emir says 'full authority', so you must use it before returning to Damascus. You may accept or reject. But you have to do it here. . . at once."

"It's true," I conceded, "that the King wrote that, but I assure you that it never occurred to him that you would set new conditions. Neither the King nor any of my colleagues in the Cabinet thought of such a possibility. We firmly believed that when you learned that we had done as you requested, you would not hesitate to withdraw your soldiers from the places and regions seized contrary to the terms of the ultimatum. Under the circumstances I do not consider myself empowered to make any decision whatever on these new and surprising demands."

"I tell you again that I haven't made any new demands, only new guarantees to carry out the old conditions. And you do have full power. So you must decide now—either to accept or reject them."

"I know what the King and my fellow ministers intended by sending me here. I cannot make any decision at all, either to accept or reject, until they are consulted."

"I won't permit any delay," the General replied sharply. "The Emir vested you with absolute power which you must use right now. Answer at once, yes or not!"

In view of this strong pressure I turned to another means of persuasion. "But I don't understand the wisdom of your insistence, sir, because I didn't ask you for a new postponement. Military operations have come to a stop by virtue of the truce we concluded with your commanders for a period of time that will terminate tomorrow morning. It is now 10 o'clock and if I leave right away I can get to Damascus before 2:00 p.m. and submit the matter to the King and the cabinet. The government will notify you of its decision before the truce expires."

"There still is no need to delay," he said stubbornly. "You have full authority to settle the matter, and you must do so. Say yes or no!"

Having exhausted all the logical arguments, I could only resort to an emotional appeal. "Permit me to ask, sir, do you intend to nullify the truce arranged between your representative and myself? I should never have expected this from an officer of France, from one who carries her honor in his hands. If you cling to the point of view which you have expressed, I shall be deeply distressed. It will be the greatest disappointment of my life and force me to regard everything that I have read and heard about France as false and misleading."

The General appeared to be moved, particularly when I referred to the honor

of France. He shifted his position. "Let it be as you wish," he faltered, "provided that there be no new delay."

"I promise you that there won't be any. I shall leave immediately. I'll notify you of the Government's decision as soon as possible. . . before the expiration of our truce." I picked up the memorandum and proclamation and rose to say goodby. He too got up.

"Above all, no delay. . ."

I reassured him once again and left the room.

I felt as though I had escaped from an incubus that had crouched on my chest. I soon forgot about it, however, in contemplating the disaster portended by the memorandum I was holding in my hand.

###

I came back to the garden and walked over to where Colonel Toulat and Jamil al-Ulashi were sitting.

"We'll leave right now." I said to Toulat.

"We'll have to get the car ready first," he answered, rising.

He left for a few minutes. "The General wants to meet Jamil Bey," he announced on his return.

I didn't know what the request meant any more than I could find a reason to object. I was afraid that Jamil would start babbling again just as he did on the way, so I told him in Turkish:

"Don't express any opinion whatsoever. I refrained from doing so. Be careful about saying anything that would give him a clue as to what our attitude might be toward his new demands."

Half an hour later he reappeared with Colonel Toulat, who spoke first:

"The General wants you to wait a while because he is writing a personal letter to the Emir. This delay won't hurt you because there is a train leaving from Rayaq at 2:30 p.m. which we can make. We'll arrive in Damascus just before evening."

The idea of going by train terrified me, but I thought it prudent to dissemble.

I was soon summoned to the presence of the General who gave me the letter addressed to King Faisal. "I want this letter to reach His Highness the Emir. I beseech his patriotism and supreme wisdom."

###

On the way back

We got in the car and rode to Rayaq. At the station there was much evidence of military preparations. As soon as I observed the piles of rails and beams being loaded onto freight cars, the main reason for their urging us to change our travel plans occurred to me, i.e. the desire to benefit from our trip by shipping supplies needed to repair the railroad.

A disturbing thought then came to mind: suppose the railroad is cut in several places, what would happen to us and our mission? The answer to the question was clear—we would not reach Damascus before the expiration of the truce and General Gouraud could use the failure of the answer to arrive as a pretext for the final advance. I couldn't communicate my fears and misgivings to anyone. I paced up and down the station mulling over ways of avoiding the dangers inherent in this new trick.

A quarter of an hour passed, then a half hour, as the loading continued, with no indication of an early departure.

"We're very late," I said to Toulat grimly, "and I'm worried that we'll be at the Wādī by nightfall. I'm afraid that something will happen to delay us very considerably. Since we shall have no means of communicating with the General once we enter the Wādī, I think we ought to give up the idea of the train and go by car so that we can easily get in touch with him if we have to."

"I'm sorry that can't be arranged," he replied, "because the car that brought us here has gone back to 'Ālayh."

This was a pretty thin excuse, so I said: "We're in a military station located alongside a large military camp with many cars—you can commandeer one of them."

"But I have no authority to do so," he protested.

"How can you say that? I should imagine that the high ranking officer accompanying an official negotiator would be able to use any vehicle he happens to meet."

Just then a military car turned off the road and stopped close to us.

"Please get this one, Colonel!"

He tried another approach. "Traveling by automobile is very tiring. A train ride is more comfortable and I think better for you."

"Especially since you're not a soldier and unaccustomed to the hardships of travel," Jamīl al-Ulashī put in.

"This is no time to discuss comfort or discomfort. I can't go by train now that we have been delayed so long. . . If you don't find a car here able to bring us to Damascus," I said turning to Toulat, "at least get us to headquarters. There's no doubt that they'll be able to provide us with transportation to Damascus. So try this one."

Toulat had no choice. He spoke briefly to the officers and returned.

"Please get in. It will take you to headquarters in Ta'nāyil."

We left Rayāq and hardly proceeded 200 metres when the car stopped on account of "motor trouble."

"Oh what bad luck! I wish you'd give up the idea of going by car. . . Let's take the train," repeated his first suggestion.

"Train travel is more comfortable," Jamīl said backing him up again, "and you're not used to hardship."

I didn't doubt for a moment that Toulat and the officers he talked to in Rayāq had arranged the breakdown. I therefore made up my mind once and for all.

"Impossible!" I cried. "I am prepared to walk, just as long as I can get in touch with General Gouraud, but I can't go by train after this delay."

I actually started to walk. I was encouraged by the fact that headquarters in Ta'nāyil was almost within sight. Toulat and al-Ulashī reluctantly followed me. From time to time each one sang his familiar refrain, but I ignored them except to shout: "That's impossible. The decision is final. No train travel!"

We plodded along for some time when an ambulance came by heading for Rayāq.

"When this car stops, you can order it to turn back and take us to Ta'nāyil," I urged Toulat.

Despairing of his inability to convince me, he agreed. He halted the car. We got in and rode to Ta'nāyil, General Goybet's headquarters. It was already 5:00 p.m.

"I left General Gouraud more than six hours ago," I told General Goybet, "and I'm still here. I can't say when I'll be able to pass through your zone to Damascus, if things continue this way. More than half the time provided for the answer was lost in reaching you here. I don't believe there's enough time left even to cross your zone. So please arrange for me to telephone General Gouraud. I want to tell him what has happened."

"It's very difficult to do that," he said hesitantly. "We don't know where he is now."

"It's difficult for me to understand why it should be impossible for the expedition leader to communicate with the commander in chief. The matter is very urgent, General, and I must reach General Gouraud in order to explain exactly what has occurred and ask him to handle the matter in accordance with the most elementary principles of common sense and logic. The hours I shall have to spend in your zone because of your own faulty arrangements must be added to the allotted period. Otherwise, I won't be able to deliver the General's memorandum and letter to King Faisal in time."

"I'll do what I can," he said. He was gone for a few minutes.

"They're trying to reach the General," he announced on his return. He then invited me to sit down on a peak overlooking the Biqā' plain. We chatted about generalities.

"I'm very fond of the Arabs," he said, "the Moslems in particular. . . because I'm an African. I lived in Africa for thirty years."

I didn't listen very attentively, for my mind was engrossed with reaching General Gouraud and persuading him to accede to my request. I scarcely breathed until the connection was made and I could talk with the General. He agreed to add the following day of the truce and wait for our answer until midnight of July 24th.

We thus gained for Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah 24 more hours. General Goybet provided a car to drive us to Damascus. We left Ta'nāyil very late in the day, reached the Wādī al-Zurzūr at night, made brief contact with our forces in the foothills of Maysalūn, and rode on to Damascus.

###

In Damascus

I arrived in Damascus fully convinced that, regardless of the change in circumstances, the French were resolved to occupy our country *in toto* with every available means. Even if we yielded to their new demands and carried them out, we couldn't avert the predetermined result because they wouldn't hesitate to present additional ones.

I went to the royal palace immediately, though it was late in the evening. I handed over the personal letter and the official memorandum to the King and in the presence of several ministers narrated everything that had taken place.

In the letter that General Gouraud gave me at the last minute King Faisal was urged to "get rid of the hotheaded extremists around you" in order to guarantee the "establishment of friendly relations between Syria and France" and "the

execution of the mandate which France received in accordance with the decision of the League of Nations" in an atmosphere permeated with "a spirit of mutual understanding and sincerity." Then followed the early assurance of the General that "the mandate does not mean that the country's independence will be infringed."

King Faisal appeared to be very tired. He read the letter and memorandum and listened to my story without comment. He ordered the cabinet to hold a session in the morning to discuss the matter thoroughly.

The cabinet met with King Faisal in the palace the following morning, on the last day of the truce, and heard the new conditions that I had brought from 'Ālayh. I gave them the gist of my talks with General Gouraud and expressed my views on French intentions based on the first hand knowledge I acquired during my trip, which took about 28 hours. As the ministers listened to the General's terms and my observations, most of them appeared bewildered and sullen. Some were reluctant to express an opinion. The majority, I noted, were not convinced of my personal conclusion and it seemed that even King Faisal was far from agreeing with me. Unquestionably, the letter written by General Gouraud at the last minute, after his meeting with Jamīl al-Ulashī, had a powerful effect on his thinking because on the surface it revealed confidence in the King, by attributing responsibility for what had happened to the hotheaded extremists, and repeated the assurance that our independence would not be endangered by the mandate.

However, my judgment was soon borne out; the French designs were unmasked even before the cabinet adjourned. Colonel Cousse came to the palace with another telegram from General Gouraud in which he demanded permission for the French army to advance to Khan Maysalūn on the grounds that only thus could its needs be satisfied. Here is the text:

"Urgent telegram — Priority

To: Colonel Cousse, Damascus No. 2/358

Date & time of issuance: 23/7/1920, 10 o'clock

Place of issuance: Beirut, Summer Residence

"The truce terms were submitted yesterday to the Minister of Education. I provided him with a car to return to Damascus. The Division Commander has told me that the 24 hours he spent in the region of 'Ayn Judaydah impeded him to state that it is impossible for the division to remain encamped in the said location owing to the scarcity of water and the condition of the road leading to Takīyah Station, which is suitable only for mule travel. He regards it as vitally necessary for his troops to move to another place where there is enough water and a connection to the railroad station by a road over which vehicles can pass.

"Tell the Emir that my Chief of Staff will be at the Wādī, which has been established as a dividing line between the two armies, tomorrow at 6 o'clock to decide with the Emir's representative the question of the division's moving to a more suitable location. From the available intelligence it appears that the encampment must be set up at Khān Maysalūn. Otherwise there is no change in the truce terms.

"Gouraud"

This telegram was fresh proof of the correctness of my analysis of the real intentions of the French. Yesterday General Gouraud informed me of his conditions for halting the march and insisted that I accept or reject them on the spot and not refer them to the King and the cabinet. Today in this telegram he added a new condition that would guarantee his troops unimpeded passage through the Wādī al-Zurzūr and over the Maysalūn foothills up to the abundant springs adjacent

to the well known as Khān Maysalūn. General Gouraud's obvious purpose was to bring his troops to within 25 kilometres of Damascus, wait for another opportunity to make a new demand, and then march them right into the heart of the capital.

The last telegram made it impossible for anyone to talk about the necessity of accepting the terms. It was decided to send messages to all the countries asking for help and to summon the foreign consuls to a meeting at which they could be apprised of the situation. This task too was assigned to me.

As I was leaving the session, Yūsuf al-'Aẓmah, who had adjusted to the reality with great temperateness, came over to thank me for my success in extending the truce by an additional 24 hours. He said that he intended to exploit this gain to the maximum. He was doubtless aware that rejection of the conditions would lead to a clash destined to end in defeat, but he was resolved that it would be a glorious defeat.

###

The meeting with the diplomats was held at the Italian Consulate General because the Marquis de Paterno was the dean of the corps. For some time we were familiar with the fact that Count Sforza, the Italian Minister of Foreign Affairs, had decided to pay special attention to eastern affairs and develop a new approach to the area. He therefore deemed it advisable to send a distinguished personality to Damascus to promote Italian foreign policy at this new stage in its evolution. During the course of his stay the Marquis showed great sympathy for the Arab cause in general and the Syrian cause in particular.

I began my talk before the assembled guests by detailing the sequence of events. I then explained what took place during the past three days, exposing General Gouraud's guile in occupying the mountains and valleys in a steady onward sweep after our government had accepted the terms of the ultimatum and started to demobilize the troops and evacuate the military garrison stationed in Mijdal 'Anjar. I dwelt on the most important aspects of my conversation with General Gouraud in 'Ālayh to show his craftiness.

The Marquis de Paterno and Duranda the Spanish Consol expressed regret and disapproval. However, the American Consol said:

"My government decided some time ago not to interfere in the internal affairs of Europe."

"We're not asking you to interfere," I replied. "We only want you to learn the true state of affairs in order to inform public opinion in your country. Even though they don't want to meddle in European politics, the citizens of the United States are undoubtedly interested in knowing what is happening in the world, especially in this part of the East. We simply want you to learn the facts in order to communicate them to your countrymen."

The attitude of the Iranian Consol was strange. "It is difficult for us to learn the truth," he said, "because we haven't heard the other side's version. I know that they believe the telegram was delayed by the action of guerrillas." I had to draw his attention to the exchange of telegrams between General Gouraud and King Faisal.

"If you wish, I am prepared to show you the telegram in which the General thanked the King for accepting the terms. Let us suppose, for the sake of argument, that the General was wholly unaware that the terms had been accepted. That might justify the advance of his troops, but not, under any circumstances, the failure to recall them after he learned the facts. As for using this contention as a basis for new demands, why it is absolutely unwarranted."

"In any case," I said turning again to the entire group, "you have all personally observed the most significant part of the developments, i.e. the government's accepting the terms of the ultimatum and starting the demobilization of the army, which caused such a furore throughout the country that we had to take up arms to quell the disorders. And then, despite all this, the French troops marched. Even now they are advancing upon Damascus. . ."

My words evidently made an impression on de Paterno, for he openly supported me and promised to do everything in his power to inform Italian public opinion, indeed European opinion generally, about this shocking injustice.

###

Following my remarks to the consular corps I set out for the palace. En route I noticed that the streets were crowded, most densely in front of the palace. I soon discovered that "the decision to resist" had spread among the people.

I told King Faisal what had happened at the meeting with the consuls. In the midst of our conversation Sheikh Kāmil al-Qaṣṣāb rushed into the room and, extending his hand to the King, said:

"As long as you have decided to resist, I promise you that I will recruit 10,000 armed men by evening."

A comprehensive volunteer enlistment program soon got under way in the city to the accompaniment of enthusiastic mass demonstrations.

###

Just before sunset Colonel Cousse came to the palace to get the government's answer to General Gouraud's memorandum and telegram. When he found out that it hadn't been written yet, he asked for some sheets of paper and wrote on them "draft", the first accepting the conditions, the second rejecting them. He handed the sheets to al-Shahbandar and said:

"I have prepared two drafts for you to simplify the job. Choose either one so that we may become familiar with it."

The form in which Cousse drafted the answers pleased no one. The final text, phrased less coarsely, read, in part:

"We loathe war, but acceptance of the terms set forth in your last memorandum would inevitably lead to a civil war. We are prepared to carry out in full the ultimatum dated July 14th. We have thus far done so in the case of four of the terms and pledge ourselves on our honor to finish the task in all sincerity, provided that the French forces be withdrawn from the places they have lately occupied."

###

Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah came in after supper to take leave of us before proceeding to the front. He walked with me to a corner of the room and said in Turkish in a tear-choked voice:

"I am going! I leave Leila in your care. Please don't forget her!"

Leila was his only daughter. She had come with her mother from Istanbul two weeks ago, i.e. just before the storm broke. I sensed at once what he meant.

He was going away resolved never to return. At this dreadful moment I didn't want to express any opinion whatsoever.

"I won't. You can be quite sure of that," I replied very calmly.*

* Three days after this painful scene, fate decreed that I discharge the trust that Yūsuf al-ʿAzmah had laid upon me. During the course of the evening we spent in Damascus after our return from Kiswah, Chief Chamberlain Ihsān al-Jābirī and I went to his house where we found his bereaved wife and daughter Leila. We transmitted to the mother King Faisal's condolences and His Majesty's promise to send Leila a monthly allowance of 20 dinars regardless of the place or circumstances in which he might find himself. They gave me the assignment of seeing that this promise was kept—and it was, even in Baghdad, until the end of the days of the Wandering King.

THE DAY OF MAYSALŪN AND THE FOLLOWING WEEK

The beginning of July 24th was the time set for the expiration of the truce concluded with General Gouraud. It was expected that the French would first attack in the foothills at dawn. Details of the battle, which started at the predicted time, began to trickle back. Although I couldn't entertain any hopes of victory in view of what I knew about our army and the equipment of the French, I kept wishing that the outcome would remain in doubt as long as possible for the sake of our military honor. By 10 o'clock, however, we received word that the army had been defeated and the front shattered. Yūsuf al-Āzmah was reported to have been killed. I said no—he committed suicide at Maysalūn, a true martyr!

Neither the soldiers and weapons we collected nor the fortifications we managed to improvise proved able to withstand for more than a few hours the violent assault of a French army in possession of every conceivable weapon of destruction—heavy artillery, tanks, and airplanes.

###

Between Damascus and al-Kiswah

It was decided that the cabinet should move to al-Kiswah by train and the King by automobile. I suggested that we first explain to the people that the government was leaving the capital in order to continue the struggle for the rights and independence of the country. My colleagues agreed and we wrote the text of a statement which we submitted to the royal cabinet for final drafting and release over the signature of Prime Minister Hāshim al-Atāsī. We arranged for everyone to be in Hejaz Station at 1:00 p.m.

I went home and packed some clothing and a few papers. When I got to the station I found it crowded with nationalists who considered it prudent to leave Damascus before the arrival of the French. Most of them were in a state of panic, their ears attuned to gossip, their minds inclined to believe and exaggerate everything. In such an electric atmosphere there were naturally many baseless reports. Some said that the French had reached al-Ghūṭah and were beginning to move toward Qadam; others told how the people of al-Maydān were getting ready to burn the station and blow up the train; still others claimed that the French would arrive shortly. Each rumor was followed by a long string of suggestions aimed at hastening the departure of the train before it was too late. We tried hard to dispel the rumors and soothe frayed nerves. Above all, we wanted the train to leave only at the scheduled hour.

Meanwhile, it occurred to me to check on the public statement we planned to make. I learned that it had been delivered to Hāshim al-Atāsī and upon inquiry he said that he hadn't looked at it yet. He then took the paper out of his pocket and read it carefully.

###

All the ministers were in the station by 12:45 p.m., except Fāris al-Khūrī and 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī. We learned that the former had sent his suitcases and was on his way, but nothing was heard of the latter until much later when

they told us he had notified the Prime Minister that as Minister of the Interior he considered it more useful to remain in Damascus than to go to al-Kiswah. He clung to this notion despite the objections of the Prime Minister.

The train was about to pull out of the station when I thought of asking Hāshim al-Atāsī what he had done with the statement. He exploded with anger.

"The statement! The statement! Why do you keep harping on it," he shouted at the top of his lungs.

Realizing that his nerves were on edge owing to the tenseness of the atmosphere, I said gently: "Because I believe that we will fail in our work if we go without releasing it. We aren't running from our obligations; on the contrary, we are trying to discharge them in the best way possible."

Some of the refugees became extremely agitated and demanded that we leave without delay. Hāshim al-Atāsī was clearly affected by the excitement, so I had to reassure him. "We have no right to leave until the statement is released. We mustn't fail now after having had the responsibility for governing up to this point."

This pacified al-Atāsī and led him to sign the document. He ordered it brought to al-Durūbī who was to arrange for its publication and distribution through various channels. We discovered later that he deliberately neglected to do so.

#

Upon our arrival in al-Kiswah, we converted the railroad cars into offices and sleeping quarters. One of them was specially fitted out for King Faisal who drove up with his retinue toward sunset. He seemed quite different from his usual self. Both his hesitant movements and reticence indicated that he was upset. I thought he was trying to conceal something from us. I said to myself: "Perhaps he is still hoping for a mutual understanding with the French and expecting word to this effect." I was right, for, as I soon found out, he had sent Nūrī al-Sa'īd to meet the French and deferred all decisions until he heard from him. In his anxiety for news he virtually refused to talk or express an opinion on any subject.

What the King was waiting for came in this telegram from Nūrī:

"To the Prime Minister:

"The agreement is temporary. The government may remain provided that it regard past acts as having been committed against its peaceful desires and publish a communiqué along these lines. The French will stay in al-Mazzah for the time being and will not interfere in anything unless the original terms are not carried out. Regular troops may remain in Qadam, the police and security forces in the city. In order to maintain security, regular army units may be converted into police. Your Majesty must come to Damascus. I await written authorization for diplomatic negotiations. Curfew is 8:00 p.m. The city is all quiet. Don't worry.

"Nūrī al-Sa'īd"

This telegram didn't convince me at all. I had no doubt that "its author was wholly uninformed regarding the true intentions of the French" and "incapable of appreciating the degree to which they would persist in deception and trickery." But the King, who was searching for a ray of hope in this dark hour, was comforted by the message. The next day many oral reports similar in tone to the telegram reinforced his optimism and induced him to make an important decision, i.e. to ask 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī to form a new government. He sent the Chief Chamberlain to Damascus to discuss the idea with him in person.

Recent events indicated unmistakably that 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī had already reached an accord with the French and his dissociating himself from us in Damascus when we were about to depart for al-Kiswah was one of the consequences of it. King Faisal therefore thought al-Durūbī could form a cabinet capable of working out an accommodation with the French.

I clearly realized that King Faisal's cheerfulness was completely unfounded and that this sacrifice would be futile. Events soon proved the correctness of my view.

###

'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī formed a cabinet which included three holdover ministers—Fāris al-Khūrī, Jalāl al-Dīn, and Yūsuf al-Hakīm—and four new ones—Jamīl al-Ulashī, 'Atā' al-Ayyūbī, 'Abd al-Raḥman al-Yūsuf, and Badī' al-Mu'ayyid. The Cabinet took office and the King impatiently awaited the hoped-for results.

On the same day the French once again revealed their designs. Chief Chamberlain Ihsān al-Jābirī met Italian Consul General de Paterno in Damascus and was told the French had resolved to proclaim the end of the Faisal regime and to bolster their decision by a "legal ruling", prepared by their myrmidons, which would say that "the investiture of King Faisal was null and void inasmuch as he fled from the capital". The Marquis hinted that it would be a wise move if the King returned to Damascus where he could neutralize the French intrigues and strengthen his position in European diplomatic quarters.

King Faisal adopted the suggestion and decided to anticipate events by going back. All of us left for Damascus by train.

###

Developments swiftly followed one another. General Goybet, commander of the forces occupying Damascus, assembled the members of the new government and read to them a long statement in which he said:

"Emir Faisal dragged the country to within an inch of destruction and his responsibility for the bloody disturbances in Syria during the past few months is so clear and so great that it is utterly impossible for him to remain in the country."

King Faisal immediately sent a telegram to General Gouraud:

"I protest the statements made yesterday to my government by the commander of your expeditionary forces. I reject the responsibility you have sought to place upon me. I consider any communication or instructions that you may send to my government directly and not through me as null and illegal before the League of Nations."

###

Shortly afterwards Colonel Toulat delivered an official note ordering the King to leave the country:

"I have the honor to inform Your Royal Highness that the Government of the Republic of France has decided to request you together with your family and retinue to leave Damascus as soon as possible by the Hejaz Railroad.

"A special train departing from Hejaz Station tomorrow July 28th at 5:00 a.m. will be at the disposal of Your Highness and party."

###

King Faisal emphatically rejected the note:

"I do not acknowledge the right of the French Government to annul the authority to administer the eastern zone officially vested in me by the Peace Conference or to deprive me of the title granted by the Syrian people. . . The entrance of the French army into Damascus flouts the decisions of the Peace Conference and violates the principles of the League of Nations and international morality."

He sent a copy of this protest to all the nations. Nevertheless, he had to yield and actually leave Damascus.

###

I went to Hejaz Station and once again boarded the train. I was the only minister with King Faisal since some of my former colleagues entered the new government, whereas the others, except al-Shahbandar who joined us later, preferred to remain in Damascus.

This took place late at night, but the skies were bright red because of a great fire that was raging in the city. We left the station,* crossed al-Ghūṭah, went through al-Kiswah, then Khirbat-al-Ghazālāh, and finally arrived in Dir^ḳā.

###

In Dir^ḳā

We remained in Dir^ḳā until the morning of August 1st. We used the train as a place in which to sit, eat, and sleep, just as we had done in al-Kiswah. In addition, a tent was set up near the train where the King could receive and chat with the tribal sheikhs.

Dir^ḳā was a veritable crossroads, literally and figuratively. Three railroad lines converged there: one linked it to Damascus in the north, another to Haifa in the west, and the third to Amman in the south. We came to Dir^ḳā from the north and the King had to go either west or east.

In reality, the choice lay between two plans and two policies. If the King went to Haifa, it would mean that he was abandoning Syria, perhaps forever. As against that, he could travel to Europe, meet the principal statesmen, and be in a position to exploit every opportunity to defend the country's rights before the Peace Conference, the League of Nations, and the world press. On the other hand, if he moved to Amman, the southern portion of the country over which he had ruled, he could remain in touch both with Syria and with the Hejaz. However, this would keep him away from Europe and handicap him in his efforts to maintain contact with the Peace Conference and the League of Nations. In brief, the first was the way of political action and peaceful struggle, the other the way of insurrection and violence.

Each plan had its advantages and disadvantages, supporters and antagonists. The King was confused and unable to make up his mind for some time. Moreover, there were certain factors that militated in favor of deferring a decision. He left Damascus with no funds to speak of and had therefore to ask his father King Husein for help. He also wanted to ascertain his father's view of the recent happenings as well as the attitude of the English.

###

The French, however, didn't permit King Faisal to stay in Dir^ḳā very long. They were afraid of the Hawrān tribes and suggested to 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī that he send an urgent wire to the King, informing him of the need to go to the Hejaz. The telegram arrived in Dir^ḳā the day after we did, i.e. on July 29, 1920, and read:

*Fate decreed that I should not see this station until 30 years later when I returned in connection with the celebration of the evacuation.

"Urgent—do not delay even for a minute!

"To the Governor of the Ḥawrān

"Deliver the following telegram to His Majesty the King and send us a reply:

"To His Majesty the King in Dir^ā. The French authorities have notified me that a train was placed at Your Majesty's disposal to go to the Hejaz via Ma^{ān} or Haifa, as you prefer, without stopping in Dir^ā. I beg Your Majesty to hurry in order to save the Ḥawrān from disaster and ruination.

July 29, 1920

"Alā^ā al-Dīn
Prime Minister"

At the same time a French airplane flew over Dir^ā and other towns of the Ḥawrān and dropped leaflets calling on the people to drive King Faisal out of the country. The text:

"From the Commanding General of the French forces to the people of Dir^ā and surrounding territory: Emir Faisal was ordered to leave Damascus and go directly to his own country. He promised to obey. We know that he has done the opposite of what he promised by remaining in Dir^ā and craftily inciting the people into committing acts that can only have the most injurious consequences for a country with which he no longer has the slightest connection. He has been instructed in writing to continue his journey without delay.

"We now ask all of you to urge him to leave your country at once lest his presence make it a bomb target.

"And now we give you ten hours time within which the Emir is to leave for his country. If he refuses, his train must be returned to Damascus."

#

< Under these circumstances the King decided to go to Haifa. He asked Emir Adil Arslān to get in touch with Sir Herbert Samuel, then British High Commissioner in Palestine, to authorize the trip. He also instructed Chief Chamberlain Ihsān al-Jābirī to prepare a reply to 'Alā^ā al-Dīn al-Durūbī. In this telegram he noted that "His Majesty is staying in a part of the country of which he is recognized as King"; nevertheless, he has resolved to leave Dir^ā on August 1st because "he is always striving to help the country and doesn't want any of its inhabitants to suffer harm on his account."

'Alā^ā al-Dīn answered with a repetition of the French demand:

"Urgent

"Dir^ā — Chief Chamberlain

"I have communicated to the French authorities what you said about His Majesty's allaying anxieties. They were grateful for that. They said that if the departure of His Majesty and party is delayed beyond the time specified in your telegram, the French will have complete freedom of action.

July 31st

'Alā^ā al-Dīn
Prime Minister"

Emir Adil Arslān sent a coded telegram in which he counselled delay and recommended going south. Here is the text of his message:

"The opinion of Herbert Samuel is that His Majesty should call on the Governor in Haifa. He has ordered the necessary measures to be taken, including making a private coach available from Lydda. Afterwards he can meet Herbert Samuel in Jerusalem. They act as though free from crisis. Therefore I advise no haste until the arrival of the answer of Ja^{far} who has come to Egypt today.

From 'Ajlūn on it is safe from attack by the French. Consider the last sentence carefully. Answer immediately. I'm waiting in the wireless office."

We deduced two important things from this telegram:

(1) The British wanted King Faisal to turn to the west and accordingly heartily welcomed the idea of his visiting Haifa, which they thought would relieve the pressure on them.

(2) The southern part of Syria from 'Ajlūn down would remain under the British mandate and be secure against French hostilities. If the King went to Transjordan, he could continue his work there without fear of harassment by the French.

However, this telegram didn't change in any way the King's attitude or his decision. He arrived in Haifa on August 1st.

Thus did King Faisal leave the country over which he had reigned for almost two and a half years. Thereafter circumstances evolved in such a way as gradually to distance the great leader from Syria and bring him to Iraq less than a year from the Day of Maysalūn. Here, as a ruler chosen by the people to found a stable new kingdom, he was to have ample scope for the display of his natural talents, knowledge, administrative and diplomatic experience acquired before and after the Day of Maysalūn in Syria and Europe.

CONCLUSION

After the Departure from Syria

Although the events of the days following our departure from Dir'ā are not closely related to Maysalūn, and thus, strictly speaking, do not fall within the purview of this book, I believe that a brief summary of the major chapters in Faisal's career between his departure from Dir'ā and arrival in Iraq will be a fitting conclusion to these memoirs.

King Faisal chose to go to Haifa whence he could sail for Switzerland in order to establish contact with the Peace Conference and the League of Nations. An inquiry revealed that August 20th was the first date on which there would be a boat for Italy. On that date a large British steamer en route to England from Australia was scheduled to touch at Port Said. Other stops included Suez, Alexandria, and Naples to load or unload freight and to take on passengers.

###

While in Haifa waiting for the boat to arrive we were in constant touch with Dir'ā and Damascus. We received a good deal of news, most of it highly unpleasant, about the oppressions of the French and the acts of traitors and paid agents. We also obtained details of the fines imposed by the French on various parts of the country and the texts of the death sentences meted out to many nationalists by military courts. We read articles in the hired press in Damascus which harshly criticized the local regime and praised the French. Military courts passed sentence without a trial, without even calling for a trial. Some nationalists were in their shops when they learned the verdict issued against them from official announcements published in the newspapers. They hastened therefore to conceal themselves until they could escape from Damascus. Every day we met a number of these refugees in Haifa.

###

On August 18th we left Haifa by train for Port Said. In Lydda the British High Commissioner Herbert Samuel came to an official reception for the King and had a long private talk with him. 'Abd al-Malik al-Khaṭīb, envoy of the Hashimite Arab Government in Egypt, met the King in Qanṭarah and gave him news of his father King Husein and some suggestions.

In Port Said the King finally decided on the few persons who were to accompany him to Europe—Nūrī al-Sa'id, Iḥsān al-Jābirī, Emir Zaid with his companions Ṣabīḥ and Rāsīm, and myself. All of us had new passports bearing the name of the Hashimite Arab Government that 'Abd al-Malik al-Khaṭīb gave us in Port Said.

###

The five days on board ship provided a relaxed atmosphere in which King Faisal could both analyze the past and think about the future. They also enabled me to have long talks with him and study his psychology. In truth, these sessions were a continuation of the conferences begun in Haifa. There the King was distracted by the many foreigners as well as Syrians and Palestinians whom he had to meet. Our conversations were often interrupted and only rarely com-

pleted. On shipboard, however, the peaceful mood was conducive to sustained thinking.

