## Abstract

This thesis traces the mandate concept as embodied in Art. 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations as an intrinsic feature of the British Imperial mind. Therefore the purview of our study is British imperial thinking and policy making during and after the First World War. It was in respect to Iraq that the mandate concept, as a distinct policy, was formulated for the first time by Mark Sykes. The mandate concept sprang from that part of British Imperial thought which was deeply affected by official apprehension about the Empire`s position in the Middle East. This thesis is proved in the following exegesis of the analytical framework of our thesis. Chapter I describes contemporary reactions and thinking on new models of peace order. We have concentrated mainly on Arnold Toynbee`s and Leonard Woolf`s thinking. Both crystallize the contemporary argumentation in an important way. While they are placed under the sub-title, Premises of Scientific Peace, others such as Amery are for their imperial sentiments discussed under the second sub-title: Imperial Sentiment and its Impact on Planning for a New World Order. The two chapters reveal the inner conditions which allowed the birth of the mandate compromise.

Many of the ingredients of the mandate concept stemmed from the doctrines of democracy. How-ever when these penetrated the East the Arab response to them was bound to bring about conflict with Bri-

tish imperial interests. Yet in its turn, the Empire`s reaction and policy was not of one kind. It was marked with the three-cornered antagonism between the Government of India, the Arab Bureau at Cairo and Whitehall. The pivot of this study of British war-time policy is the chapter called: The British Glimpse of a Middle East Empire. Interestingly, the above antagonism gave rise to ideas of a British Middle Eastern Empire. There course and fate was implicit in the frequent committee chages, departmental struggle against rule by committeee and in debates on immediate issues of policy. We regard their fate and their impact on the decision-making structure in Whitehall as more indicative of the state of the British will to rule in the East than such paper-designs as the MacMahon-Hussein correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement or the De Bunsen Committee Report. From this angle our chapter is meant to serve as a corrective to the weight of those paper-designs; further it puts the final creation of the Middle East Department in its right imperial perspective.

The sectionhas been provided with what o ne may call a "trailer". Called, Some Features of the Mesopotamian Campaign, it gives the story of how the Admiralty pushed through its policy of physical control over the oil-bearing regions of Iraq. It was their policy which led to the capture of Mosul. The study of the war-time policy concludes with the section entitled: Mark Sykes and the Origin of the Iraq Mandate. This chapter is meant to be a synopsis of the contrapuntal studies of the Matrix of the Mandate Idea, on the one hand, and, on the other, the British Glimpse of a Middle East Empire. This synop-

sis is amply contained in Mark Sykes's hitherto unknown memorandum of January 1918, and in his original way of looking at international affairs. Prompted by this find we have scrutinized Sykes's functioning in the policy making of the Lloyd George Cabinet. His thought and personality are separated out under the three topics of Sykes as(1) the campaigner and partisan official, (2) the admonisher and conscience of the age, (3) the nostalgic and reflective mind. The description of his failure to achieve his policy at the end of the war foreshadows the last chapter of this first part of the thesis.

Entitled, The "A" mandate before the Supreme Council, this chapter investigates features which point to conflicting views as to the advisability of rendering the mandate concept more strictly. This chapter puts Art.22 of the Covenant in its right perspective as a tentative and somewhat incomplete compromise principle in the new international law. By its resultant vagueness the concept afforded considerable discretion to imperialist policy. The checks which were supposed to mitigate such a policy are examined in the concluding chapter VIII, entitled: Iraq before the Leage of Nations.

The concept has emerged from the first part of our thesis as Janus-faced, combining an extremely flexible political instrument for the expansion of imperial control with an evolutionary political doctrine of "democratic control". In contrst, internationally, the mandate was regareded by League champoins as a check on the imperialistic ambitions of the mandatory. Of these three aspects the evolutionary principle was the new colonial dress.

The studyof the application of the mandate starts with a detailed analysis of: The Political Role of the Oil-bearing Regions of Iraq. The oil-issue is followed as it ran like a red line through Iraq`s early political history up to 1926. The first section of the ensuing chapter, Towards the Cairo-Conference, deals with what we call the "import article" of the colonial idea in the Middle East as it was designed and propagated advertisement-like for consumption in Britain by such on the spot experts as Gertrude Bell. The remaining sections deal, again contrapuntally, with public opinion and the tax-payer rationale in Britain and the final synthesis of the Cairo-policy.

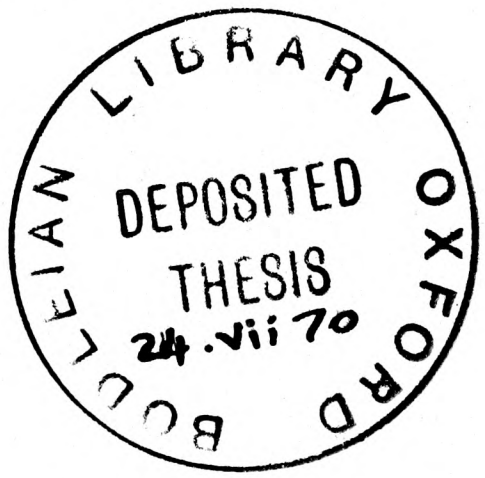
The chapter on the Cairo-Conference, is the opening movement for the subsequent constitutional development of Iraq, in the course of which Britain , set by set, gears the expansion of the governmental infra-structure to the achievement of her imperialistic aims of control As in the previous chapter the part entitled, The British Gambits in the Constitutional Development of Iraq, gives much room to the role played by personalities. These, because of their more discernible and distinct capacities and idiosyncracies became what one may call "sub-stitutes" for the far less calculable social forces, economic condi-tions and political circumstances in turmoil. There follows, in the chapter, The Shaping of Iraq`s External Relations, a desciption of some features of Iraq`s integration into the contemporary international con-text. The concluding chapter, euphemistically entitled, Iraq before the League of Nations, endeavours to define the three-cornered relation-ship between Britain, Iraq and the League within the context of imme-diate practice rather than of the myth which afterthought has woven around it.

# The Birth of the Mandate Idea

# and its Fulfilment in Iraq up to 1926

[TT 1970]

[H.J.F. MEJCHER]



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## Introduction

This thesis traces the mandate concept as embodied in Art. 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations as an intrinsic feature of the British Imperial mind. Therefore, whether it discusses the genesis of the concept or its early application to Iraq, the purview of our study is British imperial thinking and policy making during and after the First World War. From the beginning, in its analysis of the birth of the idea, the thesis deals with British policy and strategy in the Middle East. Again, it was in respect to Iraq that the mandate concept, as a distinct policy, was formulated for the first time, in a private memorandum written by Mark Sykes in January 1918 and immediately submitted to the India Office for circulation and official comment.

Thus, even in the shape of a practical suggestion, the mandate concept figured in British imperial thinking long before it was aired by General Smuts. Moreover, besides the interesting fact that it was first ventilated by a man who was already discredited by the Sykes-Picot agreement, it was, from the first, related to a distinct country. While, more generally, it will be seen that it sprang from that part of British Imperial thought which was deeply affected by

official apprehension about the Empire's position in the Middle East.

It follows that the second part of our study, which concerns the post-war application of the mandate concept to Iraq, is more than a simple case-study in the narrow sense, in that its statements do not need to be verified by a number of further studies concerning the regional application of contemporary imperial thought. The fact is that during the War Whitehall regarded the Middle Eastern regions as they stretched along the Routes to India as its t r u e Empire. Further, it reckoned that the regions north to the head of the Persian Gulf were, together with the Gulf, one of the most sensative spots of this Empire. British policy towards Iraq was therefore bound to touch the very core of the imperial idea.

Surely, nothing demonstrates the importance of this region to British imperial self-esteem better than the following pre-war incident in which even the Royal Mint, however jokingly, revealed that it entertained apprehensions with regard to the Empire's position in it.[1] When in August 1911 Rear-Admiral Slade mooted the question of a medal for service in the Persian Gulf, the Royal Mint was embarrassed about the proper design for such an imperial emblem. Should Britannia on the sea-horse convey the traditional impression of a royal progress or should the genius of the Empire, helmeted for war and grasping her trident and shield, be seen speeding across the high seas in the chariot and horses of Poseidon towards a point of danger which she has spied in the distance? But, as it was apprehensively observed, who

1.see Adm. 116/ 1675, Case 929.

could be sure that the sunrays in the background did not indicate that the sun of England's glory was setting and that Britannia was escaping from the Old Country with all possible speed? The sunrays, it was shrewdly argued, should be replaced by clouds which would suggest a time of danger and difficulty, in which special exertions were required. However, after fully considering the matter, McKenna, the First Sea Lord, decided to adhere to the idea of the sunrays, even though he directed that they were to be considerably reduced so as not to be so noticeable.

To speak plainly, from a political point of view the importance of the regions at the head of the Gulf had been a factor in British thinking ever since the 1880s when Russia had started to extend her influence to the south in the hope of obtaining Persian ports. This was further intensified after the turn of the century when the 'German spearhead' of the Berlin-Bagdad railway had been aimed at putting an end to the 'provocation' posed by all-British trade routes to a world which, thanks to the advance of science and the growth of commerce, was rapidly becoming industrialised.

The British knew that any alteration in the status quo of the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 over Persia and of the Anglo- German Settlement over Basra on the eve of the war would seriously jeopardize their entire imperial strategy in the East. Consequently, they looked upon the German challenge not as a symptom of a changing world but as a menace which might turn out to be their nemesis if they once relaxed their muscles. Without a political concept for matching a new

world, the British shaped their policy in the light of the ominous precedents of the Dutch and Portuguese Empires in South-East Asia, other empires which had been no less resolved to ward off a fatal eclipse.

The status quo in the Middle East was seriously upset when Turkey joined the Central Powers and when, in the wake of its entry into the war, Russia, France and Britain registered their claims and antagonistic demands in the Middle East in the correspondence known as the Constantinople Agreement of 1915. For the British there was now abundant reason for new strategic planning which might do away with the pre-war hazards.

However, precipitate political developments soon began to mock such an undertaking: the Hashemites' secession from the Ottoman capitol gave shape to what has, in the European terminology of the time, been styled Arab nationalism, the emergence of which, while discretely encouraged after initial hesitation by Britain's Intelligence Bureau in Cairo, entailed mutual Anglo-Arab commitments. No matter how well- or ill-defined they were, they neither dovetailed with the Entente's territorial designs nor tempered the spirit of rivalry by which Britain, France and Russia were bound and separated in the Middle East. Arab nationalism gained a new prop through the spread of the doctrines of self-determination and international government which emanated from psychological warfare across the trenches of the military and from intellectual commitment at home.

In this welter of new political beliefs and old scepticism the British apprehension about the imperial position in the Middle East reached new heights when the United States, Russia's replacement in the military effort in Europe, began, while giving new momentum to the movement for international government, to press for its cognate foreign policy principles of the open door and the freedom of the seas. Simultaneously, the Labour Movement in Britain, fed through war propaganda on the legendary cereal wealth of the Garden of Eden, decided there as elsewhere to queer the pitch for capitalists and imperialists by standing up against any policy of annexation.

Yet underneath this overt, though loose, Lib-Lab Anglo-American concert which gathered around common concepts of commercial policy and political diplomacy, a broader ideology of democracy - distinguished for its empirial and holistic patterns of world order - was being stitched together by Round Table people from Britain and country members such as George Louis Beer, Jan Christian Smuts and Arnold Toynbee. Marked by ethical roots which went back into the religious enlightenment of a by-gone age and its secular 19th century offsprings of liberty, Darwinism and aestheticism, its political keywords such as "self-government", "self-determination", "consent of the governed", concentration of responsibility" or "decentralisation of government" were, by their promises of freedom, bound to impress or subvert peoples and political communities which found themselves suddenly deprived of, or being liberated from, patrimonial or semi-patrimonial rule. This applied above all to the nationalities in Eastern Europe and the

peoples of the Middle East. What these peoples, captivated by the euphoria of victory and newly won freedom, overlooked was that the Western concepts were, at root, the outcome rather than beginning of political activity and organisation; and that, further, they were geared to particular patterns of world order.

While these ingredients of "global democracy" began to disturb politics in the Middle East and, by yielding up the mandate concept, to redress the old-fashioned colonial policy of the Entente powers, Iraq gained additional imperial significance because of its large oil-bearing regions. The Admiralty prophesied that after the war oil would become one of the most desired commodities for competitive and rival national and commercial interests and that, in any future large-scale war in which the Empire might become involved, the key to victory would be the monopoly over as much oil-supply as possible. Owing to its pressure on the Lloyd George Cabinet, the Admiralty, in the summer of 1918, virtually set the pace to the Mesopotamian Campaign. As a result Mosul was captured in order to gain physical control over oil-bearing regions. Thus together with the Government of India and Whitehall, the Admiralty entered the scene as an hitherto unknown third party in the shaping of Iraq.

In rough outline these were the more overt and disturbing factors in British war-time planning and action in the Middle East. The thesis then goes on to describe the important antagonism between Whitehall, Cairo, and India as they concern the further exegesis of the analytical framework within which we have endeavoured to prove

our hypothesis that the mandate concept sprang from British imperial thinking at the point where it was deeply affected by apprehensions about the future of the imperial position in the Middle East.

Chapter I describes contemporary reactions to a number of models for a new international peace order. For various reasons we have concentrated mainly on Arnold Toynbee`s and Leonard Woolf`s thinking on the subject. Both men, young, intellectually aware of the trends and the needs of their time, and already politically committed by affiliations with the Fabians, the Labour Party and the Round Table, crystallize in their literary output, so we believe, the contemporary political argumentation and intellectual effort in an important way. Apart from the fact that they had access to an audience of men who held high offices in the corridors of power, these writers also figured as post-war commentators on the final mandate concept.

While both thinkers, because of the express realism and deliberate detachment in their universal approach, are placed under the sub-title, Premises of Scientific Peace, others, such as Lionel Curtis, George Louis Beer and L.S.Amery are, for their pronounced imperial sentiments discussed under the second sub-title: Imperial Sentiment and its Impact on Planning for a New World Order. Summed up, the two chapters reveal both the inner conditions which allowed the birth of the mandate compromise and the imperialist motivation and expectancy which went with its application.

As is obvious, this approach differes in various ways from the vast literature written on mandates, or the League of Nations

Movement, or the relation between the League of Nations Mandate-System and the later United Nations Trusteeship System. To take some of the better known authors, for instance, to Duncan Hall or Roger Louis the mandate conception was a diplomatic device, and originated as such primarily in the decisions of the Empire Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference, or in the deliberations of the Supreme Council. It follows from this approach that Hall gives prominence to the role played by the dominions, whereas Roger Louis, who is primarily interested in African Mandates, puts George Louis Beer into the lime-light and explains the mandate-compromise in terms of the British diplomacy of buying American favour and of friendly concurrence in its latest colonial enterprise. As both authors deal primarily with the "B" and "C" class mandates, our study, if judged in the light of its second part about the application of the mandate to Iraq, might at first sight, pass off as a complementary treatise. But this is true only in a very limited sense. More widely our study endeavours to show that the mandate concept was underpinned by an ideological basis. This basis is clearly discernible in Lionel Curtis`s idea of world government built on the rock of a Pax Anglo-Americana, in Philip Kerr`s and Roden Buxton`s aesthetic Darwinism, and, last but not least, in the connection between the emergence of the Iraq mandate and the transfer of Iraq from the Government of India to Whitehall control. In fact, as we shall see, the immediate implications of this very transfer at the time, and Beer`s attitude to it, clearly show that there were certain limitations to American political opinion. These, in their turn, con-

firm our contention that the ideological strands of the mandate concept emanated from the Round Table people.

Henry Winkler's study of the League of Nations Movement belongs to an altogether different category of approach. In it he examines some of the ingredients of the mandates system, such as international control over raw materials, or the open door policy, or tutelage of backward peoples. Looking only at party labels, Winkler points to the British socialists and their radical fellow-travellors as the true originators of the trusteeship idea. True, he does reserve a few laurels for the Round Table group, but this group is quite insufficiently represented by the single essay of Philip Kerr's on the relation between advanced and backward peoples. A.J.Toynbee is not mentioned at all, although his 1915 study Nationality and the War contained one of the earliest sketches of an international government.

There remain a few other writers, mainly lawyers like Quincy Wright or R.N.Chowdhuri, whose analysis is based on the formal mandate concept as an immanent legal system. As for the historic part of the mandate concept, they follow the premise that there is a perennial mandate- or trusteeship-idea in history and that, accordingly, the League mandate could trace ancestry going as far back as the treatises of Bartolome de Las Casas, Francisco de Vitoria and the philantropists of the 19th century. Owing to their legalistic and formal approach these great treatises interprete policy by means of formal and drafted law. Judged from an historical point of view, international law in such treatises often enjoys an undue long life-time over and above its

political basis. In other words, law sometimes no longer matches the political reality which had shaped it and which it was its purpose to safeguard, and it lingers on because a new political reality, be it for ideological or other reasons, is unable to produce a new common and written international law. In contrast, our study deals with actual policy-making in the hope of listening to its inner heart beat. As for exercises in intellectual history, this study leaves it to followers of T.S.Eliot or to scholastics like Heinrich Rommen, to squeeze past and present into an eternal or perennial moment.

In order to understand the mandate concept in the war-time conditions of its birth, chapter I, which has dealt with its ideological matrix, is followed contrapuntally by a study of British policy with respect to the Middle East during the second half of the war. Our reasons for starting in the middle of the war are as follows. The turn of the year 1916 is marked by four major events which were thereafter to have a deep impact on events in Iraq: (1) the formation of the Lloyd George War Cabinet together with the powerful committee-system which soon mushroomed on its fringe; (2) the ominous come-back of hard-core imperialists such as Curzon, Amery and Milner who shaped Eastern policy to a considerable extent; (3) the increasing need for Imperial re-organisation in the Near- and Middle East which was to lead to unity of control, when in 1921, the Middle East Department was created; (4) the "mounting fermentation" of British war aims through various ingredients of the mandate idea. To take one example by 1917, in view of the spread of new political doctrines, the Sykes-Picot

Agreement was already regarded as obsolete in the Whitehall committees.

The pivot of this study of British war-time policy and planning is the chapter called: The British Glimpse of a Middle East Empire. Owing to their peculiar conditions, the Middle Eastern and, within its context, the Arab response to the doctrines of democracy were bound to bring about conflict with British imperial interests. Yet in its turn, the Empire's reaction and policy was not of one kind. It was marked with the three-cornered antagonism between the Government of India, with its summer residence at Simla, the Arab Bureau at Cairo and Whitehall. However, even while disturbing policy making, this antagonism, in striving for its own settlement in the various war-time committees, gave rise to interesting ideas of a British Middle Eastern Empire. Their course and fate, frequently implicit in committee changes, departmental struggle against rule by committee and in the debates on immediate issues of policy, are thoroughly analysed. We regard their fate and their impact on the decision-making structure in Whitehall as more indicative of the state of the British will to rule in the East than, for instance, the MacMahon-Hussein correspondence, the Sykes-Picot Agreement or the De Bunsen Committee Report. Drafted under the assumption of a hypothetical continuity of political circumstances or else having achieved an immediate purpose these designs, apart perhaps from the territorial delimitations they laid down for the Middle East, rapidly failed to provide the political principles by which the Empire would be enabled to "saddle" the new "nationalisms" - which Sykes advised it to foster and bridle -

and keep them in a cordon for warding off possible menace from the north. Needless to say that such a modern version of colonialism in the Middle East was no job for the Government of India. From this angle, the chapter, The British Glimpse of a Middle East Empire, is used by us to serve as a corrective to the weight or validity of those paper-designs. Further, as the idea of a Middle Eastern Empire, no matter how transient, was always geared to the question of its proper departmental representation in Whitehall, the final creation of the Middle East Department, which was to run the Iraq mandate after the war, is put in its right imperial perspective by being projected against alternative designs temporarily contemplated but finally abandoned.

The section has been provided with what one may call a "trailer". Called, Some Features of the Mesopotamian Campaign, it gives, as well as some hitherto unknown facts, the story of how the Admiralty fared on the slippery corridors in Westminster, when lobbying the Cabinet Secretary Maurice Hankey. Further, the chapter shows how the Mesopotamian campaign was maintained throughout the war as a purely Anglo-Indian undertaking and as a colonial war behind the screen of the great European War.

The study of the war-time policy towards the Middle East concludes with the section entitled: Mark Sykes and the Origin of the Iraq Mandate. This chapter is meant to be a synopsis of the contrapuntal studies of the Matrix of the Mandate Idea, on the one hand, and, on the other, the British Glimpse of a Middle East Empire. The

synopsis is amply contained in Mark Sykes's hitherto unknown memorandum of January 1918, and in his original way of looking at international affairs. Prompted by this find we have scrutinized Sykes's functioning in the policy making of the Lloyd George Cabinet. It is within this context that his view of the Middle East and the consistency and continuity of his thought are explored. In the course of it his personality and political activity are separated out under the three topics of Sykes as (1) the campaigner and partisan official, (2) the admonisher and conscience of the age, (3) the nostalgic and reflective mind. While his "surface" service to the Empire is very obvious, we have gone in for those features of his personality which are best subsumed under what Karl Mannheim has called The Utopian Mentality. We believe that the study of Mark Sykes proves in particular that Utopian Mentality can well be a substance in policy making. The description of his failure to achieve his policy in the less cohesive political circumstances at the end of the war foreshadows the last chapter of this first part of the thesis.

Entitled, The "A" mandate before the Supreme Council, this chapter investigates features which point to conflicting views between members of the British Delegation and the League champions as to the advisability of rendering the mandate concept more strictly. As a result of this conflict the issue was constantly deferred until it was too late for the League champions ever to win their demands. In showing these various efforts, as well as the political circumstances by which they were either helped or frustrated, this chapter puts Art.22

of the Covenant in its right perspective as a tentative and somewhat incomplete compromise principle in the new international law of the Covenant, one which by its resultant vagueness afforded considerable discretion to imperialist policy. The checks, which were supposed to mitigate such a policy, their nature and, in particular, their functioning in the context of the Permanent Mandates Commission are described in the concluding chapter VIII, entitled: Iraq before the League of Nations. Prior to this, the more relevant aspects of British mandatory policy must be examined.

The study of British mandatory policy in Iraq is the subject of the second part of our thesis. Before describing the scope of each chapter and their relation to each other, it seems expedient to restate our approach to the mandate concept and to add some remarks with respect to the application of the concept.

At the beginning, it has been said that the mandate concept was to be traced as an intrinsic political feature of the British imperial mind. As such the concept has emerged from the first part of our thesis as Janus-faced, combining an extremely flexible political instrument for the expansion of imperial control with an evolutionary political doctrine of "democratic control". In contrast, internationally, the mandate concept was regarded by League champions such as Robert Cecil primarily as a check on the imperialistic ambitions of the mandatories.

Of these three aspects of the concept, the evolutionary political principle, which was the new dress of colonial policy, has

usually been regarded as the true core of the mandate concept. But thanks to a study of the birth of the idea, the ensuing chapters depart from the hypothesis that the evolutionary principle was the most deceptive one. From this angle, the study of the application of the mandate differs from those which, taken in by the civilizing aura of the concept, have counted even the comparatively short duration of the Iraq mandate as evidence of its success; they tend to believe that the rapid arrival at independence was in itself productive of the results mandates, as they understood them, were meant to produce. For instance, P.W.Ireland, in his valuable but very formal study of the political development of Iraq, states that whether or not the new institutions would remain paper principles, depended on the future circumstances, spirit and zeal of their use. Such statements overlook the fact that those institutions such as, for instance, the monarchy were, from the start, largely manipulated for imperialist aims and therefore lost their paper character very early. Probably they also forfeited their teleological design.

Nevertheless, when, in order to make the new colonial dress transparent, the British use of the newly created governmental institutions is scrutinized, we do not assert that, under the mandate, there was neither social change nor a progress or process of integration within Iraq's rudimentary body politic. All we would contest is that such developments were neither steered by the mandate policy as it was determined in Whitehall nor, with regard to their progress, geared to the expiration of the mandate. It was change such as Iraq had un-

dergone under any foreign rule, rendered incomplete as rule had wavered. Its study would require a different approach if, for instance, we were anxious to discover to what extent political consolidation and other advancement was caused by animosity against the mandatory. An altogether different scope of research and sources would also be required, for example, in order to assess the development of political consciousness in Iraqi society: insofar as it is supposed to have gained understanding of the modern state as a system and in view of the important role of sharia law in Muslim society , one would have to study proceedings of both the sharia- and the increasing number of civil law courts. It was here, for instance, that in case of conflicting evidence the Muslim and the infidel or Christian or Jew must have emerged as citizens, i.e. in this case as "equal" witnesses. Further, as regards the emerging political party system, one would have to study the discrepancy between the claims of the new governmental institutions as being representative and the structure of the individual party, and in particular to what extent it was the clientele of powerful notables who financed it as an instrument of resistance or insurance policy rather than a means of loyalty towards the mandate state. From this angle, the function of the mandatory must have been the opposite of what it was supposed to be; in other words, instead of helping the indigenous population to stand alone under the strenuous conditions of the modern world, which was how the mandatory function had been defined in Art.22 of the Covenant, the mandatory imposed itself upon a mandated people whose politically articulate members

struggled against it as a particularly "wanton feature" of the modern world. But then a study of this hypothesis of a teleological "muddle" between the advance of political articulation and its enforced shapes would certainly require not only a different scope and different source-material but would also fall under a different thesis.

In comparison, the second part of our thesis deals rather with a changing colonial dress. The year 1926 seems a convenient end, because by then nearly all the major criteria which were considered to be essential for Iraq's emancipation had been with a few exceptions - at least formally - fulfilled. But besides the successful setting up of parliament, the start of foreign recognition of the Iraq Government, the very important settlement of the T.P.C. Oil-Concession and the settlement of the Mosul question the year 1926 is also marked by the first full examination of the annual administrative reports of the mandatory by the Permanent Mandates Commission. It is in the light of the important political events of the year 1925 that the 1927 session of the Commission has also been considered.

The study of the application of the mandate starts with a detailed analysis of: The Political Role of the Oil-bearing Regions of Iraq. The lengthy chapter follows the oil issue as it ran like a red line through Iraq's early political history up to 1926. In fact, in view of the existent controversy about this topic, the remaining chapters cannot be understood without understanding this chapter first Both in the interest of British control over the hypothetically rich oil deposits and of the expediency of the territorial indivisibility

of the T.P.C. concession, the oil became a major determinant in the territorial shaping of Iraq.

The first section of the ensuing chapter, Towards the Cairo--Conference, deals with what we would like to call the "import article" of the colonial idea in the Middle East as it was designed and propagated advertisement-like for consumption in Britain by such on the spot experts as Gertrude Bell. The ideas ventilated were all orientated towards the democratic aura of the mandate concept, and therefore are relevant to successive events. In contrast, Arnold Wilson`s administrative policy, often surveyed and discussed, has not been dealt with because, in a strict sense, it did not fell under the mandate policy. The remaining sections deal, again contrapuntally, with public opinion and the tax-payer rationale in Britain and the final synthesis of the Cairo-policy.

The chapter on the Cairo-Conference is, in a way, the opening movement for the subsequent constitutional development of Iraq, in the course of which Britain, set by set, gears the expansion of the governmental infra-structure to the achievement of her imperialistic aims of control. As in the previous chapter this part entitled, The British Gambits in the Constitutional Development of Iraq, gives much room to the role played by the personalities involved such as Gertrude Bell, Percy Cox, Winston Churchill, King Faisal, the Naqib of Bagdad, Yasin Pasha, Mushin Beg and Henry Dobbs. Of course, we do not think that these personalities were the sole determinants of policy in Iraq. But, as a result of our research, we take the view that, at the time,

personalities, because of their more discernible and distinct capacities and idiosyncracies, frequently became what one may call "substitutes" for the far less calculable social forces, economic conditions and political circumstances in turmoil. The shortcomings of such a provisional strategy of policy-making are particularly discernible in Faisal`s failure to give British policy and, in particular that which was concocted by Churchill and Percy Cox, the guarantees which it so desired but otherwise lacked. Naturally, they could condemn as crooked and insincere what would otherwise have been more difficult to define.

There follows, in the chapter, The Shaping of Iraq`s External Relations, a description of some features of Iraq`s integration into the contemporary international context. Imperially, the measures also aimed at the outward consolidation of British control over Iraq.

The concluding chapter, euphemistically entitled, Iraq before the League of Nations, endeavours to define the three-cornered relationship between Britain, Iraq and the League within the context of immediate practice rather than of the myth which afterthought has woven around it.

As for the source material of our thesis, it consists entirely of British records, as preserved in the Public Record Office, the India Office and deposits of Private Papers in the British Museum, the Beavourbrook Library, the Bodleian Library in Oxford, St. Antony`s and Nuffield Colleges at Oxford, the universities of Durham and Newcastle, and the Scottish Record Office in Edinburgh; further of

interviews with Leonard Woolf and Arnold Toynbee in 1968.