When reviewing the past King Faisal critically exposed the right and the wrong in our policies and did not hesitate to express his regret and indignation at the actions and attitudes of certain people. From time to time he also blamed me directly. But in general his thoughts were focused on the future and his plans to rectify the errors of the past. He showed his concern for the future, particularly during the last days of the voyage, when he gave me a new assignment. Since this meant that we would have to be separated from one another for an unpredictable length of time, we had to discuss every contingency that might arise during my absence. The King asked me to go to Istanbul and make contact with the Kemalists in order to learn how much aid we might expect from them in our struggle against the French.

###

While in Europe King Faisal had demonstrated his sympathy for the Kemalist movement in a variety of ways. Despite the Arab Revolt against the Ottoman Empire, he told foreign diplomats and journalists, the Arabs disapproved of the present attacks on the Turks and on their fundamental rights to their own country.

The Syrian Government did more than show sympathy. It helped actively by denying the French the use of the railroad to transport supplies and reinforcements to their troops stationed in the regions of Orfa, Kilis, and Aintab. The French were unable to relieve their men via Cilicia owing to the length and ruggedness of the roads and the heavy snows. The Syrian Government's attitude toward the French request greatly benefited the Turks and ultimately ensured their decisive victory over the besieged French troops. It worried General Gouraud very much, as he made clear in his ultimatum to the Syrian Government. Similarly, in an address delivered after his arrival in Damascus, he declared: "The Syrian Government's attitude in this matter greatly assisted the common enemy and was equivalent to sticking a dagger in the back of the French forces."

Were we not justified therefore in expecting reciprocal aid from the Turks? We did manage not long ago to have discussions with them, but, for several reasons, there were no tangible results. Now that the Turks saw with their own eyes how we helped them, without prior agreement, as proved by General Gouraud's statement, were we wrong to hope for sympathy in our hour of need?

My instructions were to explore this possibility in direct talks with the Kemalist leaders. It was decided that I should leave King Faisal in Italy, proceed to Istanbul at the earliest possible moment, and rejoin the party in Switzerland upon completion of the mission. The many hours spent with the King in discussing the plan gave me an unparalleled opportunity to gain insight into his mode of thought, desires, and hopes.

###

We docked in Naples on August 25th, or one month since the day of al-Kiswah. While on the ship we were cut off from all world news so that when we landed we were naturally eager to find out what had happened. The first newspaper vendor we encountered on the wharf had a great variety of papers to choose from, but they were all in Italian. I bought a few anyway, hoping to guess at the political news by my knowledge of the roots and derivations of French words. As I glanced hastily over the headings of the articles, I noticed in one the name of Syria in large letters. I read it very carefully and deduced that Prime Minister 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī had been killed, or probably murdered, in the Ḥawrān together with one

of the ministers, 'Abd al-Raḥmān al-Yūsuf. I recalled how strongly and vividly al-Durūbī once objected to a suggestion of mine when he enthusiastically repeated, "You don't know the Ḥawrānis. . . by God they will slaughter us," and then moved his right hand over his left in an imitative gesture.

By an exceedingly strange and ironical coincidence it was al-Durūbī himself whom the Hawranis put to death, not because he came to them to defend the local regime, as I had proposed, but rather to quiet things down on behalf of the French.

#

After informing the King and our associates of al-Durūbī's death, I immediately tried to find out when the next boat was leaving for Istanbul. The schedule had one departing only two days later, i.e. on August 27th, so I rushed off to Rome to make the necessary arrangements.

We arrived in Istanbul on the morning of September 1st and anchored in front of Leander's Tower at the entrance of the Straits. Soon some English, French, Italian, and Turkish security officers came on board to check the passports and cross-examine the passengers. My turn was not reached for many hours.

I observed that control rested in the hands of the non-Turks. Each scrutinized a passport, questioned its holder, noted the answers on a special sheet of paper, signed the paper and turned it over to his associates who automatically affixed their signatures. The Turkish officer merely recorded what the other three agreed to.

After following the procedure for some time, I noticed for reasons I couldn't determine that they refused to allow a number of persons to disembark. I began to feel apprehensive about my passport which I had obtained from 'Abd al-Malik al-Khatīb in Port Said. It was a document of "The Hashimite Arab Government" issued in the name of King Husein and indicated that I was "a subject of the Hashimite Arab State", with the added notation that I was Minister of Education in Syria. If the French officer should see it, he would be suspicious and possibly deny me permission to land. I waited anxiously until my hope was realized and the passport came to the Italian officer. Since it was visaed by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome and included permission to leave Italy for Istanbul and return, it was naturally approved by him and quickly passed through the hands of the others. I breathed a sigh of relief and went off to enjoy the beauty of the surroundings until the other formalities were concluded.

I was able to meet a representative of the Kemalists the same evening because he was an old friend of mine. He told me some things on which I hadn't reckoned. Communications between Istanbul and Anatolia were completely disrupted owing to occupation of the former by the Allied troops and the attack on the Kemalists by the Caliph, Waḥīd al-Din. Hence the Kemalists could communicate with Ankara only through Italy via the port of Antalya. This took much time, of course, and if I wanted to hasten the process, I would have to meet the Kemalists in Italy.

I then decided to return by the first ship available, which was not until September 18th. During this interval I broadened my contacts with the Kemalists. I learned all about their problems and explained to them ours in an effort to correct some of their erroneous notions about us.

I learned that their policy was clearly inclined toward mutual understanding with the French in order to combat the English whom they bitterly regarded as their mortal, irreconcilable enemies. The French had worked out an accommodation with the Turks on many points and they were hoping for a full agreement

in a short time because of their active help, both secret and open, against the English.

#

I left Istanbul on September 18th and reached Venice on the 25th. I didn't know where King Faisal was. I knew of his intention to go to Geneva and I read in the cables that he had reached Rome and then Milan. However, I never saw reference to Geneva. Did anything happen to necessitate a modification of his plan? It was impossible for me to get this information in Venice, so I decided to investigate in Milan.

When I came to this bustling city, I was unable to find a hotel room since my arrival coincided with a meeting of the Peoples' Conference which had assumed the responsibility for publicizing and making propaganda for the League of Nations. All the city's hotels, large and small, luxurious and simple, were crowded with diplomats and reporters from every part of the world as well as with thousands of sight-seers who had come to enjoy the celebrations organized there in connection with this historic meeting.

After a prolonged and futile search I was compelled to go to the suburbs of the city. I came to Varese and its magnificent hotel, famous since the time of Verdi, which had many vacant rooms. The following morning I accidentally learned from the doorman that Faisal had breakfasted in the garden of this hotel two days ago and then gone to Cernobio on Lake Como, possibly to the Hotel Villa d'Este. I telephoned the hotel and was told that he hadn't checked out yet. I promptly left Varese for Como. Beside the King, I also met—for the first time—Rustum Haydar who had come from Paris a little while ago.

The King said that he had traveled first of all to Rome and then to Milan where he boarded a train for Switzerland. However, Haddād Pasha met him en route before the train reached the Swiss frontier and delivered the greetings of Lloyd George with this oral message:

"The British Prime Minister is now in Switzerland engaged in important meetings and conferences. Confusion and a host of problems would be created if the King should come there at this time; no one would benefit. For these reasons Lloyd George wants the King to abandon the trip to Switzerland and remain in northern Italy."

The King had no alternative but to follow this suggestion and he selected the Villa d'Este as a residence for himself and party.

I reported on the results of my investigation in Istanbul and the King approved my trip to Rome to establish contacts with the Kemalists there. At the same time he gave me a new assignment. While in Rome they had made the acquaintance of Professor Bonfanti, a teacher of international law in the University, and asked him to prepare a legal deposition on the Syrian case and the dispute with the French Government. They promised to furnish him with the necessary documents and information, arranging further that he come to Como from time to time and that Rustum Haidar go to Rome. The King felt that my staying in Rome henceforth would expedite the work and make it possible to dispense with the trips of the professor and Haidar. Armed with the necessary papers, I went to Rome to discharge two functions simultaneously: to make contact with the Kemalists and to help Professor Bonfanti in the preparation of his report.

#

I experienced no difficulty in meeting the Kemalists as soon as I arrived in Rome because of the knowledge and techniques acquired during my stay in Istanbul. I had known some of them personally for a long time and so gained the

intelligence I needed without much trouble. A careful reading of the rather large number of Ankara newspapers that they gave me helped form a clear picture of the Kemalists in Anatolia and their views.

I concluded that it would be a good idea to open direct mail communication with a member of the government. I reviewed the names of the officials in charge of the various administrative and political departments in Ankara and selected Ferid Bey, who was then Minister of Finance.

I knew him from the time that he was an instructor in political history in the Royal College and chief of the editorial board of the newspaper *Ifham*. He was a man of distinguished scholarly temperament with the ability to remain objective even in his political thinking. While studying in Paris before the Ottoman Constitutional Revolution, he published a pamphlet entitled **Three Policies** in which he analyzed the basic political philosophies struggling for supremacy in Turkey: Ottomanism, Pan-Islam, and Pan-Turkism (or Pan-Turanism). He was a Pan-Turanist, but a practical one. He held that the true interests of the Turks demanded that they turn their eyes from the south to the east. I recall an occasion when he expounded his views with unusual clarity and boldness. The Turks, in his opinion, did not have the power to assimilate the Arabs, nor was it to their advantage to weaken themselves by making such an attempt. Therefore, they should come to some understanding with the Arabs and concentrate wholly upon the Turkic stock in the country and upon those issues which directly concern the future of the Turks.

The most important problem, in his view, was that of the eastern provinces "because two alien elements are living there in the midst of the Turkish world and preventing the Anatolian Turks from developing close relationships with the Turks outside of Anatolia. These two elements are the Kurds and Armenians. The Kurds will be easy to absorb because like the Turks they are Moslems and have no special culture and written literature. Appropriate measures should be taken to assure their swift integration. The Armenians, on the other hand, cannot be absorbed because their religion is different and they possess a special culture and written literature. Consequently, we must seek ways to isolate them from the Turks."

When I learned that this Ferid Bey was a powerful deputy in Ankara, I decided on the basis of the views he held long before the World War and the outbreak of the Arab Revolt—I remembered them very well—that he was probably the best qualified person to treat our cause without rancor or vengefulness. I sent him a letter by one of the special messengers who traveled the sea route from Rome to Ankara via Adalya. Here in translation is what I wrote:

"My dear friend Ferid Bey:

"I am writing you this letter on the strength of our old friendship and your frankness, which I esteem very highly.

"I was in Syria for the past year and a half during which time I took an active part in politics. However, I was forced to leave the country as a result of the French occupation. I am now in Rome continuing the struggle. We have brothers, associates, and societies working for the cause inside the country and abroad. We have many plans to organize the activities of these societies and would therefore like to obtain from you certain information that would enable us to complete these projects:

"(1) How does the Anatolian Government view the Hejazi Government and what is its position with reference to it?

"(2) What is your government's attitude toward Syria? Iraq?

"(3) Can your government help Syria in her struggle against the occupation; in particular, can it furnish the nationalist forces which may be assembled in the north with arms and supplies?

"(4) If it should be necessary to send some people to organize or lead the resistance movement and it is impossible for them to function from the south, could they be guaranteed passage through Anatolia?

"Please answer these questions. And give my regards to all my friends.

"October 29, 1920"

#

Along with this letter I enclosed another, quite detailed, addressed to Yunus Nadi, owner of the newspaper **Yeni Gun** (The New Day). I asked Ferid Bey to read and then deliver it to him. I was impelled to write this letter by an article on the Arab case and King Husein that I read in one of the numbers of his newspaper.

When King Faisal came to Naples, a news agency confused him with King Husein, i.e. it mixed up the King of the Hejaz with the son of the King of the Hejaz, and sent cables announcing the arrival of the King of the Hejaz in Naples and his departure therefrom for Rome. **Yeni Gun** picked up this item and, in an article entitled "The King of the Hejaz Goes to Europe", used it to assail King Husein and fiercely criticized the Arab Revolt. Following the text of the news dispatch it said:

"The Hejaz is holy Moslem territory, so how can one who has set himself up as king over it go to Europe? What will he do in Europe? What will he beg for there, now that the French have ignominiously expelled his son from Syria?"

Throughout the article King Husein is labelled "treacherous" and accused of the vilest of crimes.

I was an old personal acquaintance of the newspaper owner. We became firm friends after I established the "new school", particularly when I was active in the Ottoman Press Association and presided as chairman over its convention. He was an extremist in his thinking and writing. His articles were not profound, though marked by strong enthusiasm and an exciting style.

Rather than publish an article I preferred to write him a detailed letter in which I would refute his views and in a wholly scientific manner expound my own on the Arab case. After some prefatory remarks I said, in translation:

"When we were in Damascus we believed in the unity of Arab and Turkish interests. We therefore permitted the Turkish forces in action north of Aleppo to be furnished necessary supplies, while we prevented the French from using the Syrian railroads in their operations against these forces. This persuaded General Gouraud that we had made a formal agreement with you.

"In view of all that I was unable to overcome my bewilderment and anger when I chanced to read an Anti-Arab piece in a recent issue of your newspaper **Yeni Gun**.

"You are furious because of a garbled dispatch sent by one of the news agencies regarding the trip to Europe of the King of the Hejaz. You say that from the time of the revolt against the Istanbul government there was no disaster but that it befell the Arabs and Turks alike. Not merely the Arabs and Turks, but all Moslems have been trampled under the feet of the victorious French and English.

"I personally do not feel that we are as yet in a position to determine correctly the responsibility for recent events because much more time than has elapsed so far is needed in order to study and analyze all the facts, relevant documents, etc. However, on certain things, at least, I think we know enough to form a judgment. I should like now to refute the charges set forth in **Yeni Gün**.

"Can anyone say: If it hadn't been for the Hejaz Revolt, the French and English would not have conquered the Germans and would not have been able to invade the Islamic world? I doubt that anyone can seriously make such a claim.

"In one of his speeches, Jemal Pasha said: 'We almost occupied Egypt; only the treachery of Sherif Husein prevented us from doing so.' This speech was essentially propagandistic, aimed at confusing public opinion during wartime, so no one should pay much attention to it.

"The circumstances of war had bound Ottoman power and that of the Islamic countries to German power. How could King Husein's action have had any measurable effect on the final result, given the gigantic forces arrayed against each other? Was the course of the war really altered by the outbreak of the revolt in the Hejaz? Suppose there were no revolt at all? Did it contribute significantly to the defeat of Germany? I believe the answer to be in the negative, that the effect of the revolt on the victory of one side or the defeat of the other was absolutely negligible. Germany's surrender was inevitable. Similarly, the capitulation of the Ottoman Government was certain to follow the collapse of Germany whether the Sherif revolted or remained loyal.

"I firmly believe that these facts are incontrovertible. It is therefore incumbent upon us to ask; was it possible for Syria to secure herself against invasion once the Allies achieved total victory over the Ottoman Empire and Germany? The military occupation imposed on such cities and towns as Edirne, Bursa, and Izmir, despite their remoteness from battle areas, leave no doubt as to the answer to this question. No, Syria could not have avoided occupation after the Allied victory, even if there hadn't been any uprising in the Hejaz at all.

"My opinion is supported by Enver Pasha who in a speech to Parliament, after some deputies showed uneasiness over the British advance into Iraq, said substantially as follows: Gentlemen, we must face the facts squarely. We have tied our fate to Germany's. If the Germans win, we shall come out of the war unharmed, even though we have lost some portions of our territory, because they will restore them all to us. If they suffer defeat, God forbid, we shall lose everything, even though our country remains free from occupation.

"Enver Pasha's remarks are particularly applicable to Syria. Syria's fate too was dependent on the course of the war and her territory could not have remained inviolate after Germany's collapse and the surrender of the Ottoman Empire.

"Let's go a step further. Suppose there were no Arab Revolt and Arab troops had not entered Syria. What would have happened to her? As I said above, I am convinced that the Revolt had no effect on the final outcome of the war. However, I am equally sure that it made a profound impression on Syria. Without it the foreign armies that invaded Syria after the war would not be encountering the resistance they do, nor be confronting a hostile local government, which was the child of this Revolt, nor be clashing with the idea of freedom and independence that has been implanted in the minds of the people. Thus, the situation in Syria and the other Arab countries would now be far worse than it is.

"This isn't all. Without the Arab Revolt and the government that emerged as a result, the French would not have needed to hold so many troops on the Syrian coast for a year and a half or launch a campaign against the Arab Government in

recent months; they would have been able to use all these forces to strengthen their position and authority in Cilicia. In other words, if there had been no Arab Revolt and no Syrian Government, the French could have added to the forces occupying Cilicia all the troops engaged in the invasion of interior Syria and expulsion of King Faisal—in the phrase of **Yeni Gün**—and thus profoundly changed the course of the war in that part of the world.

“But what does it profit us to debate the past? We are still in the stage of making history, not writing it—to use the expression of the talented poet ‘Abd al-Ḥaqq Ḥāmid. So let’s look toward the future, not the past. Let’s not shape our actions by old emotions. Is there anything more harmful in diplomacy than to act on the basis of passion? Just think for a moment! How is it that the Russians who were considered “the eternal enemies of the Turks” have now become “the only hope”, the ones on whom the Turks are relying for help against their new enemies. Under the present circumstances, how can you continue to regard the actions of Sherif Husein and his sons the same way you did over four years ago?

“You doubtless recall that I used to speak about the need of an alliance between the Hejaz and Turkey, even before I moved to Syria. You agreed with me on this. No wonder then that I was shocked by the article in the **Yeni Gün**. I am sure that after you have pondered my observations you will go more deeply into the matter and reverse the opinions expressed in your newspaper.”

This is how I explained my “personal opinion”, formed quite some time ago, on the role played by the Arab Revolt in the history of the Near East in general and the Arab East in particular. I arrived at it by asking myself “Suppose this had or had not happened” in connection with a variety of events.

My purpose in writing this letter was not so much to rebut the newspaper article as to educate a writer who possessed considerable power to mold Turkish public opinion both in his capacity as the owner of an old newspaper transferred from Istanbul to Ankara and as an influential deputy in the Grand Assembly and active member of the Committee on Foreign Affairs. Since I also wanted Ferid Bey to be familiar with my point of view, I didn’t send the letter to Yunus Nadi directly, but placed it in an envelope addressed to Ferid, with the request that he first read and then deliver it to Yunus Nadi.

###

Oddly enough, later on I was impelled by the force of events to expound these theories in Arab circles as well; for many nationalist thinkers became critical of the Arab Revolt as they observed the obstacles besetting the path of the Arab cause. They failed to take into consideration the predicament the Arabs would have been in had this Revolt not taken place.

###

Ferid Bey’s reply reached me almost two months later. Here it is, in part, in translation:

“The nationalist Turkish Government is naturally anxious that all the Islamic countries should be liberated from foreign occupation, and it will not be slow in making every possible sacrifice for this purpose.

“We do not know the present attitude of the Hejazi ruling group toward us. However, we think that this government is too responsive right now to English influence. We want Moslems to be happy and prosperous everywhere.

“We wish in particular, that Syria and Iraq be free from foreign domination and control so that they can progress and flourish in freedom. We are prepared to

cooperate with every Islamic group that adopts this as its goal. It is clear that our present interests demand more than anything else than we give Syria the maximum amount of aid possible.

"The persons who are to go there as organizers and directors of the various activities will be able to pass through Anatolia, provided that they have the necessary credentials."

###

There were important developments in the interval between my sending the letter to Yunus and receiving his answer. The European governments did not recognize the independence of Syria or King Faisal's regime. Faisal therefore was treated in Europe merely as a son of the King of the Hejaz and his representative at the Peace Conference. His work was not restricted to the Syrian case alone, but included all the Arab problems. Some involved the Hejaz, which necessitated getting in touch with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Rome. King Faisal assigned me this task too.

###

I moved to Rome but was unable to travel to meet the King because of a severe attack of rheumatism in my right shoulder, the result, apparently, of exposure to the strong rains during my search for a hotel room in Milan. After a series of diagnostic tests the physicians decided to immobilize my shoulder completely for some time. They bound the right hand to the chest with bandages that encircled my body like swaddling bands. Then the shoulder, hand, and trunk were enclosed in a plaster cast so that the torso resembled the shell of a tortoise. Only my right palm and left hand were left unfettered. I needed help from my companion to write, eat, lie down and get up from bed. As I walked along the street wearing a loose robe or sat at a restaurant table, people must have taken me for a war casualty.

This lasted for three weeks until the surgeon removed the cast and freed my hand. Since I was barely able to move it, I was sent to a scientific masseur for daily treatments to restore mobility to the joints and muscles.

I managed to move about the city and suburbs and do my work energetically, although it was a long time before I could travel to northern Italy. I dictated to my friend Umm Khaldun and, whenever important papers had to be dispatched, I requested someone to come for them from Como.

When Professor Bonfanti finished his report after many long sessions together, Rustum Haydar came to Rome to inquire about my health and pick up the document. At the same time he brought me up-to-date on everything that happened since I left the King in Como.

The trend of world politics made King Faisal's return to Syria absolutely impossible. The speeches delivered before the French and English Parliaments showed unmistakably that the two powers had reached an accord on the basis of freedom of action for the French in Syria after they were officially granted the mandate and the problem of Mosul and Mosul oil was satisfactorily worked out.

Most Syrian politicians maintained that the English would not permit the French to occupy interior Syria. In fact, it became a "settled conviction" with some of them and a large section of the public and persisted until the Day of Maysalūn. However, it was eventually proved that France did not take the last step until she had reached a full agreement with the English on all aspects of the Syrian case.

Millerand, Premier and Minister of Foreign Affairs, frankly said as much

during a Senate debate on the budget for Syria and Cilicia. Senator Victor Birand expressed fear of the unfavorable political consequences to France from her actions in Syria, asserting that "they would lead to the loss of British friendship and do great harm to France's future." Millerand replied: "Our Allies have honestly and straightforwardly told us that France's actions in Syria would not meet with the slightest opposition on their part."

The English newspaper **Daily Telegram** published an article on the Syrian case after the French ultimatum but before the Battle of Maysalūn. After referring to the decision of San Remo on the mandates, the paper wrote:

"Under these circumstances we cannot touch this problem, nor block the military operations undertaken by the French in Syria, nor discuss them. . . any more than France can concern herself with the measures we have taken to suppress the Arab uprising in Iraq. General Gouraud in Syria is doing what he considers right."

Needless to say, the English didn't change their attitude toward Syria after the Day of Maysalūn. They declared, in fact, that they could not assist nationalist activities in Syria. They endeavored to deflect the King's attention from Syria to Iraq by frankly promising to support his candidacy for the throne. King Faisal was at first bewildered by these statements and pledges. Later, however, he overcame his doubts and told them that he would accept the proposition, provided that he were not asked to:

(1) Recognize the mandate, although he was willing to conclude an alliance that would guarantee basic English interests and yet not violate the country's sovereignty and honor.

(2) Go to Iraq until requested to do so by the Iraqis, or ascend the throne without popular approval as expressed by a plebiscite.

If an agreement could be reached on basic principles, the King was prepared to go to London for direct talks with the English leaders.

I recalled the distant origins of the scheme as soon as I heard the details. It seems that the English started to think about shifting King Faisal to Iraq the day after Maysalūn. Nūrī al-Sa'īd mentioned the possibility when he joined us in Dir'ā. The London **Times** published an article suggesting it to the Government ten days after the Battle of Maysalūn. The Paris **Temps** commented on this article during the first week of August. Even **al-Muqattam** in Cairo published it as a news item before we left Haifa for Egypt.

There were many and various motivations for this policy. First of all, the British found themselves in a moral dilemma as between the French and Syrians in general and between General Gouraud and King Faisal in particular. Lloyd George lavishly praised the King before the Parliament, saying: "It is impossible to find a man who is more upright and sincere or more desirous of cooperation with the Allies both in peace time and in wartime." This was on April 29, 1920, i. e., only two and one half months before the French ultimatum.

British military men too, who had worked with the Arabs in the Hejaz and Palestine, on every occasion hailed the great services rendered by the Arab Revolt to the Allied cause. They extolled above all the spirit of courage and daring shown by Faisal in organizing the Revolt and leading his armies in battle.

Hence, the attitude of the British toward the latest events in Syria contradicted not only the pledges made during the war, but also the recent statements made by their own officials. They naturally sought a way to alleviate the moral crisis.

Secondly, English intellectuals had great respect for the power latent in the Arab idea and felt that it should be carefully watched. The **Daily Telegraph** wrote on July 21, 1920, as follows:

"Although not directly involved in this war, we are interested in it because the Arab tribes make no distinction between one European nation and another. They may try to avenge their countrymen in Syria by attacking our positions in Iraq, as they are actually doing now."

After noting that the mandate "requires that the independence of Syria be respected and that the country be governed by Syrian officials who derive their authority from the will of the people. . . France received the mandate in this spirit," it added:

"It is possible that France can convince the nationalist Arabs that her military operations are designed merely to pacify the country and pave the way for self-government. However, the experience of recent years has taught us that nationalism is a plant which grows very swiftly. The Arab tribes were divided and mutually hostile before the war, but now they sense their racial solidarity and unity. They resent being governed by Europeans, contrary to their expectations, and refuse to wait patiently until they are qualified to manage their political affairs, as the great powers say."

These lines expressed the views of many Englishmen interested in the East. It was logical for them to evolve a new policy that would in some fashion satisfy the Arabs.

Thirdly, a new trend in British public opinion with respect to the "Iraqi case" began to be felt a little before the Day of Maysalūn. The military administration in Iraq faced many problems requiring sizable numbers of troops and the expenditure of vast sums of money. The initial attack on Dayr al-Zūr on December 11, 1919 was repeated elsewhere, especially after the declaration of independence on March 8, 1920. Churchill announced on July 19th, i.e. during the crisis in Syria provoked by the French ultimatum, that the uprising had reached the Euphrates, with British casualties amounting to 400 dead alone. A violent attack was made against the British on July 24th, i.e. the day of the Battle of Maysalūn, and the insurrection spread with great speed during the month of August to all parts of Iraq.

Quite a few influential politicians and journalists in England strongly opposed their country's policy in Iraq. The **Times** published a sharp criticism of Lloyd George's statement on March 25th that the British government would request a mandate for Iraq. It supported Asquith's view that England's responsibilities should be restricted to the Basra region, with interior Iraq left to local rule. A member of Parliament spoke on April 29th in favor of a project that would entail the establishment of a "state comprising Iraq, Syria, and Palestine to be governed by Emir Faisal and jointly supervised by the English and French." The **Daily News** and **Daily Express** followed the **Times** in urging that the administration of Iraq be left to the Iraqis themselves.

The Battle of Maysalūn took place in the midst of British public agitation over the Iraqi case which the leaders were seeking to solve. Since Faisal's name had cropped up in their discussions even before the Day of Maysalūn, it naturally assumed greater importance after the battle.

###

The idea of proposing Faisal for the throne of Iraq, which was reflected in the English press less than a week after his departure from Syria, resulted from this same ferment. The newspapers advanced numerous benefits that would

accrue, e.g. "it would conciliate the Arabs and free the English from the tasks of administering Iraq. . . and gratify King Husein and his son Faisal, both of whom rendered valuable aid to the Allies during the World War. . . King Faisal's faithful support in the war with Turkey made him especially worthy of Great Britain's favor."

#

At first King Faisal paid little attention to this talk. All his thoughts were focused on Syria, so much so that a French newspaper wrote that he rejected the proposal because of his tenacious concern for Syria and the Syrian throne. However, his familiarity with the mysterious undercurrents of international diplomacy, which he gained in the foothills of the Alps and on the shores of Italian lakes, and the need, as representative of the Hejazi Government at the Peace Conference, to deal once again with the "kingship of Iraq" seriously. Accordingly, he laid plans to realize the idea in a way that would firmly guarantee the independence and progress of Iraq.

#

While still in Rome I was able to make an important contribution to this goal. Through my contacts with the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs I discovered that the British Government had drawn up tentative texts of the mandates for Iraq and Palestine. Copies were secretly sent to the Italian Government for an expression of opinion prior to their submission to the League of Nations. It occurred to me that the details would be extremely useful to King Faisal in his talks with the British. They might reveal the motives hidden behind the formation of various suggestions and thus help him avoid the diplomatic snares which the Europeans were so supremely skilled in laying.

I tried to learn as much as I could about the projects, particularly the one concerned with the Iraq mandate. The oral information I got from an official in the Foreign Ministry merely strengthened my belief that it was necessary to see the actual texts. After considerable argument I finally persuaded the man to let me borrow the Ministry's single copy overnight. He brought it to me one evening after supper while I was still incapacitated and in need of Umm Khaldun's constant help. I asked her to sacrifice her sleep so that we could make verbatim copies of both documents. We finished the job by morning and rushed them off to King Faisal. He was delighted and sent us his warmest thanks. I learned afterwards that he found them of great value during his negotiations in London.

This was my first direct service to Iraq and her cause.

#

After he concluded his preliminary talks with the British in November, King Faisal decided to go to London via Germany and Belgium. For my part, I saw no purpose in accompanying him on this trip. I felt that my return to Egypt and re-establishment of contacts with our brethren assembled in Cairo would be the most useful thing I could do at that time. Bidding farewell to King Faisal just before he left for England, I sailed from Italy on December 5th and arrived in Egypt on the 9th.

I was soon brought up-to-date on what had happened since we left Syria. Of those actively participating in the struggle, some hid in the interior of Syria, some went to Amman, and others to Cairo. The first group tried to strengthen the spirit of resistance within the country in order to organize uprisings. The second hoped to make Amman a center for nationalist elements. The third engaged in propaganda; they considered it necessary to form a committee to undertake the defense of Syria's rights in the countries of Europe.

The fighters in Amman invited me to join them, as did those in Cairo. I felt, however, that either course of action would embroil me in politics and keep me away from my original fields of specialization. I chose instead to accompany King Faisal to Iraq in order to fashion an educational system in accordance with the desires that he had expressed to me many times. So I gently turned down both those who called me to Amman and those who wanted me to go to Europe, and waited quietly in Cairo.

King Faisal's negotiations with the British were considerably drawn out on account of the differences of opinion among the British themselves regarding the policy they should follow in Iraq on one hand and the French protest against the idea of Faisal's going to Iraq on the other, not to mention the difficulty of reconciling British imperialist ambitions with Faisal's patriotic motives. Nevertheless, an accord was finally reached in March and on the 31st the King left England. He arrived in Cairo on April 14th, proceeded to the Hejaz to see his father, and then went to Iraq via Basra (June 21, 1921).

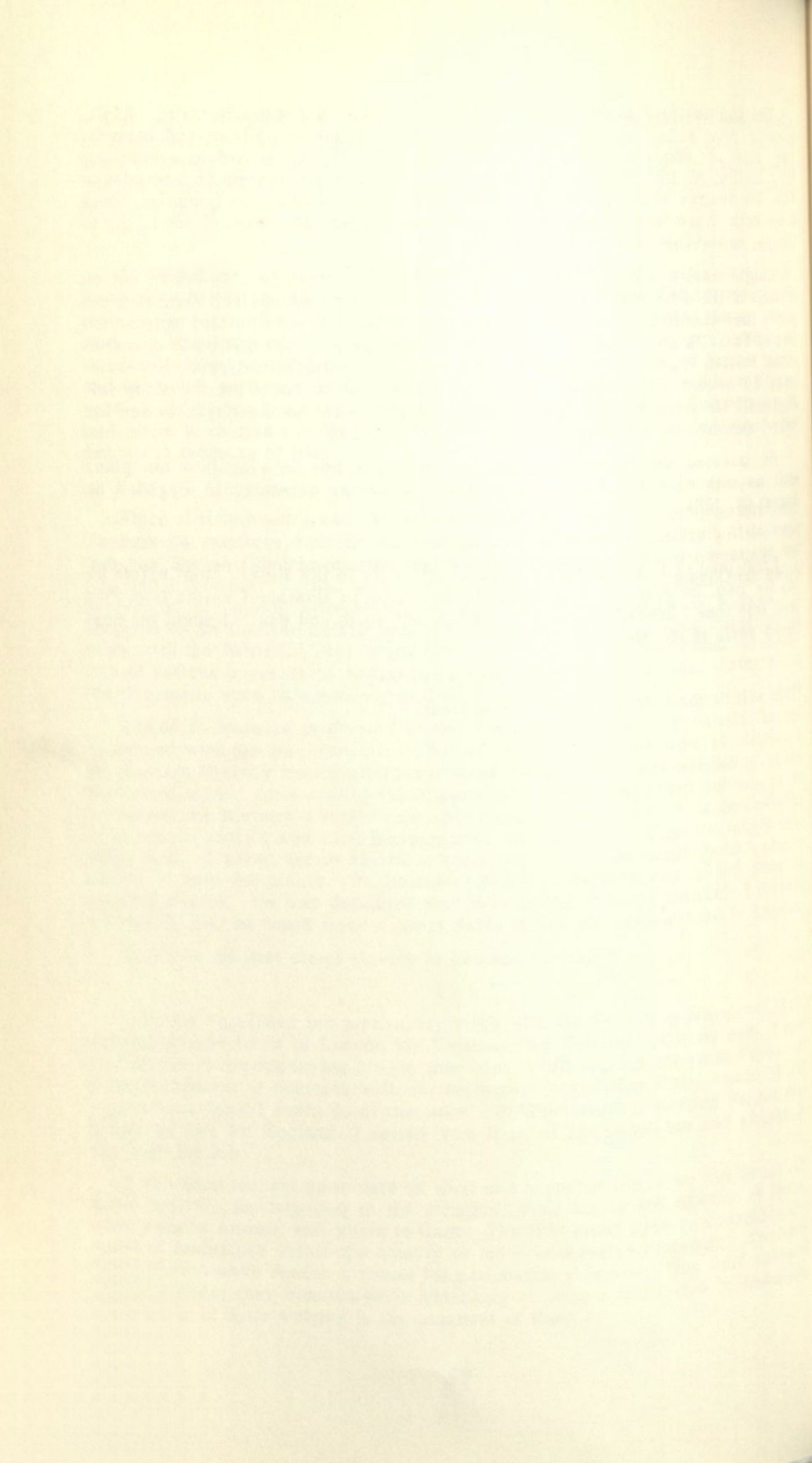
He traveled all over the country making speeches to elucidate his plans until he was chosen King and crowned in a formal ceremony in Baghdad on August 23, 1921.

###

I remained in Egypt throughout the King's stay in the Hejaz. Just before he left for Iraq, he sent me a telegram to meet him in Basra. I sailed from Port Said; this time I headed not north and west, but south and east. I spent the next twenty years of my life

In the Service of Iraq

(This will be the title of my memoirs of Iraq).



APPENDIX

Documents and Data

It was not my intention to write a complete history of the Arab government established in Syria after the World War. I wanted to present only a page of this history, the last page of the days of this government. Nevertheless, I thought it useful to add an appendix containing a collection of documents that would contribute to an understanding of the conditions and circumstances in which the government found itself from the beginning of its existence. These documents were either copied from papers in my possession or drawn from the official newspaper *al-'Asimah* extant at the time. I have also included translated extracts from the record of the sessions of the French Parliament and from the memoirs of General Goybet.

FAISAL THE FIRST

Emir Faisal entered Damascus and in his capacity as commander of the northern armies and representative of his father King Husein announced the formation of the Arab government in Syria. He then went to the Peace Conference in his personal capacity to defend the rights of the Arabs in general and Syrians in particular. Since he had maintained close liaison with the revolutionary societies organized in Syria before the outbreak of the World War, he was considered the representative of these Syrians, too.

The French and their myrmidons, however, denied Faisal the right to speak in the name of Syria and the Syrians. It was therefore deemed necessary to provide him with powers derived directly from the people. These were first granted by the resolution of the Municipal Council in Damascus, then confirmed at the meetings of notables, heads of religious sects, and representatives of the professions, which he attended in various cities of Syria. Finally, the General Syrian Congress conferred on him the crown of Syria when the American Commission of Inquiry arrived on July 2, 1919. In a resolution submitted to the Commission, the Congress declared "that it reposes full confidence in the person of Emir Faisal. . . and avows its complete reliance on His Highness." It also manifested its strong desire to designate him King of all Syria. The General Syrian Congress actually proclaimed Faisal king of "united independent Syria" eight months later, i.e. on March 8, 1920.

1.

The communiqué issued by Emir Faisal, October 5, 1918

To the esteemed people of Syria:

I am grateful to all the Syrians for the sympathy, affection, and cordial reception they accorded our victorious armies and for the swiftness with which they took the oath of fealty to our lord the King, Prince of the Faithful, Sherif Husein, may God grant him victory! I proclaim the following:

(1) An absolutely independent, constitutional Arab government has been established in Syria in the name of our lord King Husein that shall include all Syria.

(2) Riḍā Pasha al-Rikābī has been entrusted with the general leadership of the said government in view of the confidence I have in his ability and fitness for the work.

(3) A military administration has been set up to consider such matters as the commander may refer to it.

Accordingly, I ask the people to maintain tranquillity and order, and to obey the new Government and follow its instructions. I hereby declare that I shall be like a compassionate father to all the individuals united under the banner of the Arab government. I shall be exceedingly harsh to those who dare to disobey its orders and trifle with its laws or place obstacles in the path of progress. I hope

therefore that the people of Syria who have given us such a warm reception will be a model of obedience and self-discipline in order to prove to the entire world that they are a nation worthy of independence and capable of managing their own affairs.

Everyone should know that our Arab government has been established on the principles of justice and equality. It will treat alike all those who speak Arabic, regardless of sect or religion, and not discriminate in its laws between Moslem, Christian, and Jew. It will strive with all its might to strengthen the pillars of this state which arose in the name of the Arabs. It will aim at improving their condition and achieving diplomatic status among the civilized nations.

May God lead us to peace and success in whatever is best for the Arab cause and peace.

Sherif Faisal

2.

**The speech delivered in Aleppo by Emir Faisal,
November 11, 1918**

There is no doubt, gentlemen, that you desire great deeds from us. Since Aleppo is at the tip of Arab territory, its people were not touched by our uprising against the Turks. The Turks were broadcasting to the world that the Sherifs agreed to sell their land to the Westerners for a few dirhams. They tried to have legal opinions publicly issued against us. The simple minded may have been taken in by their tricks.

Islam was created by the power of God and promulgated by the great Prophet Mohammed from whom our family has descended. It is inconceivable, therefore, that people related to the noble Prophet Mohammed could sell or betray the legacy of their ancestors because the welfare of the Moslems is closely bound up with it.

We rebelled for no other reason than to aid the righteous and succor the oppressed. The Turks ruled for 600 years during which time they destroyed the glorious edifice erected by our ancestors. The fire of the Arabs has burned low since that time. It was not extinguished because the Arabs lived for years, nay centuries, whereas other peoples could not have survived at all. They were waiting only an opportunity and a favorable time.

We slept for 600 years but did not die. We watched for a suitable moment to emerge and set to work to strengthen and augment our glory.

When the Turks blew the trumpet of war, they did things which mankind repudiated; there is no need to enumerate them here.

The Arabs called upon the Turks and demanded their rights. When the opportunity presented itself, they took vengeance on the Arabs.

My father saw the Turkish Government was not trying to revive religion or to benefit the country; on the contrary, it allied itself with Germany and proclaimed a holy war in order to take vengeance on the racial elements under its control, including the Arabs. He realized that its principles were not the principles of the truth, so he came to an agreement with the Allies, after relying on the power of God, because he knew that they would deliver the weak and help restore the rights of downtrodden peoples. Together they would cooperate in disposing of the Turks and returning to the Arabs what had been extorted from them.

My father allied himself with the Western governments in the name of the Arabs and shoulder to shoulder they fought Germany and Turkey. This was not, as the Turks asserted, to satisfy selfish desires. Speaking in the name of all the Arabs, I may tell our Aleppo brethren that the Allied governments, particularly England and France, helped us greatly and as long as we Arabs exist on the face of the earth we shall not forget what they have done.

Today we are demanding freedom and independence. These are words. Thus far we have done nothing except expel the Turks from our country. This is retribution because the Divine Power refuses to permit them to go unpunished for their crimes.

An important task lies before us, i.e., to establish a kingdom and a government of which we can be proud before the entire world. The nations have helped us and will continue to do so. I should like now to read to you a telegram that reached me three days ago explaining the feelings of the western powers toward us so that everyone may realize that we did not sell out our country, nor will we ever do so:

The Statement of November 8, 1918

"France and England engaged in the war in the east, which was launched by the ambitions of Germany, in order to liberate completely and finally the peoples who have for many generations been oppressed by the Turkish regime and to set up local governments and administrations deriving their authority from the free choice of the indigenous population. France and England have agreed to recognize, encourage, and support the establishment of such local governments and administrations in Syria and Iraq, the countries already liberated by the Allies, as well as in those areas which they are still striving to liberate. It is not the intention of France and England to impose any regime upon the inhabitants of these regions. Rather, their sole concern is to offer such aid as will facilitate the work of the governments and administrations which the peoples themselves may choose. to ensure honest and equal justice for all, to promote the economic development of the country by stimulating local initiative and urging the spread of education, and to put an end to the old Turkish policy of creating dissension. These are the goals set for themselves in the liberated areas by the two Allied governments."

This message is undoubtedly an historic document of great importance. It reveals exalted human sentiments for which the Arabs can show their gratitude only by realizing the desires of these states through the formation of a strong, just government that will protect the rights of the entire population of the country.

Our position today is delicate: the civilized nations and our Allies look upon us with admiration and esteem; our enemies are critical. The Turks have left our country. We are now like children in that we possess neither government, army, nor education. The majority of the people do not understand at all the meaning of nationalism, freedom, or independence. This is the result of Turkish pressure on the minds and thoughts of the people. We must therefore make them appreciate the blessing of independence. We must strive to be worthy sons of our fathers and to raise aloft the banner of knowledge because nations live only by knowledge, order, and equality. Thus shall we vindicate the hopes of our allies.

I am an Arab and I enjoy no superiority over any other Arab, even by so much as a hair's breadth. I did my military duty, just as my father did his political duty. He formed a mutual assistance pact with civilized nations who redeemed their pledges and are still helping us to set up a regular government. We must

attain it with resolution and determination because the country cannot live in a state of anarchy, that is to say, without a government. This is an obligation that the people must discharge. We shall not be innocent before God of what may happen to this country after today. I and those with me are an unsheathed sword in the hand of the Arabs who will use it to strike whom they wish.

I exhort all my brother Arabs regardless of religion to remain united, advance education, and form a government of which we may be proud. If we do as the Turks have done, we too will be driven out of the country, God forbid; whereas if we do our duty, history will register our deeds with glory. I am the least of people in power and the slightest in knowledge, and I have no virtue save sincerity.

I repeat what I have said on many occasions: the Arabs were Arabs before Jesus, Moses, and Mohammed; religions enjoin truth and brotherhood on earth. Hence, he who seeks to create dissension among Moslems, Christians, and Jews is no Arab. I am an Arab above everything, and I swear to you by my honor and the honor of my family and by everything I deem holy and noble that I shall not forbear from punishing those who dare to do so, and truly none shall blame me. I consider no one a man unless he serves this soil.

We have many able associates, thank God, but they are living abroad, in Turkey and elsewhere. They will soon return, if God is willing, and repair the defects existing here. We may not remain idle until they come. Even if it is impossible to do everything, one must still do what is essential. We should make a start by considering people without regard to the nobility and characteristics of their family, but purely on the basis of their ability, whether they be high born or low, for these is no nobility save in knowledge.

Man is prone to err, so if I am wrong forgive me and explain the source of my error. Since many do not appreciate the blessings of independence, as I mentioned to you before, it is likely that there will be public disturbances here and there. Consequently, the government will be compelled to resort to martial law until a regular government is formed.

I should like my brethren to look upon the government as an innocent child does its compassionate father and to help it all they can. They should know too that it is concerned with the behavior of private individuals and officials alike. In this new era the government needs to generate the power with which to protect its existence. All those who trifle with its orders and violate its decrees will feel its strong arm. In order to safeguard our independence, I urge everyone to exhibit more interest in the establishment of a firm, stable, government.

The police and constabulary are the pillars of the state without which governmental affairs cannot be conducted. I therefore ask the people, particularly the youth, to join them and, regardless of family position, not be slow in rendering a service to their country. The constabulary performs an exalted duty. A man does everything inside his own home; he may even sweep it himself and not consider the task beneath his dignity.

Existing laws will be enforced until new ones are passed by the Supreme Council, i.e. the National Assembly. The present government will maintain security and order until the agencies of the new government are constituted.

The Arabs are not a homogeneous people with respect to region. The Aleppan is unlike the Hejazi and the Syrian differs from the Yemenite. My father decided to divide the country into regions in each of which special laws would be applied in accordance with the conditions and evolutionary stage reached by the local population. The interior of the country will have laws appropriate to its position.

Similarly, the coastal area will have laws harmonizing with the desires of its inhabitants.

It was necessary for us to begin by appointing a group of people to draw up these laws. However, the Arabs in foreign countries have greater familiarity with law than we do. We are consequently deferring this matter until they meet, which, if God is willing, will be soon. The men whom I have invited from abroad are capable of legislating in conformity with the spirit of the country and the nature of its population. They will hold a congress in Damascus or some other Arab city. In the very near future I shall review the work of the pious foundations and churches and restore to each the rights usurped by the Turks.

I ask my brethren to regard me as a servant of the country. You have gladly and most sincerely sworn fealty to me and I reciprocate. I shall not relax in defending right and resisting injustice nor neglect to do anything that would advance the cause of the Arabs. I want the people to support me with action in the service of the community until the National Assembly meets. I shall then say that your goods have returned to you.

Aleppo is empty of schools. I wish for it a future as glorious in knowledge as its past.

In conclusion, I should like to direct your attention and energy to two things: (1) the maintenance of public order, and (2) the promotion of education, for, by God, no one gains my respect except through his own merit and knowledge.

When I came to Hama, the people were aroused by my few words on learning and the opening of schools. At one session several of those present donated £4000 pounds, and a few pledged up to £12,000. I shall invite you gentlemen to a special meeting to deal with this important project, the project of learning, the spirit of the country.

God grant us success in the service of the country and in our efforts for mankind. May the nation enjoy a life of comfort and peace!

3.

The announcement released upon his return from the Peace Conference, May 1, 1919

Sons of beloved Syria!

I have just returned after an absence of five months. I informed the civilized world of the claims that you chose me to advance. The independence of your country was agreed to in principle. It is a fact that an international commission will be sent to inquire into your desires, as I reported them to the Westerners. The Commission will arrive within the next two weeks. You see now that the major portion of our foreign assignment has been completed, thanks to the good intentions of the four great powers, their truthfulness and devotion to the lofty principles which, in conformity with the wishes of the people, they formulated as a basis for their actions.

There remains the internal task which devolves upon the entire nation. Responsibility for its successful execution rests with the citizens who have to carry out the decision of the temporary General Syrian Congress which will soon convene.

The nations wish you success. I want you to prove to this mission, which will certify what is due to you and from you, that you are worthy of independence and capable of managing your own affairs. Register before the world and history

that you are a people who will sacrifice everything you hold dear for the most honorable of goals, independence. Being one of you, I will help all I can.

I do not doubt that you are united in demanding what is your plain right and in striving to attain it by every means at your disposal. Work single-mindedly, with truth as a guide in whatever you may say and do out of love for this pure soil. Be resolute, calm, discrete, and zealous for this country.

I hope that you will prove to the world that you are the descendants of those ancestors who were the keepers of the temple of freedom and seekers of justice. History is an incontrovertible witness to the truth of this statement. Indeed, the magnificent accomplishments of the Syrian colonies scattered over the world bring joy to the hearts of all who love this country.

I maintain that you will find no real happiness unless you have complete, unrestricted, unconditional independence. If the Arabs in their dispersion were satisfied only with this, then you in your unity will cling even more to the rights of your country. You will be independent in your country as you are in your homes. Let each one of your districts look to its own affairs, with due respect for its traditions and customs. We shall purchase the help we need whatever its price.

This, my fellow countrymen, is what I should like you to set before yourselves. I want you to be a living example and model for your sons and grandsons.

Faisal

4.

**The speech delivered in the hall of the
Government Building in Damascus, May 5, 1919**

I am honored to have this opportunity of speaking to you briefly. My words will be of historic significance with regard to the past and future of the new Arab nation. I crave your indulgence for any errors I may make during my talk since I am not a trained speaker. Several things have brought me here today.

First, the majority of my honored listeners have assembled in this hall from all parts of Syria. They greeted me in Beirut in the name of the compatriots whom they represent. They are here now to learn from me what happened in the West and at the Peace Conference that concerns the Arab World in general and Syria in particular. There is no doubt that I am compelled to utter these words in order to reassure the people as to their country and independence. Sometimes political considerations, which I can't mention, force me to be more reticent than I normally am.

Most of the notables knew nothing about the motivating forces of the revolutionary movement that arose in the Hejaz—perhaps prior to today theirs was the thinking of people ignorant of international diplomacy—and so they made various accusations against this Revolt, which I can't go into here, and said that those responsible for it were traitors to the country or the Ottoman community of which we were a part. However, after the German defeat everyone realized that the man or men who organized the Revolt were familiar with world political and military developments and that they acted the way they did in order to preserve a portion of the Ottoman Empire and shield it from the fate destined to befall Turkey following the war.

Responsibility for the Arab revolutionary movement unquestionably belongs primarily to my father, then, in a material sense, to the Hejazis who actually re-

volted. The Syrians are morally responsible because they inspired the Hejazis with the desire to launch the movement. So we see that the glory is to be shared by all, thank God, even though initially it belonged to the Hejazis. Since it was a popular uprising, the people as a whole are entitled to the credit. Yes, my father organized the Revolt during the great world struggle after he saw the Turks drawn into the German stream and the Ottoman nation brought close to disaster. He felt that if the Arabs continued in the war on the side of the Turks who were allied to the Germans, they would share the same fate. He was aware too that the Arabs had been yearning for a long time to escape from the yoke of subjection. They wanted to regain their historic position and avoid the snares set by their enemies. This is the reason why they started the movement after I came to Syria and met some of the men, both city and desert dwellers, many of whom are sitting here now. They doubtless recall the fact.

Following my discussions in Damascus with the men of the Revolt, I returned to the Hejaz and told my father how they did their duty and supported him. Providence decreed that the Syrians should not be in a position to help the Hejazis in the proper, because, as you know, the Turks applied great pressure against them. Yet the deeds the Syrians performed and the martyrs who died in the cause will be inscribed by history in golden letters. My father acted without regard for the consequences to the Hejaz and the Hejazis. He was not certain of the result, for the Creator, praise be to Him and may He be exalted, does not reveal these things; but the Turks evacuated all Syria.

Before that, of course, there were conferences or pacts between him and the Allies; both sides relied upon God and their pledges. He did his duty until the war ended and peace was restored. I left my father to go to Paris after the Turks departed. In order to implement the military plans in the occupied countries, Syria was divided into three zones—this is just for the purpose of implementing the military plans. A temporary Arab military government was set up in the interior. I went, therefore, to claim our due at the Conference which was meeting in Paris. I attended the Conference and the League of Nations where I was permitted to speak freely and explain the people's desires to the best of my ability.

I soon realized that the Westerners were profoundly ignorant about the Arabs and that their information was derived entirely from the tales of the **Arabian Nights**. They thought the Arabs were the same as the ancient Arabs, being unaware of the existence of modern Arab peoples, their political thinking and renaissance. They looked upon the Arabs as bedouins living in the desert; they didn't consider the city dwellers Arabs and all! Naturally this ignorance of theirs made me spend a good deal of time in simply giving basic facts and proving that the Arabs were one people who inhabited a land bounded on the east, south, and west by seas and on the north by the Taurus Mountains.

I told this to the Conference and revealed the goals, intentions, and actions of the Arabs to relieve the oppressed. Once the Allies understood the purposes, claims and accomplishments of the Arabs in their behalf during the war, they recognized the independence of the Arabs in principle. Inasmuch as they didn't know the present stage of cultural and political progress reached by the modern Arabs and were anxious to ensure peace throughout the land, they saw fit to appoint an international committee to investigate the situation at first hand. It will soon arrive.

My case for the Arabs was based on these two premises:

- (1) Arab territory is indivisible;
- (2) Since the inhabitants differ among themselves with respect to knowledge

and schooling, it is best not to make them into one nation with a single government.

Syria, the Hejaz, and Iraq are Arab entities. In each the population demands independence. I said that Nejd and the adjoining Arab territory belong exclusively to the Hejaz and are led by my father. Syria must be independent. Iraq too seeks independence and desires neither assistance nor protection. We in Syria do not want to sell our independence for whatever aid we may need at the beginning of our existence. The Syrian people want to be independent and will pay for any material assistance at its price, i.e., a given number of dirhams.

That was my approach. I needn't go into more detail because this meeting concerns Syria alone. I pleaded for a Syria within her natural borders. I said that the Syrians want their country to be independent without any partner.

We have been successful, thank God. Iraq is independent, not joined to Syria. Similarly, Syria is not joined to the other Arab countries, although the Arabs are one people. We all know that the various Arab districts are one with respect to history, geography, and folk ties. They have common customs and economic interests, and there is nothing to prevent friendly economic intercourse.

This defense of the country and its claims met with the satisfaction and approval of the powers. The disputes that arose were purely the result of their ignorance of the souls and intentions of the Arabs and their fear of Turkish designs. Also, the western nations looked upon the Ottoman Empire as a single entity and confused the Arabs with the Turks. As soon as they learned the truth and the objectives of the Syrians, they yielded and complied with their demands.

Here I am. I have just come from the Peace Conference with this news. The international committee will come and tell you what I have just said. They will ask you to express yourselves in any way you please, for the nations today do not want to govern other peoples except with their consent.

The League of Nations has been established to prevent war and assume the task of reviewing and solving disputes. The Arabs will have their representative in the League. When the committee returns to Paris, the League will consider all arguments and reveal the thoughts of the different peoples who were under the domination of the Turks. It will state the demands of the Arabs and others, either for subjection or independent self-rule, according to the degree of knowledge and capacity of the nations freed from the Turks.

The situation today is in your hands. The external arrangements have been successfully completed, thanks to God and the good intentions of our Allies. All the great powers, it seems to me, are alike in this regard, since they were fully persuaded by the reasons I have just set forth.

I shall soon tell you what has to be done. But first I must go back to the past. The leaders of the Revolt acted without consulting the people simply because time did not permit it. They took the entire responsibility upon themselves and functioned accordingly until today. However, this is now a matter of history. I want those present here—under the circumstances they represent the people morally not officially because of their special standing in their communities—to voice their opinions frankly and tell me whether what we have done is good or not. ("Good, good", followed by shouts and applause.)

Agreeable to the wishes of the people or not? ("Agreeable, agreeable," loud applause.)

Have our acts met with the approval of the people or not? ("Yes, yes, complete approval," shouts and applause.)

This is what we've done in the past, but from today on the leaders of the Revolt or of the present government ("Say whatever you like") must continue to work because we still haven't established a regular government. Since the time is propitious, however, and these delegations are assembled here, I can't let them return until I learn their private thoughts.

Do you want us to continue our work or not? ("Continue, continue," applause.)

Do the people trust those in charge of their affairs or not? ("They do, they do, they do".)

I want you to listen to a few words going around in my brain. Will the people allow me after today to direct the external and internal affairs of the movement or not? ("yes, yes, yes", loud applause punctuated by repeated shouts of "Long live Emir Faisal"; some spoke briefly and then Faisal went on with his address.)

Thank you, thank you all for your expressions of satisfaction and confidence.

Now I must draw your attention to another problem. There is no doubt that the agent or person who defends the rights of a group cannot function unless he possesses the documents vesting him with the necessary authority. Similarly, diplomats cannot defend a nation unless there prevail conditions under which they can work. The present body should ask the people this question: Do the people support by word and deed all my actions at home and abroad? Will they help me by granting unconditionally everything that I request or not? ("Yes.")

This is what I want. This is assuredly the main point. It will be the instrument of the person or persons or body who are to direct affairs after today until the Syrian Congress meets, which will be soon. Meanwhile, in order to work I must have authorization and this I ask of you. Give it to me and I shall work.

May God lead us to success. I want the people to look upon me as before. I expect them not to deceive themselves and say: "The nations gave us our independence." Such recognition is only figurative; we get nothing except what we take with our own hands. It is up to the people and they must act. If we fail to do so and yield to whims and say we are independent, yet at the same time neglect our patriotic obligations, then we shall not have any independence.

I say this because the people welcomed me cordially on my arrival. I want them to back their words with deeds. This is all I want—it is very little. Since I do not know what else to ask, I cannot say anything more. But after I obtain your confidence and support, I shall ask for the nation's cooperation to the degree deemed necessary.

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One of the delegates from the Ḥawrān, Sa'ḍ al-Dīn Effendi al-Khaṭīb, stood up and said that the Ḥawrān offers His Highness what he requests. Another rose and spoke in very enthusiastic terms.

A Palestinian said: "The blood and treasure of the Palestinians are the Emir's."

A delegate of the Āmirīs said: "We are ready for war, we and all the Arabs; let him who has not killed die." The Emir said to him: "Please stop, because what has been said is not by an official spokesman. I want one of you to be chosen to speak." Whereupon Nūrī Pasha al-Sha'lān, supreme sheikh of the Ruwalla, said: "We Arabs, our families and hair tents are your ransom; he who doesn't do this shall be driven out of Islam."

Nasīb Bey al-Aṭrash said: "All of us tribesmen of Syria, Arab and Druze,

will sacrifice our lives in your service and the service of the Arab nation. He who turns aside is a traitor to the law of God, honor, and the Arabs."

Sheikh 'Abd al-Ḥusayn Ṣādiq of Mt. 'Āmil said: "In the name of the people of Mt. 'Āmil I pledge to you our fealty to the death." The Emir replied: "The time for the oath of fealty hasn't come. Today we are in Damascus and my remarks are directed to the Damascenes and Syrians. I want to ask the people of Damascus, then the people of the various districts."

Muḥammad Fawzī Pasha al-'Aẓm, Muḥammad Abū al-Khayr Effendi 'Abidin, Sheikh As'ad al-Ṣāhib and others said: "We are the pledges of your command; we shall ransom you and support you."

The Roman Catholic Patriarch said: "At your command, Your Highness; command what you wish."

His Highness then asked the Roman Orthodox Patriarch. His Grace replied: "Your Highness concluded an agreement with us, which has doubtless not escaped your memory. We still abide by it."

The Roman Catholic Patriarch spoke again: "I pledge the same support as His Grace the Roman Orthodox Patriarch."

The Syrian Catholic Archbishop said: "I pledge Your Highness the same support as His Grace the Roman Orthodox Patriarch."

The Nestorian Archbishop said: "Speaking for the Nestorians in Syria, we pledge ourselves to obey your orders, take the oath of fealty, and support you."

Sa'id Pasha Sulaymān of Baalbek said: "All the people of the district of Baalbek are at your command; hundreds and thousands are the pledge of your instructions."

'Umar Bey al-Atāsī of Homs said: "I have come from Homs. I would not say good-bye to the people of Homs until they pledged me their support. They will give you their blood and souls."

Ibrāhīm Effendi al-Khaṭīb of South Lebanon said: "We invested you with the kingship." ("His Highness is smiling—remain that way"). "Mt. Lebanon is an inseparable, complementary part of Syria."

'Abd al-Qādir Effendi al-Kaylānī of Hama said: "We pledge you our lives and wealth. We give you our full support."

Sheikh Riḍā al-Rifā'ī of Aleppo said: "The inhabitants of the province of Aleppo, town and desert dwellers alike, will do no less than the people of the other parts of the country. They support Your Highness."

Shawkat Effendi al-Ḥarrākī of al-Ma'arrāh said: "Sixty thousand from the district of al-Ma'arrāh support Your Highness."

Riḍā Bey al-Ṣulḥ of Sidon said: "The hopes of the people rest with Your Highness. They will redeem you with their souls and blood. I volunteer right now as a simple soldier."

Shāb Shirkasī of Amman said: "Our wealth and children are a ransom of the Arab state."

Manāḥ Effendi Hārūn of Latakia said: "The Latakians made me their delegate and vested me with the right to speak in their name. I and my associate have been instructed to support Your Highness and grant you full authorization to do everything that may be in their interest."

Abīd Effendi Wahbah of al-Salt said: "The people of al-Salt are the slaves of

Your Highness; they will ransom you with their souls and spill their blood for you."

Amir As'ad Ayyūbī spoke in behalf of the Moslems of Lebanon: "We give you blanket authorization; whatever you deem good is good."

'Abd al-Razzāq Effendi al-Dandashī of Ḥuṣn al-Akrād said: "The inhabitants of Ḥuṣn al-Akrād, who constitute about one-fifth of the population of the district of Tripoli, appoint Your Highness as their agent; they will ransom you with their blood."

The Chief Rabbi of Damascus said: "Our wealth and lives are in your hands."

The Emir said: "I have obtained what I wanted."

The Archbishop of the refugee Armenians, speaking in Turkish, thanked the Arabs for the sympathy and humanity shown his people during the four years of the war. He said: "Our history will inscribe the name of the Arabs in gold ink. I bless you and thank you."

There is no doubt (said the Emir, resuming his address) that with the support I have received from this body I shall continue to labor as before until the General Congress meets and enacts laws to regulate the affairs of all Syria.

In my thoughts about the administration of Syria the claims of the minority groups will definitely be given preference over the views and wishes of the majority. The reason is primarily that the Turks strove to spread dissension and hypocrisy among the various elements of the population. The country will be divided into three zones in accordance with geographic and political considerations. It is certain that the southern part of Syria will not be administered like the coastal part nor the coastal like the interior and the Ḥawrān, Jebel Druze, and the southern region. This is just a personal opinion because I am only one individual but I shall use my influence with all those who have placed their trust in me. God willing, I shall always have their support and they will accept my words and act accordingly because the result, God willing, will be good. (Applause, then momentary silence.)

I ask everyone, big and small, to rely on the Creator, glory be to Him, then on one who is from their midst, this humble individual, because I shall protect and treat them all alike regardless of religion. They are the same in my eyes, but I prefer the good and the educated. I swear this by the honor of my father and forefathers. I beg the people not to consider personalities in public service. No one of us may say you were so and so and consider family background alone. Rather let each one of us have regard for the public welfare and place it above private interests. There is no doubt that the man himself is respected in the community, but it is necessary to work with knowledge. He may be very distinguished in the country and yet be unable to do governmental work. Let everyone know that I shall show no favoritism to a person because he comes from an important or powerful family. I shall consider only ability, not social status. I shall use a man in the position for which he is most qualified because personal dignity has purely abstract value, whereas work is of tangible benefit to the whole nation. Personalities cannot be brought into public service.

I should like the people to trust the nations in alliance with whom we gained victory and without whom we could not be meeting now. We are certain that our Allies wish us only success and prosperity. We must prove to them that we are a people who want to be independent. Let us protect the great and the small among us, our neighbors, and those who seek refuge with us. Let us honor all those westerners who may come to render service in our country.

I urge you above all else to unite. This is the task of the nation. It is likewise my special task, since I am one of you. There will be no independence for you unless you maintain order and do as the one to whom you have given your support says.

This is all that I have to say, and perhaps I have already said too much or made mistakes. Had someone else been in my place, he would have spoken for long hours. My inadequacy makes me say: Peace be upon you!

5.

**The address delivered before the Arab Club in Aleppo,
June 1919**

Gentlemen!

When I arrived here yesterday, several of my brethren asked me to say a few words concerning our future which everyone ought to know. However, the lack of time and facilities prevented me from speaking until now. At first they wanted the talk to be delivered in some other place than this club, which is normally devoted to science, literature, and oratory. But I was obliged to come here since more spacious quarters are not available. I am honored to appear before the leaders of the British army, representatives of the Allies, and distinguished citizens of the town which constitutes a large part of Syria.

Brethren! Unquestionably, you have often heard similar words from me before. Multiplication and repetition of speeches upset me, so I beg your pardon for any error or failure to be clear on everything that is on my conscience.

You should know first of all, gentlemen, that you face a situation that may prove to be good, or perhaps bad, God forbid. This is what impelled me to come before you. You must have heard my address in Damascus in which I unburdened myself of everything troubling me and describe our accomplishments to date. I asked the assemblage to give me their support and they all did so. They empowered me to manage both their internal and external affairs. With this expression of confidence I shall persevere in my work.

Up to now our work has been crowned with success. This is a result of the culture and good behavior of the people. I hope that they will continue this course which will elevate them to an exalted position.

The nations—and I mean those who fought for freedom and lofty principles—have granted you the uncontested right of freedom and independence. The committee sent by the nations that fought by your side arrived in Jaffa today to make inquiries as to your desires and claims. It will hear testimony that is both favorable and unfavorable to you. If it does not decide in accordance with our wishes, the fault will be ours. The civilized nations want to see the Arabs in general and the Syrians in particular at the level of advanced peoples. They have accorded you this right, provided that you obtain the necessary qualifications. This nation is not under the slightest pressure to accept anything. The great states which hold power in the world have made this clear. We must learn that we shall not succeed unless we cling to brotherhood, sincerity, oneness of language, etc. and thus prove to the world that we are a people fit to enter civilized society. Each of us must come before this committee and frankly and fearlessly tell what is in his heart if he wishes to promote the welfare of his people. (Shouts, applause.)