As regards the methodological use of these sources, our analysis of British policy making and planning has centred on the various successive committees and departments which dealt with the Middle East and particularly Iraq. As such we have closely scrutinised the Mesopotamia Administration Committee, the Middle East and the Eastern Committees of the Cabinet and latterly, the Middle East Department of the Colonial Office and the successive Committees on Iraq or group councils under the Bonar Law, Baldwin, MacDonald and second Baldwin Cabinets. Apart from a certain permanency in personnel, which is most obvious in the office held by Shuckburgh, and the resultant formation of a semi-departmental rationale, the committees are distinguished in the decision-making process and the formation of political opinion and its display particularly by their very close affiliation with the Cabinet, on the one hand, and, on the other, the departmental representation on their platform, for example, of members of the more obscure but, as to their influence on decision-making, underrated departments of the Board of Trade, the Overseas Department, the India Office, the Admiralty. There was also occasional consultation with, if not attendance by, the Committee of Imperial Defence. Under Curzon's chairmanship of all war-time committees which dealt with the Middle East members such as those from the Foreign Office and War Office and to a great extent the India Office were "belittled". For the post-war years, remarkable initiative was first displayed by the War Office and then, from 1921 onwards of course, by the Colonial Office. As the

Colonial Office became responsible for Iraq, its files in the class C.O.730 are, of course, the basis for the years from 1921 until 1926. The files are indeed far more complete on Iraq as those of the Foreign Office class 371, a fact that has led us to consult the latter only on very select items where duplicates in the C.O. files were exceptionally few or completely lacking. Particular light has been thrown on the line of consultation between Whitehall and the office of the High Commissioner at Bagdad. As for newspapers, use has been made of the collections of the Chatham House Press Library.

In order to transmit as wide a spectrum of the state of the imperial mind we have quoted somewhat extensively from the medium-level of officialdom in Whitehall and on the spot, whose representatives not only influenced final decision-making decisively as expert advisers on the Middle East but also, afterwards, became, or continued to be, prolific historians on the Middle East.

As regards the transliteration of Arabic names we have used them as the British inconsistently used them at the time. As for the word "Iraq" instead of "Mesopotamia" we have tried to comply with Churchill's instruction of 19 September 1921, by which the use of the word "Iraq" was authorised as the future official designation. As Hubert Young commented on it:

> "I think we should concur in the final disappearance of the blessed word Mesopotamia"
>
> ( C.O.730/4/40743 )

# Part One

## The Birth of the Mandate Idea

# Chapter I

## The Matrix of the Mandate Idea

> "You will remember the first conversation we had in April 1917 when I said that our intellectual reserves ought to be mobilised for the spiritualisation of the war and its great results...
> The great causes, once well started, push through by their own inner momentum."
>
> J.C.Smuts to Gilbert Murray, July 1924
> Murray Papers

### 1. The Premises of Scientific Peace.

During the first World War, the concept of a scientific peace was implicit in the war-time policies and peace-plans that purported to combine a new world order with a peace settlement that would both stem from thorough knowledge of all relevant data[1] about the war-torn regions, and comply with the spirit of the time. Men like Smuts hoped that thanks to such a realistic approach "the great causes would push through by their own inner momentum".[2] It was Smuts' ambition, and no less his pride, to get matters well started. Therefore he worked from

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1. For example: economic, ethnic, political, historical. Such data were, for instance, meticulously collected by the American Inquiry, cf. Lawrence E. Gelfand, The Inquiry, American Preparations for Peace, 1917 - 1919, London 1963. In the United States the term "scientific peace" was predominantly connected with the fact that most of the work for the Inquiry had been done by scholars and university professors. In our context the term has a more complex meaning.

early 1917 onwards with "unremitting efforts behind the scenes"[3] in order to see that they actually did so. Further, as Amery once said of him to Austin Chamberlain, sentimentality was to Smuts "more in the nature of a luxury sentiment which he would never allow to interfere with his practical conclusions".[4] No doubt, as a Cabinet Member under Lloyd George, in an unprecedentedly privileged position, he knew when to pick his moment. Unfortunately, however, by putting himself to the fore, whether at a banquet in his honour given by the two Houses of Parliament[5] or in an interview with American newspaper editors[6] or else with the publication of his well-known pamphlet: The League of Nations, A Practical Suggestion,[7] he each time stole much limelight from other no less ingenious contemporaries with a practical turn of mind.

Indeed, both his ideas and his somewhat puzzling confidence[8] in the thrust of a great cause were common at his time and typical of a kind of intellectual commitment widely shared by writers and politicians during the war. Their concept was that man with the help of his rational faculties, expertise and empirical data could anticipate, analyse and evaluate the trends of the time or, more accurately, a pattern of political and international conduct that was good and already in the process of taking shape. It was believed that by such a scientific

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2. J.C.Smuts to Gilbert Murray, July 1924, Murray Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford.
3. J.C.Smuts to Lady Mary (Murray), 2 June 1919, ibid.
4. L.S.Amery to A.Chamberlaim, 8 August 1925, F.O.800/258.
5. cf. Selections from the Smuts Papers, ed. by Hancock and Van Der Poel, 1966, Vol.III, No.750.
6. ibid., Vol.IV, No.857.
7. J.S.Smuts, The League of Nations, A Practical Suggestion, London 1918 also printed in: D.H.Miller, Drafting of the Covenant, Vol.II, New York 1928.

approach even the weight of any impediment to the advance of civilization, or else the best (psychological) moment for the "leap forward" could be assessed; accordingly reform and progress, it was commonly held, must in some cases be helped to succeed at a particular moment, whereas in other cases they could be pragmatically timed in advance.

But however rationalistic the protagonists of this approach claimed to be, their conclusions, before translated into action, passed through, if not emanated from,[9] certain communal beliefs, a specific vision of history, imperial sentiment or imperialistic interest. For instance, even before the war, and in late nineteenth century, Joseph Chamberlain, the great protectionist, had been a protagonist of a scientific approach to politics.[10] During the war, one of those bent on it was George Nathaniel Curzon; for example, the Eastern Committee which he chaired worked from 1917 on the concept that the one year old Sykes-Picot Agreement was "out-of-date and unscientific".[11] Similarly, on occasion, Curzon used to speak of the forthcoming peace as becoming a scientific peace; no doubt, he hoped to bring to mind his expertise in Eastern affairs. But the use of rich expertise did by itself not yet warrant scientific method; a concentrated and "disinterested intellectual toil" was involved in the latter, and according to Beatrice Webb

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8. Smuts' retrospect confidence of 1924 is puzzling if contrasted with his disillusement of 1919. As he wrote, for example, to Mary Murray on 2 June, "It is useless to deny that I am filled with disappointment and grief at the way things are going. My own unremitting efforts behind the scenes for the last two and a half years seem doomed to failure...I have a sense of calamity, a fear that the war was only the vanguard of calamity. Perhaps we have only too little faith and perhaps things are invisibly righting themselves. But I cannot look at that draft treaty without a sense of grief and shame." see 3.
9. In accordance with Karl Mannheim's concept of "total ideology", see: Ideology and Utopia, London 1936 (Routledge 1966).
10. R. Robinson and J. Gallagher, Africa and the Victorians, London 1965, (Papermac 131), p.404.

the British aristocratic governing class, to which Curzon belonged, had "no abiding faith" in it.[12]

Strictly speaking, Beatrice Webb - in this respect representative of her Fabian colleagues - reproached the ruling class for allowing all spheres of government policy to be shaped by their subjective fear that any translation of scientific political deductions into action might in the end prove detrimental to their vested interests and material stakes in the time-honoured social order and constitution of government power at home and throughout the Empire; however she was less worried about the effect which that fear had on the conservancy of the socio-political shapes of nation-states and empires; her primary concern was with the smaller entities of the human being, the communal or professional group and the constituency; herein she was followed by many Fabians and other Radical Thinkers of the time. In general, this sociological outlook applied also to the approach of these reformers to the study of international relations; more accurately, owing to their adherence to the socio-economic interpretation of all policy, the sharp distinction between internal and international policy tended to disappear, for, in broad outline, economic production and trade since they had come to depend on local labour and distant raw material and since they were the basis for income and welfare at large stretched right across national, linguistic or geographic borders. That they must be allowed to do so, was implicit in J.A.Hobson`s dictum that as regarded raw materials and trade routes throughout the world there was no absolute "ius utendi et abutendi".[13]

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11.Eastern Committee Minutes, Secret, 3 Oct.1918, Milner Papers 119.
12.Beatrice Webb`s Diaries 1918-1924,ed.by Margaret I.Cole, London 1952 p.118, 31 March 1918.

Besides this advanced sociological outlook on policy there was a potent social philosophical outlook with similar scientific claim but departing from the macrocosms of states, empires and civilizations as meaningful and "necessary" socio-political, ethical and even aesthetic entities. Its main protagonists were Arnold J.Toynbee, Jan C.Smuts and members of the "garden suburb" such as Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr who formerly had belonged to Alfred Milner's "kindergarten".[14] With a foot in the corridors of power and ideas that appealed to Empire-minded conservatives, Empire-reformers and Entente-liberals they were far more influential than vocal; further some of them as, for instance, Toynbee, a labourite, shared with the radicals from the Left the view that economic utility and self-sufficiency were important criteria for group and state formation; further Toynbee and his colleagues on the Labour panel had a vigilant rationalism in common.

Although, as J.A.Hobson has confided in his memoirs, the war had proved to them that civilized man was not 80% rational but was so only by half that percentage,[15] this discovery implied merely a setback in time without entailing a change in the course of progress. Since critical writers like Arnold Toynbee, Leonard Woolf, John Hobson and Henry Brailsford wished to exert their influence on actual policy making, once peace was on the way, they warded against any accusation of being either Utopian or, alternatively, anarchists. For Utopian peace

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13.J.A.Hobson, The Open Door, in: Towards a Lasting Settlement, ed. by Charles Roden Buxton, London 1915, pp.104-5.

14.On the "kindergarten" see the latest book by Walter Nimocks, Milner's young men: the "kindergarten" in Edwardian Imperial affairs, Durham, N.C. (U.S.A.) 1968.

15.J.A.Hobson, Confessions of an Economic Heretic, London 1938, p.96.

schemes would not commend themselves to the statesmen of the Entente and the officials at Whitehall. Instead they lashed out at the prevailing "fallacies" in contemporary political thinking such as secret diplomacy,[16] the "mysterious sovereignty of Sovereign Powers"[17] and the "paradox of self-government".[18] Surprisingly, as it will be shown, the myths became more obscure the further their studies extended to the East.

Since the spirit of the time was also richly tempered with imperial sentiment and with both imperialistic and anti-imperialistic concepts, and since these men's recommendations were meant to comply with that spirit, the question of how their intellectual effort coped with it is of significance here. In other words, did the premises of scientific peace make any allowance for imperialism or even endorse imperial sentiment?

Among the early studies, written in 1915, some were genuinely inspired by the war, and stemmed from the nationality problem of Eastern Europe and the Balkans. Both Arnold Toynbee whose book Nationality and the War appeared in 1915, and Leonard Woolf's International Government appearing in a series of articles in the same year, and published in book form a year later, dealt in some detail with the Hapsburg Empire and concluded with suggestions for a League of Nations.[19]

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16. cf. A.J.Toynbee, Nationality and the War, London 1915, pp.497-8: "Upon diplomacy we can and must make a direct attack. If we can draw this monster's teeth, we shall no longer be troubled by its still more monstrous offspring - War."
17. Leonard S.Woolf, International Government, London 1916, p.28.
18. ibid.,p.219, the phrase used by Woolf in quotation marks was probably taken from the headline of a chapter of Bosanquet's Theory of the State. As Bosanquet's neo-Hegelianism was closely studied by the Fabians and in debate attended by Bosanquet, Woolf must have known it. cf. Klaus Dockhorn, Der Deutsche Historismus in England, Göttingen 1950

While Woolf, however, after a meticulous survey of forms of international management turned to its sociological basis, Toynbee dealt in broad outline and by demonstrating also with the Ottoman Empire and Persia. To Brailsford and Hobson, by contrast, the outbreak of the war had only confirmed their previous views about the sinister machinations of economic imperialism. Therefore they resumed pre-war lines of reasoning, whereby they leant on card-indexes probably started when the Boer-War had begun to reveal its disturbing features. These indexes were filled with the pros and cons of imperialism. All later treatises, i.e. evolved after 1917, tended to fossilize into manifestos shaped by debate on the mounting war-aims of the time. On the whole, they were studded with "Socialist watchwords", except for those that expressed strong Imperial views against a "competitive" international organ that might "cut Samson's hair".

However, manifestos and slogans on their part compelled intellectuals like Gilbert Murray, who were in their Liberalism strongly committed to the "ideological" issues raised by the war, to clarify and defend the true Liberal meaning of "distorted" concepts such as self-determination, when their application was imminent.[20]

Similarly, by 1920, Leonard Woolf and Arnold Toynbee were explicitly commenting in a series of pamphlets on the mandate concept[2]

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18.contd., p.134; see also Bernard Porter, Critics of Empire. British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa 1895-1915, London 1968, p.141.

19.see 16. and 17.

20.Gilbert Murray, Self-Determination of Nationalities, in: Journal of the British Institute of International Affairs, vol.I, No.I, January 1922, pp.6-13.

21.L.S.Woolf, Mandates and Empire, in: League of Nations Six Pamphlets No.5, London 1920. Woolf dealt exclusively with the B-Mandates; cf. also: Empire and Commerce in Africa, London 1920, pp.352-368.

as soon as Government policy began to deviate from its provisions.[22] From them , we have implicit statements during the first half of the war, and explicit comments after the war. But their post war comments are only partly indicative of their earlier aspirations about the principle of trusteeship; Toynbee, at least, seems in his criticism to have accorded the mandated peoples of the Middle East a greater degree of sovereignty then would have been consistent with the premises he had earlier laid down. The reason for the change was that, to their disappointment, the Entente states themselves failed to define the sovereignty of the mandate states.

Incidentally, the reasons for disillusionment began to build up in late 1917, at a moment when Robert Cecil, for instance, wrote to Balfour that personally "he did not regard an independent Poland or Jugoslavia or even Bohemia as a British interest."[23] But it was also then that Smuts marvelled that Britain was fighting for a free Czechoslovakia.[24] While intellectuals such as J.Hobson were still convinced that the only way of ending the war was through constructive internationalism Cecil, known as one of the greatest enthusiasts for the League, confided privately to Balfour:

> "The League of Nations may be a buttress to security but it is far too uncertain a project to be relied on as its foundation." 25

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22. A.J.Toynbee, The League in the East, ibid.,No.2. The pamphlet dealt exclusively with A-mandates.
23. Robert Cecil to Arthur Balfour, 28 December 1917, F.O.800/207.
24. On Smuts' views about Eastern Europe and, in particular, the Hapsburg Empire cf. Harry Hanak, Great Britain and Austria-Hungary During the First World War, A Study in the formation of Public Opinion London, 1962, pp.274-5.
25. see 23.

Obviously, by 1917, ideas and aspirations had begun to travel in different directions, and an exhibition of unfettered national sovereignty and pride to reveal itself. Its climax, of course, came in late 1918, when even intellectual achievement took party political form. By then, when J.H.Thomas of the Labour Party began a great campaign in favour of the League of Nations, Cecil wrote to Lloyd George:

> "I hope he will not turn it into a glorification of President Wilson and...regret that we have let that eloquent pedagogue "patent" this question as he has done. I wonder if anything could even now be done to counteract that impression, which the Bolsheviks of various countries are running against their Governments (sic!) for all it is worth". 26

The writer coming to his conclusions after reflection, and the politician as the result of experience, were not always aware that they had come to the same comclusion. Autonomy for the Eastern subject nationalities was generally regarded as the most reasonable and the most promising, if not the easiest solution to the victors' dilemma. Since the solution was reasonable the consent of those affected by it was likely to be attainable, if not immediately, then certainly in the course of some process of tutelage. The raising of man's rational faculties by which the "trainee" should be made fit for government by consent and national sovereignty was at the time implicit in the concept of autonomy for the East. However, in contrast, real practitioners such as Western administrators in Eastern dependencies had doubts about the blow dealt by the concept of autonomy to the efficiency of the pre-war world run largely by empires. When the Balkanization of Eastern

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26.Cecil to Lloyd George,19 Dec.1918, Lloyd George Papers F/6/5/53.

Europe became the policy of the day and was extended to the Asiatic dependencies of the Ottoman Empire, undertones of alternative wisdom were frequently to be heard. For instance Gertrude Bell, whom one may count as a practitioner, wrote to Edwin Montagu, the Secretary of Stat for India, in January 1920:

> "A native government can't be efficient, as we understand the word. And in looking round the world, I don't observe that we are reckoning on its being efficient. What about Poland, Yugos Slavia etc? My own impression is that in beating Germany we have dealt the shrewdest blow to efficiency - in the pre-war sense of the term - which has ever been delivered. It led us to universal conflict; let it go in peace." 27

That the shaping of the Polish and Yugoslav nation-states stirred the mind of the Oriental Secretary in the staff of the British High Commissioner in Bagdad, was indicative of the universality that the concepts of autonomy and nation-states assumed at the time; in other words, Gertrude Bell was aware that the mandates in the Middle East like the "tiny" nation-states elsewhere hall-marked a temporary fragmentation of the international world; however there was more scepticism in her view on the new independent nation states in Eastern Europe, those"little bits" which she regarded as "doomed to stay as tiny incompetent states" and to jeopardize peace, unless they were integrated into the international framework of the League of Nations.[28] This perspective together with reflection on the nationality problem in Eastern Europe must be regarded as the true generative forces in the general genesis of the concept of A-mandates. In fact, as Amery

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27. Gertrude Bell to Edwin Montagu, 4 January 1920, Lord Lothian Papers, GD 40/17/40, Scottish Record Office, Edinburgh.
28. ibid.

states in his recollections:

> "Smuts...originally invented his theory of the Mandate, not for African Colonies, but for the liberated smaller European nations who were to be kept under direct League control, while those of the former Ottoman Empire were to be entrusted to individual mandatories." 29

But L.S.Amery who for some time served as secretary of Curzon`s sub-committee on Territorial Desiderata was himself very much engaged in devising schemes of overriding peace order for Eastern Europe; he frequently broached his point to Smuts; on the other hand, his ideas seem to have been representative of the committee`s line of thinking, for, as we shall see elsewhere,[30] they appeared in official memoranda written for the War Cabinet and signed by Curzon. As Amery`s and Smuts` theories therefore constituted a direction of official thinking that covered the Eastern European nationalities as well as the Asian dependencies of the Ottoman Empire, it is fully justified to study the premises of treatises of similar width of views that tried to influence the official mind from outside the corridors of power.

Amery`s and Smuts`s premises were not very dissimilar from those that shaped Toynbee`s approach to the problem of subject nationalities and scientific peace. In fact, they were the imperial consequence of it.

When Nationality and the War appeared in 1915, Arnold Toynbee was 26 years old. In spite of his youth he already ranked as an expert on Ottoman affairs. As such he not only wrote two years later

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29.L.S.Amery, My Political Life, vol.II, War and Peace 1914-1929, London 1953, p.165.
30.see next chapter.

a lengthy "Report on the Pan-Turanian Movement" for the Intelligence Bureau at the Department of Information,[31] and compiled kindred data for the British Delegation at the Paris Peace Conference,[32] but was also the author of all articles on Ottoman affairs which anonymously appeared in the Round Table periodical before 1920.[33]

Incidentally because Toynbee had by 1920 become critical of British policy towards Turkey, he was dropped as a contributor to the Round Table; a similar fate befel Alfred Zimmern.[34] After 1920, Toynbee published his articles on Turkish and Islamic affairs in Seton-Watson's magazine "New Europe".[35]

In 1917, within the Intelligence Bureau, however, Toynbee must have been considered very reliable and pro-Empire, for he was borrowed by the Chief of the Secret Service and "sent out to Switzerland to see if he could obtain information of what went on at one of those numerous Socialist gatherings held in that country";[36] he was thought to possess "special qualifications for the job".[37] However, on arrival in Switzerland, Sir Horace Rumbold, the British diplomatic representative, was not keen to have him brought into contact with enemy subjects. Though there must have been other ways of obtaining the information he needed, Toynbee found enough leisure to write "freely to Professor Murray at Oxford of the internal arrangements of the Service!"[38]

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31. CAB 25/42.
32. Arnold J. Toynbee, Acquaintances, Oxford 1967, pp. 169-70; see also the second volume of his autobiography, Experiences, Oxford 1969, pp. 49-60.
33. As Arnold Toynbee told the author.
34. In a collection of essays previously published in the Round Table, Zimmern had included a reflection on the post-war policy of the British Empire which read, "Since December 1918, when we elected a Parliament pledged to violate a solemn agreement made but five weeks earlier, we stand shamed, dishonoured, and, above all distrusted be-

By doing so he drew the wrath of his employers upon his head and "had he been a permanent member of the Secret Service he would have been at once dismissed".[39] Incidentally, William Tyrrell, the head of the Foreign Office Intelligence Department, spoke several months later to the Webbs about Toynbee as a young man of "Bolshevik leanings".[40] Later in the year, Toynbee sat on the Labour Party's advisory committee on international questions.[41] As is obvious from the glimpses of his war-time career, Toynbee's early views on the problems of peace must have altogether passed well with his contemporaries.

In his 1915 book, Toynbee had surveyed all nationality problems from Belgium to the East; the latter loosely comprised the Baltic, the Balkans and, more remotely, the Ottoman Middle East. The question he put to himself was: to what extent is the "sovereign national state of the West" applicable to the East.[42] In distinguishing the West from the East he followed the theme that the state ideal of the West had emerged before the industrial revolution, and before the extensive economic calculations imposed by heavy industry, supply, and the transport of industrial goods had become prominent.

In the East, where no independent nation states had so far existed, the economic calculation called for somewhat "complex multi-national molecules", for instance, in the form of a Balkan Zollverein.[43]

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34. contd., fore mankind". The official Round Table note on it read, "By we Mr. Zimmern means the British people". It was against this insinuation that the Round Table took strong objection, cf. Lord Lothian Papers GD 40/17/19.
35. For Seton Watson, his book on the nationality problem and his Periodical cf. Harry Hanak, op.cit., chapt.II.
36. Memo on letter from Toynbee to Murray of Nov.1917, F.O.800/212; see also, A.Toynbee, Experiences, p.11.
37. ibid. F.O.800/212.
38. ibid., Gilbert Murray was Toynbee's father-in-law.
39 ~~ibid.~~

In general, Toynbee considered the economic and the national factor to be essentially incompatible; he traced the motives for the clash of nationalities to a "psychological incongruity" that could be cured by persuasion and education. As he argued by analogy:

> "Just as people were persecuted for their religious beliefs in the sixteenth century so they are still in the twentieth century almost universally exposed to persecution for their national individuality. In this sphere the social evolution of Europe is exceptionally backward, and the problem of nationality will never be solved till this psychological incongruity is removed." 44

Although Toynbee spoke of Europe as a whole, his complaint was clearly directed at the Central Powers, whose social fabric he regarded as not advanced enough to tolerate smaller national individualities within itself. However, this argument was two-edged. Unfortunately, he did not look at the opposite side of the coin and consider whether small nationalities would tolerate great ones. Disregarding this thought, he argued that for reasons of economic sufficiency there was no other means of existence for the small units than to incorporate into confederations or into the orbit of some neighbouring empire; going into detail, he regarded the Czechs, for example, as "unable to work out their national salvation as an independent state".[45] For economic reasons their future lay within the German Empire.

During the war the conception of inevitability of the encroachment of economically stronger states upon the nationalities on

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40. Beatrice Webb's Diaries, vol.II, p.119, 20 April 1918
41. Harry Hanak, op.cit., p.238.
42. A.T.Toynbee, Nationality and the War, p.476.
43. ibid., p.477.
44. ibid., p.488.
45. ibid., p.476.

their fringe was also accepted by Amery. He pointed out to his colleagues in the committee that it was not worthwhile to worry about exact boundaries in Eastern Europe, because they were bound to change drastically within the next few decades.[46]

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Politically, the solution of the problem hinged, of course, on the question of whether Germany would be allowed to pursue her Mittel-Europa plans. The politicians' views, but also those of their would-be advisers were therefore liable to fluctuate with the political situation. Of course, the same held good for the Middle East, where everything hinged on the question of whether Ottoman suzerainty over the Arab provinces would remain intact.

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Toynbee, of course, foresaw friction and conflict on the borders of large Empires. Here were the opportunities for the international organ to step in, not to prevent what was admittedly inevitable, but to regulate expansion or colonization on "lines of civilization"; as examples for the latter he actually specified "German emigration to Anatolia and Indian settlement on the alluvium of Iraq."[47]

Even in his twenties he had evolved the concept he has stuck to throughout his long life. That was his inherent law of history: unit in the positive phase, i.e.states who could manifest economic growth, rise in population, spiritual energy, material surplus "inevitably ab-

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46.Notes on Possible Terms of Peace, by L.S.Amery,11 April 1917, CAB 24/10; see also sequel, War Aims and Military Policy, 15 June 1918, F.O.800/207.

47.A.Toynbee, Nationality and the War ,p.493.

sorbed the fibres and tresspassed upon the environment of units that had passed over into the negative phase."[48] The process could be reversed, once units in the negative phase were sparked off by vitality. What the international authority had, in principle, to do was nothing else than to assist this "harmonization of two rhythms - Growth and Decay."[49]

Europe, Toynbee was convinced, would be on the upward path after the war. In contrast, the Ottoman Empire would wither away; the entire Middle East was marked by low pressure in the realm of spiritual energy, so low that the peoples could not save themselves by their own efforts from political anarchy. Consequently the international executive should, he went on, be "prepared to step in and organise strong government."[50]

Toynbee`s insistence on law and order was hardly compatible with self-government, just as self-government was by itself not necessarily compatible with efficiency in peace keeping.[51] Indeed, there was no cultivation or education in the arts of government to be expected of the international authority. This change would come about through the traditional ways of spreading culture by colonization,i.e. by settlement, trade, missionary schools and capital investment.[52] In Toynbee`s view, the task of the international executive was more that of a fire-warden; he restricted, however, its action by the categorical

48.see 47.ibid.,p.491.
49.ibid.,p.491.
50.ibid.,p.493.
51.cf. Gertrude Bell`s views, see p.10 above.
52.This was colonization as,for example,outlined by Herbert Lüthy, Colonization and the Making of Mankind, in: Imperialism and Colonialism, ed. by G.H.Nadel & P.Curtis, London 1964.

condition that there must be no interference with the British Empire "irrespective of whether the Empire...handled its own problems well or ill."[53] As he underlined this point:

> "we should regard the proposition of international intervention as a menace to the Empire's existence. We should undoubtedly fight rather than submit to it." [54]

Among the units in a negative phase, Toynbee drew a further distinction and singled out what he called "no-man's-lands", places where the "currents of life swirled like a mälström" and no sovereignty existed at all.[55] Surprisingly, Persia figured in this category as did the Black Sea Straits. It was here, where the strategic interests of the British Empire were in permanent collision with those of the Russian Empire that the international executive should assert permanent sovereignty.

Toynbee's championship of the international organ and its role in the Middle East reflected to strong Imperial tendencies in his secret Report on the Pan Turanian Movement. Why did he forswear internationalised control? The championship of internationalised control in secret documents read inside the "arcana imperii" can have hardly been inopportune, for after America had entered the war against Germany, the League of Nations idea was rapidly becoming a "respectable" issue which the Cabinet could not afford to ignore without loss.[56]

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53. see 42. ibid.,p.492.
54.ibid.
55.ibid.,p.493.
56.For example Cecil whose spirits had been so low in Dec.1917 urged Lloyd George by June 1918:"I think it would be regarded in this country as almost a scandal if that body (Imperial War Cabinet) were to separate without having considered a subject in which large numbers of people here are deeply and even passionately interested... It seems to me that this question (League of Nations) is so difficult and complicated that unless the Government give some kind of

However the fact that Toynbee, in his official and secret report, refrained from bringing the international organ into play, was motivated by the subject matter of Pan-Turanianism and Pan-Islamism rather than its addressee. By his standards the Pan-Islamism of the Committee of Union and Progress was a fake. Nevertheless it was dangerous because it could be so easily underrated on the ground that the C.U.P. farmed a conflicting notion: Pan Turanianism. The danger, against which Toynbee warned, was that politicians of the West who relied on Pan Turanianism in order to restrain the C.U.P. from Pan-Islamism were in the end likely to be misled by their own propaganda.[57] In Toynbee's view, "Turkish irredentism clashed too much with Pan-Islamism to become a practical policy for the C.U.P.".[58] Yet even if irredentism succeeded it would entail the break-up of the Russian Empire, i.e. the secession of Russia's large Turkish speaking populations. This again would gravely prejudice British interests in Asia; for while the Anatolian provinces of the Ottoman Empire would be preserved of Turkish Nationalism, and would be a potential focus for all the Turks,

> "the Arab provinces would be made over to their Arab populations as a focus for other Arabs; and the two halves of the Empire linked together strategically and economically by the Taurus and Amranus railway-tunnels would form between them a Moslem 'great power' appealing by its internal constitution and its external strength to the political sympathy of the Islamic world." 59

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56. contd., of lead in the matter we may easily find ourselves at the Peace Conference with only vague aspirations for something to be done, no definite schemes in our minds, and above all no public opinion behind any proposals that we might make."Lloyd George Papers F/6/5/34.
57. Report on the Pan-Turanian Movement,p.18. CAB 25/42.
58. ibid., conclusion (e).
59. ibid.,p.17.

Toynbee also considered the possibility that the Ottoman Empire might cease to be a great power. In that event he anticipated a "genuine Turkish national revival in Anatolia. The Turkish speaking peoples of Russia would then probably play the same part that Russia herself had played towards the Balkan Slavs." 60

His Round Table articles reveal that the Russian Revolution imparted strength to his concern about Pan-Islamism. He argued that the revival of the idea of autonomy and the reorganisation of the Russian Empire into a federal republic would offer a brilliant future to the Tatars of Kazan,[61] on whose affection for Anatolia Tekin Alp's programme had been based.[62] As a result, Anatolia would lose its attraction for the Turkish speaking peoples of Russia, if not become itself attracted by them; naturally, the C.U.P. would strike root even deeper into Pan-Islamism.

Yet the position of the Ottoman Empire and its menace to the British Empire, as seen in late 1917, can only be viewed in its right perspective if one takes into account what the Russian Revolution of the time - that is, before the treaty of Brest-Litovsk - really meant to observors like Toynbee. With exuberance he asked:

> "What better neighbour could we wish for India than a democratic Russian Federation? Or what happier substitute could be found for the ancient rivalry of Russia and Britain in Asia than that we should advance together along the same Liberal road?" 63

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60. see 57. ibid., conclusion (h).
61. Turkey, Russia and Islam, in: Round Table, No.29, Dec.1917, pp.132-134.
62. Alp, Tekin (pseudonym), Türkismus und Pantürkismus, Weimar 1915.
63. see 61. Round Table, No.29., p.137; also p.136: "The issue depends chiely on Russia, for the great experiment she is making is bound to affect the destinies of the world. If she transforms herself from an autocratic empire into a commonwealth of nations, if she secures both liberty and unity for all who live within her borders, she will have solved a problem that confronts us all".

In contrast, the vision of a breakdown of the Russian Empire filled him with gloom:

> "vast regions between the Indian frontier and Europe would return to chaos; and the initiative there would pass into Ottoman hands." 64

In each case, the Ottoman Empire remained the bogey, the perennial antagonist, who frustrated a permanent peace in the East unless its Pan-Turanianism and Pan-Islamism were defeated once and for all. Such was the line taken by Toynbee, and by no means alone. Curzon and Sykes were its most vehement advocates in practical politics.[65]

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The second writer, who is of relevance here, is Leonard Woolf Like Toynbee he both expressed latent premises of contemporary political thought and, with the claim of scientific and "pragmatic" approach to politics, sought to influence the practicians and a large section of public opinion. However, in contrast to Toynbee, he belonged to the sociological school of international affairs. In consequence, he dealt hardly with the regionally definable units of empires or of East and West; instead he saw the world as one large society increasingly shaped by the "international" interests of labour and capital, but disrupted by the tenacious sway of obsolescent concepts of government.

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64. see 63. Other Round Table articles of the time dealing with Turkey in likewise manner were the following: RT No.17,Dec.1914, Rupture with Turkey; The Doctrine of Ascendancy - Turkish Oppression; RT No 26, March 1917,pp.318-53, Methods of Ascendancy, The Ottoman Empire RT No.27, June 1917,pp.515-47, Turkey: A Past and a Future, Syria -Palestine - Mesopotamia; RT No.29,Dec.1917,pp.100-139, Turkey, Russia and Islam;

65. However Curzon and Sykes otherwise had not much in common;Sykes too strong objection to Curzon's Fashodaism. see Chapt.II,3, Mark Sykes and the origin of the Iraq Mandate.

Accordingly, Woolf's main theme was the growing incongruity of the expansive socio-economic forces of industrial national societies with their prevailing political concepts of parochial sovereignty. His panacea was the transfer of all aspects of foreign policy, in particular trade and commerce, to appropriate branches of international administration; he called this gradual transfer the growth of "inter-state-socialism" which, in the course of time, would entail what he styled "internationalised inter-state government".[66]

If judged by mere nomenclature, Woolf's scheme deceives one into believing that it was simple and completely in line with the mushroom of international conventions and organisations dating from late 19th century. However to understand its full implications for representative government in advanced societies, and the resultant political standards for emancipation of backward societies, the outline of his thought requires more detail.

Incidentally, when, in 1915, Woolf published International Government, he was 35 years old. Before the war he had joined the Indian Civil Service in Ceylon which, however, he left at the age of 32 in complete disillusionment with colonial practice. After his return to London, in 1912, he was soon enmeshed as a bright young man by the Webbs; during the war he became the colonial expert of the Fabians and at its end he worked as Secretary of the Labour Party Advisory Committee on International Affairs.[67]

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66. L.S.Woolf, International Government, London 1916, pp.115-6.
67. For a brief summary of his activity in the Labour Party see the last volume of his autobiography, The Journey not the Arrival Matters, London 1969, pp.153-7.

Woolf introduced his study with a vision of history that, in accordance with Fabian tactics of permeation, should commend its contents as the suggestions of a down-to-earth political reformer; as he wrote:

> 'In history there are really no culminations and no cataclysms; there is only a feeble dribble of progress, sagging first to one side and then to the other, but always dribbling a little in one direction." 68

Accordingly the war was "just a little sagging to violence and stupidity and barbarism" to be followed by a sagging towards progress and civilisation in a decade or so.[69]

Unfortunately we do not know to what extent such mannerism sapped the force of successive argument in the formation of political opinion at the time. Anyway the study containing in its first part an impressive survey of the mushroom of international conventions, commissions and administrative organisations dating from late nineteenth century served government officials as a handy book of reference:[70] thus its author secured an influential audience.

But anybody who turned the pages of the second part of the book must have looked with different eyes on the first; for now the screening of antecedents of international government revealed the dawn of a new Leviathan whose law was already asserting itself in the manifold dealings of the coalescing world of trade and commerce. Significantly, as Woolf pointed out, it was the question of the proper

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68. see 66. ibid.,pp.5-6.
69. ibid.,p.6.
70. cf. Leonard Woolf, The Journey not the Arrival matters. An Autobiography of the years 1939-1969, London 1969, p.160.

political representation of the interests of the social groupings of capital and labour that entailed new standards of government in both the domestic and international sphere. More, international requirement set the pace and standards of domestic political reform. As Woolf argued:

> "the most vital interests of human beings were hardly ever national, always almost international.The interests which most nearly affected a man's life were those of the international group, e.g. labour and capital...purely national government made no provision for the representation of vital group interests, and therefore made it so easy for the ruling and powerful classes to delude whole nations by specious appeals to patriotism and vague references to vital national interests." 71

Evidently, Woolf fully conceded the point that the flow and investment of (surplus) capital as well as the bringing together of raw material, labour and expertise provided the sinews of internationa policy and should be fostered to spread throughout the world. Strictly speaking he even took great interest in enhancing the efficiency of financial transactions, exploitation of raw materials and training of labour and expertise; further he concurred in the necessity of developing overseas markets and civilising backward peoples. His sole criticism was that all these activities were still emanating from, and at the same time endorsing, a socio-political grouping that derived its power from a system of political representation totally out of date.

Briefly, parliament, Woolf advocated, should represent what he called the "horizontal interests" of labour, capital, profession and other social groupings;[72] he dismissed the orthodox representation

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71.L.S.Woolf, International Government, pp.222-3.
72.ibid.,p.224.

of primarily "vertical" interests, i.e. the exclusively territorial interests of states, constituencies and municipalities. What distinguished Woolf's scheme from corporate state ideals was that due to his provisions for the proper representation of international group interests the nation-state would henceforth branch off its political representation in numerous international agencies. The other way about the multiple international administration of national government power, at least in part, would create social phenomena in the international sphere which by absorbing the diffusion of the sovereignty of the various states would gradually warrant for the future triviality of legal or patriotic concepts of independence; further in the international government "the line between dependence and independence would not be clearly defined".[73] In proving his views Woolf made abundant use of the analogy of the British Empire. Though the value of the analogy may rightly be doubted from an epistomological point of view, it certainly served Woolf to drive his point home to a largely British audience.

In conclusion, Woolf's international government was more than an institution of power and rule superior to the power of nation-states; it resulted from the transformation of the international interests of capital and labour into numerous inter-state social phenomena, enclaves of real settlement of a new type of man. From this point of view international government was not a mere peace mechanism but it rather inaugurated a new civilization. Nation-states no longer possessed inborn natural rights, but only those rights granted by, and

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73. ibid, p.230.

revisable by, international government; in short, the growth of internationalism would civilize the realm of unabashed sovereign nation states. In Woolf's view completely sovereign states, nationalities or powers were by their very sovereignty somewhat degenerated adults of the new international body politic; in a broad sense they required treatment and looking after as much as African or Asian peoples, reduced by modern standards to nonage, needed tutelage.

From this angle national trusteeship as it was finally practised under the supervision by the League was anathemá to Woolf and most of the labourites. Instead the sovereign rights over territories and their backward populations should be vested in the League, and tutelage by exercised by a board of directors.[74] Woolf's directorate had nothing in common with previous systems of bi-national or multi-national administration such as had been applied to Samoa, for these had in essence, remained national and sprung from political decisions of transitory conference diplomacy, whereas the directorate struck root in the durable social basis of international government.

Besides references to model structures provided by the political edifice of the British Empire,[75] Woolf's favourite analogy of international government was the European Commission of the Danube.[76] In a sense, this choice of flowing waters channelling their way through solid soil implied both a gross simplification of the mounting social and political forces floating modern man and a perhaps no less gross levelling of the social strata of indigenous African and Asian socie-

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74. see 21. League of Nations Pamphlets No.5, pp.16-17.
75. International Government, p.230.
76. ibid. 2nd ed. of the American issue of 1916 with an elaborate epiloge : The Danube Commission, pp.369-88.

ties. No doubt, this neglect largely resulted from a choice of priorities. In Woolf's view the adult world needed prior treatment; as he put it in Empire and Commerce in Africa:

> "the capitalist system in Europe produces the exploitation of Africa, and the struggle to exploit Africa, politically and economically, will continue as long as the economic beliefs and desires of Europeans continue to produce the capitalist system in Europe...Economic imperialism can only be destroyed by a social revolution, a revolution in men's beliefs and desires; but the revolution itself requires for its success the acceptance of the ideal and the system of international trusteeship." 77

Nevertheless his somewhat ruthless transfer of the sovereignty of the mandates to the international government, without any exploration of whether social groupings of the mandates could not be represented on the international plane prior to the attainment of statehood points to an inclination of launching the development of backward peoples from "tabula rasa"; in this sense the political potentialities of backward peoples were regarded as totally available for producing exhibits of the new civilization. For Woolf, therefore, international trusteeship was a rebuff for imperialism and a kind of "preventive medicine" that should stop the multiplication of unfettered sovereign states and the fragmentation of the international body politic.

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Many premises of Woolf's thought had obviously been shaped by the political philosophy of early twentieth century British Liberalism. Particular mention must be made of its re-statement by L.T.Hobhouse in his famous essay Liberalism, first published in 1911.[78] It con-

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77.L.S.Woolf,op.cit.,pp.362-4. On page 365 Woolf draws again attention to the international success of the Danube Commission; see 76.
78.We quote from the 1964 edition of the O.U.P., New York.

veyed among else the view that while white settlement colonies included the most democratic communities in the world[79] and should therefore pace the formation of international government, the backward races should be left to themselves "until the white man had fully learnt to rule his own life".[80]

During the war this thought was reiterated by those Liberals who, in view of the growth of egalitarian internationalism, feared the loss of social variety and individuality. Significantly, their conclusions resulted in a mixture of Liberalism and Darwinism. But, first, national movements of political independence were condemned like imperialism. As Charles Roden Buxton argued:

> "is not the desire of a successful nation to spread its particular type of civilization essentially the same desire as that which inspires a subject race to defend its culture against that of its rulers...is not the intense desire for national independence, with all that it entails, the direct anemy of internationalism?" 81

He continued with equating nationality with culture and independence with autonomy. As such nationalities should "blossom and flourish in the treasure home of civilization" and humanity should be trusted to take or leave them and to ignore those who were trivial or "useless".[82] He here echoed lines of Pied Beauty such as "Glory be to God for dappled things" or "all things counter, original, spare, strange".

However, Buxton was less aesthetic than G.M.Hopkins. Buxton's advocacy of a sanctuary of cultural variety and "wild life" was blended with the allowance for natural selection and a vague concept of

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79.L.T.Hobhouse, Liberalism, New York 1964, p. 122.
80.ibid.,p.27.
81.Charles Roden Buxton, Nationality, in: Towards a Lasting Settlement p.44. see 13.
82.ibid.,p.51.

utility. It was in the interests of mankind that "there should exist the greatest possible variety of types and thought and action."[83] In Buxton's opinion the world progressed most when it was able to choose between a wide range of different courses; those which were inherently good would tend to survive. Buxton called this the essential doctrine of Liberalism. Yet Darwinism was clearly relevant in its application to subject nationalities; it was likewise in Philip Kerr's emphasis that backward peoples should not "slavishly imitate" the achievements of the West.[84]

On the other hand, much of this Liberal thought that became very vocal in the League of Nations movement dipped in pragmatic considerations as well as in purely aesthetic demands. To Buxton national autonomy was a higher form of political activity and self-government than an empire; he argued that within national delimitations people would more easily accept a form of government and co-operate in working it, whereas in an empire the citizen would be "denied the free exercise of his political and associative faculties".[85] Nevertheless, Buxton and in particular Gilbert Murray regarded the existence of the French and British empires as fortunate because they had already delimitated many self-determining units in large quarters of the world. Otherwise, G. Murray observed, the universal application of the principle of self-determination would have entailed:

> "the difficult problem of making a sort of hierarchy among the races of men, and deciding which of them ought to be governed by more advanced races, and why, and how long." 86

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83. ibid., p.50.

84. P.H.Kerr, Political Relations between Advanced and Backward Peoples in: Grant and others, An Introduction to the Study of International Relations, London 1916, pp.170-2; see also our next chapt., p.37.

Although, for practical reasons, liberals such as Gilbert Murray were relieved that the application of the principles of self-determination was restricted to those areas unsettled by the war, they nevertheless expected that, in future, internationalism would not only produce new concepts of state-sovereignty and new standards of state-formation but also civilize the surviving empires by incorporating them into the League.

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Returning to our original question of whether and how the premises of scientific peace, relevant for the mandate concept, and outlined by some committed intellectuals, whom we have considered to be in their thought representative of the intellectual effort during the war, made allowance for imperialism or endorsed imperial sentiment a complex answer is now at hand.

All writers agreed that the achievement of durable and scientific peace required the devolution of absolute sovereignty of states and empires, but they decisively differed on the manner of transfer. Significant was their choice of the level, whereby they already indicated whether they got to the roots of imperialism. As both Toynbee and the liberals stuck to the government level without questioning its social composition, they merely re-cast the same old play of acts of unabashed national sovereignty. The League Council meetings surely had no other significance than a mere change of scene. In contrast, Woolf had chosen two levels at the same time: the governmental level

85.see 81. C.R.Buxton, Nationality, p.49.
86.see 20. G. Murray, Self-Determination of Nationalities, p.10.

as an immediate political make-shift particularly for safeguarding peace at moments of crisis,[87] and, more important, the socio-economic level on which the vital international interests of capital and labour had irreconcilably outgrown the narrow political representation through national institutions. By transferring these interests to international bodies of administration which,in manifesting themselves as powerful centres of international social reality, would outpower the traditional national stimuli of imperialist policy, Woolf was indeed about to uproot imperialism.

Unfortunately, however, some ingrained liberal views barred Woolf from allowing local interests of capital, labour and raw materials to participate in their international administration without passing and crossing the threshold of statehood before. For example, in the case of the mandates such indigenous participation could easily have been arranged on planes of varying degrees of sovereignty inside the framework of the League. They would have demonstrated ultimate triviality of legal or patriotic concepts of independence with similar effect as Woolf anticipated that his international bodies would do.[88] Thus immense advantages would have accrued to the reputation of internationalism and to Iraq and the mandate policy at large had Iraqi officials been represented in League committees dealing with the prospecting of oil directly after the war. But by his liberal standards Woolf probably waited first for favourable results from "the liberation of living spiritual energy"[89] in the East and manifestations of the "self-

87. On Woolf's provisions for a cooling-off period see International Government, pp.77-8.
88. see 73.
89. For a general survey of the creed of Liberalism cf. Guido De Ruggiero, The History of European Liberalism, London 1926, p.156.

-directive power of personality".[90] That these manifestations finally took the form of extremely nationalistic anti-imperialism in the East was by the above standards of Western anti-imperialists an irony of history; for nationalistic movements that demanded complete sovereignty did not commend themselves to the advocates of the League; rather they may have helped the cause of some conservatives who had devolved politics into a cash account.

From this angle the idea of tutelage doubly applied to the East, first to pace internal development, secondly to curb political extremism. But doubly banned from immediate political emancipation there was enough scope left for enticing imperialistic powers.

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90. see 89.

## 2. The Imperial Sentiment: its impact on planning for the new world order.

World War I involved the British Empire in an unprecedented process of self-assertion. Never before had the challenge and questioning by ally, foe and citizen been so unrelenting. Many were frightened at the abyss of revolution threatened by "syndicalism, Larkinism, the workers of the world, Leninism, and cognate forces".[1] Not only would crude concepts of social and political egalitarianism and vengeful law and order rise from the war's ashes but, as pessimists were keen to point out, the enemy might follow in the wake of anarchy both at home and in the dependencies.

By comparison with the upheaval in Europe, the British empire however appeared to imperialists to be a life-raft; it looked like the mainstay of liberty, security and peace for a quarter of the human race. Since, as the premises of scientific peace have shown, there existed much latent sympathy for the Empire across the frontiers of articulate political opinion, the Empire stood a good chance of success when the imperialists while claiming to comply with the new tenets of the League of Nations sought to round it off strategically.

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1. This was a contemporary enumeration of revolutionary movements by Mark Sykes, see letter to Robert Cecil, July 29th,1917, Sykes Papers 71; summarily all these movements were called Bolshevik, which had the same connotation as had democrat among those opposed to the French Revolution. Illustrative is Haldane's attempt, for instance, to give his approaches to the Webbs a bona fides by pointing out that the F.O. employed young men of Bolshevik leanings like A.J.Toynbee, see page13 footnote 40.

But the boldest dreams of the imperial architects were not fulfilled, and their strategic designs in the Middle East materialised in ways different from those first expected. By 1917, imperial unity, the pet concept of the Round Table,[2] had been buried by Smuts.[3] By 1919, the Arab triangle in the Middle East, the most vital strategical section needed to complete the span from the Cape to Delhi[4] was merely leased to the British empire on short trust. Thus at the empire's supposed climax fulfilment was blended with decline, and the empire moved towards eclipse.

Some optimists continued to devise up to date outlets for imperial sentiment such as a Pax Anglo-Americana enforced by monopolistic control over raw materials.[5] But when examined their thoughts are much less sturdy and worthy of attention than the firm notions of the men with a Round Table outlook. These are worth examining.

Closely connected with the Round Table's notion of imperial unity was the conception of American friendship and generating American sympathy for the problems of the British empire. Yet the courting of American favour outlived the notion of imperial unity and became very important in connection with the genesis of the mandate concept. That is why the motives and the effort by which the Round Table tried to educate American opinion merit some description.

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2. Besides Walter Nimocks' book on Milner's young men, see particularly Carroll Quigley, The Round Table Groupes in Canada, 1902-38, in: The Canadian Historical Review, vol.XLIII, no.3, Sept.1962, pp.204-24.
3. Lord Harcourt to J.C.Smuts, 15 May 1917, Selections from Smuts Papers vol.III, No.752.
4. L.S.Amery to Balfour, 16 August 1918, Balfour Papers 49775 Br.Museum.
5. see, for instance, the reports on raw materials by the Committee on the Trade Relations of the United Kingdom within the Empire, Confidential, Imperial War Conference, 1918, F.O.800/207.

As early as 1909 the Round Table had, for the purpose of ultimate imperial unity, discussed ways and means of developing a stronger sense of imperial responsibility in the dominions.[6] In the light of the needs of the time, it meant that responsibility should take the form of a naval contribution to imperial defence.[7] In order to develop among the dominions a sense of the importance of sea-power, Lionel Curtis suggested that the West Indies should be handed over to Canada. Similarly, he said, Mauritius should be assigned to South Africa and the Fiji Islands to Australia.[8] As the creation of Canadian naval stations in the West Indies and dominion naval programmes, in general, were likely to stir American suspicion, something had clearly to be done to inform American opinion. However this necessity rapidly disappeared, when in those 1909 discussions Milner and also Frederick S. Oliver deprecated Curtis' suggestion unless a substantial quid pro quo was given by the dominions.

Incidentally they wished to hold on to those dependencies as eventual coin for imperial unity, were there no other way to this end. Milner was quite optimistic about the desired colonial appetite of the dominions:

> "some day everything might depend on the wish of the Dominions to possess those Dependencies". 9

As the war was to show, Milner was only too right. Yet his plan of satisfying that appetite as part of a deal in imperial unity did not ma-

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6. Minutes of Round Table Meetings 1909-10, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/11.
7. cf. Committee of Imperial Defence Minutes of 11 July 1912, Adm.116/1677, Case 5846.
8. see 6. For similar views expounded by L.S.Amery during the war see page 46 .
9. see 6. To back up his point Milner recorded recent Australian voices that had revealed growing Australian interest in the status quo in India and preparedness to defend imperial interests there.by menforce

terialise. But in ceding B- and C-mandates to Dominions more in the desired direction was established.

Irrespective of the rejection of Curtis' suggestion of 1909, the fact that, on the one hand, British maritime policy abided by its two-power standard of naval superiority, and, on the other, the Round Table continued to work for imperial unity, was reason enough for Lionel Curtis and Philip Kerr to try and educate American opinion through appropriate channels. Obviously both men and others with an Atlantic outlook were aware that the two stakes of British policy and Round Table effort could be easily misunderstood as being in conflict with the growth of internationalism in the years before the outbreak of the war. For the mounting internationalisation of trade and commerce reduced the distinction between"naval" and "maritime" nations upon which Amery and the C.I.D. founded Britain's naval supremacy;[10] further the unification of the British empire ran contrary to the pattern of a multi-national world. Taken together, in the light of such decided British stubbornness, it was certainly opportune to"inspire"American opinion, a colossus lying just round the corner.

By 1914, Curtis and Kerr were forced to admit, however, that there was no chance of creating Round Table groups in USA. They were told so by one American enthusiast for their ideas - George Louis Beer:

> "The U.S. groups would be regarded from the outset as intended to bring the U.S. under the English thumb and would be damned accordingly." [11]

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10. Notes on Possible Terms of Peace, by L.S.Amery, Memorandum of 11 April 1917, CAB 24/10.
11. Curtis to Kerr, 24 April 1914, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/3. Curtis quotes from a letter which he had received from G.Beer.

Beer was ready, however, to work on the Round Table group's behalf;[12] his problem was how to shake the US out of its indifference to world affairs. As he and they worked away, a form of barter developed between them. Beer found the British empire a useful bait to attract American thought into a worldwide field, and thus became a sort of "country member" of the Round Table group. Simultaneously, the latter was spurred by him to make greater efforts to educate American opinion about its theories.

The point at which the gospels of Beer and the Round Table apostles coincided was over the conception of the relation between advanced and backward peoples.[13] Both departed from the old, starry eyed, notion that the relationship was one between the purveyor of civilization and people living in darkness,[14] and was therefore a contribution to the well-being of humanity as a whole. In particular, Kerr, the ultra-refined aristocratic dreamer, as Beatrice Webb once called him,[15] preached this doctrine, and it turned out to be a useful cover for the secret and more nakedly imperialist designs of some of his friends, for instance, Amery.[16]

Anglo-American contacts mushroomed on all levels once the United States entered into the war, the American Inquiry was set up, and the war-aims speeches of Lloyd George and Wilson disturbed the

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12. On G.L.Beer, in general, see Roger Louis, The Pilgrimage of George Louis Beer, in: Journal of African History, IV (1963); see also: "G.L.Beer:Memoir", in: Round Table, No.40, Sept.1920.
13. see p.29 ,footnote 84.
14. e.g.Memo. by Curzon of Dec.1917,German and Turkish Territories Captured during the War, p.14, CAB 24/4: "the high standards of civilisation which have been developed by the white man have conferred on him a general right of entry into the darker places of the earth where superstition and barbarism prevail."
15. Beatrice Webb's Diaries, vol.II,p.85; but cf. also ibid.,p.81.

policy making of the Cabinet Committees in Whitehall. But from this mass of contacts one must single out a correspondence conducted between Curtis and Beer in the first half of 1918. Its details throw new light on the birth of the mandate concept. In May 1918, Beer disclosed to Curtis that the United States might possibly be more sympathetic to dominion than to British ambitions:

> "We, as a people, will be far more sympathetic towards the needs of the Dominions and of India than towards what might be represented as the wants of British Imperialists". 17

This disclosure worried not only Round Table imperialists, but also Whitehall, for the latter had hoped to make use of Curtis's contacts in the United States to win American approval for its designs on Mesopotamia.[18] Curtis, blaming himself for having misinformed Beer on his recent lecturing tour on India through the United States, frenziedly tried to make good by informing him about "the absence of Indian interest in Mesopotamia"; but his effort was in vain. Reiterating his previous view but this time grinding his own axe, Beer, by July, replied with reference to Iraq:

> "Personally I should not hesitate to enquire about Indian interests in these questions, even at the risk of creating some friction there. If there is no real widespread interest, so much the worse. But if there is such interest, it would profoundly affect American public opinion and would save England from some adverse criticism if it should be deemed essential to retain the regions in question. There is also another way of preventing such criticism, and that is by getting the U.S.A. to assume its share of the burden of civilizing the backward world. If the Allies, in due season, insisted upon this, it would be best for all. Possibly the most advantageous areas for such an experiment would be the Cameroons and Asiatic Turkey exclusive of Iraq". 19

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16. As a young man L.S.Amery had for a short time been a member of the Fabian Society until 1905, see Fabian Papers, Letters from Celebrities Box 1, letter from Amery, Nuffield College Oxford.
17. G.L.Beer to Lionel Curtis, 13 May 1918, I.O.2571/1917 Reg.No.P.3618.
18. For the background of this subtle move see chapt. on Mark Sykes.

Curtis was reckoned to be an unsatisfactory emissary when all he brought back was the news from Beer that the United States might suitably assume its share of the civilising mission.[20] His F.O. and I.O. employers did not really care for this idea, though later they were averse less to its principle than to its proposed application in the Middle East.

Curtis's share in the British operation throws interesting light on the imperial sentiment of the day. The F.O., it is true, came to regard him merely as a busybody unfit to be entrusted with diplomatic messages; but this criticism was part of the professionabs' outcry against the meddling of the dilletantees of the garden suburb in politics.[21] Curtis's imagination and his sense of purpose deserved a higher rating. His objective was to force an early decision on the question of imperial unity, and by this means to clear the way for a more ambitious scheme - that of a world government based on a pax anglo-americana. His scheme, which spanned the globe, included a health bulletin on the backward areas of mankind, to which many of the later reasonings of advocates of the mandate concept can be traced.