Don't think that anyone wants you to take what you don't want. Your future is in your hands, provided that you conduct yourselves nobly before this committee.

Yes, there are persons who say that we Arabs or Syrians cannot manage our own affairs. Perhaps they are right, perhaps they are wrong. We must therefore make those who will come here understand that if they permit us to manage our own affairs, we shall be able to demonstrate our fitness and capacity. Then when we do so, they will invite us to join the company of civilized nations.

Since the present situation is the touchstone of the future and the nations needs to unite, then do so and be unanimous in asking for what you wish for yourselves and your country. If I were in some other place than this club, I should be much more explicit and candid. I am not imposing any task on you. No one can doubt that. It is up to you. This is what I have to say. We will show the world what we need. (Shouts of "Let's rely on the Emir," loud applause.)

You are free men in your country and will say what you wish and do what you wish. This in brief is my message. Relying on the confidence you have reposed in me, I shall perform my duty and do everything that may benefit the people and strengthen the pillars of independence in the present and future.

We know that with respect to creed some of us are in a minority, some in the majority. This may be said or imagined to be a subject of dispute. Quite possibly some who are unfamiliar with the situation of the Arabs today will use it as a reason to discuss the Arabs and their future. As for myself, I say that we have no majority and no minority. Nothing divides us. We are a single body. (Shouts, applause.) The actions of the temporary government clearly show that there are no religions or sects, for we were Arabs before Moses, Mohammed, Jesus, and Abraham. We Arabs are bound together in life, separated only in death. There is no division among us except when we are buried. (Applause.) The government to be established with the help of the great civilized nations will undoubtedly do whatever is necessary to support the rights of the minority and will make written pledges for the record. I am sure that the documents which will be written to safeguard the rights of the minority will be torn up by the minority themselves because they will see that the majority are doing what they wrote, even more.

I hope that every Syrian is an Arab before anything else. And I hope that every one who speaks Arabic feels the way I do. (Applause.) The civilized world will not respect us unless we respect ourselves and one another. If we are divided into parties and sects, they will despise us since they regard all religions as equal and do not distinguish between one people and another. I want the Arabs to do likewise.

I must repeat that our first task after the committee departs, and it will not be a far-reaching task, is to see that our gatherings are scientific and cultural, not political. I shall encourage all my countrymen who are trying to establish learned societies; I shall be happy to see my name registered among theirs.

You would like me to say more about politics, but I think I have said enough. I am talking now about learning. I want this club, before which I have the honor to stand, to be a servant of knowledge and a source of culture. These people may well contemplate their future with satisfaction.

We must be brothers and permit no parties to divide us or influence our future. He who suffers an injury at the hands of anyone is to bear it patiently and notify a responsible official of what took place. Perhaps there are deceivers who want you to quarrel among yourselves, as has happened in the past, so that they can besmirch our reputation before the world and say we do not deserve self-rule. I warn you of the consequences of these things—God grant that you not hear or see them! I expect to have the pleasure of learning that you have

achieved the tranquility and unity which every Arab desires from independence. Remain calm and united!

Security is obviously one of the requirements of the country. It can be brought about only by men, i.e., the police and army. Yes, the nation emerged from the war stripped of an army. However, we must have security and I am very anxious for us to proceed at full speed to set up the appropriate organization. I want the Aleppans to have completed their arrangements by the time I come back again. In this respect your Damascene brethren have already done their duty very well. I hope that you will not linger too long behind them, indeed that you will outstrip them.

I conclude now by saying good-by and may the mercy and blessings of God be upon you!

6.

The statement issued on the occasion of Faisal's second trip to the Peace Conference, September 1919

My fellow countrymen!

Because of the news I received during the night that the Syrian case would soon be under discussion, I resolved to leave in the morning to attend these important sessions. I place my trust in God and the power vested in me by my noble people at this critical time when a final decision will be reached.

I am sure of your fullest support in carrying out the mission you have assigned me. I bid you farewell and urge you to remain devoted to the service of the country and united in its defense. Be patient and calm! Success is from God.

Faisal

7.

The address delivered before the Arab Club in Damascus following his return from the Peace Conference, January 22, 1920

I have come from the West in order to inform myself regarding the desires of the people after the withdrawal of the Americans from the diplomatic battlefield. I wanted to speak first with the intellectual leaders on the future of the country in the light of the situation in the West. I shall stay here a few days and then return to perform the necessary work.

I am still the same man you thought I was, good or bad. I care less about that than I do about my work and the future of the nation. It is a matter of indifference to me whether I am spoken of in terms of praise or blame or anything else. The people are free to say what they please. Therefore, I am not concerned about what has been said or will be said, or about the various thoughts that come from ardent souls, whether of individuals or groups. The people as a whole want to be independent. I am happy when I see the nation's youth demand independence and feel the exalted sentiments that will secure us the future, in expectation of which this club was founded.

Although I am not familiar with all the ideas in circulation, I am proud of one thing, i.e., I love my country and am working for it. I have one goal, to see my country independent. And by country I do not limit myself to a single area, for every Arab country is my country.

I am not frightened, God knows, by the power of the government or the power of societies. I fear only history and the future. I am afraid lest it be said that so-and-so did work that was unworthy of his fathers and forefathers who strove for independence. I want the people to know that I am the same person in the West that I am here. I do not change my words when I talk to diplomats or face very critical situations. My principle is that my country must be independent, and I am following God's guidance to achieve it and restore our past glory. God is a witness as to how hard I am trying. I doubt that there is a single person in the country who likes alien domination. On the contrary, I am sure that the high and the low, the old and the young, the learned and the ignorant, feel but one emotion—the desire for the country's independence.

One of my fellow speakers thanked Maḥmūd al-Fā^ḳūr for his zeal. Maḥmūd had withdrawn to the desert, long-suffering and silent, but when he was wronged he rose up and quietly did just what I want the nation to do.

We are a year and a half old. We've had enough of words and speeches. We are in the days of action, not of words. Although actions are very useful, words are not. I was away from the country for four months and I am sure that history will record what I did in the West, whether good or bad, little or much. I was not free from error, for I spoke in accordance with the promptings of my conscience.

When I returned I saw the people wildly enthusiastic, but little inclined to do anything. Bravo, but would that their words were coupled with action. I call upon the nation to act. It will not live unless it does as I say. We need cooperation, mutual assistance, better knowledge of one another, work, and affection.

I am the spirit of the movement. In its reliance on the government the nation relies on me. When the opportunity presents itself, assemblies will be formed on which the nation may rely. Therefore, at this time I will not permit any individual or group to say that the government is thus and so or to ask for the substitution of one governor for another since I am responsible until the National Assembly meets. I shall then divest myself of the responsibility and give it to the nation.

The government today is a temporary military government, one that was not elected by the people. For reasons I can't explain, I shall postpone the formation of a regular government until I offer the nation the gift of independence. I have high hopes and I am proud to see the nation's youth support me in the demand for absolute independence and freedom.

We are in a serious situation. We must not disparage the nations, for if we disparage any of them, we shall disparage ourselves before the great powers and peoples. We must respect every nation and government. Since we respect our country, independence, and interests, we do not want to trespass upon or violate the rights of others any more than we want others to do so to us.

I ask the nation and the youth to cooperate with and support my government, which will lead them to prosperity; do what al-Fā^ḳūr did in his quiet way; refrain from multiplying words and attacking anyone with tongue or newspaper article; and trust the government.

This is my counsel to you. The government counts on you. I shall work to form a trustworthy government. If I rely on it, the nation too must rely on it. I want all my brethren to help my government, pleasant tidings of which I want to hear in the West, so that I can continue to demand independence with my last drop of blood.

**The address opening the meeting of the Syrian General
Congress just before the proclamation of independence,
March 6, 1920**

Gentlemen!

At a time when the Turkish question is approaching a final solution at the Peace Conference, I have seen fit to ask you once again to determine the future of the country in accordance with the wishes of the people who have authorized you to represent them during this troubled period of history. The Peace Conference has promised to respect the wishes of peoples, indeed has imposed upon itself the task of determining the future of every nation in accordance with that nation's desires and wishes in order to realize the lofty principles for which the Allies entered the war.

President Wilson in his Mount Vernon address of July 24, 1918, made the following point:

"The settlement of every question, whether of territory, of sovereignty, of economic arrangement, or of political relationship, (must be) upon the basis of the free acceptance of that settlement by the people immediately concerned, and not upon the basis of the material interest or advantage of any other nation or people which may desire a different settlement for the sake of its own external influence or mastery."

All the leaders of the Allied governments made statements on the independence of peoples similar to Wilson's. In a proclamation dated November 8, 1918, England and France confirmed the much-desired independence of the Arab countries.

Gentlemen! Since the war was a war for freedom and independence, a war which the nations fought in defense of their political existence, His Majesty my father joined the ranks of the Allies after he secured the approval of the Arabs in Arabia, Syria, and Iraq. The struggle they waged was witnessed by the leading European statesmen and soldiers who praised Arab valor highly. There is no doubt that history will remember their glorious deeds during the war in which Hejazis, Syrians, and Iraqis sought death. I am sure that the Arabs will gain as much from the war as our Allies who triumphed over their enemies.

This victory was not wholly military; it was, above everything else, political because it represented a victory of right over might and of freedom over slavery. Today the idea of independence is widespread among the peoples of the world and enduringly engraved upon their hearts.

The Arabs are entitled to their freedom and independence by virtue of the pure blood they shed and of the many kinds of torture and afflictions they suffered. The Arabs will no longer allow themselves to be enslaved. Moreover, I don't believe that there is any nation that wants to enslave us. My many official trips to Europe and the conversations and exchange of correspondence I have had with the leaders leave me with no reason for doubt or hesitation as to the good intentions of their governments.

Gentlemen! We do not demand that Europe give us what we are not entitled to have. We simply want confirmation of our clear right, which Europe has already acknowledged, to live as a free and completely independent nation in the midst of the other respected nations on a basis of friendship and sincere affection. Our policy in the future will be one of peace and reconciliation resting on mutual benefits and confidence, i.e., a policy in harmony with the best

interests of the nation and world peace. The Arabs will not look scornfully upon advantageous exchanges between themselves and civilized nations, nor will they reject the friendship of those who want their friendship, provided that their honor not be touched or their full political independence impaired.

Gentlemen! Your function today is important, your task great. Europe is viewing us at close range and will decide for or against us depending on our actions and future political course. Our new state which arose on the foundations of the patriotism of its honored sons now needs first of all to determine its form, then to draw up a constitution that will define the rights and duties both of those who command us and of those whom we command in our future life, which I trust will be filled with energy, work, and enterprise.

Before I conclude my remarks at this immortal session, I should like to remind you of your Iraqi brethren who fought and suffered with you for the fatherland and of our obligation to help one another in order to live a vigorous and happy life. I wish you a sincere Arab salaam. May good luck and success attend your patriotic endeavors. Peace be upon you!

10.

The address delivered at the great banquet held in Damascus, May 27, 1920

On this occasion, I should like to say a few words that I know will greatly interest the nation. Yes, these words ought to come from the government and not from me because I have no responsibility. Nevertheless, begging the forgiveness of the Prime Minister, I must say that the people today are yearning for information about their situation and fate. We learned in summary form of the decision that was reached at the San Remo Conference regarding the future of our country. Some were thrown into despair, thinking that it settled our future once and for all and that any effort on our part would be fruitless. Most of the population, however, said: "Although we have been condemned, we do not want to be enslaved; therefore, let us die an honorable death."

Both these ideas are prevalent today. But neither corresponds to the reality because we have not been condemned to extinction so that we should despair, nor have we been condemned to suffer colonization so that we should say we must die an honorable death.

To what then are we condemned? We know that a decision was taken to recognize Syria's independence and to place her under a mandate. But what is this mandate? What is it like? Does it put an end to us or not? This we still do not know.

Some time ago the people resolved to proclaim their independence. They said the nations must recognize it. Now just as we took a decision to suit our interests, so they took a decision to suit theirs. Each side claims that it is right. Our friendship, however, doesn't permit either of us to infringe the rights of the other, even though we give priority to our own interests.

Syria proclaimed her independence in accordance with her interests. Along with recognition of this independence, the nations also set conditions harmonizing with their interests. When we proclaimed our independence we said that we would honor the interests of all, that we would associate with the peoples on whose side we fought. Then the powers set their conditions, saying: "Come let us reconcile our interests with yours."

It is evident that we have suffered no injury thus far and that the doors of negotiation are still open to both sides. We must know that we are regarded as an independent nation.

The word mandate has no clear definition or meaning. The people have flatly rejected it; no one who wants to live will accept it. It is an elastic term that is sometimes applied to extreme imperialism, at other times to the most delicate way of providing friendly aid without impinging upon independence. Nevertheless, acceptance of it would be a disgrace to any nation that seeks life.

I want the people to know that the head or governor or king whom they have chosen believes in this principle. He will not be satisfied to have it said that the kingdom of which he is the head is under the restrictions of another kingdom; for a nation like ours that has lived for many centuries and civilized the world cannot be so fettered.

I don't want your refusal of the mandate to be limited to words alone. You remember that I have always said, particularly after returning from Europe, that independence is something that is taken, not given. You demand of me independence—I demand of you the means.

You remember when we were under the occupation that the government lacked executive power and the ability to build an army. Since the government wanted to show the people the need, first of all, to maintain order and, secondly, to defend the country in case of an emergency, it enacted a conscription law. For more than a year prior to this law, the army was based on volunteers and we could not organize a detachment for review, let alone for defense. What a difference there was only two months after the law was passed, when we had a real, if small, army with a rudimentary sense of discipline. However, the government does not regard the present forces as adequate for the internal and external requirements of the country inasmuch as a great many men have been legally deferred from service.

We should look upon the nations in two ways: first, as friends who want us to appear orderly and who fear the occurrence of a disturbing incident that might turn us into a rabble; and second, as potential exploiters who have perhaps covetous designs on us. The government therefore is compelled to produce the strength that will gladden our friends, defend our existence, and maintain order, especially since the occupation zones of Syria are in a state of anarchy, which I fear may damage our reputation abroad. The government must be vigilant in maintaining domestic order and creating the power that will make us respected by our friends and enemies—and I don't know that we have any enemy!

The nation wants independence and will consider unfit any ministry or government that fails to call itself a defense ministry or government. The nation that demands this must furnish the necessary tools in the form of men and money.

Despair must not seep into our souls. Thinkers, intellectuals, and newspaper publishers must forestall that. We shall live and no harm will befall our independence.

There is no doubt that this nation which sacrificed tens of thousands of lives in Galicia, the Caucasus, Persia, and Rumelia in the service of others will not be loath to expend twice that many lives in defense of its own existence and freedom, even though it has just emerged from a long and exhausting war.

It is impossible to build an army without money. Hence, the government has floated a guaranteed loan to enable it to generate the strength that will render

its future life secure. I hope the people will buy the bonds and prove to the civilized world that they have everything, that they don't need foreigners even for money.

Governments have grown accustomed to floating loans to meet crises and the degree of success is a measure of their people's vitality. I want our loan to be completely subscribed, especially since the bondholders will derive considerable profit from it. Efforts must be made to arouse enthusiasm both for the loan and for the army. I am sure that none but an enemy of the country will be slow to subscribe. All those present tonight are influential members of the community and have a stake in its prosperity and welfare. They must strive, therefore, to guide the people toward these noble goals: money and the army.

This is my wish to the country. I advise it to be diligent and serious in everything that it does. As for those who advocate dying for the sake of a free life and a noble death—and I consider myself one of them—theirs is a glorious thought. If destruction should approach, I would be the first to die. But I assure you that we have not been condemned to death. This sentence has not been and will not be passed. We must prepare ourselves and reflect; our actions must be in the material, sensory world, not in the realm of the imagination.

There are few more important or more difficult problems on the international scene than that represented by Syria. A final solution will not be reached on the strength of a newspaper article or speech by some person, responsible or irresponsible. The people and I ask the head of the government, who is now sitting in front of me, to tell us about the results of his work. We are concerned today with results. I want the nation to stand firm to the end, await the decision with equanimity, and help its government with soldiers and money. Let us work hard. Success is from God. Next year when we again gather around this table, I hope we shall have forgotten these trying days.

THE SYRIAN GOVERNMENT

The Arab government established in Syria following the entrance of the armies of the Revolt passed through three distinct stages:

First, simple military government, which began on October 1, 1918 with the arrival of the armies of the Revolt and ended on August 4, 1919 with the formation of the Council of Directors. During this period the administrative power was in the hands of the Military Governor General who functioned under the supervision of the Emir and the Commander in Chief. The Directors General were then in charge of the several departments without sharing responsibility for the Governorship General or concern for public policy.

Second, the Council of Directors, which began on August 4, 1919 with its formation and ended on March 8, 1920 with the proclamation of independence. The Directors General during this phase functioned as ministers and shared responsibility for the government as a whole and determined policy. The Military Governor General was also Vice-Chairman of the Council of Directors until January 26, 1920, but thereafter only Director General of War.

Third, official independence and government by the cabinet, which began on March 8, 1920 with the proclamation of independence and ended on July 25, 1920 with the French occupation. Responsibility for government during this period was vested in a "constitutional Syrian Government" by the General Syrian Congress. This government was composed of seven ministers and a prime minister, the latter appointed by the king in accordance with the constitutional practice in the West.

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During the first stage the government was called "The Arab Military Government in Syria", and subsequently "The Syrian Arab Government", "The Arab Government", and "The Syrian Kingdom". (These names and designations may be noted on the official papers issued by the head of the government, the postage stamps of the various periods, and the Syrian dinars minted at the end of the independent regime.)

###

Initially, the Arab state in Syria was confined to the two provinces known in Ottoman times as the vilayet of Aleppo and the vilayet of Syria. Later on, following the insurrection led by Ramaḍān al-Shallāsh, the borders of the state came to include the district of Dayr al-Zūr, which was regarded by the Turks as autonomous but linked directly to the Ministry of the Interior.

Since most departmental heads in these two provinces were not Arabs, they left the country along with the army. The leaders of the Revolt found it necessary to designate Arabs as replacements for these capable men.

During the Ottoman regime the departments received instructions from the appropriate ministries in Constantinople. Hence, it was necessary to create directorates general in lieu of these ministries in order to handle government business. A new court of cassation was set up in Damascus and provision made

for various judicial procedures. The Council of State in Constantinople, to which the official departments used to refer many matters, gave way to a council with similar functions in Damascus.

The entire process of reorganization and appointment of personnel was completed in a short time; whereupon Damascus became truly the capital of the new government.

###

Under the Ottomans the official language in Syria was Turkish. All departments and courts wrote their records, decisions, and correspondence exclusively in Turkish. The Syrian government had to change the situation and replace Turkish with Arabic. This too was done with extraordinary speed. The government provided special instruction in Arabic composition for its employees. Scholars and officials used classical Arabic texts and the publications of the Egyptian government as sources for the coinage of needed technical terms and the development of an effective style for the new Arab government. Numerous committees worked hard to achieve quick results. The new Syrian state thus became fully entitled to be called "The Arab State".

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It is worth noting that in this field the Syrian government accomplished much more during a short period of time than the Egyptian government did in decades because, among other things, it also invented military phraseology when the Egyptians were still using Turkish words even for rank, etc. Arabic was made the language of instruction in higher schools while foreign languages were currently serving this purpose in Egypt. Therefore, it is no exaggeration to say that the Syrian government created after World War I was an Arab government in every sense of the term.

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The Military Governor General during the first of the three stages and the early part of the second stage mentioned above was Lt. Gen. 'Alī Riḍā al-Rikābī. He was later succeeded by his deputy Col. Muṣṭafā Ni'mah who occupied the post until it was finally abolished.

The Chairmanship of the Council of Directors, instituted after the termination of the Military Governship General, was held by Emir Zaid from January 26th until March 8th.

The officials in charge of the several departments prior to the proclamation of independence were: Director General of Justice - Iskandar 'Ammūn; Director General of the Interior - Rashīd Ṭalī'; Director General of Education - Sāṭi' al-Huṣri; Director General of Finance - first Sa'īd Shafīr, then Aḥmad Hilmi; Director General of War (originally called "Chairman of the Military Council") - first Yasin al-Hashimi, then Yusuf al-Azmah, and finally Rida al-Rikabi; Director General of Public Security - Haddad.

###

The two ministries formed during the period of independence were headed by Riḍā al-Rikābī and Hāshim al-Atāsī respectively. The former was in office from March 9th until May 3rd, the latter from May 3rd until the Day of Maysalūn. The names of the men who served in these two ministries are listed in the documents given below.

1.

Formation of the Council of Directors

To the honorable Director General of. . .

In the hope of forming a sound administration to facilitate the establishment of a normal, orderly government in the country, His Highness the Emir has commanded the Council of Directors to meet officially under the chairmanship of His Highness, or that of ourselves in his absence, at 9:30 a.m. every Wednesday morning to discuss the items enclosed in this letter. We should like you to attend regularly at the designated time in our residence.

Respectfully yours,

ʿAlī Riḍā al-Rikābī

Military Governor General of Syria

August 4, 1919

2.

Statute on the Formation of the Council of Directors

Article 1 – The country shall be administered by a Governor General and Directors, each one being responsible for a portion of the affairs of the government. They and the Governor General shall constitute a Council called "The Council of Directors" which, under our chairmanship or that of the Governor General as our deputy, will be responsible for important and public affairs.

Article 2 – The directors mentioned in Article 1 above are now the Director of the Interior, Chairman of the War Council until a Minister of War is appointed, Director of Finance, Director of Education, Chairman of the Council of State, and Director of Public Security in case of necessity.

Article 3 – Each Director shall in principle conduct such affairs pertaining to his department as come within his purview in accordance with established laws and regulations. Whatever does not come within his purview shall be referred to the Governor General for transmittal to the Council of Directors. After the matter is discussed by the Council, their decision shall be submitted to us for approval.

Article 4 – The group of Directors is collectively responsible for domestic governmental policy and each Director is individually responsible for whatever is done in his own sphere of action.

Article 5 – The items on the agenda of the Council of Directors are:

- (a) Problems connected with domestic policy.
- (b) Matters involving the collective responsibility of all the Directors.
- (c) Disputes which by law require a decision of the Council of Directors.
- (d) Matters submitted by us.
- (e) Making loans.
- (f) Executing military movements.
- (g) Proclaiming martial law.
- (h) Making extra-budgetary payments in case of emergency.
- (i) Granting concessions and contracts.

(j) Enacting regulations for government departments and decrees that shall have the force of law until the Legislative Assembly meets.

(k) Important political and administrative affairs.

(l) Matters of sufficient importance to be referred to the group for discussion.

Article 6 – All decisions of the Council of Directors shall be submitted to us for approval, which we have the choice of granting or withholding.

Article 7 – Directors may write bills on subjects which fall within their competence and which, when concurred in and signed by the Military Governor, require our approval, but need not be submitted to the Council of Directors.

Article 8 – The Military Governor General and the Directors have the right to choose employees for their departments. The directors shall communicate the names to the Governor General who will forward to us with the necessary documentation such names as require our confirmation as well as the names of those officials whom he has chosen for his own staff. They will start work after being confirmed.

Article 9 – The above articles are in effect as of now. Other articles will be added and some may be eliminated as circumstances dictate.

Faisal

#

Formation of the First Cabinet

My Minister Riḍā al-Rikābī:

In view of your well-known devotion and ability, we have appointed you Prime Minister in order to form a cabinet that will achieve the sacred objectives of happiness and political and social progress so impatiently awaited by every citizen. We ask God to grant us success for the people and for the country. Peace be upon you!

Faisal

Jumādā II 18/19, 1338 (March 8/9, 1920)

My Minister Riḍā al-Rikābī:

We confirm the Cabinet that you proposed in your memorandum no. 1 dated Jumādā II 19, 1338 (March 9, 1920) as follows:

Chairman of the Council of State: ‘Alā’ al-Dīn al-Durūbī

Minister of the Interior: Riḍā al-Ṣulḥ

Deputy Minister of the Interior: Sa‘īd al-Ḥusaynī

Acting for him **pro tem.**: Maj. Gen. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd

Deputy Minister of War: Maj. Gen. ‘Abd al-Ḥamīd

Acting for him **pro tem.**: Chief of Staff Yūsuf al-‘Azmah

Deputy Minister of Finance: Fāris al-Khūrī

Deputy Minister of Justice: Jalāl al-Dīn

Minister of Education: Sāṭi‘ al-Ḥuṣrī

Deputy Minister of Commerce,
Agriculture and Public Works: Yūsuf al-Ḥakīm

We hope that you will energetically defend the people's rights, maintain law and order in the country, and strengthen the bonds of friendship between our government and friendly governments, especially the Allies, in order to realize the wishes of the Syrians and their hopes for unity. We hope too that you will expend the utmost effort in spreading the spirit of harmony among all classes of the population regardless of religion or creed. We ask God to keep you and prosper your works. Amen.

Faisal

The Royal Palace, Jumādā II 19, 1338 (March 9, 1920)

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**The Cabinet's Statement to the Syrian Congress,
March 27, 1920**

Distinguished gentlemen!

The members of the cabinet are extremely happy to be the first local constitutional ministry in the history of Syria. We have come before the first local constitutional ministry in the history of Syria. We have come before the first representative parliament to read a statement outlining our plans. We are proud to extend our greetings to this glorious national parliament which the people will forever remember generation after generation because it is the faithful advocate of their desires, the resolute defender of their rights, and the founders of their new government in the new era of history.

You know, gentlemen, that after the World War broke out the Arabs rose up under the leadership of their commander, His Majesty King Husein, and joined the ranks of the Allies. They made enormous sacrifices for the common cause in the expectation of obtaining their independence and freedom after centuries of slavery during which their ancient civilization perished and the deeply rooted pillars of their glory collapsed. Their revolt and association with the Allies when the outcome of the hostilities still hung in the balance was a severe blow to the lavish hopes that Germany and her partners placed on the Ottoman Empire's entrance into the war on their side—this because of the historic and social position of the Arabs. The Allies derived tremendous advantages from Arab support in that they gained strength while their enemies were weakened. The war ended in a defeat for the Germans and their partners and a victory of right over might. The Arabs were liberated by virtue of the glorious deeds of King Husein and his brave sons, deeds that the people will always remember with gratitude. He is thus the founder of the Arabs' modern history with which the nation started its second golden age.

Chapters of thankfulness and esteem will also be devoted in our history to his talented son. His Majesty Faisal the First, King of Syria, who has taken up the Syrian case and pledged himself to continue to work for the liberation of the entire country and to defend it to the last. He is the creator of the Syrian Kingdom and the one most responsible for its deliverance and establishment on the basis of freedom and regeneration. The hearts and hopes of Syrians were united in him, their king and undisputed master. So let us promise him our obedience and congratulate the throne of Syria on the brave patriot and just ruler who occupies it.

We mustn't forget the debt we owe to our great Allies who proved their valor at a very critical juncture. They supported the principles of right and demolished the edifice of wrong. They called for a new and glorious era in which there would be respect for the rights and freedom of peoples, repudiation of the policy of conquest and imperialism, annulment of secret treaties violating the rights

of nations, and self-determination for liberated peoples. Their services to the Arab cause have been memorable.

As a result of these noble enduring principles, the Syrian people chose the members of your worthy assembly to determine their fate in accordance with their desires and to strengthen the rights bestowed upon them by nature and reinforced by the many sacrifices made during the war. The Allies confirmed these rights by pledges and promises and acknowledged the Arabs' share in the glorious victory. They agreed to proclaim the independence of Syria within her well-known borders embracing the three temporary zones of military occupation, to call the man of the people and their liberator Emir Faisal ibn Husein their king, and to establish a responsible constitutional government. Thereupon, you passed your historic, firmly-worded resolution of Jumādá II 18 (March 8th). That day was the beginning of our new free life. Viewing your glorious work with joyous approval, the people organized festivals and celebrations throughout the country and thus indicated once again their unanimous and ardent support for our noble nationalist objectives. We offer our thanks and commendation for your work which shall be recorded in the history of the nation.

Pursuant to this resolution which translated the desires of the Syrians from words into decisive action, His Majesty the King entrusted us with the administration of the kingdom in accordance with the constitutional civil principles chosen by your esteemed assembly. We began our task and laid hold of the reins of government by seeking the aid of God and relying on the support of the nation. We are determined to make every effort to safeguard our total independence within the framework of Syrian unity so that our people can reach the position among advanced nations to which they are entitled by virtue of their splendid record of civilization and culture.

Our great Allies view our new life with much satisfaction and will help us surmount all the obstacles impeding our path to progress and success. We rely especially on the good faith of Great Britain and France who have been known for their love of the Arabs and whose assistance in our war of liberation proved invaluable. They were the first to agree with the sound principles and noble objectives on the basis of which the honorable American people came to their aid from across the Atlantic. We have their promise of continued friendship and appreciation in the days of peace just as we had it in the days of war. They give every indication of abiding by their exalted principles.

England and France, moreover, know very well that we desire nothing but a quiet, orderly life in a world at peace. This cannot be achieved in a Syria that is partitioned and deprived of self-government. They are sure we will protect the interests of all nations in our country both for our own sake and for theirs.

Our foreign policy is a policy of peace and friendship with all nations, especially with the Allies who helped us in war and will help us in peace as well, protection of the rights of their nationals, and utilization of the vital elements in their civilization that can contribute to our progress and yet leave our independence unimpaired.

Our internal affairs will continue to be administered as they are now until we have our constitution, which will guarantee every segment of the population equality of opportunity to build the country, increase their wealth, and improve their condition. We shall make every effort to maintain order, promote justice among the people as quickly as possible, and strengthen the army so that it can protect our full independence. We are delighted to see that this plan evidently accords with the desires of the people, for they are enthusiastically answering the call of the armed forces to perform their holy duty for the fatherland.

We shall concern ourselves above all with spreading education and building schools that will graduate men imbued with love for their country, sound in their thinking, healthy, and of good moral character. We shall enrich our storehouses of information by translating and composing books on the modern sciences and arts and by making use of western knowledge.

We shall endeavor to improve the country's agriculture, trade, and industry and exploit its mineral resources in order to increase production and add to the national wealth. Moreover, through the institution of economy measures we shall lighten the burden of the high cost of living that now also affects the rest of the world and is engrossing the attention of statesmen everywhere. The government cannot perform these tasks unless it possesses a sufficient amount of money. Present income does not match the fixed expenses we have to meet in this new era of our development. In order to execute our plan, we must balance the budget and spend our funds as efficiently as possible. The people should discharge their obligations zealously, swiftly, and, above all, generously.

We shall continue to be governed by the civil laws and statutes of the Ottoman regime plus the subsequent modifications and additions until we gradually change or replace them with other laws which are more in tune with the physical and moral condition of the country at its present stage of civilization and which will contribute to our genuine progress by protecting the rights of individuals and groups.

The government requests that this esteemed body hasten to draft the constitution and electoral laws. Deputies should be elected and the legislature convened at the earliest possible moment.

In conclusion, we express the hope that the people and their representatives will help us in our patriotic task. We extend to you our respectful greetings.

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4.

Formation of the Second Cabinet The Royal Letter to the New Prime Minister

My dear friend Hāshim al-Atāsī:

In view of the governmental crisis caused by the telegram of the French government which arrived the day before yesterday, we have decided to entrust you, a man of proved sincerity and ability, with the formation of a new cabinet. Its first assignment shall be the maintenance of internal order and security and the defense of the country's rights against all those who wish it ill or who are trying from abroad to impair its sacred independence.

Choose those men who, to the best of your knowledge, possess the requisite qualifications and can help us reach this noble goal. Then submit their names to me for confirmation. May God grant us success and guidance in behalf of this people and country! Peace be upon you!

Faisal

Shā' bān 15, 1338 (May 3, 1920)

Answer of the Prime Minister

The Honorable Chamberlain of His Majesty:

Pursuant to the noble commands sent today to this humble person regarding the formation of a cabinet whose first task shall be the maintenance of internal security and the realization of the people's wishes for defense against those who wish them ill or who are trying to impair their sacred independence, I propose the following Cabinet, which possesses the requisite qualifications:

Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior:	Hāshim al-Atāsī
Chairman of the Council of State:	Riḍā al-Ṣulḥ
Minister of Foreign Affairs:	ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar
Minister of War:	Yūsuf al-ʿAẓmah
Minister of Finance (holdover):	Fāris al-Khūrī
Minister of Justice (holdover):	Jalāl al-Dīn
Minister of Education (holdover):	Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī
Minister of Public Works:	George Rizq Allāh

Please transmit this list to His Majesty so that if he so pleases he will issue his order of confirmation. May God grant that his opinion be favorable!

Hāshim al-Atāsī
Prime Minister

Shāʿbān 15 (May 3, 1920)

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The Royal Decree

My Minister Hāshim al-Atāsī:

We confirm the list of Cabinet members mentioned in your memorandum dated Shaʿbān 15, 1338 as follows:

Prime Minister and Minister of the Interior:	Hāshim al-Atāsī
Chairman of the Council of State:	Riḍā al-Ṣulḥ
Minister of Foreign Affairs:	ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Shahbandar
Minister of War:	Yūsuf al-ʿAẓmah
Minister of Finance (holdover):	Fāris al-Khūrī
Minister of Justice (holdover):	Jalāl al-Dīn
Minister of Education (holdover):	Sāṭiʿ al-Ḥuṣrī
Minister of Public Works:	George Rizq Allāh

We trust that you will labor to realize the desires of the people by taking the most vigorous measures to defend their sacred independence; to maintain security; to work for the development of mutual cooperation among all classes of the Syrian population regardless of religion or creed so that they may be like some compact structure of which each part strengthens the other; to tighten the bonds of amity between our government and the governments of the great friendly powers, especially the two that helped us reach our desired objective. May God grant you success and guidance! Peace be upon you!

Faisal

Shāʿbān 15, 1338 (May 3, 1920)

(Some changes took place in the cabinet on the following day. The Prime Minister relinquished the Ministry of the Interior and appointed 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī to the post; he replaced George Rizq Allāh as Minister of Public Works with Yūsuf al-Hakīm.)

5.

**Statement of the Second Cabinet to the
Syrian Congress, May 3, 1920**

Gentlemen!

The resignation of 'Alī Riḍā al-Rikābī led to the formation of the present Cabinet which has now come before this esteemed body to explain the plan that it intends to follow. In agreeing to assume the grave responsibility of government during these critical days as a service to the holy fatherland, we rely first upon God and then upon your help and that of the noble people who have chosen you as their representatives.

The basic elements in our plan are:

(1) Full support of our absolute independence, including the right of foreign representation.

(2) Insistence upon the unity of Syria within her natural borders and rejection of the Zionist desire to make a portion of her southern territory—Palestine—a national home for the Jews.

(3) Rejection of all foreign interference with our sovereignty.

These are the objectives of our ministry and, in essence, an implementation of the decisions taken by your Congress at its historic session. In order to attain them, we must retain the friendship of our noble Allies who are helping us to fulfill our national aspirations. We must also mobilize all our material and moral resources, i.e. our collective power, to secure the life and orderly functioning of the country. You are aware, of course, that to do so requires men and money. We shall endeavor to obtain the latter in a way that will not injure the economic structure of the country. The people who have been generous with their spirit to achieve independence will not be stingy with their money for the same purpose. The cabinet, insofar as its domestic plans go, will be chiefly concerned with strengthening law and order so as to calm the people, assure them security in their work, and increase their wealth. Since public disorders hinder our sacred patriotic efforts at home and damage our reputation abroad, we are resolved to employ drastic measures against all those who may be guilty of dangerous behavior.

You learned, gentlemen, that the San Remo Conference came to certain preliminary decisions concerning Syria. These included the recognition in principle of our country as independent. We greet this recognition with joy in anticipation of its serving as a basis for other rights that we shall claim.

We note the declaration of our ally Great Britain that she is prepared to recognize His Majesty our King as head of an independent Syrian government.

These decisions contemplate a mandate. We shall do our utmost to remove this limitation.

The conference that will meet in Paris at the end of this month will undoubtedly review the previous decisions. We trust that our Allies will deal

fairly with us and keep their promises. If they don't, the strength and unshakable determination of our people are the greatest guarantee that we shall ultimately be accorded our right.

In conclusion, we take this opportunity to assert that we are a people who demand nothing but our right and who do not wish to infringe the right of any other people. On the contrary, we want to live as free men in our homes, at peace with those who are at peace with us and respectful of the interests of those who respect our interests. Success is with God.

THE SYRIAN CONGRESS

The General Syrian Congress was both a legislative body and a constituent assembly. It was composed of delegates who came from all parts of the country—interior and coastal Syria and Palestine, i.e. the eastern, western, and southern zones.

The main purposes behind the formation of this Congress were: (1) to make clear the desires of the Syrian people to the American Commission of Inquiry, and (2) to establish the form of government and draw up a constitution.

Congress members from the eastern zone were chosen in accordance with Ottoman electoral procedures. In the western and southern zones, however, elections were on the basis of "credentials" because the occupation authorities did not permit the people to hold open meetings and conduct elections.

The Congress met for the first time on June 3, 1919, for the last time on July 19, 1920. During this period there were three sessions: (1) when the American Commission arrived; (2) at the occurrence of the crisis over the replacement of British troops; and (3) just before the proclamation of independence. It remained in session throughout the period following the official proclamation of independence.

During its final session the Congress promulgated a constitution consisting of 148 articles, which was given a single complete reading. The second reading did not go beyond the first seven articles owing to the crisis over the ultimatum which expired on the Day of Maysalūn.

1.

Resolution of the Syrian Congress Submitted to the American Commission of Inquiry

We the undersigned members of the General Syrian Congress now meeting in Damascus represent the three zones of Syria—the southern, eastern, and western. We possess credentials from the Moslem, Christian, and Jewish inhabitants of our districts. During our session of Wednesday July 2, 1919 we decided to submit to the distinguished American delegation of the International Commission the following statement clarifying the wishes of the people whom we have been chosen to represent:

(1) We desire the complete and absolute political independence of Syria, which is bounded on the north by the Taurus Mountains; on the south by a line extending in a southerly direction from Rafaḥ to al-Jawf and below Aqaba on the Syro-Hejaz frontier; on the east by the Euphrates and Khabur Rivers, the line extending in an easterly direction from Abū Kamāi to east of al-Jawf; on the west by the Mediterranean Sea. This without protectorate or trusteeship!

(2) We want the Government of Syria to be a constitutional monarchy, with her several districts administered on a broadly decentralized basis, the rights of minorities safeguarded, and Emir Faisal as King because his efforts to liberate this nation merit our full confidence and trust.

(3) Since the Arabs living in Syria are no less intellectually endowed than other advanced peoples and since their condition is not inferior to that of the Bulgarians, Serbs, Greeks, and Romanians at the beginning of their independence, we protest against Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations which places us among those average peoples who require a mandatory power to guide them.

(4) If, for reasons unknown to us, the Peace Conference should fail to accept this just protest, then, in accordance with President Wilson's declaration that his purpose in entering the war was to put an end to the idea of conquest and imperialism, we would interpret the mandate mentioned in the Covenant of the League of Nations as meaning that only technical and economic aid are involved and that our absolute political independence is to remain untouched. Since we do not want our country to be exposed to the dangers of colonization and since, moreover, we believe that the Americans are the least imperialistic of all peoples, we should like to receive this technical and economic help from the United States of America on the understanding that it is not to impair our absolute political independence and unity and not last more than 20 years.

(5) If the United States should be unable to accede to our request, we would look to Great Britain on the understanding that any aid granted should not impair our country's absolute political independence or exceed the period of time mentioned in Article 4 above.

(6) We acknowledge no claim to any part of Syria that might be advanced by the French government. We refuse to permit France to proffer aid or exert authority in our country under any circumstances whatsoever.

(7) We reject the claims of the Zionists to the southern part of Syria, i.e. Palestine, which they wish to make into a national home for the Jews. We are opposed to their immigration into any part of our country because they do not have the slightest right thereto and because economically, ethnically, and politically they constitute a very grave danger to our existence. However, our Jewish brethren who have always lived here possess the same rights and obligations as the rest of us.

(8) We ask that the southern part of Syria known as Palestine and the western coastal region which is Lebanon not be separated from Syria. We desire that the unity of the country be maintained intact under all circumstances.

(9) We ask for the full independence of liberated Iraq with no economic barriers placed between our two countries.

(10) The basic principle of President Wilson decreeing the invalidation of secret treaties leads us to denounce any treaty that provides for the partition of Syria or any private commitment that aims at settling the Zionists in the southern part of the country. We demand the annulment of all such agreements and pledges.

The noble principles proclaimed by President Wilson have given us full assurance that our desires, which spring from the depths of our hearts, will be the decisive factor in the determination of our future and that President Wilson and the free American people, who have demonstrated the sincerity of their lofty principles and noble intentions toward making mankind in general and the Arabs in particular, will help us. We are very confident that the Peace Conference will take due cognizance of the fact that we would not have rebelled against the Turks, with whom we enjoyed equality of civic and political privileges, had they not opposed our right to a national existence. We hope it will satisfy our aspirations in full so that our rights may not be less after the war, in which we shed so much blood for freedom and independence, than they were before the war. We

wish to be allowed to send a delegation to represent us at the Peace Conference, defend our inalienable rights, and realize our desires.

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2.

The Speech of Emir Zaid Delivered by the Military Governor General, November 22, 1919

I greet this distinguished Congress in the name of His Highness the Emir.

You know, gentlemen, that the Arabs and His Majesty the King relied on the pledges of the Allies and entered the war on their side simply to deliver the Arab people from the yoke of tyranny and oppression and to obtain absolute independence. The Arab army marched victoriously into Syria and proclaimed a temporary military government until the country's fate should be determined at the Peace Conference. Syria, which was invaded by the Arab army with the knowledge of the Allies and of the people, was divided by the Allied High Command into three occupation zones and placed under temporary military administrations. His Highness Emir Faisal went to Europe to represent the country at the Peace Conference and defend its political rights—and he is still engaged in this holy struggle. The uproar in Europe over the Syrian question has not yet subsided. However, in view of their financial difficulties and America's delay in rendering a final decision, as they assert, the Allies were forced to make temporary military arrangements providing for the withdrawal of the British army and its replacement by other forces in just a few places in our eastern zone, i.e. Baalbek, Rayāq, and Shuṭūrah. The British army will not be evacuated from the Ḥawrān and al-Karak, but will continue to perform its original function in these regions. This provisional scheme was drawn up without consulting their allies the Arabs whose opinion should have been of primary importance in a matter so obnoxious to them. In fact, before anything else, the Allies ought to have sought the opinion of the Arabs. The unified military authority in Syria has now become divided.

Yes, we have the statement of M. Pichon, French Minister of Foreign Affairs in connection with the appointment of General Gouraud and the last arrangement:

"The decision of the Peace Conference has left us no room for confusion or ambiguity. It cannot lead to or aim at a dismemberment of Syria. It is purely a temporary wartime agreement that will not prejudice the issues of trusteeship and frontiers, both of which will be formally decided at the Peace Conference where the Syrian case has been considered inseparable from the Eastern Question. This case will be settled along with other Turkish problems when the peace treaty with Turkey is concluded. . . General Gouraud has been instructed to keep the Republican government informed of the hopes and needs of the people; to preserve the trust between the Arabs and the Allies as it was during the war; and to continue the task of liberating weak nations, which is a principle of the Allies."

Statements like these are assuredly not sufficient to warrant our acceptance of responsibility for the recent expedient implementing the secret Sykes-Picot Agreement which is injurious to the rights of the country and contradictory to the Allies' principles, official declarations, and promise with respect to granting liberated peoples the right to life and independence in accordance with their wishes and votes. This is what impelled us to tender our resignation to His Highness Emir Faisal in protest against the reports that have reached us. His Highness then asked us to acquiesce in the temporary military authority while

he complains to the responsible sources. His Highness would like your Congress to inform him as to the present situation in your capacity as leaders of the country and representatives of the people's will and to set forth your opinion on this last temporary measure. He wants you to be much more energetic than before in directing the nationalist movement. Your continued efforts within the country will be of assistance to His Highness Emir Faisal who has been duly deputized by the people to defend their absolute political rights. This will be accomplished by unifying our plans, by manifesting a spirit of cooperation, determination, true power, and willingness to expend lives and wealth, and by molding public opinion in line with the common aim of full independence and readiness for any eventuality.

The sole objective of the military authorities at this critical hour is to maintain public order even more rigorously than before and to help the people fulfill their legitimate aspirations. Peace and mercy and blessings of God be upon you!

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3.

The Response of the Syrian Congress to the above address

During a secret session Saturday evening November 22, 1919 the Syrian Congress unanimously agreed to make the following answer to His Highness the Emir:

The Syrian Congress in its capacity as legal political representative of the Syrian Arab nation was honored to hear the statement of Your Highness as read by the Military Governor General. It thus learned how the Allies made promises to the Arabs when the fortunes of war were running against them and then broke these promises in violation of the basic principles which they declared to the world they were fighting to vindicate, i.e., to make the truth prevail over force and support the right of peoples to determine their future in accordance with their desires and aspirations. By deeds and actions they nullified the Covenant of the League of Nations, which endorsed this declaration and which their own hands wrote. Before the ink on the Covenant was dry, they were driven by selfish considerations to divide the peoples and lay the foundation for colonization. Relying on the sword, cannon, and right of conquest, they admitted for all practical purposes that their pledges and compacts were nothing but pieces of paper, even though they had condemned the Germans and aroused the peoples against them for doing this very thing.

The temporary military agreement concluded between Lloyd George and Clemenceau concerning Syria was kept secret from the Arabs who have been in the country since the dawn of history and who are entitled to decide its fate, first of all, in their capacity as allies and, secondly, as the owners and inhabitants of the land who have made clear their desires and wishes to the American delegation of the International Commission. This agreement is evidence of their bad faith regarding the future of Syria, whose people have duly chosen us to express their wishes, create their corporate entity, formulate laws in harmony with their customs, traditions, and needs, and to demonstrate to the world that they are a genuinely democratic nation based exclusively on national sovereignty.

Therefore, the Syrian Congress, in its legal capacity and in its reliance on the voice of the people who have delegated it to represent them, offers Your Highness its warmest thanks for everything that you and your brother His Highness Emir Faisal have done and will do to carry out its historic resolution to obtain the country's political, economic, and social rights, i.e., its absolute independence without the blemish of a trusteeship or protectorate.

With reference to the temporary agreement, the Congress considers that the peoples whose hopes and aspirations it represents are duty-bound to defend to the last man the unity and integrity of the country which is now facing the threat of partition and loss of independence.

We deem it appropriate to remind you briefly of certain of the Congress' ideas that must be realized if we are to unify the nationalist movement in the country and reach the desired goal: proclamation of the complete independence and indivisibility of Syria within her borders, as defined in the resolution of the Syrian Congress submitted to the American delegation of the International Commission, and a constitutional monarchy as the form of government. We desire to call Your Highness' attention to the situation and practices in the countries that have attained national sovereignty before us where the governments must be indigenous and subject to the control of the national assemblies within constitutional limits. The Congress considers itself in full accord with Your Highness on the urgent necessity of applying similar measures to this country and forming a stable government responsible to the people. The Congress offers the governments its unqualified support and cooperation in all steps to defend the fatherland which is now menaced by imperialism.

May God keep Your Highness and your brother Emir Faisal as a treasure and mainstay of our country!

Chairman Hāshim al-Atāsī	Secretary Sa'īd Ḥaydar	Member ʿAbd al-Qādir al-Khatīb	Member Fawzī al-Bakrī
Member Waṣfī al-Atāsī	Member Ibrāhīm Hanāno	Member ʿAlī al-ʿĀbid	Member Da'ās Jurjī
Member Riyād al-Ṣulḥ	Member Sa'd Allāh al-Jābirī	Member Salāḥ al-Dīn al-Ḥājj Yūsuf	

4.

**The Message of Emir Zaid to the Syrian Congress,
December 1, 1919**

Honorable Members of the Syrian Congress!

We the representative of His Highness Emir Faisal thank this esteemed Congress for its manifestations of genuine patriotism and meritorious deeds, which revealed a praiseworthy zeal and high determination to gain victory for this blessed country and to defend the rights and absolute political independence for which we fought four successive years at the side of the Allies. We relied on the aid of God, the noble sentiments of the country, and the justice of the civilized world which formally acknowledged the right of the Arabs to a free life and admired their bravery in defending their cause and destroying imperialism in accordance with the principle of right and freedom of oppressed peoples.

We have done what you wished and proclaimed a parliamentary, constitutional regime as the future basis of our government. However, for the time being we think it advisable to retain the existent administrative structure since it is more likely to maintain law and order during these difficult days until the Peace Conference ultimately decides our fate.

We do not doubt that this national Congress to which the finest and most devoted men adhere will serve as a model for every popular movement. It will be a weighty factor in unifying the nation's plans, mobilizing its strength, and arousing public opinion in behalf of the desired objective, which is full independence. Peace and the mercy and blessings of God be upon you!

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6.

**The Response of the Syrian Congress to the Speech
of Emir Faisal, as Published in the Press,
March 6, 1920**

Your Highness!

The General Congress representing the Syrian people listened with pride and joy to Your Royal Highness' speech in which you explained the noble purpose behind the Arabs' entrance into the war on the side of the Allies. You set forth the present attitude of the country toward the diplomatic crisis and described the faithfulness and good intentions of the Allies and the leading European statesmen regarding the independence of the Arab lands in general and of our country Syria in particular.

During Ottoman times the organizations and political parties of the Arabs at home and abroad waged a hard political struggle and that culminated in a bloody revolt against the central government solely because they wanted complete independence and a free life as a people possessing an independent existence, external civilization, unique national spirit, and the right to self-rule.

The Arabs joined the Allies in the war on the basis of agreements they concluded with His Majesty your father and the formal diplomatic pledges which their leaders publicly announced. They were persuaded by President Wilson's lofty principles aiming at the freedom and independence of peoples, the protection of their interests, and the right of self-determination, as you pointed out in your address.

Your glorious accomplishments and those of your father were the most important factor in the triumph of the Arab cause. They were a source of delight to all Arabs, particularly the Syrians, who fought at your side to reach the sacred goal of freedom and complete independence. Therefore, the first task incumbent upon this Congress, which speaks in behalf of the nation and interprets its feelings and hopes, is to express our gratitude to you and your father and repeat our prayer for your success and that of your brothers and your noble family who have participated in the liberation struggle and greatly helped the nation to realize its hopes and aspirations.

However, your heroic role on the battlefield was no more important than your role as defender of our cause on foreign diplomatic battlefields; it too will be immortalized in the pages of our history. After referring to the victory won by the world, Your Highness asserted that "it was not only military, but also, above everything else, political because it represented a triumph of right over might, of freedom over slavery". This pleased the members of the Congress who assembled in Damascus as delegates of the Syrian people to gather the fruits of their holy struggle from the garden of freedom. Their pleasure was enhanced by the account of your trips in which you reported that conversations and correspondence with the European statesmen have convinced you of the good faith of the Allies toward our beloved country.

Politically, the nation relies on its clear right to life and is quite sure that such a right has to be taken, not given, as you have put it many times. We seek freedom and absolute independence while eagerly striving to develop a policy of peace and friendship with all free, civilized nations that is based on mutual confidence and benefit.

The Syrian Congress, Your Highness, is fully aware of the seriousness of its task. It feels that the time has come to alter the situation of Syria with respect to the temporary occupation, which was dictated by the circumstances of war, and to do so in a fashion that will accord with the wishes of the country and solve its current problems. The partition and burdensome military occupation has now lasted about a year and a half and caused us grave harm economically and administratively. The minds of the people are filled with doubts as to their future. The tension prevailing everywhere has led to the outbreak of insurrections in the occupied zones with the country's independence and unity as their goals. In view of the nation's growing determination to demand and achieve by any and all means the unity, freedom, and right of self-determination to which it is naturally and legally entitled by virtue of the blood shed by our martyrs in the long and noble struggle, and in view of the agreements, pledges, and lofty principles of the Allies, we who are now assembled here as representatives of all the Syrians unanimously passed a resolution proclaiming:

The full and absolute independence of our country Syria, including Palestine, within her natural boundaries, based on a civil, representative form of government, protection of the rights of minorities, and rejection of the claims of the Zionists to Palestine as a national homeland or place of immigration for the Jews.

Furthermore, we have unanimously chosen Your Highness to be the constitutional king of Syria because of your wisdom, soundness of judgment, and other exceptional qualifications, immortal deeds in war and diplomacy, love of freedom and the constitution, and devotion to the country and its people. The formal oath of fealty has been set for Monday Jumādā II 17 (March 8, 1920) at 3:00 p.m.

We also announced dissolution of the occupation governments in the three zones and their replacement by a civil monarchy responsible to the National Assembly, decentralized administration of the provinces, and observance of the wishes of the Lebanese for the autonomy of their province within its pre-war boundaries, provided that it be free from any foreign influence.

In the name of the nation we shall preserve the friendship of the Allies and fully respect their interests and those of other foreigners. We are absolutely sure that the Allies will accept this honorable and well-intentioned action of ours, which rests on natural and legal right, and recognize our complete independence. We know too that they will evacuate their armies from the western and southern zones, i.e., the coast and Palestine, thus permitting the indigenous regime to assume the task of administration and maintenance of order. Retention of the existing mutual good will will enable the Syrians to reach their high goal and become active members of the world community.

Since the government that we have decided to form will be responsible to the people, we agreed to let our assembly frame a constitution that will set forth the fundamental legal structure of the country and vest the government with full authority to deal with any matter that may affect our independence. It will remain in session until a legislative assembly is convened in accordance with a law to be enacted for this purpose.

Before concluding our petition, we must note with pride the splendid services rendered by our Iraqi brethren during the war in behalf of the Arab renaissance.

We reiterate our earlier request that Iraq be given the right of freedom and absolute independence. We shall earnestly support our Iraqi brethren in all their demands for independence and efforts to remove economic barriers between the two sister countries.

May God help our leader and surround this people with His eternal care!
Amen.

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7.

The Last Resolution Passed by the Syrian Congress and Released at the Time of the Deepening of the Crisis over the Ultimatum

The Syrian Congress has been apprised of the terms laid down by General Gouraud, i.e., possession of the railroad line together with the city of Aleppo, unconditional acceptance of the French mandate, treatment of Syrian paper money as local currency, and repeal of the confidence from the Congress on May 8th after the San Remo decision regarding a French mandate for Syria and the partition of the country. The cabinet officially announced that it had rejected and protested this decision and that it would defend the country's national existence against attempts to usurp its rights or impose slavery. The Congress, which passed a resolution favoring the full independence and unity of the country and laying the foundation of the Syrian monarchy accordingly, endorsed the cabinet after it had agreed to implement the resolution. As soon as the ultimatum was issued, the Congress summoned the cabinet to learn formally its plan of action, but the cabinet did not accede to the request. The Congress hereby affirms that no government has the right to accept in the name of the Syrian people any condition whatsoever that conflicts with the historic resolution of the Congress. In view of the fact that the present government violated its own official statement and failed to do its duty to the country by seeking to sign a document contrary to the Congress' resolution, the Congress declares the government illegal and the document invalid. It charges the members of the cabinet with full responsibility toward the country which, according to the aforesaid resolution, is absolutely independent by virtue of its natural and legal right and long struggle. It will deem any foreign intervention in the country improper whether achieved by force or with the consent of persons who have not been vested with this right by the people. This the Syrian nation is entitled to repudiate at all times.

The Congress asks the civilized world to bear witness to this declaration which it proclaims to the nation and submits to the representatives of foreign countries.

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THE PROCLAMATION OF INDEPENDENCE

The statement containing the proclamation of Syrian independence was read on March 8, 1920 from the balcony of Town Hall in Damascus before a large crowd of people and officially communicated to the Allied governments. It was greeted with great joy throughout Syria and elsewhere in the Arab world. However, it provoked strong anger in European circles, chiefly in England. The reason is that the resolution embraced Palestine and demanded the independence of Iraq. Moreover, it was coordinated with the resolution on Iraqi independence passed by the Iraqi Congress meeting in Damascus. Therefore, Lord Curzon, then British Foreign Secretary, sent a sharply-worded cable in the name of the British and French governments protesting that the Syrian government was not a legally constituted body and that announcement of the said resolution would hinder the Peace Conference in its efforts to solve the Turkish problem. King Faisal was compelled to refute these charges by pointing out that the Syrian Congress which passed the resolution was the same Congress that had held many meetings over a long period of time without any objections having been raised by the British government.

1.

Text of the Resolution on the Independence of Syria Passed by the General Syrian Congress

During its public session of Sunday-Monday Jumādā II 16, 1338 (March 7, 1920) the General Syrian Congress which represents all the Syrian Arab people in the three zones—interior, coastal, and southern (Palestine)—passed the following resolution:

During Ottoman times the organizations and political parties of the Arabs, who are the heirs of an ancient glory and brilliant civilization, waged a hard political struggle that culminated in a bloody revolt against the central government solely because they wanted complete independence and a free life as a people possessing an independent existence, unique national spirit, and the right of self-rule like that enjoyed by other peoples who are not superior to us in civilization and progress.

The Arabs joined the Allies in the war on the basis of formal promises made privately and publicly by their parliaments and government leaders, in particular the pledges given to King Husein regarding the independence of the Arab countries. They relied too on President Wilson's lofty principles espousing the freedom and independence of large and small peoples, equality of rights, termination of the policy of conquest and imperialism, nullification of secret treaties impairing the rights of nations, and the right of self-determination for liberated peoples. The Allies officially agreed to all this in the following: the statement of Premier Briand on November 3, 1915 before the French Chamber of Deputies; the statement of Lord Grey, British Foreign Secretary, on October 23, 1916 before the Committee on Foreign Affairs; the Allies' answer to the note of the Central

Powers, which was submitted by Briand through the American Ambassador in Paris; the Allies' answer to President Wilson's note of January 10, 1917; the declaration of the French Chamber of Deputies on the night of June 4-5, 1917; the declaration of the Senate on June 6th; and Lloyd George's speech in Glasgow on June 29, 1917.

King Husein's great deeds on the side of the Allies constituted the major factor in freeing the Arabs from the morass of the Turkish regime, and they will live forever in the annals of the people. The diplomatic and military leaders of the civilized world witnessed how much his sons and the other Arabs suffered when they fought in the regular Allied armies for three years. The sacrifices, persecution, torture, execution, and exile of many of those who joined the Arab movement Syria, the Hejaz, and Iraq—not to mention the accomplishments of the Syrians in their own country—facilitated the victory of the Allies and the Arabs. They contributed to the Turkish defeat and subsequent withdrawal from Syria and thus realized the hopes of the Arabs in general and of the Syrians in particular. Arab flags were unfurled and local governments established in various parts of the country before the Allies arrived.

When military arrangements required the division of Syria into three zones, the Allies officially announced that they had no designs on Syria and that the only reason they were continuing the war in the East was to deliver the peoples from the Turkish yoke once and for all. They said that partition was just a temporary military expedient that would have no effect on the country's future, independence, or unity. Moreover, in the first paragraph of Article 22 of the Treaty of Peace with Germany they formally recognized our independence in fulfillment of their pledge to grant peoples the right of self-determination. Then they sent the American Committee to ascertain the wishes of the people who made it clear that they wanted the complete independence and unity of Syria.

The burdensome military occupation and partition has now lasted about a year and a half and done us great harm economically and administratively. The minds of the people are filled with doubts as to their future. The tension prevailing everywhere has led to the outbreak of insurrections with the termination of alien military rule and the country's independence and unity as their goals.

We the members of this Congress, in our capacity as true representatives of all the Syrians in whose name we speak, hereby proclaim the necessity of putting an end to this intolerable situation. We do so in reliance upon our natural and legal right to freedom, upon the blood shed by our martyrs in long and holy struggle, upon the aforementioned agreements, pledges, and lofty principles, and upon the ever growing determination of the nation to demand and achieve by any and all means its right and unity. We have therefore unanimously proclaimed the full and absolute independence of our country Syria, including Palestine, within her natural boundaries, based on a civil, representative form of government, protection of the rights of minorities, and rejection of the claims of the Zionists to Palestine as a national homeland or place of immigration for the Jews.

Furthermore, we have chosen His Highness Emir Faisal, son of King Husein, to be the constitutional king of Syria with the title His Majesty King Faisal the First. His tireless efforts to liberate the country caused the people to acclaim him their greatest hero. We have announced the termination of the present military occupation governments in the three zones and their replacement by constitutional monarchy which shall be vested by this Assembly with the full authority to deal with any matter that may affect our independence until the representative assembly can be convened. There shall also be decentralized

administration of the provinces together with observance of the wishes of the Lebanese for the autonomy of their province within its pre-war boundaries, provided that it be free from any foreign influence.

Since the Arab Revolt occurred in order to liberate the Arabs from the Turkish yoke (the reasons justifying the independence of Syria are equally applicable to Iraq) and since the two regions are inextricably linked together by linguistic, economic, natural, and racial ties, we therefore demand the full independence of Iraq and the creation of a political and economic union between the two sister countries.

In the name of the Syrian Arabs who have chosen us to represent them we shall preserve the friendship of the noble Allies and fully respect their interests and those of all the other nations as well. We are very sure that the noble Allies and all the other civilized nations will accept this honorable and well-intentioned action of ours, which rests on natural and legal right, and recognize our independence. We know too that the Allies will evacuate their armies from the western and southern zones, thus permitting the indigenous regime to assume the task of administration and maintenance of order. Retention of the existing mutual good will will enable the Syrian Arabs to reach their high goal and become active members of the world community.

It is incumbent upon the Syrian government, which has been formed on this basis, to carry out this resolution.

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2.

The Syrian Cabinet's Note to the Allies

I have the honor to communicate to you the following:

The Arabs joined the Allies on the strength of their declared war aims and suffered great losses in men and money at the side of their partners. More than once the Allied leaders officially acknowledged the value of the Arab contribution.

The Allies never ceased to promise the Arabs that they would satisfy their natural desires and restore the rights taken away from them by the Turks. These statements heightened the valor of the Arabs and intensified their devotion to the Allied cause. Moreover, the Peace Conference provided new pledges of independence and self-government in the Covenant of the League of Nations.

Many months passed and these promises were not kept; the Arabs failed to obtain any of the rights for which they had expended so much in men and money. Syria was divided into three zones and her provinces were governed by a military administration lacking in economic or administrative method, with the result that the unfortunate country is now in urgent need of reorganization if the damages wrought by the war are to be repaired.

Frequent postponement of the realization of their hopes led the people to fear for their natural unity and future existence. The frustration and political unrest provoked by the economic and administrative confusion threatened to turn into a mass uprising. The enlightened section of the citizenry felt it their duty to correct the situation before it became much worse. Accordingly, they convened a Syrian Congress composed of duly chosen representatives from all parts of Syria. After a careful study of the conditions, the Congress passed a resolution on March 8, 1920 proclaiming the absolute independence of the country in its three zones and His Royal Highness Emir Faisal king of Syria.

The resolution brought great happiness everywhere. The people saw in it a means of ending the crisis about which they were complaining and a guarantee that they would enjoy the right of full independence and legitimate self-government granted by nature and often supported by the Allies. His Majesty King Faisal was then pleased to entrust me with the task of forming a ministry to govern the country on the basis of the constitutional principles. The Ministry, which has been approved by His Majesty, has the following program:

- (1) To safeguard the absolute independence which has been proclaimed;
- (2) To maintain and strengthen order throughout Syria, render justice without distinction as to race and religion, defend the rights of minorities, and protect the interests of friendly powers and their citizens;
- (3) To build good relations between Syria and foreign powers;
- (4) To endeavor to organize the country in such a way as to ensure its moral progress and the development of its natural resources; and
- (5) To cooperate sincerely with the Allies in preserving peace in the East.

The enclosed is a translation of the original text of the resolution passed by the Syrian Congress. I trust that your government will appreciate the factors which led to the Congress' action and recognize that it had no alternative since a sacred right was involved.

You may observe from the program which I have the honor to send you that there can be no room for doubt as to our strong determination to create friendly bonds that will safeguard our interests and those of the Allies, particularly your noble country, which did so much to help us fulfill our national aspirations.

I am hopeful that we shall continue to enjoy your government's valued confidence and aid in order to facilitate our task. Please be assured, Your Excellency, that we will never neglect any means of strengthening the good relations existing between our two countries.

Respectfully yours,
‘Alī Riḍā al-Rikābī
Prime Minister of Syria

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3.

King Faisal's letter to President Wilson

Your Excellency:

The Arab countries (Syria including Palestine, the Hejaz, and Iraq) liberated from the Turkish yoke suffered from oppression and maladministration for many centuries. The balance of power in Europe frustrated the Arabs in their efforts to reestablish their national existence and once again to enjoy the boon of justice. When the great war broke out and engulfed the nations one by one, the Arabs took up arms on the side of the Allies. After their declaration of war on the Turks and revolt against the Caliph of the Moslems, his appeal for holy war was as dust scattered in the air. The matter did not rest there, but went even further since the Moslems became stimulated by our determination and joined the ranks of the Allies. They fought with enthusiasm and devotion and helped them gain a glorious victory.

The Arabs wanted their uprising to lead to the fulfillment of their aspirations which all the Allies, notably Great Britain, acknowledged to be just. The Allies

greeted with satisfaction the lofty principles that you set forth, e.g., the aim of this war was the liberation of peoples, not the striving for victory; every nation, including Syria, had the right to determine its own fate and the kind of government that promised to promote its welfare. Feeling sufficiently assured and confident that the promises made to them by the Allies would be definitely carried out once the hostilities came to an end, the Arabs plunged into the war.