Curtis set his case going in early 1915 when he asked his Round Table friends to consent to an all-out propaganda for imperial unity. There was some initial criticism and hesitation by Glazebrook of the Canadian Round Table group warning Milner of the adverse effect

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19. Curtis had answered Beer's letter of 13 May 1918 by June 7th on which, in return, Beer answered on July 11th, 1918, see 17. ibid.
20. Shuckburgh from the I.O. interpreted Beer's letter of July 11th, however, optimistically as an insinuation to the British to screen off their retention of Iraq by making use of Indian interest, cf. Beer's reading, "If there is no real widespread interest, so much the worse' As for Suckburgh see chapter II,3 on Mark Sykes, p.129.
21. See however also Glazebrook's view of Curtis below.

which Curtis's somewhat premature tactics would have on politicians such as Borden on whom the success of the scheme depended to a large extent. Glazebrook's reasoning sheds light both on the personality of Curtis and the tactics of the Round Table:

> "The people", he wrote to Milner," that have to be specially handled at the present moment appear to me to be just those kind of people that Curtis is least able to deal with, and until we have in this particular form of indirect propaganda reached what one might call the saturation point, I think it would be better to leave things as they are." 22

As Milner, though for different reasons as we shall later see, was also for a quick and "radical solution" of the problem of imperial unity, Curtis was soon able "to open the ball in his own way".[23]

By September 1915, an elaborate article of his called:"The End of War - The World State"was published in the Round Table.[24]Incidentally, Curtis's authorship can be deduced not only from the headline and the contents of the article but also, more definitely, from a letter of Kerr's of October 1918, in which the latter asked Curtis to review Wilson's Fourteen Points in the light of British policy.[25]This review became the famous article-"The Windows of Freedom"- which appeared in the Round Table of December 1918.[26] That it was not Curtis's first article on backward peoples is clear from Kerr's casual remark to Curtis that there was no need for him (Kerr) to expound the Round Table view as to the necessity for some civilised control over politically backward peoples because "you (Curtis) were the first person to

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22.Glazebrook to Milner, 15 Febr. 1915, Milner Papers II, Bodleian Oxf.
23.Milner to Glazebrook, 8 March 1916, ibid. IV.
24.Round Table, No.20, September 1915, pp.772-797.
25.see J.R.M.Butler, Lord Lothian, London 1960,p.68.
26.Round Table, No.33, December 1918, pp.1-48.

propound it".[27] In his 1915 article Curtis advocated treatment of the backward peoples by preventive medicine, not surgery. His prescription differed from the later mandate concept in that he advocated a two stage operation:

> "Those who are to-day so far incapable of governing themselves as to be under the tutelage of civilized states could be transferred to the world government to administer until they were sufficiently educated to govern themselves.
> As to the rest it is not so easy. On the one hand, the direction of world affairs would have to be in the hands of the most civilized peoples, for the progress of the world would not be assisted by transferring power from responsible to irresponsible hands.
> On the other hand, to deprive the intermediate peoples of the responsibility of self-government would be to set back the hands of the clock of progress. It would seem therefore, that their external relations and such of their internal acts as affect the rest of mankind, would have to be controlled from above until such time as they were fit to be admitted to a share in the responsibility for world policy." 28

Imprecise though some of his thinking was, it reveals that the concepts of 1915 were coloured no longer by nineteenth century views alone but also by new ideals. Applied to the map of the world, his two stage programme entailed the application of the first stage to the tribes of Africa, and of the second to"Mexico, Persia, Egypt, Phillipines...Turkey and China".[29]By submitting the African peoples to the world govern-

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27.see 25.
28.Round Table, No.20, September 1915,pp.784-7.
29.ibid., As Curtis had set out the map,
"The tribes of Africa, for instance, have so slight a sense of the obligation of mutual service that they have been unable to form a state at all.
There are many other peoples politically so backward that the reign of law and liberty is, to say the least, doubtful, for instance, misrule in Mexico, Persia, Egypt, Phillipines...there it is necessary for some civilized Power to step in, as they have done in Egypt and Phillipines, to sweep aside a condition of misrule which is a scandal to the world, which renders impossible internal progress, and which endangers international peace.Finally there are states which, while able to govern themselves, are certainly not fit, as yet, to control the destinies of their more advanced neighbours and of civilisation itself. Turkey,for instance, is one and China another..."

ment, Curtis complied with the nineteenth century ideals of internationalising the tropical African territories. In this respect he complied also with Labour opinion that was reviving the ideals during the war. It remains uncertain whether he envisaged the ultimate transfer of African peoples from tutelage by the world government to that by individual powers once the pupils had reached the intermediate stage - say - of Turkey or China with their wanting capacity of controlling the destinies of their neighbours; such a provision would have been indeed a shrewd device for linking the nineteenth century ideals to the twentieth century notion of military autonomy[30] with its derivatives of strategic zones and spheres of influence. This new ideal was revealed in the notion of intermediate peoples that were from the start, as it seems, submitted to the control of individual powers.[31]

As is evident Curtis did not work out all the consequences of his proposals. Guilty of some loose thinking his thought shows a certain ambivalence. From where were the external relations of those already educated in the arts of self-government to be controlled? Who was to be on top? Certain was only that the "good" imperialists were called up against the "bad and irresponsible" ones.

As his ideas fermented and developed, he failed to dispose of this legacy and in consequence became entangled in a knot that could be cut only if America joined in; as he wrote on the eve of the Peace Conference:

> "The future position of America in the world, not that of Germany, Austria or Turkey, is the great issue which now hangs on the Peace Conference." 32

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30. e.g. this concept played a role in British mandate policy in Iraq.
31. Curtis spoke alternatively of control from above, and civilised Power

By December 1918, Curtis's mind was revolving not only around the League of Nations, but, owing to the mounting jealousy between Italy, France and Britain, also round the fate of the Middle East and German East Africa - the areas of the Empire's two prime but suspect war aims. His solution of the problem of reconciling these two incompatibles was, yet again, to enlist American help:

> "Her (America's) position between India and Europe removes all our objections to the railway developments which these regions require." 33

Was he unrealistic, or ingenious, or merely confessing British weakness? His reasoning was a compendium of all three, but, imperially speaking, its largest ingredient was the last.

Given his concept of tutelage, he was logical in introducing America, for only she was powerful enough, and free enough from all taint of European diplomatic bargaining, to divide the Middle East into spheres of influence that no one would question. But he failed to be clear-cut - that is, to spell out whether or no his scheme amounted to British retrenchment, of the kind that G.F.Clayton described to Walford Selby early in 1924:

> "The Arabs are under-dogs for the moment but they will bide their time and wait! I feel sometimes that the time will come - perhaps soon - when England may have to go for a "White" Empire policy, the Dominions and Great Britain and leave all idea of dominating "brown peoples" (blacks are still behind and may be ruled with safety and benefit to all concerned for some time yet).Ocean routes, open seas and no commitments in confined spaces like this Mediterranean. That is freedom in war and the ability to take the initiative from the very outset. In peace, the same chance for all everywhere and the most energetic man of business gets the trade and economic power.Think of the freedom if we could say that, if war were to come again, we did not care a d-n for Mediterranean or Suez Canal. A strong Home Fleet, Gibraltar blocked and the Red Sea stopped from the East, and the Mediterranean stews in its own juice with Dago pulling Dago's tail to their hearts content -Just stray thoughts but perhaps worth thinking..."34

Others, less articulate, but more down-to-earth than he, criticised Whitehall's tendency to increase its Middle East commitments. Curtis must have sensed it, if only for the mere reason of his many personal contacts. But he voiced too many opinions to permit himself to be fixed on a distinct line of reasoning. And his great theme, world government and a Pax Anglo-Americana as the forerunner of it, was a vision and an obsession rather than an argument and a study.

Yet Curtis's ideas, however visionary, served one useful purpose. They crystallised the thoughts of others. Milner when, in 1915 allowing Curtis "to open the ball in his own way"[35] had urged an early solution of the question of imperial unity out of fear that before long the dominions might be too much attracted by the United States and turn their back upon Whitehall. Further as a practitioner as much as a theoretician, he judged that the Empire must hold aloof from the schemes of management of backward peoples by the League of Nations - an idea that was gaining ground in America.

The Empire, Milner thought, must complement the League by keeping law and order in its own house. Basic to his line of reasoning was the notion that only units of the size of empires would render the League practicable. Writing in 1916, he envisaged the League as an imperial necessity for handling the world outside the Empire.[36] But how was it to be constituted?

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32. Round Table, No.33, December 1918, p.1. see also 26.
33. ibid., p.34.
34. Sir G.T.Clayton to W.Selby, 3 March 1924, F.O.800/156. Clayton was at that time chief secretary in Palestine; Selby had joined the F.O. upon which Clayton congratulated him.
35. see 23.
36. Milner to Tryon, 29 August 1916, Milner Papers IV. Tryon, an American had studied problems of international government and established contacts with Milner prompted by an article of Cromer in the Times.

On this last topic, the articulate member of the Round Table group was L.S.Amery. Amery who spoke ex officio[37] wanted a "series of Monroe doctrines"; under this notion he wished to reconcile a new world order with British imperial interests. His efforts are well illustrated by a talk he had with Balfour on August 16,1918,[38] and their subsequent interchange of letters. Amery argued that America might well be entrusted with tutelary responsibilities, but only in her natural preserves, and far away from the Middle East:

> "To dump Americans with their vigorous but crude ideas down into the middle of the complicated Middle-Eastern problem in Palestine would lead to endless complications in Egypt, Arabia and Mesopotamia, just as it would lead to complications if, even on American invitation, we (Britain) undertook the guardianship of Mexico or Guatemala." 39

By Amery's reasoning, the tutelary powers of the future, including empires, must exercise their tutelage only in areas adjacent to their main property. In a word, Whitehall and the white dominions might be enabled to run peoples in tutelage without risk of interference from "armed burglars at their gate."[40] And the terminology describing the tutelary role must be sufficiently broad to allow of including the USA among those accepting it. In so arguing, Amery may well have been priming Balfour for forthcoming encounters with American politicians.

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37. cf. previous chapt. I, The Premises of Scientific Peace, p.11, footnote 30.
38. L.S.Amery to Arthur Balfour, 16 August 1918, Balfour Papers 49775 British Museum. The letter encloses a note on: US and British War Aims; see also footnote 4.
39. ibid.
40. cf. Memorandum by Curzon, German and Turkish Territories Captured in the War - their Future, 5 December 1917, CAB 24/4 G.182, Whitehall or the Dominions or both together should, from an international point of view, be set in a position in which they could be "free to devote their entire energies and resources to this task (of developing their immense territories), without the perpetual terror of an armed burglar at their gate."

Balfour was attracted by this theory of a "number of Monroe doctrines", but wanted to consider how it would stand up to a test in practice.[41] Amery who called the Monroe doctrine "the greatest principle of peace yet devised" hastened to supply examples:

> "There is one thing which I am sure would greatly influence the American attitude towards any possible increase of colonial Empire on our part, and which is also desirable for the reasons which the P.M. gave the other day, namely the need for capital (by which he really meant human capacity, for capital in the narrower sense will reproduce itself if the economic conditions are favourable). That would be if we were to ask the Dominions definitely to take a more direct part in the task of development or trusteeship. I would, for instance, advocate Canada taking over the whole of the West Indies, as part of a federation of All-British America, including Newfoundland, and even the Falkland Islands. That ought to satisfy American Monroe doctrine sentiment in so far as it means that no territory in America is any longer directly governed from Downing Street, but has its centre of administration at Ottowa. Similarly, I would let Australia and New Zealand either separately or collectively, take charge of the Pacific Islands. South Africa has her own trustee problem within her borders in the shape of her large black population. But sooner or later the Union will have to be entrusted with Basutoland, Bechuanaland, etc. and in a more distant future may have an increasing voice in the development and control of East Africa. By that I mean the whole East African block from the Zambesi to the Sudan..." [42]

The imperialists, in working out their "Monroe doctrine" pattern, formulated their groupings on strategic and economic lines. Nowhere is this better demonstrated than in their recommendations for the areas bordering on the passage to India. The interesting point about Amery's talks and correspondence with Balfour is the ingenuity that he exercised in meshing these self-interested projects into a scheme for a new world order. Balfour was sceptical of this possibility, but

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41. Balfour to Amery, 17 August 1918, Balfour Papers 49775 Br. Museum.
42. Amery to Balfour, 22 August 1918, ibid.
43. Balfour to Amery, August 1918, F.O.800/207 Balfour Papers PRO. The day is not given, but Balfour refers to Amery's letter of the 22nd.

Amery was undeterred.

His train of thought can be further pursued by examining a correspondence that he conducted with Smuts at the end of 1918. It will be remembered that Smuts' scheme for placing certain conquered territories under tutelage originated as a scheme for central Europe.[44] By December, Amery was propounding to Smuts the notion that instead of a series of "Monroe doctrines", a series of League of Nations should be advocated - e.g. British, Danubian, American. Alongside them, and set up by them, must be minor "Leagues" of independent states, thereafter dealing directly with the League of Nations.[45] But in addition there must be yet more minor areas, mandated under the main League to "great states" in an association that might be permanent:

> "I see no reason, however, why the association thus created should not be a permanent one, i.e. why Palestine, the Arab State and Mesopotamia should not find their welfare in permanent association with the British League of Free Nations".[46]

Amery went to great lengths to evolve terminology that would at one and the same time give blanket coverage to empires and pass muster in the United States:

> "The title", he wrote to Balfour by October,"that seemed to me most satisfactorily was "United Nations of the British Commonwealth", the word <u>nations</u> emphasising that mere constitutional difference between the closer federal framework of the United States and the looser framework of our Commonwealth which can admit actual nations into equal partnership with itself. That is one of the reasons, for instance, why I think that a Zionist Palestine, if it really comes to something, would be much happier in association with us than with the United States. In the one case it could aspire eventually to become a partner nation and to have its representatives attending an Imperial Cabinet. In the other case it would either have to be a state or group of states, or else a protected dependency with no voice in the destinies of the whole. It could be a Cuba or a Texas, but never a New Zealand or a South Africa." [47]

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44. see Chapt.I, The Premises of Scientific Peace,p.11, footnote 29.

By the time the peace conference opened, however, much of this thinking had become outdated. For notions of Anglo-American solidarity had given place to an atmosphere of competition. What is more, among the imperialists, cynicism about the mandates[48] and particularly the League had set in. In their eyes it had become as much of a sham as the Emperor's New Clothes.[49] This cynicism did not suit Smuts, who had by this time laid claim to a mandate, though only a very small one.[50]

As a result of the foregoing arguments it seems justifiable to conclude that the mandate concept, as finally accepted by the British, was not the sop to the Americans that early thinkers had imagined it to be. Nor was it a step in the direction of creating new nation states. Rather was it a new dress for British colonial policy. For it had been conceived by exuberant imperialists who thought that British imperial practice held lessons for the Americans, and for the French.

Yet at least one practical Englishman - Balfour - warned these imperialists of the likely cost of their plan in men and money.[51] None of the so-called experts foresaw how great this would be.

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45. L.S.Amery to Smuts, 17 Dec.1918, Selections from the Smuts Papers, ed. by W.K.Hancock and Van Der Poel, 1966, vol.IV, No.866. As he expressed the purpose behind it:"The great thing is to get the world reduced to a reasonable number of great Powers, each itself a free association of lesser units".cf.also My Political Life,pp.162-3.
46. ibid.
47. Amery to Balfour, 24 Oct.1918, F.O.800/207 Balfour Papers PRO.
48. cf.Amery to Smuts, 20 March 1919, Selections from the Smuts Papers, vol.IV, No.913, "We ought, in fact, to treat the mandate principle as simply an extension of occupation by agreement, and not really as setting up a new type of sovereignty or anything implying even the shadow of an international government."
49. ibid.;As to Kerr see J.R.M.Butler, op.cit.,pp.68-9.
50. Smuts to M.C.Gillett,25 Jan.1919,Selections...vol.IV, No.895, He had made his case for South Africa "like the poor sinning girl's

50.contd., plea that her baby was only a very little one".
51.Balfour to Curzon, 16 December 1918, F.O.800/199 Balfour Papers PRO "There is one point which I have not heard mentioned in the discussions of the Eastern Committee and which seems to me to be of great importance in deciding our future policy as regards Mesopotamia, Syria, Palestine etc.

Our economic and financial position after the war will be such that we shall clearly be compelled to practise retrenchment in every possible direction. If we take over these countries either absolutely or in a mandatory capacity, what would roughly be the annual cost involved? I think any estimate should include the upkeep of the military forces which will be required to keep order etc.

It may well be that we should derive from our occupation economic advantages which would more than set off the expenditure, but I hope that, as Chairman of the Eastern Committee, you will have this question examined by experts."

# Chapter II

## Whitehall, Cairo and Simla in the Middle East

"The Entente first and last, and the Arab nation the child of the Entente."

Mark Sykes to Gilbert Clayton, 22 July 1917
Sykes Papers

## 1. Some Features of the Mesopotamian Campaign.

The degree to which differences of opinion between Whitehall and the Government of India determined the physical shape of Iraq has long been known. The documents only lately available in the Public Record Office reveal that an unexpected third party, the Admiralty, also affected both the pace of conquest in 1918 and the ultimate frontier of the mandate.

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In 1913 the German battle-cruiser Goeben made a poor showing when she was lying for sale off the Dolma Bagche Palace on the Bosphorus. The Turks knew that she drew two feet more water than had been intended.[1] A year later she produced more steam under stress of British guns than any other ship, and she coaxed the onlookers at Dolma Bagche Palace into the suicidal war that crushed their empire.

Basra was the first extremity to be cut off from the Turkish body. The Anglo-Indian aim permanently to retain the vilayet under British administration revealed exactly where the shoe had pinched in the Anglo-German settlement on the eve of the war.[2] While the occupation of Basra had been planned as a preventive measure to checkmate Turkish

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1. F.O.424/252 Affairs of Turkey, Mallet to Grey, 22 May 1914, No.144.
2. Besides BD on the Origin of the War see: F.O.424/252-253 and B.T.II/3-4. cf.further B.C.Bush, Britain and the Persian Gulf 1894-1914, Berkeley, 1967, chapt.XI.; H.S.W.Corrigan, German-Turkish Relations and the Outbreak of the War in 1914, in: Past&Present, No.36, April 1967.

intrigues among the Sheikhs of Muhammerah and Kuwait and to protect the oil wells of Southern Persia and the refinery at Abadan,[3] the decision of October 1915 for the (first) advance on Bagdad, and the final capture of the city, in March 1917, were the outcome of much contested military strategy. Sir John Nixon, the new Commander-in-Chief, and Sir Percy Cox, the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, were the best horses in the Indian stable, and Whitehall, when its turn came likewise produced good men.[4]

In view of the impact that the Lloyd George policy was to have on Mesopotamia, it is worth setting out Lloyd George's hindsight about the campaign up to 1917. It was in the difficult situation of September 1922 that he wrote to Churchill:

> "The whole problem has arisen out of the decision to attack the Turks in Mesopotamia. Strategically I think that decision was faulty. To be effective we had to leave our base on the sea for hundreds of miles in a torrid country utterly unfit for white fighting. We ought to have concentrated on Gallipoli and Palestine or Alexandretta. The Taurus was then unpierced. The decision was taken when I was hardly on the fringe of the War Cabinet. You were in it. Having provoked war with the Turk we had to fight him somewhere, but the swamps of the Tigris were a badly chosen battle-ground.
> Whatever, however, the merits or demerits of the original decision to fight in Mesopotamia it certainly is responsible for our difficulties now; and tracing the story back to that decision, I do not see how any of our subsequent troubles could have been avoided.
> It was quite clear to me when I became P.M. that we could not afford to release our campaign against the Turks in that region. Such a decision after the withdrawal from Gallipoli, and the surrender of a British army at Kut, would have weakened our position throughout the Mohammedan world." 5

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3. see A.J.Barker, The Neglected War, London, 1967, pp.37-39.
4. ibid. pp.100-102. For Cox, in general, see Philip Graves, The Life of Sir Percy Cox, London, 1941. cf. also Shane Leslie, Mark Sykes, His Life and Letters, London, 1923, p.265. The political and commercial assets of the British hold on Bagdad (and also on Mosul) were clearly set out in the famous De Bunsen Report of 30th June, 1915, CAB 42/3/12.
5. Lloyd George to Churchill. 5 Sept. 1922, Lloyd George Papers, F/10/3/44.

the De Bunsen Report § 26 it gave at that time way to other priority.

Yet Churchill did not allow the P.M. any escape from responsibility for the early decisions of 1914 and 1915:

> "We were both members of the War Committee of the Cabinet... we are clearly both responsible. After that I agree that there was no way out during the war except by fighting and winning." 6

This was the view in retrospect. But who or what had decided the extent to which victory would be pressed home and the desirability of the kind of peace that was sought? What were the political and economic implications of the victory? That there had been alternative peace--schemes is clear from another reminder by Churchill, that intended to fix the Prime Minister's responsibility for successive events. Without doubt, Lloyd George was fully responsible for waging this colonial war behind the smoke screen of the great European War, and he had also spurred on the dashing campaigns towards Jerusalem and Damascus, Aleppo and Mosul.

The shaping of the campaign in 1917 and 1918 hung on three outstanding developments that changed all previous calculations: first, the Russian Revolution entailed a decisive change in Anglo-Turkish relations; secondly, the new instructions and the attempts to keep the campaign an exclusively Anglo-Indian undertaking no longer tallied with the terms and motives of the Sykes-Picot Agreement of 1916; thirdly, the rush for the oil-bearing regions of Iraq was an important motive for the advance on, and capture of, Mosul.[7] While the first and second factors were connected, the third one was a relatively late outcome of a different cause.

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6. Churchill to Lloyd George, 6 September 1922, ibid. F/10/3/45.
7. Although the importance of the oil around Mosul had been set out in the De Bunsen Report § 26 it gave at that time way to other priority.

In 1917, the odds in the war as a whole were partly in favour of the British, partly against them. No doubt, locally, as has been pointed out, it was "the year of liberation from the promise of Constantinople, of the capture of Baghdad in March and Jerusalem in December, and of the attainment of positions from which to leap into the breaches left in Asia by the defection of Russia."[8] This was the net result won despite an extremely complex political landscape. How to make the most of it remained uncertain for the months to come.

The democratization of Tsarist Russia wrought by the February Revolution gave according to Toynbee[9] a boost to the morale of the Entente, and relieved the Empire of its concern about the need to accomodate to a strengthened Tsarist Empire at the end of the war. In contrast, a democratic Russia, sharing the liberalism of the West, brightened the prospect of co-existence. Above all, however, the Entente was liberated from the stigma of co-operating with a "reactionary and autocratic" regime. Yet satisfaction soon gave way to the fear that the newly democratized Russia might drop out of the war. This grim prospect made illusory any hope of a separate peace with Austria. Thus,in May 1917, Lloyd George thought that he might have to make a bargain with Germany.

Here was one of those moments when the odds created by an unfavourable international situation elicited his profound conviction that the slaughter of hundreds of thousands of lives in attacks on the Western Front was a mistake. Instead Germany ought to evacuate Belgium

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8. Elizabeth Monroe, Britain's Moment in the Middle East 1914-1956, London, 1963, Paperback Ed., p.37. For the political plunges see ibid. pp.38-43. For the impact on the Sykes-Picot Agreement cf. Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, Beirut 1960, pp.18-24.

"in return for the restoration of her Colonies",[10] and Britain must concentrate all her efforts on a campaign to break up Turkey. Already Bagdad was captured, Armenia was occupied by Russian troops and C in C Murray of the Egyptian Expedition Forces on the borders of Palestine. As the P.M. emphasised:

> "To continue the process of releasing subject peoples from Turkish oppression would be to gain some considerable advantage." [11]

But apparently nobody swallowed the bait; the advantages of the scheme were not even set out. In the light of the events in Russia, a complete review, if not re-orientation, of the Middle Eastern policy would surely have been desirable. For lack of it, Smuts declined the P.M.'s offer to replace the "creeping" Murray and lead an offensive campaign into Palestine and Syria. And while Henry Wilson, the Chief of Imperial General Staff, warned the Cabinet that a separate peace made by Russia might call for British re-inforcements from the Middle East for the Western Front against a more offensive and politically more recalcitrant Germany, others went even further than retrenchement in the Middle East, and suggested a separate peace with Turkey "particularly in view of the present feeling in Russia in favour of peace without annexation".[12] As the year went on this proposition gained ground in the Cabinet.

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10. Minutes of War Cabinet 135a, 9 May 1917, CAB 23/13. On the agenda were Palestine High Command, General Policy and Stockholm Conference Smuts was present.
11. ibid.
12. In the Cabinet Meeting of 5 April 1917 Lloyd George had reproached Murray with creeping where he ought to have rushed. Unless he was replaced by a dashing type such as Birdwood or Bridges a great opportunity might be lost. Curzon had defended Murray. Smuts made his point at that meeting, but he elaborated it in a private letter to the P.M. of 31 May 1917 see Lloyd George Papers, F/45/9/4.

In general, as Mark Sykes pointed out at the time,[13] there were many forces at work which desired to abstract Turkey from the war on terms advantageous to her. He enumerated them as follows:

> "(1)The pacifists of the Morel type in all allied countries.
> (2)The international financiers in London and Paris, who have an interest in maintaining a corrupt militarist Government at Constantinople for concessionary reasons.
> (3)Indian and Egyptian Moslem seditionists and their sympathisers, such as Pickthall,Rosher,Fielf and Mrs.Zeynab Charlton.
> (4)The Semitic anti-Zionists, who are undisguised pro-Turco--Germans.Wolf in London and Schiff in New York." 14

Describing the C.U.P.`s desire to get out of the war in a position advantageous to its future policy, he set out the main lines of the latter as:

> "(1)Pan-Turanianism reinforced by
> (2)Political control over the Moslem world.
> (3)A frim grip on the control levers of international finance.
> (4)Close co-operation with the various revolutionary movements in Europe and the U.S.A...."15

In the Cabinet, Lord Milner had in the meantime urged Lloyd George to take fresh stock of the war situation as a whole. His arguments must have reinforced Henry Wilson`s belief in an easy diplomatic success in the East, for Wilson felt encouraged to endorse them. He needed a separate peace with the Turk, before he could switch all resources to the Western Front.

By June 1917 Lloyd George was no longer disinclined to conclude a separate peace with Turkey, but this must be on terms that curtailed some of the C.U.P.`s ambitions; it must also comply with speci-

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13.For an appraisal of Mark Sykes see paragraph 3.
14.Memorandum by Sir Mark Sykes, 29 July 1917, F.O.800/206.
15.ibid.,p.2.

fic British aims. Further he had come to regard the naval and military experts as a drag on the progress of the war; he was resolved to restore the priority of politics over their advice. He was not going to let the Chiefs-of-Staff and the generals slip away leaving behind them havoc for the politician to clear up. By his reckoning it first was necessary to get Syria into British hands. As Mesopotamia would still be under British occupation, and Armenia in the Russian grip, the Turk might then be lured by financial inducements. Finally any settlement should provide for the emancipation of Palestine from Turkish misrule.[16]

Lloyd George's aim was clear: he wanted a peace with Turkey that would both cripple the C.U.P.'s Imperial policy, and give him all the territory and scope he needed to re-concile his commitment to King Hussein, the Zionists and the French.[17]

Accordingly, while the Mesopotamian Campaign had lapsed into stalemate on the northern borders of the Bagdad Vilayet, and while events in Russia were still hanging in the balance, the War Cabinet, in August, authorised Allenby's advance to the north; it did so, however, without setting any geographical objectives. The instructions to Allenby were:

> "that it was necessary to strike the Turks as hard as possible during the forthcoming autumn and winter but that in view of the worsening Russian situation which enabled the Turks to concentrate forces against the British lines in the Middle East, no geographical objectives could at present be assigned Allenby's object, therefore, was to defeat the Turks opposed to him and to follow up his success as the situation admits."[18]

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16. The financial inducements suggested were an offer to take over the Turkish debt and a guarantee of debt in Arabia. The Cabinet met on 8 June 1917, see CAB 23/16, Special Secret File, War Cabinet 159a.
17. For the conflicting policies cf. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit., pp.38-44.
18. War Cabinet 247a, 10 Oct. 1917, CAB 23/13, General Military Policy. First urged on 31 July, a heavy blow to be followed up by negotiations.

As to peace negotiations with the Turks, Balfour reported at the end of July that "tentative feelers had been put out by certain elements in Turkey". Although these had proved "somewhat shadowy"[19] the Cabinet nevertheless grasped at the opportunity, and authorised the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs "to keep the door open for a continuance of these negotiations".[20]

It was these tentative peace feelers in Switzerland that developed into more regular contacts as the year drew to its close. The British terms were the independence of Armenia and Palestine and the autonomy (under Allied supervision) of Syria and Mesopotamia. According to Balfour the Turks had been offered by Smuts suzerainty over Bagdad.[21]

Owing to the Russo-German negotiations at Brest-Litovsk, however, the talks between the British go-between and Mouktar, the Turkish agent, dragged on.[22] As Horace Rumbold, the British Ambassador at Berne, informed Balfour in early January 1918:

> "Our conversations with the Turks have, of course, been prejudiced by the conference at Brest-Litovsk. In the last week we have ascertained from a number of Government Turks at Geneva that the conference in question has filled the Turks with extravagant hopes for the future of their empire. Not only do they hope to recover Mesopotamia, Palestine etc, with the help of the Germans but they also expect to get portions of the Caucasus and to enter into an alliance with such a state as Georgia. In fact they seem really to believe in the possibilities of the Turanian movement. We feel therefore that we should not at this moment show undue eagerness to come to an arrangement with the Turks as we may appear to be competing with the negotiations at Brest-Litovsk." 23

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19. War Cabinet 200a, 31 July 1917, CAB23/13. The minutes contain no elaboration on this.
20. ibid.; see also Foreign Relations of the US, 1918, Supplement I, vol.I, The Charge in Great Britain (Laughlin) to the S of S, 7 Oct.18, p.340.
21. Balfour to Beaverbrook, 9 August 1918, F.O.800/206. Compare however P.H.Kerr (to Balfour), Notes on Present Position of Turkey, 19 March 1918, ibid. According to Kerr the authorised terms had been due to a misunderstanding falsely transmitted as the independence of Armenia

In the light of Maude's and Marshall's military successes in Mesopotamia, where the Ramadi Ridge had been taken,[24] Sammarah been captured in September[25] and the offensive plans of the Turks had broken down,[26] as well as that of the capture of Jerusalem on December 9th by Allenby,[27] Britain certainly had no need to sue for peace. On the contrary, the new instructions to Allenby,[28] and Smuts' departure for Egypt to confer with Marshall and Allenby on the best co-ordination and use of all resources,[29] were to bring about a most vigorous prosecution of the war against Turkey. These instructions showed beyond doubt that the Cabinet wished to eliminate Turkey from the war and achieve a quick kill.