Following the Armistice, Syria was divided into four zones for administrative purposes in accordance with a secret agreement of which we knew nothing. The people then became enraged by the ensuing state of affairs and did not calm down until they received numerous guarantees that this division was temporary and that it would disappear with the military government. We were still fearful when it became known that Great Britain and France had concluded a treaty calculated to aggravate the existing difficulties. This news had a very bad effect. People lost their patience; some of them took up the sword in order to defend the unity of Syria which had now become clouded. Since the northern portion of Syria bordered on a region in which the flames of rebellion were still raging, we became apprehensive lest the disorders spread throughout Syria.

There was no better way to cope with the situation and restore order than to convene the Syrian Congress elected by the people, proclaim Syria's independence, and crown me king—all this in conformity with the promises and declarations of the Allies. Since we ask only for the right accorded us by nature and history and earned by the blood shed in the war, we expect the Allies to welcome our new government and facilitate the task of removing the obstacles that hamper our progress. We ask for nothing more than to live in safety and tranquillity under the banner of universal peace. We shall respect the interests of the Allies in our country and protect the rights of all foreigners.

The present division of Syria is a stumbling block in the path of her economic and political development. Peace cannot come until her unity and independence are secured.

I have every hope that you will use your power and influence to defend our cause in accordance with the true principles that you have uttered.

Sincerely yours,

Faisal

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4.

**Letter of the Chief of the Royal Cabinet
to Lord Curzon—through Colonel Easton**

Dear Colonel Easton:

I have the honor to request you to please forward the following telegram from His Majesty King Faisal the First to His Excellency Lord Curzon:

"In answer to your telegram dated March 9, 1920, I have the honor to draw Your Excellency's attention to the fact that the Syrian Congress which met on the 7th of this month is the same Congress that held numerous meetings with the knowledge of the British authorities who were then in control of Syria.

"This Congress met in order to present its opinions to the American Commission which came to ascertain the views of the people in accordance with the resolution of the Peace Conference. It remained in session for three months more. At the end of last year it held another session during which it investigated

various domestic problems. Neither the British nor the French authorities protested the Congress, which was a normal organization composed of legally elected members. During its last session the Congress proclaimed Syria independent and me her King on the basis of the statements and pledges of the Allied Governments. Therefore, the British and French cannot regard it as having behaved in any fashion contrary to their views. Moreover, the Congress assumed the responsibility for quelling public disorders and protecting the country against questionable ideas which had begun to circulate in the East. It openly avowed its devotion to the Allies, above all to the English and French governments. The Syrian people, and I at their head, demonstrated faith in your country by entering the struggle on your side at a time when there was indeed room for doubt as to the outcome. They were so happy at the victory in the East that they could not today do anything inimical to Great Britain and her Allies. On the contrary, they will zealously defend her interests and be ever ready to place their resources at the service of the Allies. The last war provided overwhelming proof of our intentions. However, it must not be forgotten that as a consequence of the promises you made to us, I acted to bring the Arabs into the war and thus incurred a grave responsibility toward them. Since they are now demanding that I carry out the promises, I am compelled to ask you to find a way to help me do so.

I am most hopeful that under these circumstances you will reply to this telegram by informing me of the recognition in principle of the complete independence and unity of Syria. This will permit me to go to Europe to thank His Majesty's Government and explain to the Supreme Council the true position of Syria."

Respectfully yours,

ʿAwnī ʿAbd al-Hādī

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5.

**Letter of the Chief of the Royal Cabinet
to General Gouraud—through Colonel Cousse**

Dear Colonel Cousse:

I have the honor to forward the enclosed letter from His Majesty to General Gouraud:

"I am pleased to send you a copy of the telegram written to me by the British Foreign Secretary in the name of the French and English governments and my reply thereto. I am adding the following observations:

"There is nothing in the resolution of the Syrian Congress that conflicts with the promises and aims of the French and English governments, nor is its purpose to impede in any way the work of the Peace Conference in solving the Turkish question.

"The Syrian Congress took this action only after it became convinced of the friendly intentions of the Allies and their desire to help the Arabs in their new life, as they had often publicly stated, notably in the Anglo-French Declaration of November 7, 1918.

"The resolution of the Syrian Congress is in complete harmony with the desires of the Allies. It undertakes specifically to safeguard the peace and strengthen the friendly relations existing with the Allies in general and with France and England in particular.

"The Syrian people, the Syrian Congress, and the Syrian government eagerly invite the advice of their noble Allies. They are bold enough to hope to obtain their help in building up the country materially and spiritually as long as there is no infringement of its absolute independence and geographic and national unity.

"When the Syrians entered the war on the side of the Allies, they tightened the bonds of friendship and cooperation linking them together.

"It would afford me great pleasure and preclude any misunderstanding if you communicated to your government the text of the resolution of the Syrian Congress and confirmed out sincere intention to obtain the independence of Syria within her natural boundaries.

"Syria relies on the aid and assistance of her two noble Allies to facilitate her march toward progress and civilization.

"I await an appropriate answer from the government of the Republic endorsing the aspirations of the Syrian people. I trust that you will transmit these observations of mine.

"Respectfully yours,

"Please accept, my dear Colonel, my best wishes.

"Awnī 'Abd al-Hādī"

THE MANDATE

On April 24, 1920, the Allied Council at the San Remo Conference agreed to place Syria under a French mandate. This decision was communicated to the Syrian government in two telegrams: one from Monsieur Millerand in the form of a communiqué, the other from Lord Allenby in the form of a letter addressed to King Faisal.

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Telegram of M. Millerand, published in al-*'Aṣimah*, May 3, 1920

Referring both to its previous communiqués and to the general principles enunciated by the Peace Conference with respect to liberation of peoples and friendly aid, the French government reiterates its acknowledgment of the right of the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Syria of all religions to govern themselves as independent peoples.

The French Government considers it an obligation to accept the assignment of the Peace Conference and help these peoples with advice and material aid to realize their legitimate aspirations and become organized into a nation. They are entitled to this assistance after their long subjection and emergence from a war that has devastated their country. The French government will guarantee their independence against any aggression within the boundaries defined by the Peace Conference, with due regard to the necessary independent administrative departments.

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2.

Lord Allenby's Telegram, Sent from the British Agency in Cairo, April 27, 1920

Your Highness:

His Majesty's Government has instructed me to send you the following letter:

"As a result of the recent decisions reached by the Allies in San Remo, Syria and Iraq have been recognized as independent states, with the proviso that they be aided by a mandatory power until such time as they are able to stand alone.

"Pursuant to these decisions, the mandates for Syria and Iraq have been awarded to France and England, respectively. The latter has also been awarded the mandate for Palestine.

"His Majesty's Government feels strongly that the time has now come to proceed to an arrangement whereby the desires of the Syrians will be harmonized with these decisions.

"In your letter No. 103, dated March 28, 1920 and addressed to the British

Foreign Secretary, you expressed the wish to go to Europe, provided that the independence of Syria be recognized.

"Although His Majesty's Government is prepared to recognize in principle Your Highness as head of an independent Syrian state, it strongly believes that the question of your kingship is one that should be reserved for final action by the Peace Conference alone. Hence, it urges you to come to Europe without delay and present your case to the statesmen. The Conference will hold its forthcoming session in Paris at the end of May and we trust that Your Highness will find it possible to remain in constant attendance."

By thus insisting upon your acceptance to His Majesty's Government's invitation to travel to Paris immediately, I am seeking to assure Your Highness that the only reason for His Majesty's Government's interest in this connection is its desire that you have an opportunity to set forth your case in all its particulars so that full consideration may be given to your hopes and aspirations.

I take this occasion once again to offer Your Highness an expression of my warmest esteem.

THE ULTIMATUM

The following documents fall into four categories: (a) communications prior to the receipt of the official ultimatum (b) text of the ultimatum (c) communications subsequent to the arrival of the official ultimatum (d) communications after the advance of the French army.

#

(a) PRIOR TO ARRIVAL OF THE OFFICIAL ULTIMATUM

1.

Telegram Sent to the Various Consulates in Damascus for Transmission to their Governments, July 11, 1920

Following the massing of French troops on the border between the eastern and western zones in Syria and the creation of military bases in preparation for war, General Gouraud declared that he had conditions that he wanted me to fulfill. These conditions—up to now I've read unofficially only a part of them—plainly aim at the destruction of our national sovereignty. Insofar as he made any statements, the General said that he would place obstacles in the way of my trip to Paris unless his demands were met and that the French Government would refuse to discuss the Syrian case with me if I didn't go through the western zone en route.

I have the honor to call the attention of the Allied Powers and the League of Nations to this act and request that they intervene to prevent Syria's yielding to force and becoming a victim of the militaristic spirit, the annihilation of which was the major objective of the great war. I am relying on the fairness of the Allies to avert bloodshed and the total ruination of this country which sacrificed so much in their behalf.

I ask you to form an Allied arbitration commission to review General Gouraud's demands. My people and I pledge ourselves in advance to accept and abide by the decisions of this board.

Faisal

#

Letter to the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Damascus

To the Consul General:

I have the honor to submit to you the following note from His Royal Majesty to the Allied governments with the request that you transmit it to the interested governments and send copies thereof to the consuls now in Damascus:

Excellency:

"As the leader of the Syrian people and an ally of your country in the common cause, I hasten to direct your attention to the current situation in Syria where

peace has become seriously endangered. I am communicating with you in your capacity as representative of one of the great Allied Powers which participated in the Peace Conference that assumed responsibility for establishing peace throughout the world and which recognized the independence of my country at the Conference of San Remo and invited me as the future leader of this independent country to have discussions with it.

"I have the honor to inform you in all frankness that while I was preparing to travel to Europe in response to the invitation extended to me, I received disturbing news concerning the movement of French troops along the coast, and the arrival of occupation officials clearly demonstrated that the General was not sincere and that his actions did not match his words. Moreover, I was semi-officially informed that the General made my trip to Paris contingent upon satisfying certain conditions and that unless I did so the French government would not discuss the Syrian case with me. The conditions were:

"(1) Occupation of the Rayāq-Aleppo Railroad station by the French army;

"(2) Unqualified recognition of the French mandate for Syria;

"(3) Free circulation in the eastern zone of paper currency issued by the Syrian Bank; and

"(4) Suspension of compulsory military service in the western zone (although he knew that the law was enacted solely to maintain order).

"With reference to these demands, which were in flat contradiction to the principles proclaimed by the Allies, I suggested to the General the formation of a mixed commission to arbitrate any dispute that might arise—this in accordance with the terms of the November 25th agreements between the French government and myself. But the General responded by strengthening and massing his forces on the frontier and by occupying Rayāq. In addition, the French troops which is in Jarābulus seized Jisr al-Shughūr on the road to Aleppo. The conclusion is that they began to carry out the aforementioned terms before any official notification was sent to us.

"I am anxious to avoid any hostile act or bloodshed in this Islamic country, which is distinguished by its desire to live in peace and comfort and which has faith in the justice of the cause I am espousing, the fairness of its Allies, and the integrity of the Supreme Council. I have acquainted Your Excellency with the situation in the hope that you will use your influence to safeguard this country from a war that can bring only destruction and ruin.

Faisal"

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3.

Circular Telegram

Once again I ask all the Allies—England, Italy, Belgium, etc., America, and the League of Nations—to listen to the cry of Syria which wants mankind to intercede with the French Government and prevent its powerful army from marching over our country without reason. I say that we are prepared to reach an understanding, provided that our honor be preserved, the decision of San Remo kept, and no obstacle be placed in the way of my going to Europe in response to the invitation of the Conference and the repeated requests of Great Britain.

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**Report of the Government to the Syrian Congress,
July 13, 1920**

Gentlemen!

We consider it our duty to submit to you a report on the present critical situation. You know that the cabinet's plan is the same plan that was and still is the basis of our actions. In our account of this plan, which was approved by your esteemed Congress, we said that we would preserve the bonds of friendship with all the Allies, particularly France and England. You know too that we scrupulously followed the plan in an effort to realize the hopes of the people which were announced to the world through you their deputies in this Congress.

Negotiations proceeded smoothly. After the decisions of San Remo promising the recognition of Syria as an independent state, we received the unofficial messages of our ally, Great Britain, which not only referred to His Majesty our King as King of Syria, but also favored recognition and solve once and for all the Syrian problem in a way consistent with the hopes and happiness of the people. We also wanted to show the entire world that we were not antagonistic to any nation and that we would not oppose the decisions of the Peace Conference as long as this Conference safeguarded our independence and honor. His Majesty resolved to go to Europe himself and through his personal influence there quickly conclude the negotiations. We were very confident of receiving the news that would brighten our hopes, which are the hopes of the people as well.

While we were thus following our plan and waiting for a favorable report from the delegation headed by His Majesty, the unexpected took place and produced a situation that we should like to describe to you now.

General Gouraud, for reasons unknown to us, sought to use his armed forces to prevent His Majesty from making his trip. He told our envoy that he had certain conditions for us to meet. However, we have not as yet received the official text. We can not study the conditions formally or consider them correct or communicate them to you until we receive the official version in writing.

Gentlemen! When we look at these conditions, we see that they conflict not only with the people's desires, aspirations, and absolute determination to preserve their independence, but with the decisions reached at San Remo by the powers, including France herself. These conditions, if correct, undermine the foundation of our independence and sovereignty as recognized by the powers at San Remo. The General has massed troops south and west on the borders of the eastern zone—his purpose being perhaps to underscore the conditions which, we repeat, have not reached us up to this very hour—and sent reinforcements to Rayāq. The French military governor of Zaḥlah told the commander of the Arab station in Rayāq that Rayāq was under military occupation and that the General brought back the French forces which had occupied al-Mu'allaqah last year.

We learned yesterday from Colonel Cousse speaking for General Gouraud that the occupation of Rayāq and al-Mu'allaqah was to balance the reinforcement of our troops in Mijdal Anjar, which we set up at the beginning of the occupation as a military base to maintain internal order only in that region. We recently strengthened it as a precautionary measure after we observed the forces the General was massing on the frontiers of our zone.

Our government protested General Gouraud's behavior, which was in violation of the spirit of the alliance, and requested that the matter be referred to

international arbitration. From this platform we now proclaim to the nation and to the entire world the following:

(1) We desire only peace and the preservation of our independence and honor which must remain unblemished.

(2) We are innocent of any charges or insinuations that we want to disturb the relations between ourselves and any of our Allies.

(3) We do not reject negotiation; on the contrary, we welcome it. The delegation headed by His Majesty is ready to negotiate at any time. We shall accept any solution that does not impair our independence and honor and is based on right and independence.

(4) We are fully prepared and adamant in our determination to defend our honor and rights with all the strength that God has given us.

This, then, gentlemen, is the present situation. God is with us, for we seek only our right and the preservation of our existence.

#

(b) THE ULTIMATUM

1.

General Gouraud's Letter

His Highness:

I have the honor to send my note dated July 14th. I submit it to Your Royal Highness in the hope that your exalted character, sincere patriotism, and friendly sentiments toward France will lead you to accept it.

France has shown her devotion to Syria by agreeing to assume the responsibility for guiding the new state and providing honest leadership. Thus, I should like to believe that Your Highness will listen to the voice of wisdom in handling this grave matter and refrain from backing a government that represents only extremist elements among the population.

I do not think I can be sure that the guarantees I am asking of Your Highness will be implemented as long as the present anti-French government remains in office. This government is endeavoring to drag your country into war and plunge it into the furnace of woes. Only the action of Your Royal Highness can ward off this disaster.

Gouraud

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2.

Note Sent on July 14, 1920 by General Gouraud, French High Commissioner in Syria and Cilicia and Commander in Chief of the Army of the East

To His Royal Highness Emir Faisal:

In the name of the French government I have the honor to review before Your Royal Highness for the last time my Government's attitude toward the behavior of the Damascus government since the beginning of this year.

Peace reigned in Syria throughout the English occupation. The atmosphere

became murky and turbulent only when our troops replaced the British. The steadily increasing public disorders since that time have impeded Syria's political, administrative, and economic progress more than they have injured our troops or our occupation of the western zone. The Damascus government is fully accountable for this situation to the people of Syria to whom France, in accordance with the instructions of the Peace Conference, will impart the blessings of an administration founded on independence, order, tolerance, and abundance. France made clear to you her desire for friendship and cooperation when she championed "the right of the Arabic-speaking inhabitants of Syria of all religions to govern themselves as independent peoples". Your Highness answered with the admission that it is to the great advantage of the Syrians to seek advice and help from a major power in order to achieve unity and organize the affairs of their country which suffered so much from Turkish oppression and the destruction caused by the war. The League of Nations will record that advice and help when they are actually given. Your Royal Highness in the name of the Syrian people invited France to execute this task.

While you were negotiating with the French government last November and guerrilla bands from Damascus were assailing the western zone, Monsieur Clemenceau sent me the following cable:

"When the news of the Bedouin attacks in South and North Syria reached me, I told Emir Faisal that for the time being I agreed with him on certain principles and that I would keep my word. However, he had to match my plan of action with one of equal sincerity and make his authority respected by his followers. If these two conditions were not fully met, the French government would regain its freedom of action and use force to carry out the instructions of the Peace Conference and restore order and respect for rights."

The following account will make clear how the Damascus government has continued its calculated hostility and all-out opposition to the policy of cooperation which the Prime Minister advocated and you undertook to implement.

1. Open attacks on our troops.

The Damascus government's persistent refusal to permit the French authorities to use the Rayāq-Aleppo railroad is a definite act of hostility. The government is quite aware that we need the railroad to supply one of the French divisions in the north and equip it for battle. This division will engage the forces of Turkey from whose noose the victorious Allies snatched Syria and defend the frontiers of the new Syrian government to which we must be linked by bonds of interest and gratitude. The Damascus government has made it a principle to organize guerrilla bands to harass our occupation troops. This principle was frankly admitted by the commander of the Third Division in Aleppo on April 13th when he said:

"Since we can not formally declare war on the French, we must fill the country with guerrilla bands to wear them gradually down. Our officers will lead these irregulars and when one of them is killed, the government will support his family."

Here is proof of the faithfulness with which this plan has been executed:

On December 13, 1919, the Sherifian forces in Homs were incited to attack our position in Tell Kalakh. At the end of the same month the Bedouin Maḥmūd al-Fā'ūr, the Christian from Marj 'Uyūn whom Your Highness described to me as a personal friend, was killed where our soldiers were attacked on January 4, 1920 and the Sherifian flag raised. On the 5th Sherifian soldiers were found among those who attacked our troops under the command of Thurayyā Bey first

at Qurayq Khān, then at al-Ḥammām. On the 25th Chief Fu'ād Salīm and a detachment of regular soldiers attacked our position at Jisr al-Liṭānī.

After Ḥārim and Antioch were raided by Arab guerrillas, Bābana was assaulted unceasingly from April 16th to April 22nd under the command of the Sherifian officer Ḥasan Bey.

It was proved that a brigadier-general, chieftain, 6 lieutenants, and 317 men from the Sherifian army were serving during June with the guerrillas in the Marj 'Uyūn sector and using their regular army equipment, i.e., 4 heavy and 3 light machine guns, 50 boxes of ammunition. There was also evidence that agitators from the eastern zone had taken part in the massacres of 'Ayn Ibl and the Shī'ah uprising of June.

Moreover, the leaders of the guerrillas are received with great respect and honor in Damascus, notably Subhī Bey Barakāt who, as everyone knows, has done us much harm.

When bands were not sent out from the eastern zone, disturbances were provoked in the French zone itself.

Add the numerous assaults on the Christians, especially at Jisr al-Qar'ūn on December 29th, the responsibility for which rests on the two Sherifian officers Waḥīd Bey and Tahsīn Bey.

Sheikh Ṣālīḥ, the champion of chaos and of animosity toward us, has been given active and continuous help in the Nuṣayrī mountains.

It would be possible to list many more such instances; we protested each of them to Your Highness at the time of occurrence.

2. The hostile policy of the Damascus Government.

Your Highness observed that noted Francophobes were brought into the Damascus government. The prevailing atmosphere affected you so strongly that you were unable to leave at the appropriate time in response to the invitation of the Peace Conference. The cabinet was composed of men belonging to that party which did not limit itself to insulting France and rejecting her aid, but also vented its spleen upon the Supreme Council which awarded France the mandate for Syria. The outright rejection of the French mandate on May 18th is a piece of folly that will visit grievous misfortunes upon Syria.

3. Anti-French administrative measures.

The financial resistance evident in the refusal to accept the Syrian Bank's new Syrian paper money issued to the account of France and the suspension of all commercial and monetary transactions with the eastern zone branch of the Syrian Bank are fresh indications of enmity that will injure the country. So too the prohibition against transporting grain to the French zone first from Hama during March, then from Damascus and Aleppo.

Sherifian authority crossed the border of the eastern zone and gradually penetrated the western zone in order to show that it had grown to the point where it could drive us out. In March a Sherifian guard unit was posted at al-Khālīṣah. Then the Sherifian flag was raised over al-Qadmūs. In April the Aleppo Government made al-Qaṣīr a Sherifian district. Shortly thereafter a Sherifian administrator was appointed over Jisr al-Shughūr.

4. Hostile acts directed against France.

All friends and supporters of France in the eastern zone are considered suspect by the authorities and often maltreated. A good example of this is the

case of Fāris Ghanṭūs and Nasīb Gabriel whose return to Rāshayā was officially guaranteed by the Damascus government. As soon as they arrived they were abused and placed in jail.

On January 22nd a delegation of Ḥawran Druzes who had come to greet me were attacked in the Wādī al-Qarn on their way home and a number of them killed. There have been many such instances, particularly in Aleppo.

Our enemies, on the other hand, are honored and given full protection in the eastern zone. The Dānadishah were accorded a rousing reception in Damascus following the events of Tell Kalakh. Amin Maḥyū blew up the Beirut arsenal, but the Damascenes inflicted no punishment on him. We remember too Your Royal Highness' recent efforts to obtain the return to the western zone of the famous rebel Kāmil Bey al-As'ad who had been exiled because of his seditious activity in the Shī'ah regions. The number of inhabitants of the eastern zone whose Francophobia has won them the sympathy of the Government is very great indeed.

Offensive anti-French propaganda in the western zone has been encouraged by the Damascus government. The French authorities prefer to ignore it owing to their determination to follow an extremely conciliatory policy.

The latest and most flagrant act is the attempted bribery of the majority of the members of the Lebanese Administrative Council for 42,000 Egyptian pounds. Our security forces seized these men on July 10th while they were en route to Damascus to sell out their country. They were faithless to the wishes that have been voiced from remote times by almost all the Lebanese.

The Damascus press, strongly backed by the government, relentlessly attacks everything French. It criticizes the local authorities in the western zone and insultingly rejects whatever aid France offers Syria.

5. Violations of international law.

According to international law, the commander of the Hejazi Army occupying Syria, which must remain Ottoman until the Peace Treaty decrees otherwise, should retain the title of "Commander of the Hejazi Army" and protect the *status quo*. He in fact does just the opposite and calls himself "commander in chief". A law of compulsory military service was passed and executed in December, 1919, although the country is still foreign territory. Thus, a heavy, useless burden has been forced upon the people, even in such autonomous regions as Biqā', and applied to those who are normally exempted from such laws, e.g., the Lebanese and Maghribines living in the eastern zone. This senseless levy met with open resistance that in some cases ended in bloodshed.

The assemblage called the Syrian Congress, which was illegally organized and convened, enacts laws, indeed governs in the name of a regime and a state whose existence has not been recognized. Moreover, the title of king was conferred upon Your Highness without any right or justification, thereby placing you in a position of rebellion against the Peace Conference, as you yourself put it.

Foreign concessions are not respected. One of our subjects, Emir Mukhtār, the representative of a great family long famed for their attachment to France, was arrested in Aleppo.

Nor are diplomatic agreements kept. The Sherifian brigade was sent to Mijdal Anjar in spite of the treaty concluded last December with M. Clemenceau which stipulated that no armed forces, Sherifian or French, should be in the Biqā'.

6. The resultant damages to France and Syria.

The French authorities have thus far been unable to organize the country as they had hoped to do because of the need to use their energies and resources to suppress the successive uprisings and to prolong the sterile diplomatic negotiations conducted with the Damascus government. The French are not responsible for the delay, although they necessarily bear the military and financial burden resulting from the situation created by the Damascus government. The expenditures will inevitably affect the Syrian budget either by reducing government income because of the continuing disorders or by increasing the future costs.

The anarchy produced by the insurrectionalists reached a point where powerful forces had to be brought up in numbers far in excess of those needed during the time of peace and tranquillity when the English troops were being replaced.

These facts sufficiently explain why it is no longer possible for us to rely upon a government that has openly proclaimed its hostility toward France and grievously sinned against its own country through obvious inability to organize and administer its affairs. France deems it imperative, therefore, to obtain pledges that will guarantee the security of her armed forces and the welfare of the population for which she has received a mandate from the Peace Conference. I have the honor to inform Your Royal Highness that these pledges will require the following:

(1) Absolute control of the Rayāq-Aleppo Railroad for the purpose of transporting such matériel as may be ordered by the French authorities. This control will be ensured by French military observers operating in the Rayāq, Baalbek, Homs, and Aleppo stations. They will be assisted by special guard troops. The city of Aleppo, an important communications center, will be occupied in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the Turkish army.

(2) Repeal of the conscription law. Enlistment must be completely halted and troops demobilized until the Sherifian army is reduced to its size of November 1st last.

(3) Acceptance of the French mandate. This mandate will respect the independence of the Syrian population and avoid any conflict with Syrian authority, which draws its force from the will of the people. Such aid as may be proffered by the mandatary will definitely not be a cloak under which to promote colonization, annexation, or direct administration.

(4) Acceptance of Syrian paper currency. These bank notes shall be regarded as national currency in the eastern zone. All regulations concerning the Syrian Bank in the eastern zone shall be annulled.

(5) Punishment of criminals. Those who are the most violent enemies of France.

These conditions are offered as a whole and must be accepted as such within four days commencing from midnight of July 15th (i.e., 12 o'clock of the night of July 14th) and ending July 17th at 2400 hours (i.e., 12 o'clock midnight).

If a notification of Your Highness' acceptance of these conditions reaches me prior to expiration of the time limit, your officers must also by the same time have received orders not to resist my troops as they advance to occupy the above-mentioned places. Acceptance of the second, third, fourth, and fifth conditions must be officially confirmed in writing before the 18th and executed in full before 2400 hours of the 31st (i.e., midnight).

If Your Highness does not indicate acceptance of these conditions within the specified time, I have the honor to inform you that the French government

will consider itself free to act. In this event I am unable to guarantee that the French government will content itself with the above-mentioned reasonable pledges. Such misfortunes as may befall the country will not be the fault of France which has long demonstrated her leniency. The Damascus government will bear full responsibility for any extremist acts which I could only deplore. However, I am prepared to meet them with unshakable determination.

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(c) AFTER ARRIVAL OF THE ULTIMATUM

1.

Telegrams Sent to Representatives of the Powers

Permit me to call your attention to the fact that His Majesty the King has received an ultimatum dated July 14th containing in detail the conditions mentioned by Awni Bey, secretary of His Majesty, in his letter of July 12th, namely:

(Lists the conditions set forth in the ultimatum.)

This contrived excuse makes it plain that the French government aims to put its hand on the heart of the country and force the Syrian people to do its will. Our independence, which was recognized by the Conference of San Remo, became meaningless after the entrance of French troops into Aleppo, the occupation of the railway stations in Hama, Homs, Baalbek, and Rayāq, the request for the dissolution of the Syrian army which is responsible for maintaining internal order and security, and the compulsory circulation of illegal Syrian bank notes as legal tender.

We appeal to the sense of justice of the Allies, who repeatedly proclaimed that the Syrians would enjoy freedom and independence, and to the conscience of the leaders of your free governments. We beg your government in the name of humanity and peace, which we have exerted ourselves with all our might to guard, to try to solve our dispute with France by arbitration and to submit it to the Executive Council of the League of Nations for an expression of opinion. This will avert bloodshed in a country that has endured the woes of war from the beginning of the world conflict until the present day.

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2.

Telegram to His Highness Emir Faisal

I have the honor to receive your letter sent through Colonel Toulat which mentioned your personal acceptance in principle of my conditions. May I remind Your Royal Highness that the purpose of the note of July 14th was to gain not merely acceptance of the conditions, but their implementation by official measures enacted prior to the 18th and fully executed by midnight of the 31st.

Since I have already granted a 24-hour extension of the time limit at Your Highness' request, I would be justified in not granting another until I receive word of the official and actual acceptance by Your Highness of the measures referred to in paragraph 4 of the note of July 14th.

In order to give you sufficient time to accept the demands officially and to satisfy them, I have decided that my army will not move before midnight of July 21st.

July 19, 1920

Gouraud

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3.

**From Lt. Col. Cousse, Liaison Officer to His Highness
Emir Faisal, July 20, 1920**

General Gouraud has asked me to inform you that he received Your Royal Highness' answer sent through me yesterday and that he is satisfied with the wise considerations that inspired it.

The General is now awaiting the arrival of detailed written confirmation, which shall include an appropriate reply to the note of July 14th mentioning the conditions set forth therein and announcing their acceptance. For his part, he repeats the gist of his telegram of last night in which he assured you that the French army would not move before midnight of the 21st to occupy Aleppo, where it will arrive on the third day after it starts. You will soon be informed of the conditions and date of occupying the other stations.

The General expects that your reply will be officially dispatched today, the 20th. Among other things, active steps are to be taken in accordance with the demands he clearly outlined in his note of July 14th.

The General adds that you may rest assured that Syria will receive a full measure of attention, sympathy, and justice. The various messages and communications sent Your Royal Highness to date regarding the terms of the ultimatum and their implementation, especially those relevant to the exercise of the mandate, have fully clarified the intentions of the mandatory power. The General believes that it will surely be in your interest to use these explanations.

Sincerely yours,

Cousse

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(d) AFTER THE MARCH OF THE FRENCH ARMY

1.

**To Colonel Easton, British Liaison Officer in Damascus,
July 21, 1920**

My dear Colonel:

I have the honor to communicate to you the following telegram from His Majesty:

"Despite my acceptance of all the terms mentioned in General Gouraud's ultimatum of July 14, 1920—occupation by the French army of our territory located near the city of Aleppo, the stations of Aleppo, Hama, Homs, and Baalbek, withdrawal of our forces from the borders and demobilization of the remainder, repeal of the conscription law, free circulation of Syrian currency, and acknowledgment of France as the mandatory for Syria—and his satisfaction with this acceptance, as expressed in his letter of July 20th transmitted through his liaison officer in Damascus, the General has nevertheless issued an order for his army to march on Damascus, thus violating his pledge, the rights of man, and the principles of international morality.

"This strange action—civilized man has never seen its equal before—will inevitably lead to frightful bloodshed at a time when the Syrian soldiers have

returned to their homes, in accordance with the terms of the ultimatum, and there is a grave threat of revolt by my people who demanded an outright rejection of this ultimatum.

"I draw the attention of your government and of the civilized world to this vile treachery, the responsibility for which rests squarely with those who have broken their promises and torn up the holiest of international documents."

"Sincerely yours,

"Private Secretary of His Majesty
the King"

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2.

Telegram to General Gouraud, July 21, 1920

Now that I have accepted all the conditions specified in your note of June 14th—a fact that did not prevent the French forces from continuing to advance on Damascus—and have shown my desire to avoid needless bloodshed, I ask you to arrange for an armistice between the two armies in order to enable us to talk things over along the lines indicated in your telegram of today. A representative of my government will call upon you to negotiate in its name.

Faisal

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3.

A Protest from the Representative of the Syrian Government in Cairo, as Published in the Egyptian Press

My Government has informed me of its acceptance of the conditions presented last week to His Majesty King Faisal by General Gouraud. These included withdrawal of the Arab troops encamped on the borders of the eastern zone and demobilization of the remaining troops stationed in Damascus as well as other conditions previously published in the newspapers. His Majesty accepted them in order to avoid bloodshed and to maintain order, relying, as he did, upon the good faith of General Gouraud and his assurance that the French army would not march into the eastern zone. However, after the General observed the withdrawal of the Arab forces from the borders into the interior, he took advantage of the situation and, in contravention of the agreement concluded between himself and the Syrian government, ordered his army to proceed to Damascus.

Since this action, which is a breach of promise as well as a violation of international law and justice, will produce consequences threatening the peace, in the name of the Syrian Arab government I protest said action and call upon the entire civilized world for help. My Government is free from all responsibility for what may result from the General Gouraud's refusal to honor his official commitments.