Thanks to the interplay of grand strategy, Turkey's role had shifted and her defeat had become a prime military objective.

The train of thought in Whitehall, as notes by Cecil, Amery, Smuts and Kerr show,[30] was that unless Southern Russia was secured against German domination, in other words, rendered anti-German, Bri-

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22. ibid.; see also: Paul Guinn, British Strategy and Politics 1914-1918 Oxford 1965, p.277. Lord Beaverbrook, Men and Power 1917-1918, London, 1956, p.193 records Sir Basil Zaharoff as conducting the negotiations for the surrender of Turkey.
23. Sir Horace Rumbold to Balfour, 7 Jan.1918, F.O.800/206.
24. For the importance of Ramadi for the flood protection scheme see A.J.Barker, The Neglected War, pp.416-17. Its plain was also very important from the Turkish point of view. At the War Cabinet Meeting of 1 Oct.1917 the position in Mesopotamia was regarded as secure, but Indian re-inforcements were forcasted for 1918. CAB 23/4.
25. see J.A.Barker, op.cit., chapt. on Sammarrah pp.385-412; see also War Cabinet Meeting of 9 November 1917, CAB 23/4.
26. This was in early Dec.1917. By then the number of the British rifles was more than treble of that of the enemy. On the advice of the Imperial General Staff the Cabinet approved the transfer of an Anglo-Indian Division from Mesopotamia to Egypt, War Cabinet 290, 4 Dec.17, CAB 23/4.
27. The propaganda preparation provided that in view of the unique character of the city and of the many difficult political and diplomatic questions no flag sh. be hoisted, see CAB 23/4, 26Nov.1917.
28. War Cabinet 332, 28 Jan.1918, CAB 23/5.
29. ibid.

tain`s major war aim of destroying Germany`s Mittel-Europa scheme and destroying her domination of Turkey would have to be given up,- a prospect which spelt defeat in the East.

As for Turkey, her removal from the war would ensure the vital communications of the Middle Eastern and the Mediterranean forces with those in Southern Russia and the Caucasus. Apart from detaching Turkey proper from German domination, elimination of Turkey would also, in the first instance, liberate the Armenian and Arab regions from Turkish control.

Obviously all three objectives were closely interlinked. However, their attainment depended, as Amery drove home to Lloyd George, on a rapid offensive against Damascus and Mosul which should make it "impossible for the slowly arriving German reinforcements ever to restore the balance".[31] Writing of Mosul Amery underlined the importance

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30. Robert Cecil to Balfour, 28 Dec.1917, F.O.800/207. In referring to the pronouncement of the Austrian Foreign Minister Czernin he wrote: "On the whole my provisional conclusion is that we should avoid if possible entering into negotiations now. But we should make every possible effort not to lose control of South Russia as a mere rejection of Czernin`s terms would certainly do. We should therefore... ask for further details...intimating that we regarded the proposals as at present stated as a trap." In addition, the letter affords an interesting spectrum of hopes and fears.Cecil doubted whether the Italians would go on fighting. Referring to France,. he wrote:"I think it very doubtful if the French will (fight). Clemenceau cannot last for more than six months. When he goes he will be succeeded by a government - perhaps headed by Briand - in which the Socialists will be the prominent force".This view was several months later refuted by the Report on the Political Situation in France for the month of May,see F.O.800/207, War Cabinet,G.T.4867, Supreme War Council Versailles.
About Germany Cecil wrote:"Disarmament is, I believe, a fraud. Delbrück has recently written an article to show that disarmament is quite safe for Germany since she will always be able to arm more quickly than her heighbours and this is true. If a German military defeat is impossible should we go on on the chance of an economic victory? Will not Germany be able to revictual herself from Russia? Is there any real chance of a German revolution?"

of its capture for opening up communications with Armenia, yet at the same time stressed the extremely difficult transport problems between Bagdad and Mosul and further north to Armenia.[32] Referring to the forth coming hot summer, he therefore pointed out the alternative of concentrating all effort on Allenby's advance rather than taking and holding Mosul. He also drew attention to the possibility of opening up communications with South Russia through Vladivostok, as well as to the convenience of a peace with Turkey that secured the free passage of the Dardanelles.

On the whole, Amery's suggestions played an important role in the Cabinet discussions, during which the question of the possible co-operation of Japanese ground forces in the Mesopotamian campaign again came to the fore. Finally this idea was buried, and the Dunsterforce mission took shape.[33]

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As the thought of using Japanese re-inforcements well illustrates the narrowness of the imperial aims lying behind the Mesopotamian campaign, the decision about their use merits a long parenthesis. The co-operation of Japanese forces up to a strength of two divisions had been discussed as early as October 1916, when the first advance on Bagdad ran the risk of cancellation because of insufficient troops.

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30 contd., For Amery see: Amery to Lloyd George, Private,12 Jan.1918, Lloyd George Papers, F/2/1/11,The Turkish and South Russian Problem. For Smuts see:Smuts to Lloyd George,14 March 1918 ibid.F/45/9/10. For Kerr see, Notes on Present Position of Turkey,19 March 1918, F.O.800/206.

31.see 30.Amery to Lloyd George,12 Jan.1918.

32.ibid.;see also A.J.Barker,op.cit.,p.417.

33.ibid.

By then the Gallipoli campaign was on its last legs.[34] Yet the Japanese might, though available was kept out at sea, cruising for the Entente in the Mediterranean.

Less than a year later the turmoil in Russia cast serious doubts on the rliability of General Baratoff`s Russian columns in Armenia and on the right flank of Maude`s advance. Henry Wilson had pointed out to the Cabinet in May, that the forward military policy in Palestine and Mesopotamia had been advised on the assumption that Russian co-operation would be forthcoming.[35] By the end of September, however, any Russian assistance seemed hopeless. Things went from bad to worse when the Indian Government sounded the alarm about a possible Turkish attack through Persia.[36] Indeed, encouraged by the departure from Germany of Falkenhayn together with troops and planes for retaking Bagdad, the Turks were engaged in a menacing build-up for their forthcoming offensive.[37]

This threat once more strengthened the now tenuous bonds with Russia, and for weeks British operations were vigorously assisted by Russian cooperators.[38] Yet by mid-December the Russian commander in the Caucasus was said to have put forward proposals for an armistice with the enemy.[39] Who but Asiatic troops could fill the gap thus left in the

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34. A.J.Barker,op.cit.,p.117. see also p.447.Barker,however,does not refer to the renewed discussion of the co-operation of Japanese troops Of course, there was no cogent connection between the rejection of Japanese troops and the recruitment of Dunsterville`s forces.
35. CAB 23/13, War Cabinet Meeting of 9 May 1917.
36. CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 238, 24 Sept. 1917.
37. CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 230, 10 Sept. 1917, it was said that four divisions of German infantry with aerial squadrans and artillery had left Dresden for Constantinople and were destined for Bagdad.
38. CAB 23/4, Cabinet Meeting of 5 Dec.1917.
38. ibid. War Cabinet 295, 10 Dec.1917.

Eastern theatre of war. From the United States, who had entered the European War on April 6th,1917, no effective assistance, or relief on the Western Front, could be expected before 1919.[40]

But the Cabinet was divided over the employment of Japanese troops in Mesopotamia. The strongest objections came from Montagu, the Secretary of State for India. As it turned out the India Office view prevailed over those of Curzon, Milner and finally Balfour.

The India Office had taken the same stand when, earlier in September, the employment of Chinese troops against the Turks in Aden and in Egypt had been discussed. Its strong objections were shared by the Middle Eastern Committee. The employment of Chinese troops was found to induce the Japanese to make similar claims to representation in the fighting forces. As to the implications Montagu wrote to Hankey:

> "We would rather no action was taken against the Turks at Aden than that Chinese troops should be employed there... worse effect upon our prestige, not only among Arabs but among Indian troops.
>
> We must not risk its being said in Asia that the British cannot do without the assistance of the Chinese or the Japanese, and this leads me to observe that if for political reasons the Chinese are represented in our fighting forces, the Japanese will probably make a similar claim.
>
> All the facts which reach me show that the Japanese have great ambitions as the saviours of Asia and among them the policy of Asia for the Asiatics is gaining an increasing hold. They now practically dictate Chinese policy.
>
> It may well be said that our military needs are so desparate that all such considerations as these must be sacrificed to the conquest of the common enemy. I shall be prepared to attach due weight to this argument when I learn that the employment of Chinese is of real military importance, and even then I shall implore the Cabinet to employ them let us say in Russia, but not with Indian troops nor in Mohammedan countries." 41

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40. Estimate made by Lloyd George, see War Cabinet 247b, 11Oct.17, CAB23/13
41. Montagu to Hankey, 20 Sept.1917, F.O.800/199, see also conclusion 7 of War Cabinet 234, 17 Sept.1917.

When Balfour, Curzon and Milner, on September 24th, discussed the proposed invitation to Japan to send a small force to co-operate with the Anglo-Indian Expedition Force in Mesopotamia, no notice seems to have been taken of Montagu's objections. It seems that he was not even consulted, for on the following day Balfour thought it necessary to draw Curzon's attention to this omission, and to Montagu's objections, of which he knew. Balfour assured Curzon that he still held the view that "broadly speaking there was no F.O. objection to such a course".[42] These exchanges suggest that all three must have been agreed on its desirability. Balfour seems to have been determined to preclude a confrontation between Curzon and Milner on the one hand and Montagu on the other. Accordingly he advised the two former to make good the "over sight" of the previous day. In general, as we shall see later, there were at that time enough explosive topics dividing Curzon and Montagu.

The "triumvirate" [43] remained agreed about the matter for another month. In the meantime more objections cropped up from the India Office, some of them, very downright, such as:

> "the probability of the Japanese requiring some quid pro quo in respect of either territorial or commercial concessions, which might be embarrassing."[44]

While Curzon was setting the pros neatly against the cons before any action should be taken, Lloyd George shoved sign of impatience and reported that M.Painlevè, his French colleague, would welcome an invitation to the Japanese. Lloyd George showed his disinterest in imperial

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42. Balfour to Curzon, 25 September 1917, F.O.800/199.
43. see p.91.
44. CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 242, 1 Oct.1917. Montagu himself was not present at the meeting, but Curzon quoted from a letter he had received from him.

susceptibilities in Asia. The Entente was nearer to the forefront of his mind, as was the growing menace of Bolshevism:

> "Bolshevik doctrines were beginning to spread even in this country." 45

His instinct was to pooh-pooh Balfour's concern lest the introduction of the Japanese in Eastern Siberia would involve war with the Bolshevik Government, - a prospect that Britain must be prepared to face.[46]

In the Middle East the India Office view prevailed. The solely British-Indian character of the campaign was successfully safeguarded. Strategically the attention of the Mesopotamian force was directed towards North Western Persia[47] while the fire-superiority of the force served the thrust of the Palestine Campaign into the heart of Syria.[48] The final rejection of Japanese assistance to some extent restored Middle Eastern perspective to the military campaign.

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For Mosul there was a lull in front of Marshal

might. The events of the sudden autumn advance upon Mosul and the bold capture of the city shortly after the Turkish armistice had been negotiated, have been recorded both by those involved in the campaign

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45. CAB 23/13, War Cabinet 330A, 24 January 1918.
46. For the general aspect of the Japanese and American susceptibilities in that area see Paul Guinn, op.cit.,pp.310-11.
47. cf. Henry Wilson's statement in the Cabinet on 4 March 1918:"As regards the position in North Western Persia, he (Wilson) considered that General Marshall should be quite able to deal with this even after sending a division to Palestine. He could, moreover, be reinforced in an emergency by some of the new battalions from India". War Cabinet 358a CAB 23/13.

and by many indefatigable historians. By contrast, the motives underlying this last step of the Mesopotamian campaign have been passed over in silence in all the memoirs,[49] and are related with vagueness, and even denial, in historical accounts of what happened. The fact is that monopolistic aims, and zeal to acquire the oil-bearing regions were prime motives of this last step of the Mesopotamian Campaign.

Explanation of the obscurity is many-sided.[50] Strategically, the capture of Mosul had been a pawn in the alternative moves whereby Amery`s grand strategy of early January sought to open up communication with Armenia and South Russia.[51] Further, Mosul had been the gate of entry for the Turco-German forces threatening Bagdad; its closure was a desirable objective for British commanders in Mesopotamia.[52] However, the menace had disappeared without s showdown over Mosul. Yet a coup de grace against the Turk at Mosul seemed to dovetail well with the stroke being delivered by Allenby in Syria.[53] Again, the ridges north of Mosul commended themselves as a secure northern border for the open plains of Iraq;[54] but in August 1918, when the moment for action

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48. One division together with 4 batteries of 6 in. howitzers were transferred from Mesopotamia to Palestine. CAB 23/13 War Cabinet 360a. As to the campaign from a broader standpoint Lloyd George explained: "the P.M. said he would like to have the proposed campaign considered from a broader standpoint. If we imagined ourselves negotiating at the Peace Conference, what would be the better value of our present position compared with our present position with Damascus added as a further pawn? Was it worth the sacrifice of two or three hundred thousand tons of shipping? We might find it possible if Damascus were in our possession to persuade the French to be content with something less than the whole of Alsace-Lorraine in return for compensation in Syria. Fortunately the party in France which was most eager to recover Alsace Lorraine was also eager to extend French influence in Syria." War Cabinet 351A, 21 Febr. 1918, CAB 23/13.

49. cf. in particular: A.T. Wilson, Loyalties, Mesopotamia 1917-1920, Vol. II, London, 1931, p.10. Marshall`s orders are given almost literally with the exception of the mention made of the oil-bearing regions. The same applies to the version given by L.S. Amery, My Political Life, II, p.169; for Marshall`s full orders see p.72.

came, there was no plan for a united Iraq. Mosul still belonged to the sphere assigned to the French by the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Although that agreement was for complex reasons regarded as obsolescent by the influential Eastern Committee, the French Government, despite some hard lobbying by Mark Sykes, insisted on its validity.[55] In contrast, Lloyd George had already made it clear to his Cabinet, that he would in the case of Syria use the right of conquest to reopen the whole question of the bargain made with France.

Lloyd George's attitude offered scope for self-interested British pressure groups. At the end of July and throughout the ensuing weeks, when there was no military advantage in pushing forward in Mesopotamia, it was the oil-interests and the concern of the Admiralty for the future oil situation of the Empire that exerted severest pressure upon the Cabinet.

The ball started rolling when approaches were made to Hankey "by people with knowledge of oil production". They told him "privately" that the oil situation of the future was very uncertain and that the USA would presumely consume all the oil that they themselves produced, and a good deal of the Mexican production as well. Hankey was further told that the largest potential oilfields then known were situated in Persia and Mesopotamia and that they included oilfields lying as far north as Mosul.

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50. Officials at the time were obviously bound to keep strict secrecy. Even Curzon's letters to the Times in later years (see Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit.,p.103) were white lies and a fake, as has now become evident from the newly opened files of the PRO.Most documents referring to oil were marked Very Secret, usually - and in contrast to other documents - written in red ink.
51. see p.60.
52. cf. A.J.Barker,op.cit.,p.415.

Although Hankey does not identify the people who approached him, except to say that they had knowledge of oil-production, it is likely that they were in some way in contact with the Admiralty. For Mosul apart, their information was elaborated in a very important memorandum on the Petroleum Situation in the British Empire that had been written by Admiral Sir Edmond Slade.[56] Further Hankey's next steps indicate that they directed his requests for more information to the Admiralty. For when he wrote off to Sir Eric Geddes, the First Lord of the Admiralty, on July 30th, he received in reply Slade's Memorandum which bore the date of the previous day. As this was an elaborate paper well supported by comprehensive statistics it must have been in careful preparation some time.

The approach to Hankey was well timed, as Balfour was due to make a declaration on War Aims at a forthcoming Cabinet Meeting. Now Slade's paper, although it stressed the importance of a link between the Persian and the Mesopotamian oilfields, did not refer to the potential oilfields of Mosul. However, these played an important role in Hankey's private talk with his informants, and since Hankey, in his letter to Geddes, had submitted a plan for the future campaign in Mesopotamia, his informants must have been conversant with the military situation in Mesopotamia.

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53.ibid.p.455.
54.see Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit.,p.103.
55.see pp.132-3.
56.Paper by Admiral Sir Edmond Slade on the Petroleum Situation in the British Empire, 29 July 1918, CAB 21/119. The paper will be dealt with at greater length in the chapter on oil. see pp.166-170.

In his letter to Geddes Hankey referred to these approaches and then went on:

> "Now I do not know whether this information is correct, and so far as I know the Admiralty are the only Department who are likely to know. If, however, it is correct, it appears to me to have a most important bearing on two questions which are about to be considered by the Imperial War Cabinet and the Committee of Prime Ministers respectively, namely,-
>
> (1)The question of War Aims, and
>
> (2)The question of the Future Campaign.
>
> As regards War Aims, if this information is correct, the retention of the oil-bearing regions in Mesopotamia and Persia in British hands, as well as a proper strategic boundary to cover them, would appear to be a first-class British war aim. I do not remember, however, that it has appeared as such in any document that I have ever seen.
>
> As regards the future campaign, it would appear desirable that before we come to discuss peace, we should obtain possession of all the oil-bearing regions in Mesopotamia and Southern Persia, wherever they may be. By this time you will have read the Chief of the Staff's paper on the Future Campaign, and you will have seen that both Palestine and Mesopotamia have rather become "dead ends", because of the new line of penetration to the East which the enemy has opened up through the Caucasus towards the Caspian and from thence through Turkestan or Persia towards India. The acquisition of further oil-bearing country, however, might make it worth while for us to push on in Mesopotamia notwithstanding its comparatively minor importance from a purely strategical point of view.
>
> May I suggest privately for your consideration that you should have these matters looked into at the Admiralty? The matter is of the utmost urgency, as I think the discussions both on War Aims and the Future Military Policy, will come on in a day or two." 57

Hankey, of course, must have known of the oil, including that round Mosul, for he had been a member of the De Bunsen Committee.[58] However, as the oil-fields round Mosul were not covered in Slade's paper of the 29th, Hankey forthwith called on Slade for further information, and for confirmation of what he had been told about Mosul.[59] Slade not only

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57.Hankey to Geddes, 30 July 1918, CAB 21/119.
58.see p. 170.
59.see Hankey's letter to Balfour, 1 August 1918, Secret, CAB 21/119.

confirmed his news but also showed Hankey a map on which the oil-fields were marked.[60] Hankey requested him to forward through the Admiralty a further short memorandum and the map giving the evidence as to oil deposits in Mesopotamia north of the line then held by the Expeditionary force. As there was a Cabinet meeting next day, Hankey wrote at once to Balfour and Lloyd George without awaiting the additional memorandum, which, incidentally, he received on day before the meeting.

As the two letters reveal not only the importance that was attached to the Mosul oil-fields and the actual "military stagnation" of the campaign in Mesopotamia, but also the lines along which opinion on the subject developed, relevant extracts from the two letters are worth recording. The attention of both Hankey's addressees was drawn to Slade's first paper, and to the further information received from him, Hankey wrote to Balfour that it would be confirmed by a forthcoming memorandum:

> "...As I understand the matter, oil in the next war will occupy the place of coal in the present war, or at least a parallel place to coal. The only big potential supply that we can get under British control is the Persian and Mesopotamian supply. The point where you come in is that the control over these oil supplies becomes a first class British War Aim. I write to urge that in your statement to the Imperial War Cabinet you should rub this in. You will do it much better than the Admiralty will, and as an ex-First Lord you have a greater interest in it than most.
>
> Admiral Slade tells me that there are important oil deposits in Mesopotamia north of our present line. I have asked him to let the War Cabinet have any evidence as to the real importance of these deposits, as they might have an important influence on future military operations, but this is another side of the question." 61

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60. see letter from Hankey to Prime Minister, 1 August 1918, Very Secret, Important, CAB 21/119.
61. see 59.

In his letter to Lloyd George of the same date, Hankey referred particularly to the recent assessments made by the General Staff on the state of the Mesopotamian Campaign. He continued:

> "there is no <u>military</u> advantage in pushing forward in Mesopotamia. Briefly the argument is that the German gun is now aimed at India, across the Caspian Sea, instead of, as formerly down the Bagdad railway. From Mesopotamia we cannot affect their advance across the Caspian.
>
> Admiral Slade's paper, however, and more particularly the map which he has shown me, suggest that there may be reasons other than purely military for pushing on in Mesopotamia where the British have an enormous preponderance of force. Would it not be an advantage, before the end of the war, to secure the valuable oil wells in Messopotamia?" 62

At the Cabinet meeting next day, the matter was, on the proposal of Walter Long, Secretary of State for the Colonies, referred for further consideration to Lord Harcourt's Petroleum Imperial Policy Committee.[63]

Meantime the Cabinet was preoccupied with the series of heavy German offensives on the Western Front. In Mesopotamia, the British Army abstained from any military activity during the hot season. But as the day of Balfour's Statement on War Aims approached[64] the question of the oil-bearing regions cropped up again among its lobbyers.

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62. see 60.; As to <u>Slade's 2nd Memorandum of August 2nd</u> the relevant passages on Mosul read:"The most northern indication of oil with which this paper deals is that at Zakha, about 60 miles N.N.W. of Mosul. It is an important seepage worked by natives and there are said to be 30 hand dug pits from which an oil of good quality of about 9 specific gravity is obtained.The group of seepages in the neighbourhood of El Gayara about 50 miles south of Mosul are reported to be the most important of all in this region. They are leased to natives from the Turkish Crown...Oil is being produced in moderate quantities and has been so produced for ages. It is of good quality with about 8 specific gravity. Oil indications occur on both banks of the Tigris between this place and El Fatha, 50 miles further down the river. The seepagesthere are stated to be very important". Slade's remarks were, according to himself, based on German reports of the pre-war years and on more recent reports by geologist sent by the A.P.O.C. to examine some of the seepages on behalf of the Military Authorities. CAB 21/119, G.T.5313, 2 August 1918.

63. CAB 21/119 Extract from Imperial War Cabinet 29, 2 August 1918.

Balfour had previously told Hankey that he regarded the acquisition of the oil-bearing regions as a "purely Imperialist War Aim".[65] But Hankey continued to try and convert him. The day before the statement was due he mixed the oil and water of the Upper Mesopotamian regions into a potion for the idealist. He wrote:

> "it appears to me even viewed from the point of view of the idealist, that it is almost unavoidable that we should acquire the Northern regions of Mesopotamia...neither President Wilson nor any one else will wish to place the vast regions of Mesopotamia bordering the Tigris and Euphrates again under Turkish control...
>
> The question I ask, therefore, is as to whether it is not of great importance to push forward in Mesopotamia at least as far as the Lesser Zab, or as far as is necessary to secure a proper supply of water. Incidentally this would give us most of the oil-bearing regions..." 66

On October 2nd, Hankey's ceaseless efforts at last began to bear fruit. Marshall was requested by the War Office to study the note that follows; as it ended with a reminder that any action to be effective must be initiated without delay, he was on his way to Mosul by mid-October:

> "The Turks have been placed in a position of extreme difficulty by the victories in Palestine and the collapse of Bulgaria, and a request from them for cessation of hostilities in the near future may result. It is advisable in these circumstances that as much ground as possible should be gained up the Tigris. Such action is important not only for political reasons but also to occupy as large a portion of the oil-bearing regions as possible. At the same time, the work on the L.of C. to the Caspian should not be retarded in any way as the development of this route is looked upon as of primary importance, In view of the possibility that General Allenby's Cavalry may be pushed on northwards towards Aleppo, the possibility of making a Cavalry raid by a small force up the Euphrates with a view to assisting his operations should be studied by you."67

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64. 13 August 1918.
65. Hankey to Balfour, 12 August 1918, Personal and Secret, CAB 21/119.
66. ibid.
67. War Office to G.O.C. in C., G.H.Q., Mesopotamia, 2 Oct. 1918, Secret Ope-

The early cessation of hostilities with Turkey had become so desirable an object that Marshall's advance along the Tigris developed into a "race" against time. Indeed, since his object was extensive occupation rather than defeat of the Turks, peace constituted a menace for the Mesopotamian campaign. As it proceeded, the importance of capturing Mosul itself caused slight difference of opinion in the Cabinet. Nobody contemplated renouncing claim to the city; there was general agreement that it must in any case be taken away from Turkey.[68] But some concluded that in view of the urgency of knocking Turkéy out of war it was more appropriate to secure the surrender of the city by means of an armistice or a peace stipulation, whereas others preferred taking it by military action despite any consequent prolongation of the war. This argument was fought out mainly between Lloyd George and Curzon.[69] Just as in the case of Japanese co-operation, the Eastern was pitted against the "European" view.[70] Again it was the Eastern view that prevailed. This decision was largely due to the settlement of the intricate question of whether a peace or merely an armistice should be concluded with Turkey.[71] In the end, the pause entailed by these considerations gave Marshal precious time in his advance on Mosul.

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68. Lloyd George, and Milner with him hoped that by rolling up Germany from the East Britain by imposing a severer armistice upon Germany which should include the surrender of the High Fleet would be absolved from the loss of naval might that would be entailed had she to fight the German High Fleet in order to finish the war. cf. Cabinet Minutes of meetings of October 10th and 22nd, 1918, CAB 23/14.
69. see Curzon to Lloyd George, 23 Oct. 1918, Private, Lloyd George Papers F/11/9/19. Curzon accused the P.M. and Milner of having stampeded the Cabinet "into jettisoning practically the whole of our terms vis-a-vis of Turkey for the sake of getting through the Dardanelles..."
70. In the Cabinet Meeting of 25 Oct. Lloyd George indeed reproached Curzon indirectly with taking a "purely Turkish or Eastern view". CAB 23/14, War Cabinet 491 A.

By October 21st, Marshall, although pushing as fast as he could towards Mosul, was still about 140 miles away from the city.[72] Three days later Allenby was still 46 miles from Aleppo, while Marshall was still further away from Mosul. Both were once more urged to press on and occupy the two cities.[73]

Finally, on 30th October, the armistice was signed at Mudros.[74] When Admiral Calthrop[75] sailed into the Straits the British forces in Mesopotamia were still advancing upon Mosul. Active hostilities had been in progress not far south of the town at the very moment when the armistice was signed. Its terms provided, however, a clause whereby Marshall and his forces were enabled to slip into the town. As Churchill put it later "the status quo was to be maintained, further advance of our troops being permissible only in so far as it might be necessary for the purpose of safeguarding our existing military position".[76]

Once the Trojan Horse had been propelled into the market place of Mosul, the Turks, of course, stood no further chance of retaining town or vilayet.

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71. Besides the Cabinet Minutes of the first half of October see on this aspect letter from Balfour to Lord Beaverbrook of 21 Sept.1918 also of 9 August 1918, F.O.800/206.
72. Statement by Henry Wilson in Cabinet Meeting of 21 Oct. CAB 23/14.
73. Cabinet Meeting of 24 Oct.1918,CAB 23/14. In a private letter of the previous day Curzon had pressed Lloyd George for occupying Mosul, see Lloyd George Papers, F/11/9/19.
74. As for the Turkish overtures through Townshand, on 20th October, at Mitylene see: A.J.Barker, Townshend of Kut,pp.215-16,London,1967.
75. The French had been pressing for Franchet dEspercy as chief negotiator in the armistice. On this whole aspect see the elaborate letter from Lloyd George to Clemenceau,15 October 1918, F.O.800/206.
76. The Question of Mosul, Memorandum by Churchill, M.E.D.,10 Nov.1922, C.O. 730/27.For more detail cf. A.J.Barker, The Neglected War,p.456.

## 2. The British Glimpse of a Middle East Empire

The making of British war-time policy in the Middle East has rightly been characterized as the undertaking by a "hydra-headed political organism".[1] The purpose of the first epithet was to explain the many conflicting views and recurring tensions between Whitehall, Cairo and Simla that impeded the decision making process. In one case, Mark Sykes is said to have enlisted at least eighteen various authorities with a say in a Middle Eastern issue.[2]

Given this cumbersome procedure it is well to describe some of the more energetic feet that turned the treadmill before scrutinising the origin and development of the Iraq mandate. Yet, since the mandate concept was correlated with the concept of a Middle East Empire and since the two concepts signified accord rather than discord, it is best first to examine the co-operative efforts of the other "dissenting" bodies. These efforts centred on the creation of a Middle East Empire.

This Empire made its appearance, sporadically, in the discussions of the committees on the fringe of the War Cabinet which designed the policy for Iraq. Although it remained essentially an apparition, there was nevertheless an ebb and flow in the substance of this Imperial dream.