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**Communication from the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs
of the Hashemite Arab Government to the Foreign
Ministries of Great Britain, France, Italy
United States, and Belgium**

I submit to Your Excellency the first part of a telegram dated July 21, 1920 to His Hashemite Majesty from his son Faisal:

"In spite of our acceptance of the conditions laid down by General Gouraud, which included returning our army and demobilizing the remainder in the capital, and in spite of our holding in check elements that caused the uprising against the government here, General Gouraud has now crossed our borders and actually proceeded to Damascus in violation of his promises, agreements, and honor. This unprecedented action will lead to unnecessary bloodshed and the death of innocent people—and this at a time when an entire nation had confidence in a voluntary official commitment! I am therefore appealing to the civilized world and drawing its attention to a crime for which the full blame rests on the shoulders of him who has betrayed his country and broken his own agreements. I am asking, sir, for justice, fair play, and speedy help."

I herewith lodge a protest with your government against this aggression, which is not sanctioned by humanity or the accepted principles of international law. It has been said that General Gouraud's actions serve to implement the decisions of the Peace Conference. To this we say:

First—the Conference is both the adversary and the judge.

Second—Since the creation of the world the functions of such conferences have been to decide against the defeated in war in favor of the victorious and to maintain peace in general, not to decide against friendly allies who were united in a bloody struggle to subdue the common enemy. We have never heard of an international conference acting to the disadvantage of one or two victorious allies, as it has done in the present Syrian case where a ruling was made in favor of France.

Third—it was the Arab army that entered Syria first and drove out the common enemy.

Fourth—the rights that France demands in Syria, rights that she has repeatedly asserted to be traditional, can no more be regarded as legitimately hers than are houses that happen to have been built in the French style. This point needs no laboring.

Notwithstanding our just protest, we fear that circumstances will drive the Arabs to rise up in order to defend their honor and the safety of their country. We trust that the feelings and sentiments of your noble government and people will lead to our protest's being given full consideration and thus help serve the needs of mankind. (From the newspaper *al-Qiblah*, no. 403, July 16, 1920.)

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Telegram from General Gouraud, July 24, 1920

Despite the fact that the note handed to the Minister of Education requested an answer by the morning of the 23rd, out of a desire to avoid bloodshed I waited until 3 a.m. of the 24th for the answer brought to me by Colonel Toulat. I am extremely sorry that this answer is a rejection.

I should like to inform you that a detachment of 450 regular soldiers of the Sherifian army equipped with artillery and machine guns attacked French troops on the afternoon of the 22nd east of Tell Kalakh. They were routed on the morning of the 23rd and about 50 men, including 2 officers, 1 cannon, and 6 machine guns were captured.

Thus, on the morning of the day when your royal army proclaimed a state of peace and on the same day that a letter was sent to me, saying "We do not want war," units of that army were taking up offensive positions and attacking my troops in the western zone. Under these circumstances, which once again demonstrate Your Royal Highness' inability to impose obedience upon your soldiers, I am entitled to remain unsatisfied with promises and to obtain guarantees that the note of July 14th will be executed.

The note of July 22nd stipulated that in case of rejection or hostilities against French troops, such as occurred yesterday at Tel Kalakh, these troops would regain their freedom of action. They did so this morning.

However, I am no less ready than before to halt the bloodshed as swiftly as possible and to negotiate with any government that is sincerely desirous of cooperating with France.

Gouraud

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6.

**To General Gouraud, French High Commissioner
in Syria, July 27, 1920**

Colonel Toulat notified me in his letter of the 27th that the French government decided to ask me to leave Damascus by private train 5 o'clock tomorrow morning. I have the honor to inform you that I do not acknowledge the right of the French government to annul the authority officially vested in me by the Peace Conference to administer the eastern zone during the occupation and partition of Syria into three zones, an authority confirmed on November 15, 1919 in Lloyd George's note to Clemenceau and to me.

Furthermore, I deny the French government the right to divest me of the title granted by the Syrian people. This can be done only by force. However, you know that force no longer has any sanction in international law.

I hardly need mention that the entrance of your troops into Damascus after a brief skirmish and seizure of the public utilities goes counter to the decisions of the Peace Conference and the principles of the League of Nations which abolished war and laid down rules for the solution of disputes by international arbitration.

Your occupation of the country's capital is a serious and unfair act because it occurred after demobilization of the Syrian troops, as demanded in your ultimatum of the 14th which I had accepted in its entirety. In your letter of the 20th you expressed satisfaction with my approval as well as sympathy for the Syrian people.

In the second paragraph of that letter you asked for a detailed confirmation of the acceptance of your terms, not an answer of acceptance, for this was already in your hands. The delay of the detailed confirmation in reaching you—I gave it to your representative Colonel Cousse 6 hours before the expiration of the time limit—did not entitle you to march your army to Damascus, particularly

since you were told 12 hours before the time limit mentioned in the ultimatum that I had begun energetically to carry out the terms, acting first of all to demobilize the Syrian army.

You used this situation, which testifies to the degree of my concern as well as to my promptness in accepting your conditions and alertness in carrying them out, as a justification to invade my country. The small number of soldiers left to maintain law and order greeted your army as an ally, but their friendliness did not prevent your officers from seizing them as prisoners of war, although a state of war is non-existent.

May I also remind you of the contents of the letter that you sent me through my representative, the Minister of Education. You acknowledged therein that I was not responsible for the delay of the above-mentioned detailed telegram in reaching you. However, at the same time that you made this admission, you imposed harsh new terms which it was impossible for me to induce my people to accept. You therefore placed me in a dilemma: either I accept those new terms and provoke a revolt against my army and government, which you would use as a pretext to intervene and occupy Damascus; or I reject them, in which case thousands of your soldiers equipped with the latest weapons of destruction would move in to subdue the people. Regardless of the course I chose, the end would be occupation of Damascus. We have seen that the second contingency came to pass.

If people were living today as they did in the Middle Ages when might made right and the sword was the arbiter of disputes, your behavior would have conformed to the prevailing laws. However, the great war, which we entered on the side of the Allies for the sake of winning our independence, had as its aim the establishment of right and the crushing of militarism. The principles of the Peace Conference proclaimed the freedom of peoples and their right to govern themselves; these were not empty words. The Covenant of the League of Nations outlawing war between nations and the subjection of one by the other—this Covenant was signed both by the Allies and by their enemies—is still honored. Hence, the French invasion of the eastern zone, the administration of which was entrusted to me, is nothing but an instrument of oppression and must be treated as such.

In conclusion, your conduct flouts the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916; the agreements concluded at the end of 1915 between the British government and my father, King of the Hejaz; Article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations; the decisions of the San Remo Conference; the pledges made to me by the British government; the text of the peace treaty submitted to Turkey; and the agreements concluded between former French Premier Clemenceau and me. It also contravenes general laws as well as the principles of international morality.

Faisal

THE OCCUPATION

Following the Battle of Maysalūn nothing stood in the way of the French army's occupying Damascus the same day. However, the commanding officer General Goybet wanted the troops to enter the Syrian capital in full splendor, so he delayed things until the next day. He rode into Damascus July 25, 1920 at the head of an army that paraded through the most important streets of the city. Twenty-four hours later he met the members of 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī's Cabinet and proclaimed to them the end of the Faisal regime.

1.

Text of General Goybet's Statement to the Cabinet, Published in al-*ʿAṣimah*, July 29, 1920

Gentlemen!

I am here as a representative of General Gouraud, the French High Commissioner, and I speak in his name. Emir Faisal has brought his country to the brink of destruction. His responsibility for the bloody disorders that occurred in Syria during the past two months is so clear and so great as to preclude his remaining in power any longer. The new government that you represent has agreed to cooperate with the French mandatary in organizing Syria. It will gain our confidence and assistance and at the same time find us very respectful of Syrian independence.

In accepting the responsibility of the present hour your new government cannot ignore the consequences of a past characterized by vast destruction and bloodshed. Therefore, it must before anything else assume the burden of paying indemnities in the amount of 200,000 gold dinars to Syrian families afflicted by ruin and death. We must also punish those criminals known to be the leaders of the guerrilla bands which systematically ravaged the country on the grounds of patriotism and take action against those who helped them with their influence and money. We shall send you a list of names of the men who are to be arrested and legally tried; those who run away shall be divested of their civil rights and have their property confiscated.

Your new government is to continue conducting local affairs as before. All problems concerning the population or connected with the future of the country will be studied by you together with Colonel Toulat, Chief of the French Mission, and then referred to us. The Sherifian army will have to be reduced to a police force charged simply with maintenance of internal security. All weapons must be collected and delivered to the military authorities.

The various difficulties that may arise from this state of affairs will be handled by Colonel Pettelat, Chief of Staff of the Army of the East, who will settle them in consultation with your Minister of War. You can and must assure the Damascenes, the majority of whom are hard working and intelligent people, that you rely on them and that no harm will befall them. Strict orders will be given to our army to prevent any incident. In return, there must be no demonstration or provocation likely to disturb public security. All hostile acts will be suppressed with the greatest severity.

The municipality is to be administered by influential people chosen from every quarter and made jointly responsible. Disarmament of the population will be started soon and proceed by stages. The display of a portion of our army has shown you that in case of emergency we could utilize a variety of methods to maintain the order that this country needs so badly.

###

**Thanks and Praise, Published in al-[◀]Āsimah,
August 2, 1920**

The office of the Director of the Press has sent us a copy of the testimonial submitted by spiritual leaders to His Excellency, the Prime Minister. It reads:

"In order to proclaim the truth and acknowledge the merits of those who possess them, we the Christians and Jews of all faiths and classes of the population resident in Damascus and environs send our heartfelt thanks to our Moslem brethren—the divines, notables, dignitaries, and plain people—whose constant watchfulness over public tranquillity and whose use of nationalist army units maintained order and prevented serious disturbances during these last frightful days. This will be ascribed to their credit on the pages of history and entitle them, Your Excellency, to the fullest measure of honor and esteem. May God preserve the glory of your government and the mandatary.

"Nicholas, Roman Catholic Patriarch

"Istudas Kisissian, Nestorian Archbishop in Damascus, Armenian Representative in Damascus, Mikhā'il Baḥḥāsh Metropolitan of Buṣṣā and the Ḥawrān

"Fāris al-Khūrī
Nāṣif Abū Zayd
As'ad Abū Shi'r
Quṣṭākī al-Ḥumṣī
Ibrāhīm Ṭawīl
Isbir al-Khūrī

Mikhā'īl and Ilyās Ṣuhnāwī
Michel Awādīs
Shafīq Qudsi
Antoine Abū Hamd
Khalīl 'Anḥūrī
Mūsa Sa'd Shāmiyah

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3.

**Proclamation, Published in al-[◀]Āsimah,
August 9, 1920**

Everyone knows that when the Peace Conference recognized the independence of Syria and her existence as a sovereign state, it decided at the same time to assign France a mandate for this country. The conditions were laid down in the Covenant of the League of Nations and related to the fitness as well as educational and social development of the people. Since the Syrians are in the forefront of countries noted for their intelligence, scientific progress, and capacity for self-government, the mandate cannot be unduly burdensome. Indeed, it will consist of nothing more than assistance and not infringe the independence agreed to by all the powers.

However, the failure of negotiations between the former Damascus government and the authorities of the coastal zone to yield clear results regarding rail transportation from Beirut to Aleppo and the misunderstandings that arose on other matters led General Gouraud, the French High Commissioner—who found himself in acute need of shipping troops and supplies to the northern front in order to check the enemy of all the Allies—to inquire first orally and then in writing about the reasons for placing obstacles in the way of these shipments, although the interests of both parties were involved. He finally sent the ultimatum that was published at the time in the press. It contained the following articles:

- (1) Control of the Rayāq railroad in order to facilitate transport.
- (2) Military occupation of the city of Aleppo in order to prevent it from falling into the hands of the enemy.
- (3) Statement of acceptance of the French mandate as something real.
- (4) Acceptance of the circulation of Syrian bank notes.
- (5) Punishment of those whose activities injured the population of the two zones.

Since the government did not believe that these demands constituted an infringement of the country's independence or an insult to the national honor or a denial of the people's rights, it decided to adopt a policy of conciliation with firmness by accepting them after some modifications in favor of the national welfare were introduced.

Unfortunately, the telegram of acceptance was several hours late in arriving. This delay caused the troops of the mandatary to march, with the consequences that everyone knows. They entered the capital very peacefully and found the government and people calm. The officials of the mandatary confirmed their recognition of the legality and independence of the nationalist government and of the necessity of respecting its laws and procedures. They sought to obtain helpers, primarily to strengthen the pillars of comfort and tranquillity and to render the rebels and disturbers of internal security impotent.

Accordingly, the government asks the people first of all:

- (1) To remain completely calm and avoid behavior likely to injure their reputation and that of their country.
- (2) To be prompt in paying their state taxes any way they can.
- (3) To respect the law and the rights of officials and obey the instructions of the government.
- (4) Not to withhold information about any act that has been or may be committed against the law and the will of the government, which is determined to inflict severe punishment upon all such offenders.

Secondly, officials and employees charged with maintaining security and calm must:

- (1) Be swift and severe in punishing those who seek to disturb public order.
- (2) Know that the nationalist and the French troops are united in support of this noble purpose.
- (3) Bear in mind that the troops they may request to suppress insurrection and root out corruption and violence are purely for the purpose of striking a blow and dealing out punishment, not of serving as a warning or a threat. Before seeking this aid, they must carefully prepare the grounds on which to try those who deserve to be punished and clearly ascribe the causes and circumstances of the uprisings to the persons who have deliberately organized them. Should this prove to be impossible, then ascribe them to the town or tribe whose people participated in it. If destructive acts are committed by a few while the others keep silent as a sign of satisfaction, punishment shall be meted out to all. In any case, the notables and sheikhs are principally and personally accountable. If they content themselves merely with reporting the events and do not establish the identity of those responsible, they shall be automatically regarded as incompetent and removed from their posts.

Officials and public alike should realize that if they heed what we have just said and do their duty sincerely and honestly, they will be taking a long step toward the noble goal of reaching their much desired independence. If not, the blame will be theirs, and it will be too late for regrets.

August 5, 1920

'Alā' al-Dīn
Prime Minister

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4.

**Address of Prime Minister 'Alā' al-Dīn al-Durūbī at the
Banquet Tendered by the Syrian Government to General
Gouraud, Published in al- 'Āṣimah, August 12, 1920**

Your Excellency!

I welcome you in the name of the Syrian government and wish you and the government you represent every happiness. The patriotic feelings that move all Syrians lead me to thank you wholeheartedly for your recent statement to the effect that the French government wishes only to promote the welfare and prosperity of the country and that Syria's publicly recognized independence is not in any danger. This official statement inspires all the more confidence because of France's brilliant traditions and the many declarations of her leaders which date from the time she entered the war in order to defend justice and help right to triumph over might. It cannot be doubted that your honorable government has no desire, as you have said, to colonize Syria or to enslave her; it wishes to act in accordance with the sound principles derived from its own revolutionary heroes who wrote the rights of man with their blood in the history of the world.

The Peace Conference that awarded you the mandate for Syria added a pledge to support the rights of the Syrian people, protect their freedom, and respect their independence. Hence, there is nothing in your government's mandate for Syria to make us apprehensive, for the preservation of our honor has been openly guaranteed. We hope to obtain from you what America, Italy, Belgium, Greece and other nations that were once deprived of their rights finally obtained.

Enlightened people here are fully convinced of the integrity of France's intentions. Only a small majority, most of them aliens, have been whispering to the masses that France is an imperialistic power working to increase her possessions at the expense of others. Those who have been deceived by vain talk will soon learn the truth that we have known all along. In order to clarify the facts that are still obscure, I should like to inform Your Excellency that Sherif Faisal shared this view of ours and at private gatherings spoke freely of the sincerity and honesty of the French. However, certain suspicious people around him provoked the recent painful events, as a serious investigation would prove. French justice will properly evaluate the situation and render its decision accordingly.

There can be no doubt as to our feelings because we fought at your side for the same just cause. Linking our fate to yours, we formed an inseparable part of you. By virtue of our tested devotion and friendship we are entitled to expect the fulfillment of all our national aspirations now that the common victory has been won.

I am confident that these words of mind will erase every possible source of misunderstanding, especially since we need have no fear for the independence of Syria. On the contrary, our assurance is strengthened by your noble principles,

the official statements of your leaders, and the agreements concluded between your Premier Clemenceau and the Syrian representative at the Peace Conference. These things show that France comes to Syria as a friend, not as a colonizer. Your Excellency was pleased to promise respect for the freedom and independence of the Syrian people, trust, and mutual friendship. You have exemplified the lofty idea of France as a supporter of freedom and civilization.

This is what emboldened us, Your Excellency, to accept the responsibility of the present hour. Relying on your help, we did not hesitate to assume the task that will result in the freedom and independence of our beloved country. The nationalist government, which merited your confidence and attention, as shown by General Goybet's proclamation of July 26th, has swiftly executed everything asked of it in sincere cooperation with your technicians who are working for the welfare of Syria. I am convinced that the affection Syrians feel for France, an affection built up through joint action in the fields of spiritual and material effort that led to the attainment of freedom, will not be shaken. The Syrians' traditional love of France and their characteristic determination and energy are the best guarantee of the impatiently awaited victory of the nationalist cause.

I greet you, sir, as an official and personal friend of Syria and wish you and your soldiers a successful stay in this great, historic country. Your army has shown by its behavior that it is in the country of a friend.

Long live free and independent Syria! Long live great and noble France!

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Message of Condolence of General Gouraud, Published in al-*Āṣimah*, August 30, 1920

A telegram from General Gouraud, French High Commissioner in Syria and Cilicia and Commander in Chief of the Army of the East:

"To the members of the Damascus government and the families of *ʿAlāʾ* al-Dīn Bey al-Durūbī and *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān* Pasha al-Yūsuf:

"I was shocked by the death of Prime Minister *ʿAlāʾ* al-Dīn Bey al-Durūbī and *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān* Pasha al-Yūsuf, Chairman of the Council of State. My sincere condolences to the members of their distinguished families.

"*ʿAlāʾ* al-Dīn Bey al-Durūbī and *ʿAbd al-Raḥmān* Pasha al-Yūsuf died while engaged in the noble task of conciliation. I offer my consolation to all the relatives and friends who loved and esteemed them. I share the grief of those who know the value of the services they rendered to their country.

"*Ālayh*, August 21, 1920 General Gouraud"

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6.

Warning to the People of the *Ḥawrān*, Published in al-*Āṣimah*, September 2, 1920

The hideous crime committed by the *Ḥawrānis* against the cabinet Ministers in *Khīrbat al-Ghazālah* and their armed assaults upon the French and Syrian troops who went out to take vengeance on the murders have led to devastating consequences which the *Ḥawrān* is now beginning to feel.

Our forces will mercilessly carry out punitive actions until the criminals are called to book for their deeds and order is restored in the towns and villages

responsible. All the leaders and notables of the Ḥawrān have been offered a period of eight days' time within which to pledge obedience to the government. Villages will be punished only to the extent of proven cooperation with our enemies. The terms to be imposed upon them will steadily increase in severity until the criminals are apprehended. The villages which shelter the chief culprits will be considered their accomplices. Henceforth, whenever a hostile act is perpetrated against our guard forces or railroad tracks are pulled up, the village closest to the scene of the incident will be held responsible, immediately destroyed, and its cattle confiscated. Airplanes will continue to bomb rebellious villages until they take an oath of obedience.

General Goybet, Commander of the Third Division of the
Army of the East,
for Muḥammad Jamīl, Prime Minister

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7.

**Temporary Restoration of the Arab Flag, Published
in al-^ʿĀṣimah, August 19, 1920**

The Prime Minister issued the following communiqué:

During the discussion of the white-starred flag adopted by the Syrian Congress it was revealed that:

(1) The Peace Conference decided to recognize the existence of an independent state in Syria. Independence therefore became an agreed question pursuant to this international decision.

(2) The Syrian Congress was not recognized by the powers because it had met prior to their recognition of an independent Syrian state. Hence, its formation and adoption of the white-starred banner were premature.

Under these circumstances we decided not to raise the said flag and to use temporarily the Arab standard—the ensign of a caliphal state. We shall restore the national flag after the National Assembly meets in accordance with a law to be enacted for the purpose and decrees a special form for it.

August 4, 1920

ʿAlā' al-Dīn

Prime Minister

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8.

The Syrian Flag, Published in al-^ʿĀṣimah, October 28, 1920

At 9:30 a.m. October 24, 1920 the temporary Syrian flag was raised over the great Government Building in Damascus. His Excellency, Prime Minister Jamīl Bey al-Ulashī spoke as follows:

Gentlemen! People!

We are celebrating today the unfurling of the flag of the new Damascus government. It was chosen by the Congress of the Syrian people as a special ensign for a united Syria. The miniature French flag set at the top indicates that the interests of Syria and France are identical and that the great French republic has a mandate for our country.

Every patriotic Syrian sincerely wants this day to be a good beginning for our beloved Syria and a stimulus to the mandatory government to finish the

welcome task it has taken upon itself of bringing our country up to the desired level of social, economic, and civil progress where it may proceed shoulder to shoulder with all the modern nations, lacking in none of the distinctive qualities of a nation and the factors making for survival.

In the name of the Syrian government I salute our beloved flag and invite you to join me in this gesture of honor and esteem. This ball placed in the center perhaps symbolizes the fact that Syria possesses all the civilized virtues and that our noble people will soon reach their predestined stage of genuine happiness for which our nationalist government is striving together with the French government.

Long live united Syria! Long live great France!

CLAIMS OF THE FRENCH

The French have described the events of Maysalūn in a way that is very far from the truth, principally owing to their desire to cover up General Gouraud's shocking crime of occupying the military positions evacuated by the Syrian army in accordance with the terms of the ultimatum. They failed to mention in their communiqués and statements the truce concluded in al-Judaydah and the conditions laid down therefor, the new demands made in 'Ālayh, or the telegram sent to Damascus requesting permission to transfer their headquarters from al-Judaydah to Khān Maysalūn even before the expiration of the truce. They tried to exaggerate the size and equipment of the Syrian troops assembled on the Maysalūn front so that they could boast of "the greatest victory in Syria", as they called it. The magazine *Asie Française* wrote: "The army assembled under the command of Yūsuf al-'Azmah at Maysalūn consisted of 25,000 well trained troops fitted out with the most modern weapons and equipment." In similar vein, the newspaper *Le Temps* noted: "Russian and German officers were found in the Syrian army which fought at Khān Maysalūn. . . The number of dead in the battle exceeded 5,000."

We thought it necessary to quote some of the French statements and communiqués in order to give a clear idea of their claims.

1.

The Circular Dropped by French Airplanes on Various Cities Before the Day of Maysalūn

(Since we were unable to locate the Arabic text, we had to translate it from the French version as published in *Asie Française*.)

Syrians!

At this moment when your government is dragging your country toward the horrors of war, I turn to you with the question: Why should you fight?

It has been said: France seeks to colonize and enslave you.

This is an absolute lie!

France has accepted the mandate for your country from the Peace Conference.

It is the desire as well as the duty of France to discharge this task. She will concern herself with the welfare and prosperity of the country and at the same time safeguard the officially recognized independence of the Syrians.

France wants to offer the help of her technical experts to organize efficiently the public utilities, just as she offers her capital for the sake of sound exploitation of the country's resources.

She respects all the freedoms, especially that of worship. France will secure this freedom for all people without exception, and will not tolerate one religion to encroach upon the rights of the others.

She has decided to permit local officials to exercise their authority, provided that they take no action inimical to France or in violation of negotiated agreements.

You are surely aware, Syrians, that the Damascus government, impelled by an extremist minority, has indulged for the past six months in a policy of bitter hostility to France.

It denied the use of the Rayāq-Aleppo railroad to French units which have been fighting the Turks for months in order to protect Syria.

It flooded the French zone with armed officer-led guerrilla bands to kill the people of defenseless villages.

It inflicted very great harm on you by prohibiting the circulation of the new Syrian currency, banning imports, and erecting an economic barrier between Damascus and the coast.

Finally, in order to be able to continue this foolish policy, it laid on you the burdens of exorbitant taxes and compulsory military service. They did so not to safeguard your freedom and independence—because these have never been threatened—but to cater to the interests of politicians, many of whom are not natives of your country.

Throughout this period of time France was patient because she was strong. But there is a limit to patience.

In the name of my government I presented to the Damascus government just and wise demands which must be accepted if there is to be peace.

One of these demands is repeal of the compulsory military service law.

If the Damascus government surrenders to the influence of stupid people and spurns the outstretched hand of France, it is virtually declaring war and will incur the full responsibility therefor.

However, I still hope that the Syrians are intelligent enough to avoid rushing to ruin or annihilation for the sake of the criminal minority which has gained power over them.

Surely, you will not expose your children to death by the frightful weapons of modern land and sea warfare simply to continue compulsory military service, oppressive taxation, and the other burdens that weigh you down.

I do not intend to use airplanes against the unarmed population—I follow the dictates of human feelings shared by all Frenchmen. However, this policy is conditional on one thing, that no Frenchman or Christian be killed. Should this happen, there will be the severest of reprisals by aerial bombardment.

I do not doubt that all ardent and sincere patriots wish their country to be prosperous and tranquil. They will reject war and come over to our side. I direct my remarks to such people in the name of France and Syria.

So let them all rise up and unite against the clique that rules them. Let them rely upon the power of their right, because the strength of the clique is drawn only from their weakness. Let them trust in the spirit of freedom and altruism for which noble, energetic, and civilized France is distinguished. Let them come then in all confidence and enthusiasm to their friends the French, just as the valiant Lebanese and others have already done.

Long live free and prosperous Syria! Long live France!

General Gouraud

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2.

**Communiqué from the Military Authorities in Beirut,
July 21st, noon**

Emir Faisal informed Commander in Chief General Gouraud on July 20th that the Damascus government accepted all the conditions of the French government. However, the ultimatum of July 14th emphasized that acknowledgment of the acceptance of the conditions would not be enough unless they were officially implemented. Owing to General Gouraud's failure to receive at the designated time any indication that acceptance was coupled with action, Emir Faisal was notified that French troops had begun to move toward Damascus at dawn of July 21st.

Sherifian troops declined to give battle and they retreated before our forces which are still advancing into the mountains up to this hour (i.e., 11:00 a.m., July 21st). If necessary, Damascus will be occupied.

From a Damascus dispatch that reached headquarters in 'Ālayh at 11:00, it was learned that Emir Faisal had telegraphed to General Gouraud on the evening of July 20th confirming his acceptance of the General's conditions. The telegram did not arrive because the rebels, who were so greatly encouraged by the Damascus government, had cut the telegraph lines in the region of al-Zabḍānī. The government brought today's disaster upon its own head by its maladministration and lies. Arrival of the above-mentioned telegram in time would have led the French troops to delay their advance, particularly if General Gouraud found evidence that the desired measures of implementation had been started.

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3.

Communiqué, Beirut, Morning of July 23, 1920

Emir Faisal officially notified General Gouraud on July 21st that he acquiesced in the conditions laid down by the French government and that their implementation had already been started. Accordingly, orders were issued to the French army to halt, and it did so the evening of July 21st.

The French troops remained in their positions throughout July 22nd and at this moment (the morning of July 23rd) are still in possession of the hills adjoining the anti-Lebanon in the region of al-Judaydah. They will not resume their advance until required to do so by hostile acts.

As for the Rayāq-Aleppo Railroad, appropriate military measures have already been taken.

The French troops en route to Damascus will be progressively pulled back as the conditions mentioned at the beginning are carried out.

It appears that there are grave disorders in Damascus.

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4.

Communiqué, July 23, 1920

It has become necessary to clarify the events that took place from the 14th to the 24th of July. Based on the correspondence between General Gouraud and

Emir Faisal, this communiqué is written for publication in the newspapers of Damascus in order to dispel the doubts existent in the minds of the people and to explain why the French army first marched on Damascus and then came to a halt.

On July 14th General Gouraud informed Emir Faisal of the conditions that he had laid down and gave the Emir four days' time, i.e., until July 18th, in which to carry them out.

Emir Faisal requested an extension of time, which General Gouraud granted until July 19th. This request, also transmitted through Colonel Toulat, was followed by a third truce and additional time to execute the terms from July 18th to July 21st. The Emir was told that unless the General ascertained that they were actually being carried out, French forces would begin to move forward after the deadline.

12 a.m. July 21st passed, but the Emir's answer did not arrive. Despite the fact that the troops had already begun to march, the French commanding officer was authorized to communicate with Damascus, so General Gouraud telegraphed Emir Faisal, if there were any government willing to come to an understanding with France.

During the morning of July 21st General Gouraud received Emir Faisal's official answer accepting the French conditions. It came late owing to the incident at al-Zabdānī for which the perpetrators alone are responsible. Because of the delay the French troops had advanced to the tops of mountains and the depths of valleys. General Gouraud could not halt them in places lacking in water or where inaccessibility to railroads made it impossible to bring up supplies.

On July 21st Emir Faisal asked General Gouraud to order the army to halt—a request with which, for the above-mentioned reason, he could not at that time comply. The General answered that he was not thinking of entering Damascus if it were possible to maintain order otherwise.

Finally, on July 22nd Colonel Toulat informed General Gouraud of the precautions taken by the Emir and of his request that the troops be halted. The General kept his promise and issued an order to the army to halt as soon as possible. The troops will remain in their positions until all the terms laid down by France are carried out.

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5.

Communiqué, Morning of July 24, 1920

Following the official explanations and communications sent on July 21st by Emir Faisal to General Gouraud, the French Army halted after it crossed the Biqā' plain in Eastern Lebanon.

On July 22nd General Gouraud ordered his army to halt in the occupied positions in order to prevent bloodshed. He is awaiting the explanation of the peace-minded Damascus government which should destroy the misunderstanding about executing the terms of the ultimatum.

As an indication of his peaceful intentions, General Gouraud granted Emir Faisal a new extension of time until 2400 hours of July 23rd. He also warned him that the army would march again and regain its freedom of action if any hostile act was committed against the French troops.

During the afternoon of July 22nd and at a time when the General was demonstrating his desire for peace and the avoidance of bloodshed, a detachment of 400 Sherifian soldiers armed with two cannon and several machine guns attacked units of the French army doing police duty near Tell Kalakh in the western zone.

On the morning of July 23rd the French dispersed the enemy after a fierce battle which ended in our gaining possession of the railroad and 'Ayn al-Tīn. The enemy retreated in panic, leaving several dead and wounded and much equipment on the battlefield. We captured 50 Sherifian soldiers, including 2 officers. We also took a 77 mm. cannon and 6 machine guns.

This incident showed once again both the anti-French attitude of the population of the eastern zone and the inability of Emir Faisal's government to maintain the discipline of its troops when it wanted to prove by deeds its sincere desire for friendship and understanding.

On July 23rd the extremist faction gained control over the political situation and refused to go along with the General's peaceful program.

Despite the Tell Kalakh and other incidents and the expiration of the truce at 2400 hours of July 23rd, General Gouraud waited quietly for a conciliatory reply until 0300 hours of July 24th. Since that time the General has been free to act.

The troops encamped in the region of 'Ayn Judaydah resumed their advance and the cavalry joined battle in the Wādī al-Takīyah.

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6.

Communiqué, Evening of July 24, 1920

The hostilities at Tell Kalakh and the failure of the Damascus government to demonstrate its peaceful intentions, restored General Gouraud's freedom of action and he ordered his troops to advance at 0300 hours of July 24th. They made contact with large Sherifian forces well entrenched in the passes between Wādī al-Takīyah and Khān Maysalūn, a general encampment and Sherifian mobilization center. These forces consisted of the entire Damascus division supported by Bedouin units, artillery, and machine guns.

The French forces consisted of units from the 415th Infantry Regiment, the 2nd Algerian Riflemen Regiment, the Senegalese Division, the African Riflemen Regiment, the Moroccan Spahi Battalion, plain and mountain artillery, and 155 mm. guns—all under the command of General Goybet. They opened a violent 8-hour engagement for the pass that dominates 8 kilometres of the road to Damascus.

The terrain was extremely rugged and hampered our artillery. But our tanks and airplanes launched a blow as brilliant as any struck during the major battles of the World War.

At 1300 hours the action came to an end with all the enemy's positions in our hands. The Sherifian forces were routed and the French army gained its greatest victory in Syria.

The Sherifian army was shattered and dissolved as a result of the tremendous losses it sustained. Nine cannon, 25 machine guns, large quantities of ammunition, vehicles, and equipment were left on the battlefield.

Yūsuf Bey al-Āzmah, Sherifian Minister of War, lost his life.

Following this glorious victory the French army continued to advance and it is expected to reach Damascus July 25th.

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7.