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1. Jukka Nevakivi, Britain, France and the Arab Middle East 1914-1920, London 1968, p.18.
2. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit., pp.35-36,47.

At its zenith, it was a viceroyalty of the Middle East with Cairo as its seat of power and, at another moment, a combined Indian-Middle Eastern Empire. In the end, the only vestige of it was the Middle East (Sub-) Department at the Colonial Office.

Since the fulfilment of these ideas hinged on the question of the proper representation of the new dependencies in Whitehall, and since the various committees, particularly the Eastern Committee in which these edifices were discussed, were themselves rapidly developing into new governmental forms of Imperial representation and rule, endless friction was bound to occur between the committees, which usually had ill-defined terms of reference, and the traditional departments endowed with orderly procedures. As these departments were usually represented within the committees concerned by their Secretary or his Assistant Secretary the very committee was a field of battle.

In the case of the Eastern Committee, this process by no means weakened but rather strengthened its authority and efficiency. For under the pressure of constant criticism, Curzon, the chairman of the committee, was compelled to back its legitimacy. He adopted some forms of departmental organisation, such as a secretariat for preparing the weekly papers for each meeting.

In general, the glimpses of a Middle East Empire and the account of the success and failure of temporary new forms of Imperial rule not only sheds light on the process of decision making, but also gives an indication of the Imperial content of the various paper-designs for the Middle East. From this angle the prospects of mandatory

rule can to some extent be estimated.

The pivot on which the "Middle Eastern question"[3] turned was how all the affairs of the British Middle East[4] could be brought under a central body of control. The snag was the incompatibility between the Government of India`s claim for more control but less responsibility, the Fashoda spirit of both the Arab Bureau at Cairo and the Curzon crew at Whitehall, and, thirdly the Entente view as broached mainly by Mark Sykes. A fourth discordant element was, to use Mark Sykes`s words,"the Foreign Office pro-Turk gang: Parker, Tyrrel,Mallet and Co".[5] However for the Middle East minus Turkey proper it was largely a three-cornered contest, although Mark Sykes and D.G.Hogarth of the Arab Bureau often found themselves together in a trench opposite the lines held by the Government of India.

A further complication bedevilled the issue. This was the Treasury view. Once the contestants began to agree on the creation of a Department for the entire Middle East there cropped up the stipulation that this must have its own financial vote and be charged with the composite financial expenditure for all the regions under its sway. A final side-issue was how cheaply those regions and the department could be run.

Because of the avalanche-like development of the issue, and the replacing of individual contestants, as well as some shifts of initiative, this Middle East question is best dealt with in three main

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3.This is how Curzon himself styled the whole question; see p.91.
4.This includes all the spheres that were at the time already under, or likely to come under, English and Anglo-Indian control combined.
5.Mark Sykes to Gilbert Clayton, 22 July 1917, Sykes Papers 69. Brig.--Gen. Clayton was at the time Chief Political Officer under Allenby for Palestine.

stages. The first coincides with the era of the Mesopotamian Administration Committee (March 1917 to August 1917); the second stage is that of the Middle East Committee and its successor the Eastern Committee (August 1917 to 1919); the third and final stage (1919 to 1921) sheds light on the actual creation of the Middle East Department and the role which Winston Churchill played in its formation.

Shortly after the capture of Bagdad in March 1917 the War Cabinet set up the Mesopotamia Administration Committee. It lasted until mid-July. The objects of the Committee were " to sécure co-ordination between the various authorities concerned with the administration of Mesopotamia and to construct a new regime in that country".[6] But since those questions were from the beginning bound up with the cardinal issue of India's future role in Mesopotamia and Arabia, other questions affecting Aden, the Hejaz, the interior of Arabia and an eventual confederacy of all the Arab units were referred to it as well.

In the chair was Earl Curzon; Viscount Milner was there as Minister without portfolio. The Foreign Office was represented by Lord Hardinge, George Clerk and R.W.Graham. From the India Office came its Secretary of State Austen Chamberlain and a competent band of civil servants, T.W.Holderness, Arthur Hirtzel, J.E.Shuckburgh and Lieut.-Gen. H.V.Cox. Also on its panel was Sir Henry McMahon. Major C.L.Storr acted as Secretary.

Since it dealt, in principle, with the development of administration and the construction of a new regime in Mesopotamia, the Committee's work was largely confined to planning. Although it indulged

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6. Curzon to the Middle East Committee, 12th January 1918, CAB 27/23 War Cabinet, Middle East Committee, Secret, 11th Minutes (Final).

in the introduction of some preparatory measures, for instance, the recruitment of personnel from the Sudan rather than from the Indian Civil Service[7]; it had no certainty about about final application of administrative designs. The two main reasons for its uncertainty were that the Hague Convention precluded annexation during the war[8] and that some territory might be restored to Turkey in the event of a satisfactory separate peace. Consequently, the smouldering quarrel between the Government of India and Whitehall over the Persian Gulf remained unresolved.

Annexation of the Basra Vilayet by Great Britain was the catch that Lord Chelmsford, the Viceroy of India, was determined to net. From there he intended to complete India's control along the Persian Gulf and at all costs to prevent Mesopotamia from becoming a separate administrative sphere of its own and a third nucleus in the Middle East. As he put it:

> "Someone will have to control the Gulf; control could scarcely be vested in a new Administration struggling to find its feet, and a dual control, assuming an independent Basra Administration, is obviously to be deprecated. The control of the Gulf must then remain with India, and, if friction is to be avoided, it seems to me inevitable that India, along wi with the control of the Gulf, must control Basrah." 9

However, as the Government of India had not the financial means to launch direct administration by Indians in Mesopotamia and because a rival authority in Mesopotamia might jeopardise India's control over the Gulf, Chelmsford was determined to administer Mesopotamia indirect-

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7. This was recommended by the M.A.C. on 8 May 1917, CAB 27/22, Minutes of 2nd Meeting. Two days later the Viceroy was informed to the effect that "Personnel both of higher branches and clerical establishments should be limited to immediate requirements, and should not ordinarily be drawn from India unless and until it has been ascertained that Egypt and the Sudan cannot supply them." CAB 27/22, G.T. 724.
8. This was stressed by A.Chamberlain at 2nd Meeting of M.A.C.

ly and to abandon any idea of a direct Indian administration:

> "I am not prepared to advise that India should in fact directly administer Mesopotamia. I should prefer an administration that was in large measure independent, subject only to control by India as regards its external relations and such matters as might involve India in military operations." 10

As the Government of India was vehemently opposed to the Cairo policy of stirring up local Arab nationalism and pan-Arab sentiment wherever this might further the British campaign against Turkey, the "large measure" of independence, which Chelmsford was allowing for, was a sham from the point of view of a progressive native administration. His conception was that the tribal system of government should remain intact, and the mudirs carry on their work though not under a qaymmaqam but under an Anglo-Indian inspector. In short, his policy was intended not to awaken the "sleeping dogs" but rather to ensure their sleep.

But the India Office and Whitehall were, in general, against any kind of loose administrative control by India over Mesopotamia. They were also profoundly sceptical about India's capacity to assume direct responsibility for Mesopotamia.As T.W.Holderness warned the committee:

> "Great things would be expected of the Indian Government by the civilised world, which for years has been fed on wonderful accounts of the potential riches of this wasted land." 11

In the same vein Arthur Hirtzel had written as early as March 1915:

> "The Power which detaches from Turkey regions with the history and the potentialities of Mesopotamia makes itself morally responsible to humanity and civilization for their reclamation and development." 12

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9.From Extract of Lord Chelmsford's Priv. Letter of 18 Oct.1916,CAB27/22
10. ibid.
11.Memorandum by T.W.Holderness on Chelmsford's letter,9 Jan.1917,ibid.
12.Notes by Sir A.Hirtzel on Chelmsford's letter of 30Dec.1916,CAB 27/22.

But how could Chelmsford's apprehension about the implications of any loss of Indian control over the Persian Gulf be set at rest? A special Sub-Committee of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee had pointed to "the desirability of placing the Arabian littoral of the Persian Gulf and Muscat under the political control of the Mesopotamian authorities rather than of the Government of India".[13] What attitude was taken by the India Office? Nobody denied the validity of Imperial and, in particular, Indian interests in the Persian Gulf. Obviously, the importance of guarding these was not rendered less by rejection of the way in which the Government of India proposed to do the job. For as Arthur Hirtzel put it in his note on Chelmsford's letter:

> "It is assumed that if Mesopotamia is not to be administered by India, a new dependency will be created which will include the whole of Arabia, Egypt and the Soudan - a unilingual and unicultural area, from Sollum to the Turco-Persian frontier. If this is n o t to be done, the argument for Indian administration will be much stronger, from the military as well as the civil point of view." 14

Here was a glimpse of a new Empire, and a preserve promising trouble! How was the mandate concept for Mesopotamia to fare in its context?

What the India Office view implied was that anything short of a compact Middle East dependency extending from Sollum to the Turco--Persian frontier would fail to reconcile the reclamation of Mesopotamia with the safeguarding of Imperial interests in the Persian Gulf. One anamolous result of this attitude was that the India Office joined not only in the "pan-Arab policy" of the Arab Bureau, associating it-

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13. Report of Sub-Committee, Secret, 27 March 1917, CAB 27/22 also in CAB 24/10 No.14 of the Report. On the Committee sat T.W.Holderness, Mark Sykes, McMahon, Hirtzel, Graham, Clerk, and Shuckburgh as Secretary.
14. Notes by Sir A.Hirtzel on Chelmsford's letter, see 12.

self with the Western Arabian view which was anathema to the Government of India, but also insisted on the strict observance of the pledges given to Hussein. In the eyes of the India Office, observance thereof spelt the successful integration of all Arab territories into the desired Middle East dependency. Further, their strict observance was also a guarantee, that no concessions detrimental to the British hold over Mesopotamia would be made in a separate peace with Turkey. Accordingly, Austen Chamberlain took great pains to further the Arab Movement by arranging for the transfer of Aden from India to Cairo and the War Office. He circulated his views in a secret note:

> "The Aden operations are part and parcel of the war against Turkey. It is generally admitted that our prolonged inactivity there has had the effect of deterring the Arab of Southern Arabia from openly espousing the cause of the King of the Hejaz, and so has been a great hindrance to the Arab movement which is our principal weapon of offence against the Turk in that theatre." 15

Fortunately, the Viceroy was for financial reasons not averse to the transfer.[16] It was the fate of Mesopotamia that remained unresolved. Some alarm was felt at the reasons which Curzon gave for separate treatment of the Bagdad Vilayet, as distinct from that of Basra. The implication that Bagdad might be restored to Turkey in the event of a separate peace, or that it might be bargained away in some other deal was as inacceptable to the India Office as was the development of Mesopotamia into a separate nucleus. It was in this context that Curzon was somewhat acidly reminded by Chamberlain of the pledges given to Hussein

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15. Aden, Secret, Circulated by the S of S for India, 29 June 1917, CAB 27/22

16. Besides Chamberlain's note see Chelmsford's letter of 18 Oct. 1916 and the observations thereon by Hirtzel and Holderness. Chamberlain suggested also that the G.O.C. Aden should be placed under Wingate.

McMahon complicated the argument by pointing out that "the terms in the Agreement with the King of the Hedjaz were not so rigid as Sir Arthur Hirtzel had indicated."[17] The Agreement with Hussein and the Maude Declaration did not seem to count for much in Curzon's impressive exposition to the Committee on May 8, 1917:

> "In their deliberations the Committee could not ignore the conception that the Allies might possibly come to terms with Turkey, and those terms might include the restoration to Turkey of the Bagdad Vilayet.For this reason he thought it was necessary that the future administration of Basrah and Baghdad must be treated separately. Further, in thinking of our Terms of Peace, it was necessary that our Allies should be considered. It was possible that we might have to pare off bits of Asia as well as of Africa, in order to effect the restoration of Allied territory in Europe now in German hands. For this reason, care must be taken that Sir Percy Cox did not start working upon the assumption that Baghdad and Basrah were necessarily to be amalgamated. There was a further consideration; supposing that our arms were victorious in Palestine, in order to retain our gains there and to get our Allies to agree to their retention by us, or if, as he had said, we saw an opportunity of making a separate and generally satisfactory peace with Turkey, we might have to surrender Baghdad." 18

His warning of possible plunges by Percy Cox pointed to another contingency that deeply worried the India Office.

In general, because of the long-drawn-out uncertainty and vagueness as to the fate of Mesopotamia, Whitehall and Simla grew even more intransigent and devious in their mutual relations. The friction was bound to increase because neither government could afford completely to ignore the other: London was dependent on India's human resources, and the Government of India was exercised by Whitehall's

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17.Minutes of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee, 2nd Meeting of May 8, 1917, CAB 27/22.

18.ibid.,p.4. For the Maude Declaration itself and some of its motives and reactions to it, see Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit.,pp.41-42.

Middle Eastern policy. Although there was in these circumstances only very small scope for practical political development in Mesopotamia, the steps in this direction bore many signs of the overriding conflict. This last was brought to a head by Sir Percy Cox.

On the surface his quarrel with General Maude,[19] who was his superior, confirms the well-known fact that generals and politicians have always been at loggerheads whenever war is waged. Yet deeper causes were at stake. Percy Cox, who was Maude's Chief Political Officer and a senior civil servant of 55 years of age, was an excellent administrator with the instincts of a diplomat, but was also a politician of the forward school. To him the extension of the British Empire into Mesopotamia was the fulfilment of wishes cherished throughout his long service in the Persian Gulf. Naturally, the introduction of direct administration in Mesopotamia appealed to him more than did the adoption of some permanent makeshift. From this point of view he adhered rather to the Whitehall view than to that of the Government of India. On the other hand, he inclined to Chelmsford's view that it would be impracticable to detach India completely from Mesopotamia.[20] The Viceroy was eager to provide Cox with administrative personnel to overhaul and run the defunct Turkish departments,[21] in particular, the revenue

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19. On Maude and his narrowness as far as administrative matters were concerned see Gertrude Bell's "obituary" in: Elizabeth Burgoyne, Gertrude Bell 1914-1926/From her Persoanl Letters, London, 1961, vol.II p.68.

20. On the whole Cox was not outspoken on this aspect, presumely because it would have placed him in an impossible position. Therefore when a political programme was submitted to him for comment which raised that issue as well he usually wrote "no comment needed from me" compared with which other laconical observations read " no comment or objection" or" I agree in principle" or "I agree". However he stressed repeatedly his loyalty to H.M.G. policy, which did not say much to the contrary.

department, the records of which had been destroyed and burnt by the withdrawing Turks. Obviously the Viceroy thought that this would be a good investment by India. Whitehall's attitude by contrast tended to put a brake on the reconstruction work.

Thus sandwiched between Whitehall and Simla, and still in the office of the Political Resident in the Persian Gulf, Cox was in a position which many a Roman pro-consul would have regarded with envy. Seen the other way about Cox's activity and schemes were too those of many a Roman proconsul, regarded with considerable apprehension on the Capitol. But Cox was determined to act.

In principle, he simply asked that the Committee should in its deliberations make use of the expertise of the man on the spot. He doubted whether Whitehall, far away as it was, was at all capable of designing a proper administrative system for Mesopotamia. As a good administrator he insisted further that the rudiments of the provisional administration under military law should be in line with the general principles of the administrative policy that were to follow after the war. Here again he doubted that the Committee for lack of the facts and the expertise on the spot, would ever be able to formulate a sound policy for the future. That he himself would not act as a mere purveyor of facts, but would also advance his own views was made clear when he submitted his observations on the political programme drawn up by the Committee and circulated for comment.[22] As to different treatment

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21. see Chelmsford's letter of 18 Oct.1916 and his note of 26 March 1917 which was repeated to Cox. In his earlier letter he had alleged that he had all the personnel available for taking over Mesopotamia, a statement which has to be doubted in view of the observations made by the special Sub-Committee on the M.A.C.

22. An abrideged summary was sent to him on 29March1917 and thereafter a full draft Report on 1 April1917.Cox replied on 7April,CAB 27/22.

of the two vilayets, he did not beat about the bush; he favoured an amalgamation of the two administrative systems and was opposed to a local ruler in Bagdad. Instead he put forward the idea of a combined Administrative Council for both vilayets presided over by a British High Commissioner. As to legal difference in local status, he observed that in practice this would not be felt on the spot:

> "I feel convinced, however, that no attempt to differentiate fundamentally in regard to working principles and details of two administrations will produce satisfactory results, and that they should be so similar as to be indistinguishable in the working. The difference would be one of technical political status and nomenclature which need not make itself felt on the spot. To attempt to run the two vilayets, which are from any point of view inseparable, on conflicting lines and inconsistent principles would, I am sure, result in great prejudice to all interests concerned." 23

Here was grist to the mill of those who suspected him of heading for an independent Mesopotamia, i.e. a third nucleus of British influence in the Middle East. For the time being, he did not raise the drawbacks of his position under General Maude. Instead he urged that a special Commission should proceed to Mesopotamia after the hot season "to examine the whole problem on the spot, and make detailed recommendations as basis on which future policy could be formulated".[24] Two months later, however, in threatening his immediate resignation, he demanded to be placed "in a stronger position vis-a-vis the Army Commander, and at any rate to be given right to send a regular report weekly or fortnightly to higher Authority to keep them au fait with current questions

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23. From Sir Percy Cox, 7 April 1917 (addressed to Government of India, repeated to India Office), CAB 27/22.
24. ibid., Cox's reply is also contained in CAB 24/10, G.T. 415.

and at large".[25] The position which he suggested was that of a High Commissioner, "nominally". But he made the acceptance of this rank dependent on the provision that it did not connote any more extensive introduction of Arab administration.[26]

Cox emerged from the struggle in a stronger position, as Civil Commissioner. Previously Maude had had the last word, and all decisions had lain with him. Now Cox could submit reports through the G.O.C., who had to pass them on to the India Office and could consult the Office on every matter through the same channel. There seems to have been a moment when Curzon toyed with the idea of letting Cox report directly to the Committee. But Chamberlain insisted that the higher authority to which Cox had asked to be allowed to report should be the India Office. This channel no doubt made it easier for him to prevent Cox from setting up an "administration of his own faute de mieux".[27]

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25. From Sir P.Cox to S of S, 25 May 1917, Very Confidentail,CAB 27/22; see also Minute by the Director of Military Intelligence on the Maude-Cox question, dated 10 August 1917 ibid.; the whole question was thrashed out in the Mesopotamia Administration Committee Meeting of 12 June 1917. Cox's reassurances that he had no ulterior ambitions show that he was aware of the apprehensions about his motives.
26. As to the Arab personnel of the regime which should be set up in Bagdad, the political programme of 29 March 1917 had read: "(3)Bagdad to be an Arab state with local ruler or Government under British Protectorate in everything but name.Thus it will have no relation with Foreign Powers, and Consuls will be accredited to H.M.G. (4)Behind Arab facade Bagdad to ge administered as an Arab Province by indigenous agency and in accordance with existing laws and institutions as far as possible. In particular (a)Iraq Code not to be used but local judicial system maintained as regards both law and personnel, only substituting Arab for Turk;(b) similarly with executive and administrative machinery, tribal system of Government, provincial and local councils,&c.,to be resuscitated and maintained; (c)present land revenue system not to be disturbed;(d)employment of Indians in any branch of administration to be strictly discountenanced as inconsistent with above principles, and no Asiatics from

While Chamberlain was averse to allowing Cox to launch even minor administrative improvements, Curzon cautiously steered an evolutionary course.[28] He argued that Cox's powers must be gradually extended as time went on. He had mixed motives. One objective of his gradualism was, undoubtedly, his desire to effect a smooth transition from the war-time administration to application of the post-war political programme. However, a no less important aim was his intention to maneuvre Mesopotamia gradually out of Indian waters. While Curzon seemed to be setting his sails for Cairo, Chamberlain was striking his in order to await clearer prospects for the Middle Eastern Empire in the light of events in Russai. Strangely, the Committee passed this overriding issue over in silence, and shirked the question of who should control the Persian Gulf. In the end one can only assume that Curzon did not like to run the risk of shipwreck between the Scylla of India's claim and the Charybdis of the London and Cairo challenge.

This self-imposed restraint disappeared with the old setting of the Mesopotamia Administration Committee. For when the scope ofthe Committee's duties was enlarged by the War Cabinet,[29] new problems appeared on the agenda, and new people moved in.[30]

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26. contd. outside to be employed unless of Persian or Arab descent or domicile. The same to apply as far as possible to Basra Vilayet." CAB 27/22. - Incidentally this programme was the first official scheme drawn up after the Maude Declaration, and it throws interesting light on its "secret" implications. However the application of this programme was shelved in accordance with the decision of the M.A.C. taken at its 2nd meeting of 8 May 1917 when the programme plus comments were reviewed. By then it was decided to assure Cox who had reported the lack of suitable indigenous personnel"...that H.M.G.had not in view the immediate establishment of an Arab administration on the lines indicated in the I.O. telegram of 29 March1917"
27. ibid., Curzon had stressed Cox's duty to report; M.A.C. 2nd meeting.
28. As to Cox see also pp.266-7.
29. CAB 23/4,War Cabinet 184, 13 July 1917.

The strengthening of the Foreign Office representation was significant. Both A.J.Balfour, the Secretary of State, and Robert Cecil, the Acting assistant Secretary were members. A.Chamberlain who had resigned as Secretary of State for India had been succeeded by the "very able" Edwin Montagu.[31] But it seems that the new Secretary of State for India never attended a meeting of the Middle East Committee until it was enlarged into the Eastern Committee.[32] Although the main reason for his absence was, no doubt, his work on Indian Reform and his journey to India later in the year, the fact that the Secretary of State for India left the floor to the Foreign Office was revealing in more ways than one. Both Montagu and Cecil were utterly dissatisfied with Committee rule in the Middle East. Instead, a Middle Eastern Department should be created. Even Curzon recognised the necessity for this, but he kept shelving the issue. But Cecil and Montagu practised no such restraint.

The question of how to run the Middle East was first thrown open by Cecil. In the circumstances it was a "plot" against Curzon's rule by committee. Significantly, it was not staged in the Middle East Committee, where Curzon as chairman could have thwarted it, but in the War Cabinet.

At the meeting of 14th September Cecil submitted a lengthy memorandum on Egypt drawn up by his brother Lord Edward Cecil, who was

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30. Milner relinquished his membership because of his many other duties. General Macdonogh entered as Military Representative. The I.O. was represented by Shuckburgh and Lord Islington. Later Mark Sykes acted as secretary, assisted by Ormsby-Gore.

31. A.J.Balfour to Lloyd George, 16 July 1917:"Montagu is very able: he knows a great deal about India: he would be very popular I am told with the Indians. Per contra he would be disliked by the Anglo-Indians partly because he is too much in their opinion of a reformer, partly because he is a Jew..." F.O.800/199.

32. For Montagu's work on Indian Reform see A.Chamberlain's private letter to Montagu of 8August 1917 with comments on it, F.O.800/207.

Financial Adviser to the Egyptian Government and had just arrived in Britain.[33] Edward Cecil felt that seen from the Egyptian end, a lack of organisation at the British end was evident," not so much in diplomatic as in administrative matters." The spark he lit spread like wildfire. The spectrum of Cabinet comment shows: lack of official channels of communication in administrative matters; next,no suitable Foreign or Colonial Office Department to deal with such aspects; next, the demands of the movement for democratic control over foreign policy.[34] Most of the criticism was added by Robert Cecil himself.

Undoubtedly, Britain's position in Egypt was seriously in danger. As D.G.Hogarth of the Arab Bureau at Cairo had reported in July:

> "Though all overt manifestations of sedition has been stamped down in Egypt, and the country is well in hand, it is at present potentially an enemy country. From the immediate entourage of the Sultan down through all the educated classes runs an almost unanimous wish that we may be compelled to withdraw at the end of the war, and all these classes of society are permeated by a spirit of conspiracy, with which we cannot deal effectively for lack of direct control of the administration." 35

But Cecil used the situation in Egypt merely as a launching pad for much wider criticism. He emphasised the role that Egypt should play as a "centre through which not merely Egypt, but the whole of Arabia and possibly Palestine and Mesopotamia would be managed".[36] And in stressing

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33. CAB 23/4 War Cabinet Minutes 233, 14 September 1917. Extract also in CAB 27/22.
34. This point was stressed by Robert Cecil as well, no wonder, for the Foreign Office Reform Movement, in which Cecil was active, and which again accounted for much of his critivism against departmental short comings but, in particular, against the ill-defined and arbitrary manner in which the M.E.C. and later the Eastern Committee worked, was sympathetic to those demands. on this aspect cf. Eustace Percy, Foreign Office Reform; a series of five essays, in: The New Europe, May 1919.(Editor and Proprietor, R.W.Seton-Watson).

the urgency of a timely solution about the proper running of the Middle East, he launched his attack on the Middle East Committee which he discarded as "too big to deal satisfactorily with the matter."[37] There was no better way of questioning the raison d'etre and the competence of that committee.

Yet Curzon caught the ball. He acknowledged that the memorandum raised the whole question " of what we are accustomed to call th Middle East question, and how it is to be dealt with".[38] Acknowledging the lack of a department that dealt with administrative matters in Egypt and elsewhere, he pointed to the desirability of an entirely new Department of State for the Middle East; this could, however, in no circumstances be completely separate from the Foreign Office.[39] Possibly he was trying to secure the Middle East for the Foreign Office in the event of his becoming Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

At the time, the Cecil plot was only partly successful. The Middle East Question was handed over for further investigation to a small Committee, composed of Balfour, in the chair, Curzon and Milner.[40] India was pushed out of the picture. The shift of the Middle East into the Foreign Office sphere was one of the main results.

Notwithstanding, the Middle East Committee continued to exist Of course, Cecil was annoyed about its survival and kept holding it up to ridicule, at least in his private correspondence. He even made an

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35.CAB 27/22, Note on the Situation in Egypt, 10 July 1917,Secret.
36.CAB 23/4 , War Cabinet 233, 14 September 1917.
37.ibid.
38.ibid.
39.ibid. This view was held by Curzon until 1921.
40.CAB 23/4, War Cabinet 233, 14 September 1917.

attempt to scotch it, together with the Persian Committee. But in vain; as he wrote early in January 1918 to Balfour soon after Lloyd George's famous War Aims Speech:

> "The existence of the Persian Committee seems to add a rather unnecessary entanglement to any possibility of action; but George (Nathaniel Curzon) holds strongly to it as he does to another body called the Middle East Committee; the function of which seems mainly to be to enable George Curzon and Mark Sykes to explain to each other how very little they know about the subject. An attempt by me to smother decorously both Committees was detected by George, and had to be abandoned. They are now to meet regularly on Saturday mornings; a time fixed with the hope that it may ultimately prove discouraging to their existence." 41

On the whole, Cecil's revelations had at least one salutary effect. For after receiving the considerations of the "triumvirate" the Middle East Committee took according to Montagu, "the first step in the right direction by proposing to eliminate the Government of India and the India Office from those parts of Arabia...which had previously been under their influence".[42] The idea now was that the Arabian Coast of the Persian Gulf, Muscat, the Hadramaut, and Aden should be placed under the Department that would eventually be responsible for Mesopotamia. That such a Department would, besides exercising close control over administrative matters, either be connected with the Foreign Office or else be charged with the Foreign Office functions in the Middle East, was generally accepted by everyone except the Government of India. But by the end of 1917 the Secretary of State for India was not quite so convinced that the elimination of India from the Middle East was as

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41. Cecil to Balfour, 8 Jan.1918, Balfour Papers, 49738, British Museum. In the same letter Cecil referred also to the efforts of organising South Russia, in which he personally took great interest. He also mentioned the Russian Committee, to the formation of which he had "unfortunately" had to agree.
42. Memorandum of 11 Jan.1921, Secret, Lloyd George Papers F/9/2/55.

right as he appeared to think in an India Office Memorandum of January 1921.[43]

Montagu's grand design for a Middle East Department provided for a close link between the Indian Empire and the new Middle East dependency as well as for the amalgamation of committee, ministry and department. He conceived this idea of a combined imperial organisation for India and the Middle East on his way to India in November 1917. During a short stay in Cairo, where he had to wait for a steamer that was a few days late, he discussed the Middle East Question with Reginald Wingate, the High Commissioner in Egypt. Wingate had recently urged amendment of the Sykes-Picot Agreement to secure Britain's political predominance in the Arabian Peninsula south of area (A).[44] Montagu, in the light of Edward Cecil's recent memorandum on the Egyptian situation, seems to have found him stimulating in both respects. For he thereafter drew up an important Memorandum, dated 4th November 1917, and sent it from Aden straight to Maurice Hankey, the Secretary of the War Cabinet, dedicating its contents to the Cabinet generally and to the particular notice of Lord Curzon.

Montagu suggested creating a special Middle East Department of the Foreign Office under a separate Permanent Under-Secretary. It should take charge of all problems connected with annexed or protected areas that could be separated from rodinary diplomatic activity. In the interest of co-ordinating the control of Mohammedan problems in the

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43. see 42.
44. Despatch from Sir R.Wingate to A.J.Balfour, and a Minute by Sir R. Graham, 11 June 1917, CAB 27/22; see also observations thereon by Director of Military Intelligence, 6 July 1917, ibid.

British Empire, the new Department of the Foreign Office should be linked with a Western Department of the India Office which in its turn should handle all those quasi-administrative or Protectorate responsibilities that were still under the aegis of the Foreign Department of the India Office. Montagu suggested separation of the western problems of India's external relations from the eastern ones. The motive behind his suggestion was the most interesting - although the most vulnerable-point in his scheme. As he wrote:

> "I would tentatively suggest that negotiations and considerations of Chinese, Japanese, Tibetan, Mongolian questions should be separated from Persian, Afghan, Arabian questions. Thus then the British Foreign Office would approach this great British protected Mohammedan world from its Eastern side, while the Indian Foreign Office would approach it from the Western side." 45

Yet the nub of Montagu's whole scheme was that in order to dovetail the activities of both Foreign Offices and their respective new Departments the latter "should be brought under the Middle East Committee". He further recommended that this Committee, although it had been devised for war time purposes should be made permanent and become henceforth a feature of British Imperial organisation. Last but not least,he argued that such a step should help tp cure the departmentalism in the British governmental system, with its lack of regular inter-departmental communication.[46]

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45.Memorandum from Mr.E.S.Monatgu at S.S."Kaiser-I-Hind" Aden, dated 4th November,1917, to Sir Maurice Hankey; CAB 21/186, G.T.2837. Secret, 9 pages. Quotation taken from page 7.;The memorandum lay later also before the Commission (1920) that deviced the M.E.Department as it came into being in 1921.

46.ibid.,p.7,Montagu referred in this context to the recent arrangements made by the F.O. and the Board of Trade for co-ordination on commercial (blockade) questions:"My suggestion is for a not incomparable, although not closely analogous co-operation with the India Office on Moslem questions".

Montagu's scheme was the last grand design for the Empire in the East. Its failure sealed the cleavage there between Whitehall and the Government of India, it was doomed to failure; its very coherence and neat perfection make one suspicious of it, and convinced that there must be a flaw somewhere. Montagu himself had drawn attention to the national aspirations and desires both in India and Egypt which would have to be faced "in the not distant future".[47] But the flaw lay elsewhere: it was contained in the suggestion that the Near- and the Middle East should become the domain of the Indian Foreign Policy. Cairo under India was anathema to the War Cabinet, and to Imperial thinkers at large.

Nevertheless the scheme died only slowly. Its life-line was the concept of policy-making by committee; and thanks to Curzon this proved to be a tenacious one.

Montagu, in accordance with his advocacy of a link between the Middle East Committee and the future Middle East Department, embarked after his return from India on an ardent campaign for Committee reform, and vehemently opposed the broadening of the Middle East Committee into the Eastern Committee. The broadening of the Committee reflected the extension of the military campaign from North Persia to the Caucasus and the Ukraine.[48] But the Committee gained also in weight and power - implicit in the enlarged membership which included, besides Montagu, Cecil and Balfour, such prominent new members as Henry Wilson and Smuts.

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47. ibid., p.8. This aspect is dealt with under Mark Sykes and the mandat see next chapter.
48. According to Curzon it had been originally intended that the Eastern Committee should take over the powers of the Russian Committee as well, see Eastern Committee Minutes, Secret, August 13, 1918, p.4. in: Milner Papers 119, Bodleian Library, Oxford; also in: PRO, CAB 27/24.

It was the regular attendence of Montagu at the committee-meetings that was the most important feature in the general change. As might be expected, he soon combined forces with Robert Cecil and attacked the autocracy of Curzon`s rule exercised from the chair. Cecil`s regular attacks on the committee and his constant demand for a department in London for administering the Middle East amounted to a convenient support for Montagu`s broader proposition of welding committee and department into a permanent and efficient institution. But on the exact organisation of the latter their views differed widely.

Montagu went so far as to suggest that the Eastern Committee should be turned into an Eastern Cabinet which should decide questions about the Eastern sphere of the Empire on its own authority or on behalf of the War Cabinet.[49] He must have dangled before Curzon the temptations of even greater power. But Curzon who already wielded immense though ill defined powers, preferred to hold on to what he had got; no doubt he hoped to attain even greater scope at some later date. For the moment he was carried away by the thought that his control over policy in the East would lapse if he were involved in the intricacies of Montagu`s package solution.

At a decisive Eastern Committee meeting on August 13, Montagu referred to his paper which he had written on the way to India. Althoug the situation had changed, in that Cecil at the Foreign Office had in the meantime been placed in charge of "all affairs affecting Middle

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49. see 48.

Eastern countries, China and the Western Neutrals",[50] Montagu's and Cecil's joint suggestions for creating a permanent interdepartmental sub-committee inside the Eastern Committee carried all the implications of Montagu's grand design:

> "The Committee would consist of the head of the new Foreign Office Department and the Permanent Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, together with the Secretary of the Political Department of the India Office as essential permanent officials; and the politicians there would be the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and the Secretary of State for India as essential politicians." 51

Curzon had been right in spying a Trojan Horse, and an attempt to catapult the Middle East out of the Eastern Committee. He threatened to resign rather than agree to the proposal.[52] He said that he could personally vouch for the outcome of the Committee's work. In principle, he regarded his own position as different from that of an ordinary War Cabinet Chairman. And he disputed Montagu's postulate that the Eastern Committee was strictly analogous to other Cabinet Committees:

> "His own position was not presisely identical with that of other War Cabinet Chairmen. He assumed that he had been charged with this duty because his public life had brought him into close contact with almost every aspect of Middle Eastern affairs; he had served as Under-Secretary of State both at the Foreign Office and the India Office; he had been Viceroy of India, and there were few of the countries concerned with which he had not personal acquaintance."53

Obviously the Middle East could not dispense with him, and the Committee's legitimacy emanated, at the end, from him. And so, just as in late 1917 the first plot against his Committee had failed, the second

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50. Eastern Committee Minutes, 13 August 1918, pp.2,4.;Montagu's description of Cecil's appointment as "to all intents and purposes that of Minister for the Middle East" was corrected by Cecil himself at the same meeting as "not strictly or literally accurate"."He was under the Foreign Minister in his own department, in charge of all affairs affecting the Middle Eastern countries..."To this Montagu replied that he did not wish to quarrel over nomenclature,...Cecil's temporary position implied that of a Minister for the Middle East."

plot against it failed likewise. As Cecil reminded Montagu in September 1918:

> "We have seen the results of an attempt to convert the Eastern Committee into a Middle East Department, and I think we are both agreed that that attempt has been a failure." 54

Yet the failure was not solely due to Curzon`s personal overbearance and obstinacy. The deeper reason for it was the general shift of Imperial strategy from the Middle East to South Russia and the Caspian.[55] The Middle East had turned into a backwater, which, as we shall see, it remained until late 1920. Thus the ascendancy of the Eastern Committee as well as Curzon`s triumph over Montagu and Cecil were, from the point of view of Imperial organisation in the Middle East, the first steps towards the muddle in which Mesopotamia will later be found

By mid-1918, another and more important change in the international situation began to affect the relation between Whitehall and Simla in the Middle East.

When the Middle Eastern Committee had proposed in 1917 that India should be eliminated altogether from Arabia, the Government of India had reluctantly acquiesced. However, as Montagu stressed later, Simla had only done so because at that time "it was expected that the British hold upon Mesopotamia would be strong".[56] It had reckoned that the basis for such a strong hold would be provided by annexation of the

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51. Memorandum from E.S.Montagu, 4 Nov.1917, CAB 21/186, G.T.2837, p.8. Explaining the word "essential" Montagu added in brackets "(I use the word "essential" because I do not wish to exclude any others who may be suggested)".
52. see 50.
53. ibid.
54. Cecil to Monatgu, 5 September 1918, F.O.800/207. The letter had been seen by Hardinge and Crowe, whose initials were on the back of it.
55. see: Some Features of the Mesopotamian Campaign, p. 59.
56. Memorandum by India Office, 11 Jan.1921, Lloyd George Papers F/9/2/5

Vilayet of Basra. But from early 1918 onwards, a policy of annexation had become illusory. What was more, the almost simultaneous emergence of the mandate concept[57] had begun to worry the India Office. That the British hold upon Mesopotamia should be limited in time made both the Government of India and the India Office revoke their acquiescence.

Cecil, who was in August and September busy organising his Middle East Department at the Foreign Office as the preliminary to a separate Middle East Office after the war recognised their apprehension, and tried to mitigate it by arranging for a link between the personnel of the Foreign Office and the India Office. There were three candidates for the top post of Assistant Under-Secretary in charge of the new Middle East Department: Eyre Crowe, Ronald W. Graham and Arthur Hirtzel. Which of them was the best to take on what Cecil described as:

> "this new job, which is really founding an administrative department for dealing with a new Empire".[58]

Cecil's process of selection was simple: he called on each candidate and asked each how he would organise the new department. Hirtzel was the first to be dropped. Cecil has not given all his reasons for this, but we have his words for it that they included Balfour's dislike of India Office officials.[59] Graham took the job too lightly; he thought that all the assistance he would need would be one India Office official and a Foreign Office clerk. In contrast, Crowe made nearly all the

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57. see: Mark Sykes and the Origin of the Iraq Mandate, p. 110.
58. Cecil to Balfour, 23 August 1918, Balfour Papers 49738 British Museum
59. ibid.

points that Cecil had in mind: special sections dealing with the various countries involved, and the desirability that the Foreign Office should rid itself of the Middle East Department as soon as the existing international difficulties had been solved. Cecil was pleased. From their working relationship he knew that Crowe suited him. As for Graham he had "really the diplomatic mind". According to Cecil he also hoped some day to be appointed High Commissioner in Egypt; on the whole Graham was too much bound up with that country which, incidentally, he thought had hardly any connection with Arabia.[60] Balfour agreed with Cecil's choice,[61] and Crowe was appointed Assistant Under-Secretary of the Middle East Department of the Foreign Office.

The next step was to bring about the close co-operation with the India Office that had been intended with the appointment of Hirtzel as Head of the Department. Instead Cecil was now anxious to obtain the services of John Shuckburgh as "principal lieutenant to Crowe".[62] As he kept repeating to Montagu, it should help:

> "to avoid offending the esprit de corps of the Government of India or the India Office." 63

In form, things should be left as they were. But Shuckburgh in continuing to deal with all affairs of South Persia, Mesopotamia, and Eastern Arabia was thenceforth to be guided by the policy, and be subject to the directions, of the Middle East Department. 64

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60. ibid.
61. Cecil to Montagu, 29 August 1918, F.O.800/207.
62. ibid.
63. Cecil to Montagu, 5 September 1918, F.O.800/207.
64. ibid.; The candidature of Shuckburgh is, of course, of interest because he, in fact, was later appointed as Permanent Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies ich charge of the Middle East Department.

It was here that the new India Office attitude immediately made itself felt. Montagu himself was not opposed to the eventual transfer of those functions which still appertained to his office to the Middle East Department, but he stressed that it was a decision to be taken after the war and, at any rate, was a matter for Cabinet or an Eastern Committee decision.[65] In other words, Montagu preferred to wait and see how the British Government suggested dealing with Mesopotamia in view of the new concepts of "no annexation" and establishing a "mandate". On the other hand he did not wish to cut adrift from the Eastern Committee.

Supposing that Lloyd George were to have to yield to strong pressure from the Allies, any premature transfer might speed the deterioration of the Empire's position in the Middle East. Mainly for tactical reasons, therefore, Montagu kept India's claim to Mesopotamia in reserve, regarding it as some sort of a guarantee for an "Imperial solution" of the Middle East question, much as Chamberlain had for Imperial reasons leaned on the pledges to Hussein. Accordingly Montagu began to step up India's role in Mesopotamia; as he wrote to Cecil:

> "I should be reluctant, if it could be avoided, to assent to any changes which might be considered by the Government of India to reflect upon their discharge of duties which have hitherto fallen upon them. I do not think that anybody would criticise their share in the administration of Mesopotamia." 66

The issue remained undecided until it entered into its third and final stage in May 1920. Old contestants who had temporarily left the Committee and taken up other duties and interests returned in power

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65. Montagu to Cecil, 3 September 1918, F.O.800/207.
66. ibid.

ful votes: Austen Chamberlain as Chancellor of the Exchequer, Milner as Colonial Secretary,[67] and Curzon in charge of the Foreign Office. Montagu was still Secretary of State for India. But new and energetic men arrived on the scene as well, the most formidable of them Winston Churchill as Secretary of State for War.

In comparison with his Cabinet colleagues Churchill had a strong position in the Middle East question. The main reason for its strength was the overriding concern of the Cabinet to cut Government expenditure. Since it was the War Office that was spending at the shocking rate of L 32.000.000 pounds per annum in Mesopotamia, it was up to Churchill to curtail that immense military expenditure.[68] Churchill who held the Offices of War and Air (at that time still combined) had for some time been wrangling over Army Estimates and Garrisons with Henry Wilson, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff. Churchill who was a great believer in air power[69] staked all on the views of Trenchard, the Chief of the Air Staff. With Trenchard`s help Churchill made the cheaper offer, and succeeded in convincing Lloyd George of the obsolescence of holding down each part of Mesopotamia with posts and garrisons. He also made it clear that the policy to be pursued there must be attuned to the new method of holding it down.[70] His ruthless, and from the Treasury point of view, promising money-saving device as well as its administrative implications, commended him as a manager for

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67. Milner had previously been Secretary of State for War. In that capacity he had expressed himself "as not unfavourable" to Cecil`s proposals of a Middle East Section at the War Office.
68. see Minutes of Cabinet Meeting 56(22),5 Oct.1922, CAB 23/39.
69. C.O.730/2/33102,Churchill`s marginal note on a Private and Personal letter by Cox, explaining the reported Bombing operations against recalcitrant tribes:"Certainly I am a great believer in air power and will help it financed in every way". letter rec.3 July 1921.

the Middle East. Yet in view of the worsening financial situation there was no chance that Parliament would pass large additional expenditure for a separate Middle East Office.[71] Consequently this pet project of the Imperial architects had to be cut down to the size of a (Sub-) Department,[72] and to be lodged in one of the existing Offices that dealt with the Middle East or were likely to do so.

There was no easy choice of destination. The demand by the India Office for unity of control in the Middle East was unconditional. But what Office or Department could bring unity about? Although the monolithic character of the Mohammedan world was in itself a unifying principle it did not easily fit into the political framework of either the administrative or the foreign apparatus of an extraneous State. But was not the authority that would spring from some established Department the essential that the India Office was striving for?

The expert opinions expounded by Montagu and also by Cox recommended that the Middle East should not be transferred to the Colonial Office because it "would look like the annexation to the British Empire of mandated territory";[73] alternatively, that because Palestine, Egypt, Arabia and Persia were already looked after by the Foreign Office, Mesopotamia should be transferred to it as well.[74] The arguments of the Cabinet were on the same plane: that it was not the business of the Foreign Office to undertake administration,[75] or that the transfer of Egypt from the Foreign Office to the Colonial Office would cause

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70. Winston Churchill, 23 March 1920, CAB 1/29.; see also p.258.
71. Cabinet Meeting 82(20), 31 Dec.1920, p.8.CAB 21/186.
72. Sub-Department was the official term used in the 1920 discussions.
73. Note by the Secretary of State for India for Circulation, 22 Dec. 1920, Secret, CAB 21/186, C.P.2348.
74. ibid. pointed out by Montagu.
75. Cabinet Meeting 82(20), 31 Dec.1920, CAB 21/186.

serious difficulties in Egypt; some stressed that the Colonial Office was already overcharged and others pondered over the difference in outlook and temperament between administrators and diplomats. No doubt, each point contained a grain of truth. But were they make-weights? For the India Office, everything turned on the stipulation that there must be unity of control. Unity would brace up the authority afforded by the British presence in the Middle East. But Montagu sold out to Curzon for a further reason.

While Montagu was so vehemently stressing that the Cabinet was "pledged up to the hilt, and over the hilt, against the continuation of the existing arrangement"76 in the Middle East and that this was "unfair to the India Office, unfair to India, and unfair to Mesopotamia", Curzon revived the Committee-idea. He emphasized that the Foreign and Indian Secretaries should sit together on the Committee as they had hitherto done. Further he stressed that without impairing the superior authority of the Cabinet, the Committee should continue to be political and deliberative, not administrative.[77]

No matter what Montagu's other reasons for making common cause with Curzon may have been, he certainly had in mind the prospect of securing India a voice in Middle Eastern affairs without directly entangling her in the "absurd" obligations of a mandatory power.[78] The final settlement of the long-drawn-out feud between these contestants was one of the few pleasant events of 1920.

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76. see 73.
77. see 79. Curzon's Memo of June 1920, p.4.
78. Montagu, of course, knew also that through the link of personnel India's influence in the Middle East Department was secure.

But much to the embitterment of Curzon the Colonial Office was charged with the Middle East. As Curzon expressed his disappointment to Hankey:

> "After the remarks made about the Eastern Committee at which I have presided over more than 150 meetings, have devoted weeks of time and thought, have saved the Cabinet from all but an occasional reference (sic!) I decline ever again to summon or to take the chair at any such meeting. Those who are responsible in the future will soon discover the need for a co-ordinating hand and will perhaps regret a decision taken by the non-experts of the Cabinet against the unanimous voice - bar the S of S for War - of the experts concerned...a decision too which bars from any voice in the future management the only members of the Cabinet who have first hand knowledge of those regions or really take an interest in them at all..." 79

Nomenclature was to remove the taint of Imperialist odium, for the same Cabinet majority that had agreed to set up the new Department for the Middle East mandates as a branch of the Colonial Office had also suggested that the Office should be given "some new title, suc as the Department for Colonies and Mandated Territories".[80]

But as the title at once reveals, unity of control was not yet guaranteed. For the important territories under the rule of Ibn Sa`ud and Hussein as well as the petty sheikdoms on the Arab littoral of the Persian Gulf would not be mandates, nor would Egypt come under the new Department. Further if unity of control was restricted to the mandates for Mesopotamia and Palestine, then it was also limited in time. Old fears racked the India Office and Simla. Churchill was impressed by the vehemence with which they were voiced.

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79. Curzon to Hankey, 2 January 1921, CAB 21/186. The file contains two interesting memoranda on the subject written by Curzon in the preceding year, dated June 8, 1920 and August 16, 1920.
80. Cabinet Meeting 82(20), 31 Dec. 1920, Conclusion (c), CAB 21/186. In a circulated note of 22 Dec. 1920 Montagu had been pushing hard for a Cabinet decision before the end of the year, "for the sake of economy and for the sake of our reputation".

The India Office argument was that with the progress of the mandate in Mesopotamia and at its expiring British control in that important sphere would vanish and the status and importance of the High Commissioner at Bagdad be lowered to such an extent that he would no longer inspire respect for H.M.G. in the Persian Gulf and the Nejd. The consequences of such a development were expounded with vigour:

> "The small States on the coast have given little trouble so long as the firm hand of a powerful British Neighbour was over them, but it cannot by any means be inferred that they will do so when that hold is relaxed. And it must be remembered that practically the whole of their trade is with India and in the hands of Indian merchants, and Indian subjects will be the first to suffer if the States get out of control. Moreover, they are under the formal protection of H.M.G., and they have a dangerous neighbour in Nejd. Nejd has always had a wholesale regard for the Government of India, and would doubtless be equally respectful to a powerful High Commissioner at Bagdad; but it may well be doubted whether the shadowy individual who will represent H.M.G. in Mesopotamia when the Mandate comes to an end will inspire any respect at all." 81

The India Office admitted that the time had probably come for the Government of India to "contract their foreign responsibilities".[82] But they could only do it if the organisation of British Imperial control in the Middle East showed any "guarantee of peace and security in Arabia and the Persian Gulf".[83] Naturally, this guarantee presupposed unity of control and permanent control at that. But the area to come under the sway had dwindled significantly. It was no longer the unilingual and unicultural area from Sollum to the Turco-Persian frontier but instead "the whole area to be detached from Turkey east of the Mediterranean together with the remainder of the Arabian peninsula".[84]

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81. Memorandum by India Office, 11 Jan. 1921, Lloyd George Papers, F9/2/55.
82. ibid.
83. ibid.
84. ibid.

Egypt had disappeared. The India Office's alternative, should its condition not be met, was specified in its Memorandum of 11th January 1921 as following:

> "the only guarantee lies in unity of control, and we ought not to agree to the mere substitution of the C.O. for the I.O. in the latter's present sphere, while everything else remains the same. In other words, unless the whole of Arabia (with one exception) is placed under the office which administers the Mandate for Mesopotamia, we must ask that India be left in the position which it has held for over a century." 85

Churchill's response was quick, decisive and final. He fully fell in with the elaborate and strongly worded demarche by the India Office, and within three days notified Lloyd George that the condition was "indispensable" and that "the Cabinet should amplify and implement their previous decision".[86] There are two main reasons for Churchill's quick reaction. Both were to motivate most of his future actions in Mesopotamia.

First, politically, Churchill had "a virgin mind" on the subject of the Middle East.[87] Curzon was right when he complained sulkily to Hankey that the Middle East was now run by Cabinet members who had no first-hand knowledge of those regions.[88] In fact, Churchill never pretended to know anything about them. As he wrote to Lloyd George with reference to the India Office paper:

> "I do not pretend to have understood the bearings of these different factors one upon the other at the time of the Cabinet discussion. I had up to then only been concerned with the military aspect. But I should certainly not be able to take charge of any Middle Eastern Department that was based upon the absurd foundation..disclosed in their paper." 89

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85. ibid., the single exception was Muscat.
86. Churchill to Lloyd George, 14Jan.1921, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/55.
87. Churchill himself conceded it literally once to Hubert Young, s.p.
88. see 89.

Secondly, since Britain's entanglement in Mesopotamia was extremely unpopular at home, Churchill was aware that if his policy entailed stil heavier expenditure or a general disaster his political career would be ruined. On the other hand, success, he was sure, would raise his prestige at home. As he said to Lloyd George after he had been "honoured" with the charge of the Middle East mandates:

> "While I feel some misgivings about the political consequences to myself of taking on my shoulders the burden and the odium of the Mesopotamian entanglement, I am deeply sensible of the greatness of this plan you are confiding to my charge, of the honour which you have done me in choosing me for such critical employment." 90

The two reasons account for Churchill's tendency to lean for choice on the advice of the experts on the spot, and in particular, on the counsel of Percy Cox, the High Commissioner at Bagdad.

With Churchill, the India Office ( and Simla) and Lloyd George in unison, the final organisation of the Middle East Department became amatter of formal procedure without dispute of the kind experienced before.[91] When the Department was finally set up on 1st March 1921, its sphere of control covered the Arábian triangle limited by the Persian Gulf,[92] the Arabian Sea, the Red Sea, and the "outlying properties of Egypt, Syria and the Northern Kurds"[93] together with Persia.

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90. Churchill to Lloyd George, 4Jan.1921, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/51.
91. The Inter-Departmental Committee which was to study the question and report on it to the Cabinet sat under the supervision of Churchill himself. On its panel were: C.James Masterton Smith(in the chair), Herbert Creedy(W.O.), Herbert Read(C.O.), Russel Scott(Treasury), J.E. Shuckburgh(I.O.), H.W.Young(F.O.) with E.E.Bridges(Treasury)as Secretary. The Report (C.P.-2571)lay before the Cabinet 7(21)on 14Feb.21.
92. Special Reservations had been made with regard to the Persian Gulf Littoral, see §§ 9-12 of the Report. Thereafter the Political Resident in the Gulf should continue to be appointed by the Government of India, but should be authorised to communicate direct with the C.O. on matters concerning the Arabian littoral, that the functions of Simla on the Arabian littoral should be confined to administrative and purely local matters and that the prior concurrence of the C.O.

Significantly, John Shuckburgh who had been the head of the Mesopotamia Department of the India Office was appointed Under-Secretary in charge of the Middle East Department. Thus the smooth transition from the India Office to the Middle East Department was completed. But the transfer can securely be said to have entailed continuity of policy in Mesopotamia. For the mandate concept called for progress, and progress required change.

But to what extent were progress and change reconcilable with the objectives of Imperial control, or - the other way about - would the maintenance of Imperial control also be of benefit to the mandate policy? The problem was how to reconcile the mandate concept on the one hand with the stipulation about unity of Imperial control in the Middle East on the other.

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92. contd., should be obtained by them to any measures of political significance; and lastly, that the relations of H.M.G. with Ibn Sa`ud should be conducted exclusively by the new Department through the Political Resident at Bushire in the first place.-There were still other provisions for cases of emergency.

93. Churchill to Lloyd George, 12 Jan.1921,Private and Personal, Lloyd George Papers F/9/2/54. His enumeration of Syria must be regarded as a lapsus for Churchill was well informed of the French stake ther see: Enclosure to his letter, Note of Churchill`s conversations in Paris, 11 January 1921. Churchill`s letter was sent from Nice; he had stopped in Paris for talks with Millerand. Churchill described the outlying properties as external problems which should be left for the present where they were dealt with.He considered as vital the control in the triangle Jerusalem-Basra-Aden which he called the ringfence.

## 3. Mark Sykes and the Origin of the Iraq Mandate.

Long before Smuts set forth his mandate scheme in November 1918, Mark Sykes had in early January designed a mandate for Mesopotamia. It was expounded in his private memorandum called: Our Position in Mesopotamia in relation to the Spirit of the Age. The memorandum was circulated in the India Office, and it put forward the following concrete proposal:

> "we should (i)Investigate the possibility of getting the United States of America to propose that we should, provided the people of Mesopotamia desire it, assume on behalf of the nations of the Entente responsibility for establishing a provisional regime in Mesopotamia for a period of twenty-five years, with the object of setting up a self-governing and independent state in Mesopotamia at the end of twenty five years.
> (ii) At the end of the term of twenty-five years, the future of Mesopotamia to be decided by such International authority as may exist.
> (iii)That our tutelage should be limited by the open door commercially and by international guarantee of security from invasion from a military point of view. No troops other than internal order troops to be maintained there.
> (iv)During our twenty-five years trusteeship we should at stated terms report progress of administration to such International authority as may exist." 1

Mark Sykes listed three recent events as constituting the new spirit of the age: America's entry into the war, the Russian revolution and the spread of the idea of no annexations. By these standards the con-

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1.F.O.800/221. This copy of the Draft Memo is undated. However, it bear the marginal note, Sent by Sir A.Hirtzel Jan.16. for observations.The observations were dated 22 Jan.1918, see p. .The contents of the Memo suggest that it was drafted soon after Lloyd George's War Aims Speech.

cepts of protectorates, spheres of influence, annexations, bases and White men`s burden`s had to be consigned to "the Diplomatic lumber--room". He went on to stipulate that if Britain remained determined to run Mesopotamia, up to date reasons and up to date working formulae must be found. The lens through which to examine the scene, he prescribed, were those of "our own Democracy" and "World Democracy".

Through this lens, Mesopotamia was seen as a potential store--house of "fuel and food for the world". Its development and exploitation would feed and warm the workers of the world much better than if it lay idle. Its retention by the Turks would merely add to their military power. On the other hand, if let alone, no development would result from the cock-fighting between "municipal oligarchies, a collection of riparian brigands and a fringe of Patriarchal nomads".[2] All told these were up to date reasons for stepping in. Yet three conditions would have to be observed: the development of Mesopotamia should not be for the benefit of Capitalistic groups, nor add to the military power of those running it, nor impede the political liberty of the inhabitants.[3] To observe only two out of the three would not do:

> "If any one, or all three of these desiderata cannot be secured then Anarchy and no development is preferable." 4

Sykes also drew attention to the necessity of generating confidence in Britain and the Government both at home and in the realm of World Democracy. The British Government must show that "the Mesopotamian peoples as a whole" preferred British to Turkish administration; further,

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2.Memorandum, p.2.
3.ibid.
4.ibid.,p.3.

that British administration, once invited, had not only the consent of the governed, and that it understood itself to be "the fore-runner of actual independence". Finally and in sharp contrast to the recommendations of the by now obsolete De Bunsen Report, the administration should not be based on a system of commercial monopoly.[5]

To procure the desired invitation by the indigenous Arab population, Mark Sykes, never at a loss, gave the simple advice that Britain should make herself wholly indispensable by playing up to the desires of the Jewish and Armenian segments of the population, to the aspirations of the mercantile classes for prosperity and security, and to Arab Nationalism in general. As he elaborated the latter point:

> "(vi)We should subvention an Arab press on Nationalist lines, which would always hold up the Turks to odium and us as protectors of Arab Nationalism.
> (vii)We should start an Arab Nationalist party recruited from the Urban Intelligensia and promote its members to official positions.
> (viii)We should start an Education department and as many schools as possible, based on Arab Nationalism." [6]

Further items were the subvention of the greater Bedawi chiefs of the desert, plenty of employment for all and the spread of the amenities of civilization such as municipal lighting, water, and trams.