**General Gouraud's Speech in Damascus, in Response
to al-Durūbī's Speech, Published in al-^ʿĀṣimah,
August 9, 1920**

I thank you, sir, for the words you have addressed to me. You will not be disappointed, for France has not come to colonize this country. She wishes in all sincerity, as you will see, to safeguard your independence within the framework of the mandate, provided, however, that independence not redound to her disadvantage.

(The General then mentioned the discussions between Emir Faisal and Clemenceau. Referring next to the guerrilla bands which attacked the French zone, he said:)

These raids were made now from the north, now from the south along the entire frontier, i.e., from Palestine to Alexandretta.

It is worth noting that the bands that attacked us did not consist of outlaws alone. Their leaders were regular army officers and they had ample supplies of arms, equipment, and money. Although not serious as far as our troops were concerned, their depredations caused great injury to the peaceful population. Homes were destroyed, villages and hamlets burned, and cattle and other possessions plundered.

The official acts of the Sherifian government were no less hostile to France than the guerrilla raids. I hardly need remind you of the rejection of Syrian currency, the ban on importation of grain into the western zone, the repudiation of the mandate for Syria awarded to France by the Peace Conference, and the decree of compulsory military service, a heavy burden on the people. Then there was the refusal of the Emir and his government to grant us free use of the French railroad from Rayāq to Aleppo, although we needed it in order to continue our military operations against the Turks, which were in the interest of Syrian peace. These are the things that induced a man whom you respect, Colonel Toulat, and who like me worked so hard for Syria's welfare, to warn the Emir of impending peril. He told His Highness that denying us the Aleppo line was a dagger blow aimed at the backs of our troops. I personally pointed out to the Emir the dangerous consequences of his actions and those of the men surrounding him.

France was very patient, but her patience finally became exhausted. The day came when neither patience nor deliberateness would avail. The French government then ordered me to send the Emir the ultimatum with which you are familiar. You know too that the telegram that would have kept our troops from advancing did not reach us during the evening of July 20th because one of the robber bands encouraged by the Emir and the government had cut the telegraph lines. Thus did they reap the harvest of their deeds.

On July 21st when I learned about the telegram, I ordered the expedition to stop, despite the risks involved in affording the Sherifians an opportunity to entrench themselves at points where they boasted they would check us and then launch a counterattack. Nevertheless, in my solicitude for the honor and traditions of France as well as for my personal honor, I did not hesitate for a moment to issue the order halting my troops.

(The General then spoke about the Battle of Maysalūn and France's good intentions toward Syria. He concluded his remarks as follows:)

My great patience with the old government and moderation in negotiation clearly prove that, notwithstanding my determination and ability to defend the honor of my country, I did not come to Syria thirsting for military glory. My colleagues and I obtained our share during the great war.

I hope to work for the welfare of all Syria. In particular, my efforts will be devoted to helping this city, the pearl of Islam set in the emerald of its rich gardens.

You, O people of Syria, are in urgent need of the aid of France while I am in need of your counsel. So do not shun us; take this hand of mine that is outstretched to grasp yours in the name of France.

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8.

**Communiqué from the French Press Administration,
Published in the Newspapers of Damascus,
August 9, 1920**

The rumors widely current in Damascus to the effect that England or some other power is going to help Emir Faisal return to Syria are absolutely without foundation.

The Syrian question concerns France alone, and no other nation.

We also deny reports that Emir Faisal will make a trip to undertake discussions with the French government.

There are rumors too that the French will leave Damascus. Just as France will not tolerate the return of Emir Faisal to a country in which he is an alien, **so she will never leave Damascus.**

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THE SYRIAN CASE IN THE FRENCH PARLIAMENT

The Syrian case became a subject of debate and dispute in the French Parliament one month before the Day of Maysalūn in connection with the funds sought by the government to carry out its policy in the East. The speeches made during this debate threw light on the various French intellectual currents involved in the Syrian case and are, therefore, worthy of our study and attention here.

I have deemed it useful to translate the most important portions of Daladier's speech, which may be regarded as typical of the viewpoint of those opposing the government's Syrian policy, and of Briand's speech, because it clarifies the circumstances that surrounded the Sykes-Picot Agreement from its conclusion until its execution, after some modifications were introduced.

1.

Daladier's Speech, Delivered During the Session of June 25, 1920

(Daladier spoke on two topics, one that he called the "Islamic question", the other the "Slavic question". Regarding the former he said:)

In connection with the Islamic question, the government has requested you to appropriate special funds amounting to 525 million in the budget of the Ministry of War and 187 million in the budget of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This despite the fact that our committee reporter was cautious in stating that these funds would total to between 500 and 600 million. At a time when France is still suffering from the effects of her terrible wounds, should we get embroiled in a policy of ostentation and prestige that might be the ruin of the country? ("Very good, very good" from the extreme left and from various seats on the left)

I have personally analyzed the benefits that might justify such a policy. They tell us, particularly in regard to Cilicia, that we intend to evacuate it and that we have abandoned the policy of adventure and war. Yet battles are still going on, the armistice has just been broken, and we are still suffering in Cilicia as in Syria severe losses as a result both of the bullets of the Turks and Arabs and of marsh fever and typhus. We do not know the exact number of our dead, but during the month of January alone we had more than 600 casualties.

They tell us too: "We do not seek a protectorate, we do not want the Moroccan formula." But I am forced to say that you sent to those countries a number of administrators.

(After dwelling on criticism of the government's actions in Cilicia, he went on:)

No serious argument can legitimize the Cilician expedition. Regardless of viewpoint, you cannot justify the sacrifices to be asked of the country on economic grounds.

I say the same thing about the Syrian question. I am not ignoring the magnificent work accomplished in Syria by Christian missionaries and laymen. I am not one of those who deny the force of the moral arguments that can be advanced to justify peaceful activity there. ("Very good, very good".) The French missionaries and laymen do not need a military expedition to gain the esteem of all the inhabitants of Syria, regardless of their religion. It is evident to me from a study of the activities of the French Conference in Syria, the importance of which is known to you, that these men are not asking you to organize military campaigns; indeed, they tell you just the opposite.

Aristide Briand — They are the very ones who beg us not to leave them. ("Very good, very good".)

Daladier — That's true. But they beg us not to engage in a military campaign.

Bellet — We're to leave them to be killed, I suppose!

Committee reporter — They beg us to work for peace, when we can no longer make war.

Ruellan — War is one of the ways to peace. (Interruption from the extreme left.) Yes, gentlemen, I insist that war is a way to peace.

Guichard — I don't want war; I got into it because it was necessary. But war is a way to peace, and there is no doubt about that.

Daladier — In any case, regardless of the arguments that may be advanced, I am sure that we obtained in Syria—before the present crisis and long before the present military operations—a first-class position, moral and material, without war, by peaceful methods alone. (Applause)

Georges Leygues — That's very true.

Daladier — And so I ask: Why do we now think that this position has begun to weaken?

Reporter — Because there has been war!

Daladier — But why fighting now? We must by all means agree. . . (Interruption from the center)

President — Gentlemen! You will come to the speakers' platform in orderly fashion, each in turn. Please, no more interruptions!

Daladier — I agree with those who regard the struggle in Syria as the outcome of undeniable mistakes in policy. I believe that we have failed to take into consideration the profound emotion that has stirred the Islamic world since the great war. I believe too that we have completely erred in comparing Faisal now to a "Bolshevik wandering in the desert," now to a "Wilson with a turban," now to some mythological "St. George on a horse". . . (Laughter).

I have never subscribed to this view. I look upon the problem much more seriously than that. I believe that Faisal, contrary to what people think, is a man of moderation who runs the risk of being outstripped by the extremists and is working with all his strength to dam up this dangerous stream.

This is my frank opinion. I am compelled to say that none of the opposite arguments seem to me completely convincing.

We mustn't forget that there are 3,000,000 Moslems and 300,000 Christians in Syria who in no way resemble the tribes of Morocco, who possess a very ancient civilization, and who proved by their continuing evolution long before the World War, especially since 1893, that they desire to obtain freedom and independence

and to organize a genuine state. How can you, you who are so well informed on oriental questions, forget the famous Beirut Program which goes back to 1913, and that great nationalist movement—an extraordinary development for the East—in which the entire population, Moslem and Christian, joyously shared and united against the Turks to found a state based on peace and order.

I could cite here a great number of facts that confirm this. You are not unaware that the Turks themselves were frightened by the importance of this nationalist movement into thinking of creating a "Turco-Arab Union" comparable to the "Austro-Hungarian Union".

These are singularly impressive facts. Am I not entitled to say that war accomplished nothing in this connection except to accentuate the evolution?

Come now! You appealed to the Arabs for five years to fight against the Turks and together with your Allies during the same period of time you declared everywhere and always from French, English, American, and Italian platforms that you have no aim but to fight for the freedom of peoples. With what audacity and, permit me to say, with what cynicism do you today try to occupy a country that isn't yours, a country that has the right to be independent? (Applause from the extreme left and from several seats on the left; interruption from the center)

Reporter — A mandate is not an occupation. It is just the opposite.

Daladier — The honorable M. Noblemaire has made a very just observation when he said that is not a question of occupation, that it is merely a matter of exercising a mandate.

I am well aware of that. I read very carefully the report that M. Noblemaire prepared. What does he say? That he is against conquests and adventures. But he is in favor of much gentler methods. He relies first of all on the impact of the San Remo decision. He says: "Our title to Syria was contestable until San Remo. However, since the San Remo decision we have gained a firm, international title. We have the approval of England, Italy and the Mikado." On the basis of such weighty authority we can say that Emir Faisal and all the objectors, without exception, as M. Noblemaire writes in his report, will hasten to yield.

M. Noblemaire likewise states in his report that what we must do now is to put amounts of between 500 and 600 million into the hands of a few well-intentioned officials, not to equip an expeditionary force—troops are there only for decorative purposes—but to discuss, to negotiate. With the money we provide Kamāl and Faisal and all those surrounding them we shall work out a solution of the Syrian question.

However, I believe—and say in all candor, with no offense intended—that it is a grave error to tell those people who are so passionately determined upon liberation and emancipation that you will try to seize their land, and that you will try to rule them. . .

Reporter — Not at all!

Daladier — . . .by imposing a mandate, because words hardly change the reality.

In the past we used to speak about peaceful penetration, and now you speak about a mandate. In essence, you are bringing them a mandate on the point of our bayonets.

Reporter — The whole thing is simply a matter of ensuring French order in a country where frightful anarchy prevails. The reason is that national order, i.e.,

native order, is impossible to achieve by itself. If we maintain this order, it is because we want the indigenous resources to compensate us for our efforts and advance payments as soon as possible so that they may suffice for all local needs and allow the people to live free and independent in their homes. ("Very good, very good" from a number of seats in the center and right)

Léon Blum — By what means?

Reporter — By means of the order which they cannot establish without us.

Léon Blum — And how would you establish it?

Reporter — Naturally, with the help of the police. (Interruption from the extreme left.) Of course! How do you expect to establish order without police? This is the basis of all social and quasi-social life, even among the Bolsheviks, indeed more so than among other peoples. ("Very good, very good" from the center and right)

Lenail — It will be that way even in the League of Nations!

Deladier — Even if I succeeded in doing nothing more than to force M. Noblemaire to clarify his thinking, I would not regret my participation in this debate.

Reporter — I had written it before.

Daladier — It is a question then of police and of peaceful penetration. But it will result in a military expedition and bloody battles. . .

. . . If you persist in this foolish policy, you may end up in a veritable catastrophe. Hence, I am entitled to ask: Wouldn't it be better for you to try to avoid creating great disturbances in this country and destroying the friendship of the Islamic world for us. . . than to dispatch 100,000 soldiers and send Frenchmen to their death in Syria and Cilicia for military operations that may well be ruinous to France? ("Very good, very good" from the extreme left and from a few seats on the left)

Do I need to say that none of us, irrespective of political views, denies that it devolves upon France to do a great piece of work in the East? France's work in Syria and the entire world must be done, but peacefully and on a basis of reason and justice.

Reporter — The end justifies the means.

Daladier — This is something we don't want. That's why we oppose any military action in support of this policy, the importance of which you do not understand.

Reporter — Yes, we do.

Daladier — We say that it is a mistake to follow a ruinous and inauspicious policy at a time when there is unrest throughout Europe, particularly when the skies of the East are overcast with threatening clouds.

It is incumbent upon each one of us to ponder and accept his responsibility. As for myself, I will not vote for these hundreds of millions in credits when our people have been bereft of 1,500,000 of their sons, when we ought to concentrate all our strength on repairing our devastated regions and ensure the defense of the Rhine. ("Very good, very good") I will not vote for credits to organize a dangerous and ill-omened campaign against Syria. (Applause from the extreme left and from some seats on the left) Please excuse me if I seem to have been quite excited while speaking from this platform.

###

**Briand's Speech, Delivered During the Session of
June 25, 1920**

In the course of the debate on the budget some of the deputies mentioned the agreements concluded between the Allies in 1916. A few criticized the government for not adhering strictly to the terms of the agreements and for renouncing Mosul which had been conceded to France pursuant to the said agreements. Others criticized the agreements proper because they exceeded the bounds of practicability by bringing the French zone up to the Iranian frontier via Diarbekr. Aristide Briand then demanded the floor and began to defend the agreements concluded during his regime. We translate the most important portions of his remarks.

Since I was in power when the debates and negotiations were going on and the agreements relating to the Eastern countries were signed—in 1916—I feel it necessary to provide you with some facts about the real character, scope, and purpose of these agreements.

If you return in memory to the days when these agreements were being negotiated, you will find that they coincide with the agony of Verdun and the weakness of the Balkan front. It was the time when Italy had not declared war on Germany, nor had I as yet had the joy of meeting the American Ambassador and hearing him tell me that his great country was going to join France in defending the cause of liberty.

The horizon wasn't very bright in those days. Perhaps you will say that it was reckless, even childish, for the government at that time to have raised its eyes to those regions far from the main theatres of military action, i.e., the European battlefields.

However, my colleagues and I personally considered it our duty, despite the critical situation, not to neglect the defense of France's rights and interests everywhere. That's why we withdrew a sizeable number of divisions from our threatened domestic front and sent them to Salonica in order to prevent German megalomania from reaching Constantinople and to facilitate Russian movements in Armenia and British operations in Asia Minor. We thought that France had very ancient interests and rights in these regions and that it was our duty to defend them. (Applause)

At this point, gentlemen, permit me to say how unjust it is to refer to a policy of expansion and imperialism when speaking about these regions and our country. Poor France! . . . After the efforts she exerted in this war, fighting everywhere, on her own soil, sending her troops to the Balkans, even participating to the greatest extent possible in the operations in Asia Minor. . . after all this. . . when she has become worn out by these exhausting efforts. . . In fact, if she could be reproached for anything, it would be rather for excessive disinterestedness. (Applause)

To say that our country has imperialistic aims is indeed an undeserved accusation. ("Very good, very good")

May I be permitted to tell the honorable M. Lafont—when he discusses the agreements of 1916 relating to the Orient and Asia Minor—that we are not there in a country where France is unknown. We are in a country in which the glory of France radiates everywhere. ("Very good, very good")

These people, in whom our colleagues on the extreme left have so many justifiable reasons to be interested, are obligated to France, who has expended much effort and blood to direct them toward the ideas of civilization and give them the taste of freedom. (Applause)

My dear colleague, M. Ernest Lafont! You were too young then, but I still retain memories of the traditions of the Socialist Party. I recall the time when the eloquent voice of Jaurès and the persuasive tongue of Pressensé directed public attention to the sufferings of the Syrians and Armenians. We used to come to mass meetings organized by these two men and shared their indignation at the atrocities inflicted on these people. What did Jaurès and Pressensé say then? They said: "Save these people from the bloody yoke of the Turks, liberate them!" (Applause)

In my capacity as Prime Minister I had the occasion to greet delegations of Armenians, Syrians, and Iranians at the Quai d'Orsay in 1916. All of them used to say to me: "France—we are France! We make no distinction between her and ourselves; since Turkey is to disappear, we beg France to come to us."

The disappearance of Turkey was definitely envisioned at that time. It was one of the war aims of the Allies.

How then, gentlemen, could France remain with hands folded before the scattering and disappearance of Turkey and be indifferent to the fate of these peoples? (Applause) She would have forgotten her traditions! Palestine would have become nothing as far as she was concerned! Iraq and Syria the same!

Really, gentlemen, if a prime minister had confined his attention at such an hour exclusively to the immediate needs of local defense and contemplated the French and European fronts alone to the neglect of all the previously mentioned interests, what could you tell him today? (Loud applause)

My dear colleagues! France is not in France alone. She is everywhere that she has roots (more applause), in every place that her army has performed glorious deeds, wherever her banner has flown. (Applause)

It was quite natural for France to do what she did in responding to the appeal of the peoples. In doing so she didn't really go counter to the principles of peace and freedom which you approve. There is no imperialism or policy of violence toward the peoples who came to beg us to claim them, saying: "We prefer your influence to that of any other power."

This is the spirit that prevailed while we were concluding the agreements I referred to before. Unquestionably, they are far-reaching. But, gentlemen, when will Frenchmen decide not to consider the external affairs of France on sentimental grounds!

(Briand then digressed to discuss England and English ethics. He spoke about bargaining and referred to the method of "give and take" in diplomacy, saying:)

Like the overwhelming majority of Frenchmen, I had strong faith in ultimate victory. I used to tell myself: We must not—when accounts are to be settled—come to the peace table empty-handed.

When France is called to such affairs, she must simply ask herself, just as our good peasants do when they go to the market to conclude some transaction, whether they have something to take or to give. They are always careful not to give before they take (laughter), they argue. One knows that they can give, but they are always anxious that it be known too that they should take. (More laughter and applause)

This idea—please forgive me for presenting it in somewhat vulgar terms—dominated our policy in 1916. We used to say to ourselves: The possibilities of these agreements perhaps exceed the military potentialities of France. How-

ever, through them we shall preserve at least that which France cannot relinquish in the light of her glorious past and ancient traditions. As for the rest, it will be something to talk about.

A glance at the map is enough to arouse astonishment at the extent of the territory covered by the agreements. They included—both as a French zone and as a zone of Arab administration—Mersin, Adana, Sivas, Diarbekr, Armenia, and Mosul, with a projection into Kurdistan.

(Turning to Ernest Lafont) This Kurdistan confused you very much, my dear friend. It awoke in you the memories of a student who used to find it difficult to remember the name and sometimes ended up wondering if this country really existed. (Smiles)

I shall tell you why we have concerned ourselves with this corridor which is so far from our zone. The reason is very simple. A number of Iranian dignitaries and noblemen came to me and, speaking excellent French—for they knew France, had learned when quite young that France really existed somewhere, and even, in the case of some of them, had lived here—said: "France, we are France! In Iran they speak French just as much as in France. We have 1800 French schools. Your country seems to us the tangible guarantee of our independence. Do what is necessary to make contact with us." This may explain to you the wisdom of the existence of the small projection that you have observed and that confused your geographical recollections. (Laughter)

(Briand then reviewed the incidents that followed the conclusion of the agreements and noted how the various French governments had renounced sections of the agreements item by item and how they yielded Mosul and Palestine to the English. He criticized the government for that, saying: "I see what you gave, but I don't see what you took for it." (He continued:)

It is France's good fortune to be compact as far as her territory and principal colonies are concerned. North Africa is a prolongation, which forms, so to speak, a part of her, that is, as long as she defends her position in the Mediterranean. ("Very good, very good")

The treaties of 1916 ceded to us Alexandretta together with Adana and Mersin—glance at the map, it's the entire bay—and the mountains that ensure its strategic defense in depth. This is what impelled us to expand the borders of our zone of influence, to connect them to those remote spaces with the approval and at the request of the Armenians. What a magnificent position!

Since there was once a discussion of the possibility of England's giving up Cyprus, a special clause was inserted in the agreements granting France the right of pre-emption to this island. Here too there was ample scope for negotiation and exchange in case of need.

The Gulf of Alexandretta is something remarkable in the Mediterranean Sea; **possession of it is essential to the future of France.**

(Turning again to an analysis of English diplomacy, Briand said proudly:)

As for myself, it is one of the greatest sources of satisfaction that I concluded these treaties when I did. My only wish is that we profit from them now.

###

GENERAL GOYBET'S MEMOIRS OF THE DAY OF MAYSALŪN

The magazine *Revue des Troupes du Levant* V, January 1937, published the memoirs of the Day of Maysalūn of General Goybet, the commander of the expedition that marched on Damascus. These memoirs include a good deal of military data. They also touch, in passing, on many political events and here and there contain some general observations. The information and observations are interesting in that they help to reveal the truth about certain problems and lay bare the mentality of the leaders who assumed the task of "imposing the mandate on Syria" by iron and fire. I therefore thought it necessary to go over the General's writings and quote from them, now in summary fashion, now in literal translation, depending on the importance of the passage. I have added nothing to his observations because I believe that the facts and events detailed in the preceding pages make any commentary of mine superfluous.

The memoirs are organized in 12 short sections, entitled: (1) "King" Faisal (2) Secret Massing of Troops (3) Terrain (4) Plan of Movements (5) Ultimatum (6) "D" Day (7) Diplomacies, Hesitations, and Decision (8) Stage of the Tragedy and Its Actors (9) Khān Maysalūn (10) City of "A Thousand and One Nights" (11) End of the Regime (12) General Order No. 22. A short appendix follows.

Most of the sections of the memoirs and analyses are wholly military in content. The General mentions the number and names of the units under his command. He analyzes the strategy developed after a study of the terrain and the general mobilization undertaken in preparation for war. There are copious details of the battle that subsequently took place.

I see no purpose in reviewing the military data. I should like merely to summarize his notes on the strength and losses of the expedition.

The Army of the East was composed of three divisions, the one under General Goybet's command being the Third.

This division consisted of: 4 brigades of chasseurs, 2 brigades of cavalry, 4 batteries of 75 mm. artillery, 2 batteries of 65 mm. artillery, 1 battery of heavy artillery, 155 mm. Schneiders. Also under his command were 15 tanks, 4 armored cars, units of engineers, and reconnaissance planes. He could also call on bombers belonging to the High Command.

His troops comprised Algerian chasseurs, Moroccan cavalrymen, and Senegalese infantrymen.

French casualties in the Battle of Khān Maysalūn were 250 dead and 200 wounded, including 3 officers.

###

The memoirs begin with a brief section on King Faisal. The General shared the general French view:

"In Damascus the Emir put the royal crown on his head and began to conscript Syrians and equip several army divisions. He prohibits the circulation of Syrian currency and prevents Ḥawrān grain from reaching our zone. He uses every means

at his disposal to block trade between Lebanon and Sherifian territory. Likewise, he places many obstacles in the way of supplying by railroad our troops stationed in the north.

"Moreover, our apparent inactivity encourages him to win over men with elastic consciences either by alluring promises or by glittering gold. He urges some Syrians to prepare for a trip to Europe to seek assistance in delivering Syria from the oppression and tyranny of France."

Consequently, the supreme French authorities came to feel the need of resorting to force and so undertook to mass troops on a large scale.

General Goybet concedes that their purpose was not really "to defend the French zone" because, despite the Damascus garrulousness, "an attack by Sherifian soldiers on the western zone was scarcely possible." Their true objective was "to bring the threat of French bombs to the western zone."

Inasmuch as the most important and sensitive point in the eastern zone was the capital Damascus, this city was naturally regarded as the principal military goal. The major part of this operation was assigned to the Third Division under the command of General Goybet.

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Massing of Troops

The General prepared his troops thoroughly for the march on Damascus. He kept the garrisons of Tibīn and Marj 'Uyūn where they were and called out the garrisons of Bānyās and Marqab in Tripoli and Tell Kalakh. The bulk of his forces were massed along the sides of the road leading to Damascus between Beirut and 'Ayn Şawfar.

Advance units were sent to Zaḥlah, Sa'd Nā'il, and al-Murayjāt and given training in mountain warfare. The General considered it necessary to conclude the preliminary phase by bringing the forward lines up to the Litany River through the occupation of Shutūrah, Al-Mu'allāqah, and Rayāq. This was all very easily accomplished.

Similarly, he built a good airfield near Ta'nāyil in the Biqā'. He admits that the farm of the Jesuit Fathers there helped greatly in camouflaging this operation.

On July 14, 1920 having wound up his preparations, the General had only to await marching orders from the Commander in Chief, General Gouraud.

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Ultimatum

General Goybet mentions the demands incorporated in General Gouraud's ultimatum and goes on to say:

"We must admit that General Gouraud has shown his characteristic leniency by sending an ultimatum to Emir Faisal despite all the latter's acts of cunning and treachery. They should have led to the issuance of orders to march on Damascus at once, without any warning. . . We were all sincerely hoping that the Emir's delusions of grandeur would drive him to return an equivocal answer or a flat 'no'."

Marching Orders

The orders for which General Goybet was impatiently awaiting did not arrive until the night of July 21st, the time fixed for the expiration of the ultimatum.

They came at midnight by telephone:

"There is no answer from the Emir. Telegraph lines have been cut in Sherifian territory. The march on Damascus is to begin on July 21st according to plan."

General Goybet promptly issued the necessary instructions to his officers.

The Advance

At 0430 hours of July 21st the French troops began to move across the Litany River. They found the bridges intact and encountered no Sherifian patrols. Goybet asserted that the absence of Sherifian soldiers was part of a strategem. He therefore ordered his commanders to proceed very carefully in readiness for a possible attack or any other contingency. When he learned shortly afterwards that the French forces reached and occupied Mijdal 'Anjar without fighting, he decided that there was no reason to waste any more time by taking precautionary measures. He ordered his officers to regroup the entire army and move on to Damascus directly. He himself traveled in back of the vanguard.

The Meeting with Colonel Cousse

Colonel Cousse met General Goybet in the Wādī al-Ḥarīr. The General describes the incident in these words:

"I noticed a car approaching from the direction of Damascus in which were Colonel Cousse, French liaison officer to Emir Faisal, and several Sherifian officers. Colonel Cousse's face was pale with emotion. He said:

"What are you doing, General? You have invaded Sherifian territory, even though Emir Faisal agreed to all the demands of the High Commissioner."

"I have orders from General Gouraud to proceed to Damascus," I answered simply. "I am carrying out a plainly limited military assignment. As for political matters, take them up with someone in the rear."

"I continued on as the Colonel's car disappeared behind us en route to 'Ālayh."

The Push Forward

The intelligence obtained by General Goybet from air reconnaissance confirmed "the retreat of the Sherifians toward Damascus". He therefore decided to move quickly in order to cover as much ground as possible before sunset.

At 5 o'clock in the afternoon the vanguard reached 'Ayn al-Judaydah where it prepared to encamp. When the General arrived, however, he disapproved of the location and ordered the troops to occupy the heights which dominate the Wādī al-Zurzūr. The necessary dispositions were then made. "By nightfall the division was secure against attack from any quarter and in a position to march toward Khān Maysalūn early in the morning."

Retreat of the Tanks

Following a description of their movements, General Goybet says:

"We accidentally discovered the Sherifians' intention to hold on to the Wādī al-Zurzūr in order to prevent our troops from leaving through the pass of the Wādī

al-Qarn. The tanks rolling along with the forward units were instructed to proceed to the mouth of the Wādī and take possession. However, on emerging from the Wādī they were greeted by four or five 105 mm. shells, which forced the commanding officer to pull back to a safe place."

Truce

Goybet notes the reasons that led him to conclude a truce at 'Ayn al-Judaydah:

"During the night a Sherifian delegation accompanied by Colonel Toulat, Chief of the French Mission in Damascus, came to headquarters to remind us that Emir Faisal had accepted all the terms of the ultimatum. He asked us for another delay in order to give the Sherifian government an opportunity to study the situation created by our advance.

"We took up the matter with Colonel Pettelat, Chief of Staff. Colonel Toulat told us that the news of our march greatly excited the people of Damascus and resulted in a number of clashes. The foreign consuls became perturbed, fearing that our action might cause a massacre of the Christians.

"We saw the following benefits in a 24-hour delay:

"(1) It would afford our troops a chance to get much needed rest after spending a day under the broiling sun and a sleepless night of intense exertions in the dry, waterless mountains.

"(2) It would enable us to tighten communications between the various units of the division which were gathered together for the first time in 24 hours. This created many problems each requiring study and a decision.

"(3) It would show our good intentions to the foreign consuls who are the representatives of Christian Europe in Damascus.

"Actually, our stopping where we did was dangerous. It destroyed the advantages derived from our swift advance by helping the Sherifians fortify their defensive positions before the entrance to the Wādī al-Qarn and complete the equipping and massing of their men in certain sensitive places along the line of march.

"Nevertheless, we decided to offer 'a suspension of all activities for a period of 24 hours', provided that the Sherifian Government in turn give our troops the right to use the railroad from Rayāq to al-Takīyah to ensure our supplies. For this purpose we would utilize the road leading to the aforementioned station on the left side of the Wādī al-Zurzūr.

"The Sherifian delegation accepted our terms and proceeded to 'Ālayh to negotiate with General Gouraud directly."

The New Request

On the morning of the following day, i.e., July 22nd, the General sent out patrols to reconnoitre the road to al-Takīyah left of the Wādī al-Zurzūr. He learned that it was a mule path and absolutely impassable by motor traffic. He also calculated that transportation of supplies by the single train from the station of al-Takīyah to 'Ayn al-Judaydah would require all the army mules, including those employed to carry cannon and machine guns.

It was necessary therefore to use the road leading out of the station of al-Takīyah along the right side of the Wādī al-Zurzūr which crossed the Damascus road near Khān Maysalūn.

General Goybet observed that two critical problems would be raised if his army remained on the Plain of al-Judaydah:

(1) Water — The five wells in al-Judaydah yielded 20,000 litres daily, whereas the army needed 90,000 litres.

(2) Anthrax — the Plain of al-Judaydah had been traversed by caravans for thousands of years. They apparently became "the accursed fields", to use Pasteur's phrase, where the anthrax germs were endemic. Indeed, within an hour a number of animals, including the horse belonging to one of the General's staff officers, died of this dread disease.

For these reasons General Goybet wrote to General Gouraud to explain "the absolute necessity" for demanding that the army be permitted to advance to the flowing wells of Khān Maysalūn and be guaranteed free use of the excellent road connecting the station of al-Takīyah to the Damascus road. This, mind you, "while halting the march to Damascus".

The New Conditions

After giving a detailed description of his army's situation in 'Ayn al-Judaydah, General Goybet says: "This request of mine crossed in transit the new conditions General Gouraud set for 'halting the march on Damascus' ". Enumerating the conditions, he concedes: "These new demands, the necessity for which I proved, are of such nature as to increase the difficulty of their acceptance by the Emir. We were not surprised, therefore, to see Colonel Toulat come to us that evening with the Emir's negative answer to the new ultimatum sent him by the High Commissioner."

The Last March

General Goybet followed his reference to Colonel Toulat with an account of how the order for the last march was given:

"I shall never forget the affecting scene that took place in the virtually roofless building that I had appropriated for an office. Colonel Toulat picked up the telephone and called General Gouraud to tell him that Emir Faisal had answered in the negative. The General apparently made some objections to which Colonel Toulat replied: 'It is obvious that halting our march on Damascus would definitely put an end to our spiritual influence in the East.'

"General Gouraud immediately ordered me by telephone to continue to move forward."

The Final Sections

General Goybet then tells about the battle, entrance into Damascus, parade through the streets and review of the troops, and reaction to the proclamation of the end of the Sherifian regime in Syria. He concludes by quoting the order of the day issued by General Gouraud after the battle:

"The General is profoundly happy to send congratulations to General Goybet and his brave troops. . . They broke the resistance of the enemy who had defied us for eight months. They have recorded a glorious page in the history of France and Syria."

Mention of the Crusades

General Goybet appends a brief postscript in which he registers some of his observations after he settled down in Damascus.

It is worth while for us to read and ponder the words of this commander who asserted that he conducted the military campaign against Damascus "in order to carry out the decision of the League of Nations to civilize Syria and the Syrians". He wrote:

"I am in Damascus!

"This name used to evoke fabulous associations in my mind as a young boy whenever I came across it in the records of my family.

"Jean Mongolfier, the distant ancestor of my paternal grandmother Louise, was captured during the Second Crusade in 1147 and brought to Damascus.

"He was an ordinary foot-soldier, so the 'thieves' did not accord him the good treatment they reserved for the brilliant knights. The people of Damascus worked him as a slave in one of the factories engaged in manufacturing paper from cotton. Poor Jean labored there for three years until he managed to escape from the city and, after countless perils, rejoined the Crusader army. When he returned to his birthplace after an absence of ten years, he built the first paper mill in Europe.

"Is it not an act of 'supreme justice' that the descendant of a prisoner during the Crusades should enter the holy city as a triumphant conqueror?"

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AUTHOR

al-Husari

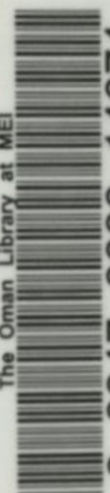
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