International assent to the British position in Mesopotamia should be secured by utilising the mandate formula.

These "heretical" views and recommendations do not seem to fit a man who has become discredited as the drafter of one of the worst Imperialist secret agreements concluded during the war. As has already

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5.ibid.,p.3.
6.ibid.,p.4.

been pointed out, the fact that the Sykes-Picot Agreement bears Sykes's name does great injustice to his personality.[7] But what sort of man was he at bottom? What was the motive for his proposal of a mandate, and to what extent was it consistent with his earlier thinking? Was Sykes an original thinker at all?

In view of his record as a leisured travellor and a dilettante in matters of policy, often stigmatised as incapable of disciplined thinking, such questions may seem superfluous. Yet granted that the mandate idea itself was a novel conception, his advocacy of it was the upshot of an extraordinary capacity for taking a synoptic view of the political situation at each stage of the war.[8] Lord Milner had appreciated this asset and therefore attached Sykes, together with Amery, to the "informal brains trust" of the War Cabinet.[9] Their task was to draw up ideas on all subjects and submit them to their chiefs. It was Mark Sykes's particular job, to produce a weekly summary of the world situation. Similarly he summarized the weekly receipt and output of despatches for the Middle East Committee. In this role he must have been more than an intellectual entertainer whose job was to keep humming official minds otherwise caught in the trammels of the war. On the other hand sweeping world-wide views were bound to leave out of account or to minimise the petty problems of one given locality.

This "disregard" for local issues, and perhaps his enviable position as a man unencumbered by any responsible departmental routine

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7. cf. A.J. Toynbee, The Western Question in Greece and Turkey, London, 1922 p.48. Quoted also in: Zeine N. Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence Beirut, 1960, p.13 footnote 3.
8. This capacity revealed itself also in his cartoons which betrayed an ingenious eye for often latent constellations of circumstances.
9. L.S. Amery, My Political Life, vol.II, London 1953, p. 92, 100.

work but yet privileged to move freely in the corridors of power, had made him the target of comment by his less privileged colleagues; these were not always fair to him.

A man who is expected to write a weekly summary of the world situation for official use is apt to shift his view with the fluctuating situation of the war. Nevertheless the job is bound to focus his attention, and reveal to him some unchanging features recurring again and again in an itherwise changing kaleidoscope. Among such features were the steadily increasing importance of a solid Entente, the advance of the Labour Movement in the domestic sphere but with ever-increasingly articulate views on international politics, and the rising wave of nationalism all over the world, and nowhere more than in the Middle East. Since Mark Sykes worked on war-lines, as he once stressed to Eric Drummond,[10] he attached due weight to nationality, co-operation and alliance. As he elaborated this concept in July 1917:

> "Now for two years I have given the best work I could to these Middle Eastern affairs;I have only had one object in view and that has been the better prosecution of the war; I have refused office and decorations; I have backed up whatever Government there was, and I have done my best to keep the Entente together on trumpery questions, and I have endeavoured to work up every available political asset on the Entente side; viz: Armenians, Arabs, and Zionists." [11]

Here was Sykes the campaigner and partisan loyal to the military cause of the Entente. But there was also Sykes the admonisher and conscience of the age, who from a bird`s-eye viewpoint commented on the latest developments in international political thinking and behaviour, and

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10. Sykes to Drummond, 20 July 1917, Mark Sykes Papers, 68. Eric Drummond was Balfour`s Private Secretary.
11. ibid.

sought to adjust to these the permanent settlements already made by diplomacy acting upon by-gone principles. Thus Sykes was one of the first to urge the review of the Sykes-Picot Agreement when it became obvious that annexation was no longer consonant with the spirit of the time. As he wrote in his Memorandum on the Asia-Minor Agreement[12] on 14th August 1917:

> "When the agreement was originally drawn up I think it was then in consonance with the spirit of the time that certain concessions were made to the idea of nationality and autonomy, but an avenue was left open to annexation. The idea of annexation really must be dismissed, it is contrary to the spirit of the time, and if at any moment the Russian extremists got hold of a copy they could make much capital against the whole Entente." 13

Sykes was, of course, right in his apprehension about the Russian extremists. His pleading for reversal of a policy of no annexation was intended to whip the politicians into changing their mind. Significantly he did not suggest that either of the two powers should depart from the agreed geographical boundaries.[14] In this he differed fundamentally on the one hand from the Fashodaists who urged the cancellation of the agreement in order to oust the French from the transit routes between the ports on the Eastern Mediterranean and Mesopotamia, and, on the other hand, from the peace strategists such as Cecil who tried to dislodge the French because their claims to Syria conflicted irreconcilabl with Arab national aspirations and promises given to the Arabs.

The deeper reason for Sykes's compliance with the boundaries of the Anglo-French Arab agreement was his view that boundaries did not

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12. This is, of course, the Sykes-Picot Agreement which Sykes referred to also as the Anglo-French Agreement. But his favourite title for it was "Anglo-French Arab agreement" which he submitted should replace the name Sykes-Picot Agreement, see Memorandum by Sykes on Mr. Nicholson's Note Regarding Our Commitments, Sykes Papers 66.

signify dividing lines but, essentially, neighbourliness with all the advantages that accrue from this. On the other hand Sykes linked the prospects of civilization in the Middle East to a renaissance of the ancient glory of its cities. Jerusalem, Damascus, Aleppo, Mosul and Bagdad mattered infinitely more to him than stretches of desert, tribes and transit-routes. The renaissance would not come about if Bagdad were simply turned into a Hamburg. As he had once written with some disgust at the "railway-civilisation":

> "It will mean eventually putting down something like a new Hamburg in the world!...The Arab in the fourth century liked Corinthian columns so much that he built them in the desert... People were studying Plato in Bagdad in the eighth century...The Baghdad Railway a return to what was the Overland Route of the Middle Ages!" 15

This was the reflective and nostalgic Sykes, not so outspoken as he was resolute. But why was French neighbourliness so important and harmless? Louis Massignon has pointed out that Sykes realized that Great Britain could learn much from the stern social practice of the French in befriending local populations.[16] There is not that much evidence of this practice; on the contrary, Sykes was critical of French civilizing efforts, and aware of the apprehension that racked the Moslem intelligentsia. As he enumerated their fears:

> "(i)the introduction of an artificially created class of French colonists of French or Latin origin with superior political rights;(2)the introduction of an alien administrative staff;(3) an absorption of a favoured element of the population into the enfranchised colonial class, and the subsidence of the remainder into the inferior position of a governed race; (iv)the introduction of French culture and language and the degradation of the native language into the dialect of a conquered people." 17

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13. Sykes Papers 75.
14.ibid.,
15.Shane Leslie,Mark Sykes,His Life and Letters,London 1923,p.261.

Accordingly Mark Sykes took considerable pains to bring the French Government round to the Arab cause. How serious he took this is obvious from what he once wrote in a fit of annoyance to Clayton:

> "I am going to slam into Paris to make the French play up to the Arab cause as their only hope. Colonialism is madness and I believe P. and I can prove it to them." 18

But what did Sykes understand by the Arab cause if, at the same time, he felt that Lawrence who had obviously most energetically taken up that cause, needed to broaden his views? He deprecated nationalism that implied complete independence; it saw boundaries as dividing lines. By contrast, Arab Nationalism signified in his view the rennaissance of Mediterranean Society marked by free and animated communication between its European and Oriental civilisations.[19] However since those civilisations were in the grip of imperialism they were without a future so long as European civilisation remained paralysed by the imperialism of the European states. Since the restoration of European civilisation was Sykes's grand theme, imperialism had to be overcome. This was the spirit of his idea of the Entente.

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16. Louis Massignon, In Memoriam, Sir Mark Sykes, Remarks about the present Disruption of British Policy in the Near East (1919), in: Opera Minora, Tome III, pp.418-422, Beirut 1963.
17. Observations on Arabian Policy as results of visit to Red Sea Ports Jeddah, Yembo, Wejh, Kamaran and Aden, by Mark Sykes, 17 May 1917. PRO 30/30/12 (Misc. Papers on Mesopotamia and Palestine received amongst Lord Milner's returned papers in Nov. 1936).
18. Sykes to Brig.-Gen. Clayton, 22 July 1917, Sykes Papers 69.
19. cf. Note by Sykes on Viceroy's private letter of 19 March 1917, CAB 27/22:"I am strongly of opinion that a country that has a Mediterranean language, and will be within a short time, (25 years at most) within touch of the Mediterranean civilisation, should not be pivoted for policy and administration on a purely Asiatic centre..."

Like Arnold Toynbee,[20] Mark Sykes was deeply convinced that the British Empire in the East was a failure because it lacked the capacity to assimilate foreign civilisations as the Greek and the Roman Empires had so successfully done. Further Sykes was convinced that with European civilisation in fragmentation, and that given the British colonial practice of observing a social colour bar[21] Arab Nationalism would never find a fulfilment which in his view could only lie in its orientation towards the West. The problem was to overcome imperialism. How could a Colonial Service that understood civilising mission be convinced that the Arabs could not be treated in the same way as Indians or Africans? Obviously the antagonism that were tending to split Western civilisation could not be eradicated by persuading France, or Great Britain, to transfer its Imperial interests from this area to another. On the contrary, the renaissance of European civilisation required that France and Great Britain should clear themselves of imperialism in the Middle East. They must perform an act of self-denial by playing up to the Arab cause. Therefore both France and Great Britain must take their place in the Middle East not as imperialist powers but as "Corinthian columns". Arab Nationalism should be righted by European civilisation. In essence, his doctrine implied that Arab Nationalism should be integrated into the Oriental civilisation which he once painted as a landscape with three mountains:

> "Mount Zion the cradle of law and civilisation where began monotheistic religion: Mount Ararat, sombre and sistant, persistent with an age long constancy and faith, and Mount Arafat, symbol ofthe poetry, chivalry and art which the Crusaders learnt and brought to Europe." 22

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20. It was probably not by chance that Toynbee saw reason to point out that Sykes was unjustly discredited by the Sykes-Picot Agreement.

Sykes, who was Roman Catholic, undoubtedly gave in the last case full play to the fact that European civilisation originated from a fountainhead of religion in the Middle East.

Consistent with this line of thought, he rejected the projection of Asia and India into the Middle Eastern sphere. Significantly, Sykes's campaign against imperialism was strictly limited to the Middle East. It is doubtful whether he would have addressed Indians or Africans as friends and brothers, since they were devoid of similar cultural and religious bonds. On the other hand, the Entente, as he understood it, laid claim to the Middle East as Curzon and Flandin, his French equivalent, did, although from quite different motives. Sykes stipulated what Arab Nationalism s h o u l d become and create. For him, it was one of the indispensable prerequisites of the revival of Oriental civilisation; but unless "christened" by the spirit of the Entente it would remain a blind force and as such impoverish the West. It was in this sense that Sykes wrote:

> "The Entente first and last and the Arab Nation the child of the Entente". 23

In contrast to Lawrence, who may possibly have doubted whether European civilisation would ever again have the strength both to produce "Corinthian columns" and to inspire admiration for them,[24] Sykes was remarkably optimistic about the prospects of his Entente idea. He thus admonished Lawrence through Clayton:

> "Lawrence's move is splendid and I want him Knighted. Tell him that now he is a great man he must behave as such and be broad in his view. Ten years tutelage under the Entente and the Arabs will be a nation. Complete independence means Persia poverty, and chaos. Let him consider this...".25

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21. Political Note on our advance in Iraq, by Sykes, summer 1917, Sykes Papers 78.

On the whole, Sykes's Entente enthusiasm and optimism can be explained by his experience of intensive work with Picot, and by his contacts with Zionist, Armenian and Syrian communities in Britain. Another influence upon him was without a doubt Lieutenant Albina, a Jerusalem citizen and a Roman Catholic by origin, who was his interpreter and Oriental clerk.[26] Acquaintance with cultured but nevertheless enthusiastic Oriental nationalists resident in the West provided him with fine examples of what the Entente might look like if its solid moulding was studded with the various national variations of Oriental civilisations.

But alongside these contacts there existed factors that stimulated his Entente enthusiasm. Foremost among these was his grasp of the mounting interdependence of the Allies not only in their joint pursuit of the war but, more important, in their peace effort. The way to ever increasing co-operation was also clearly marked in the various league-schemes that began to mushroom among the Allies. Yet while Sykes's working relation with Picot was imbued with a spirit of coopera tion, both their main adversaries , Curzon and Flandin, were not merely hostile to the extension of the league into the Middle East but also antagonistic in their respective policies.[27] Obviously there was no

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22. Mark Sykes to members of the Zionist, Armenian and Syrian deputations of Manchester at a luncheon on September 12th, 1918. Zionist Organisation, London Bureau, Communique 22, 26 Sept. 1918, F.O.800/221
23. Mark Sykes to Gilbert Clayton, 22 July 1917, Mark Sykes Papers 69.
24. Margret Boveri has tried to see Lawrence's personality as rent by the deep cultural "Umbruch" that inaugurated our century, cf. Margret Boveri, Der Verrat im XX. Jahrhundert, Bd. I, pp. 20-22, Hamburg, 1956.
25. see 23.
26. Sykes to Salis, 8 June 1918, A Letter of Introduction, F.O.800/221.
27. e.g. Sykes to Drummond, 20 July 1917, Sykes Papers 68, "Picot is accused in Paris of having given away everything to England just as Curzon never ceases twitting me with having given everything to France."

alternative means of successful Allied co-operation than that already practised by Sykes and Picot. Grasp of this home truth induced Sykes to claim:

> "If England and France co-operate and employ people like Picot and myself who will act in a co-operative spirit we have opportunities amounting to certainties." 28.

Retrospectively, the question of whether Sykes's mandate formula and his suggestions for its application on the spot as put forward in his Memorandum of early January 1918 were consistent with his previous lines of thought, must be answered in the affermative. The trusteeship idea imbued his numerous memoranda and letters written in 1917. Further, he was all the time eager to recommend arguments that might help to court and satisfy Labour opinion. As a result Mesopotamia soon achieved legendary dimensions as a store-house for the world's food supply. But Sykes was sometimes illogical. He seems never to have reflected that his "store-house" concept was a double-edged argument in that by dangling huge profits before monopolists, it vastly strengthened the Labourites' stand on internationalisation for commercial reasons. Sykes, however, refuted internationalisation on the classis administrative grounds, that tutelage and successful development required a well-defined responsibility which only national administration and unity of control could guarantee.

Another feature was to change; his ideas put forward in the second half of 1917 did not yet show any impact of the Russian Revolution and the larger political implications of America's entry into the the War. His Memorandum of January 1918 by contrast seemed to have been

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28. see 27.

prompted by those two events. Strictly apeaking, Sykes's reference to them as well as to the idea of no annexation was a reply to, and part of his counter to, the speculations aroused by Wilson's vague phrase about the "absolutely unmolested opportunity for autonomous development" for the Ottoman dependencies. His reaction was also that of the India Office people, and was noticeable in Hirtzel's note of 11 January[29] which may well have prompted Sykes to draft his Memorandum.

Hirtzel, in his note which was entitled "Future of Mesopotamia" and was obviously written for circulation, called for comment on the points that Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson had made on Mesopotamia in their respective speeches of the 5th and 8th of January. Hirtzel had pointed out that open or veiled annexation even of Basra was now presumably out of the question. Even the Arab facade which the Committee had envisaged "must be something more than a facade". However, he went on:

> "It is clear that somehow or other we must retain predominating influence in Mesopotamia.By what means?" 30

Next, Hirtzel referred indirectly to the peace feelers being put out by the Turks, emphasising the probability that peace negotiations might start " at any time within the next few months". Swift considerations were required. Accordingly he suggested that rather than send out the commission that Cox had asked for earlier in 1917, Cox should be informed by telegraph about "the entirely altered political conditions in Europe" and asked to forward his proposals. Lastly Hirtzel urged

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29.Future of Mesopotamia, by Sir A.Hirtzel,11 January 1918, I.O.2571/17
30.ibid.

that Britain's commercial position should be strengthened in Mesopotamia:

> "to get ourselves started commercially, so as to be ahead of competitors whom it may be impossible to exclude after the war."31

As to Sykes's "private" mandate formula - when it got to the India Office, Hirtzel rejected it; he told Lord Islington that it did not commend itself to him at all.[32] Sykes, he said, lacked all contact with the facts on the spot, and Cox should be left to make his point.[33]

Islington who was by this time Under-Secretary of State for India agreed with Hirtzel.[34] So did T.W.Holderness, the Permanent Under-Secretary of State. But he observed that communications to Cox "need not necessarily antagonistic to the solution suggested by Sir M.Sykes". He went on:

> "We may find that the idea of a British protectorate over this region is not acceptable to our Allies and to the Americans without the addition of some international machinery; and we may have in the end to submit to this. But the time for suggesting this to them has not yet come. Meanwhile let us study the facts." 35

Thus Sykes's Memorandum had not entirely disappeared from view. However, it never reached the agenda of the Middle East Committee Instead, the Committee considered the instructions to be sent to Cox.[36] Cox should explore and report as soon as possible how the consent of all those who were interested in good government - Jews, Christians and the mercantile classes - could be obtained to British administration that should last "at all events for a period of years". Further

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31.ibid.

32.Hirtzel to Lord Islington,22 Jan.1918, I.O. 2571/1917 (L/PS/10/686) This note bore also marginal notes with the same dates by Islington and T.W.Holderness.

33.There seems to have been some argument about it, for Hirtzel stressed"I still think the opposite is the right way to go viz.to tellCox

he should sound out the practicability of any form of Arab Government, in particular, whether a member of the Shereefial family would be acceptable as "sovereign under Sherif's suzerainty".[37]

Although these instructions were never sent to Cox, they are nevertheless revealing for the state of mind prevalent at the India Office. There was a touch of panic about a telegram ending that Cox should bear in mind that Britain "must be ready for all eventualities."[38] Further the way how the India Office thought it could deal by some criss cross correspondence with such a delicate international situation showed its amateurishness in matters of international politics.

Small wonder that Curzon with his sense of touch for the diplomacy needed to meet the larger diplomatic implications of the new international situation blocked the India Office course and refused to be stamped ed.[39] Cox's expertise should be duly consulted, but with more caution and after fresh stocktaking of Britain's entire political and commercial position in Mesopotamia. Accordingly it was decided that the communication to Cox should be made by word of mouth,[40] otherwise, it was feared, Cox might misjudge the political situation and conceive the false impression that Whitehall had changed its intention about the future of Mesopotamia.

While the India Office arranged for a secret meeting between one of its representatives and Percy Cox, which should take place at Cairo on the 9th of February, Hirtzel wrote a memorandum on the future

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34.ibid.
35.ibid.
36.The telegram was drafted by Hirtzel and Shuckburgh agreed with it. Originally,Islington had proposed to have Sykes's Memo together with Hirtzel's note discussed at the M.E.C. meeting.
37.ibid.
38.ibid.

of Mesopotamia, the gist of which was that Britain was now in a position similar to that of a candidate towards his constituents. As he expounded the comparison and the consequences it entailed:

> "our position towards Mesopotamia is, or may become, not that of a ruler towards his subjects, but that of a candidate towards his constituents. We shall want their votes; and unless we nurse the constituency in advance, we may not get them. Is it possible so to handle to local population, or the elements in it that count, as to ensure that, if and when the moment for "self-determination" arrives, they will pronounce decisively in favour of continuing the British connection? That seems to be the immediate question we have to ask ourselves; and it is one to which the local authorities are alone competent to furnish us with a reply." 41

On his way to Cairo, where he arrived on March 23, Cox had received orders at Suez to go on to London after his talks with Ormsby-Gore,[42] Wingate and the Arab Bureau Staff. Cox's talks in Cairo, where he stayed for ten days, and in London, which he left at the end of May have been extensively quoted from his diary by his late biographer Philip Graves.[43] From this account it emerges that Cox was strongly opposed to a Shereefial solution in Mesopotamia[44] and also to nominal Turkish suzainty, unless there was at minimumu "complete British financial and administrative control, free from the slightest Turkish taint"[45] Much of the Cairo talks was devoted to the affairs of the peninsula: the rivalries between Ibn Rashid and Ibn Saud on the one hand, and those between Ibn Saud and King Hussein on the other. To Graves accoun must be added the fact that Cox learnt while in Cairo that Britain "might be obliged or wish to come to an understanding with Turkey at

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39. Shuckburgh to Sykes, 29 Jan.1918, F.O.800/221; Middle East Committe Minutes, 3rd meeting, 2 Febr.1918, CAB 27/23.
40. see M.E.C. 60, CAB 27/23.
41. Hirtzel's Memorandum was dated 31 Jan.1918, ibid.
42. From S of S to Cox, 9 Febr.1918, CAB 27/23. The despatch sent earlier to Bagdad read: "H.M.G. think it desiarble to send out special officer from England to confer with you on important matters affec-

at any moment".[46] But Cox remained unperturbed. To him British experience in Koweit and Egypt was proof of what an understanding with Turkey or the "fiction" of Turkish suzerainty would come to mean in practice. At the back of his mind lurked the hope that provided Britain maintained a sufficiently strong position and an effective control over the administration in Mesopotamia, the vilayet of Basra might in the end be annexed and a veiled protectorate over the Bagdad vilayet be exercised. In London he called this thought "a counsel of perfection"; while there he began to admit that it would probably have to give way to a less satisfactory solution.[47]

Much to Cox's dismay the talks in London proceeded under the "evil star" of President Wilson. Wilson, everyone feared, would exercise the most potent influence at the Peace Conference and render any question of annexation exceedingly difficult. Thus the essential problem of Mesopotamia's future status could not be thrashed out. For Sykes's mandate formula was not ventilated at all. Cox's "expert" suggestion amounted, in essence, to the establishment of a protectorate, and was a virtual reiteration of his earlier case for administrative amalgamation of the two vilayets of Basra and Bagdad. The British High Commissioner should be President of a Council that was to consist of the ministers, half native, half British, and be assisted by a body of a dozen prominent and representative natives.[48]

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42. contd., ting future of Mesopotamia. To save time they would like conference to take place at Cairo. Could you without serious inconvenience arrange to pay brief visit there in near future, and if so, when would it suit you best to arrive? Matter is of some urgency. It concerns question of adjusting policy of H.M.G. as to future of Mesopotamia described in tel. of 29 March 1917 to latest developments of political and military situation in Europe and to peace pronouncements of Entente Powers, the adjustment to be such as to interfere as little as possible with the progress of the country (~~sic~~

The decisive Eastern Committee meeting, on April 24, which Cox attended to discuss his Memorandum that reviewed the administrative problems in Mesopotamia, must have confirmed his strong views that the British must keep hold of the vilayets of Basra and Bagdad.[49] Holderness alone pointed to the likelyhood that at the Peace Conference Britain would meet a demand "for some sort of international control". The rest either said nothing or else endorsed Curzon's retort that international control must be resisted. The general mood of the meeting is revealed in its seizure of a new opportunity to discuss proclamation of the annexation of Basra. Sykes who was present, and cannot have been too happy in the ranks of the Curzon and Cox phalanx, seems to have been satisfied with objecting to the word annexation as "too inauspicious".[50] On the whole, the meeting was a skirmish about nomenclature that would permit of waving the principle of no annexation. As Curzon expressed his hope:

> "a terminological variant such as "perpetual lease" or enclave might be found, both to safeguard the reality which we must not abandon, and to save the appearances which the occasion might require." 51

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42.contd., under British auspices (sic!)...proposed visit should be kept secret."
43.Philip Graves, The Life of Sir Percy Cox, London, 1941, p.237. As for Ormsby-Gore and his further mission to Palestine, see letter from Mark Sykes to R.Wingate, 3 March 1918, F.O.800/221.
44.Philip Graves, op.cit., pp.235-247. In this sense Cox had already made his point in a tel. to I.O. of 25 Jan.1918 which was confirmed by the Viceroy on 28 Jan.1918, CAB 27/23.
45.Philip Graves, op.cit., p.239
46.Cox to Shuckburgh, 20 April 1918, I.O. 2571/17.
47.ibid.
48.Eastern Committee Minutes, 24 April 1918.
49.For Cox's very lengthy Memo of 22 April see I.O. 2571/17. This Memo was an extension of his earlier note to Shuckburgh of 20 April, on which he had received comments by Islington and also Curzon. His letter to Shuckburgh, therefore, expresses better his views
50.see 48. Milner Papers 119 .
51.ibid.

By following this counsel Cox was to leave a fatal legacy for Arnold Wilson, his replacement at Bagdad.

Meanwhile, Whitehall advanced more sober estimates. Appearances must be made to match the political realities that reinforced those embarrassing new principles. Britain, if not the Empire, would after the war be physically present in Mesopotamia. It could not hide behind a dubious phrase. Therefore, regardless of how long the definition of the political and legal status of Mesopotamia remained undecided, there was a sudden rush to educate American opinion in favour of British rule in Mesopotamia.[52]

At least some of the essential ingredients of Sykes's mandate formula began to materialise. Educating American opinion was a far cry from procuring an American invitation to the British to take charge of Mesopotamia, but it might ease Wilson's task on the Capitol if he had been requested to tender such an invitation to Whitehall.

Read with hindsight, the efforts made to achieve this end were clumsy in the extreme. The "anti-imperialists" together with the "West Arabian School"[53] in Whitehall reckoned that they had triumphed in ousting the Government of India from the principal role, only to learn that "anti-imperialist" America regarded management by Whitehall as the greater evil. As we know, the India Office in conjunction with Robert Cecil and the Garden Suburb had made use of the Round Table communications with George Louis Beer in America.[54] Now the India Office

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52. As Balfour had put it at the Eastern Committee meeting of 24 April 1918: "an Arab State under British protection would satisfy him (Wilson) and with him the American public though less enlightened, if it were shown that the Arabs could not stand alone".

53. Its distinguished representative, of course, was Curzon.

put the blame for Beer's views on Indian role in Mesopotamia on Curtis, who on a lecture tour through America had recently given talks on the subject of British India. Shuckburgh was furious with Curtis who had so badly acted as the envoy of the Garden Suburb.

However, George Louis Beer preferred Indian management not for India's sake but as camouflage for British acquisition of Mesopotamia, so applied as to make that acquisition acceptable to American opinion. Shuckburgh and Hirtzel, after sensing his attitude, agreed that, to bolster it, H.M.G. must be presented as advancing the Arab cause on Wilsonian lines.[55]

The Arab cause to be thus advanced was hardly that advanced by Sykes in 1918;[56] it was more like the sombre picture drawn by Cox[57] of helpless people dependent for salvation on a civilised power. The essential was to set Beer's mind running along those lines, and since Curtis was no longer a trustworthy envoy, Lord Reading was given the job of messenger: As Hirtzel wrote to Cecil by August 8:

> "It is suggested that Lord Reading should see Beer, informally acquaint him with that policy (see below), and set his mind running on the right lines. It is not desirable - regard being had to the flux in which everything is - that Beer should present the appearance of being "inspired", or that anything should be said to or through him which could be quoted hereafter as a pledge. It is suggested that the following papers might be given to Lord Reading:
>
> Baghdad Proclamation of 19 March 1917,
> S of S for India tel. of29 March 1917,
> Sir Percy Cox's Memo of 22 April 1918,
>
> which has been accepted by H.M.G. His Lordship would of course not think it necessary to go into detail with Beer; but these papers would probably enable him to establish the point that the policy of H.M.G. is in accord with the principles of self-determination so far as that principle is applicable outside Europe..." 58

54. see pp. 38-39 ;For the Garden Suburb cf. Lord Hankey, The Supreme Command 1914-1918, London 1961, vol.II, p.590.
55. Shuckburgh to Hirtzel, 5 August 1918, I.O. 3618.

In general, these tactics dovetailed with the numerous communications of British officials with members of the American Inquiry and, in particular, with George Louis Beer.[59] Of course, Beer was no plenipotentiary of the American President. On the other hand, as Hirtzel had emphasized, he had to take precautions not to look "inspired" to his American colleagues. But even were he not persuaded openly to advocate Whitehall's stake in Mesopotamia before his President, he would object strongly to international administration in the territories which were at the disposal of the Allies. For in a strict sense, national administration was one of the sine qua nons of the Round Table, i.e."concentration of responsibility". As things turned out, Beer upheld this principle, and so remained in favour of the Anglo-Indian cause with regard to Mesopotamia. His report for the Inquiry on "The Future of Mesopotamia"[60] which he had written before the end of 1917, was left as it was.

The full effects of Reports and Memoranda can seldom be precisely ascertained; this applies above all to evaluating their translation into action. In a sense their true significance lies rather in the ideas they express than what they bring about. Thus in the case of the India Office, a wealth of notes and memoranda reveal not only the motive forces of the moment; taken together, they also reveal an astonishing process of formation of political opinion and a change of out-

56. see p. 112. According to Sykes plenty of Arab government officials from lowest to highest were only waiting to be reinstated in the new indigenous government system to be set up at the end of the war.
57. see p. 87, footnote 26.
58. Memo for Lord Robert Cecil from A.Hirtzel, 8Aug.18, I.O., P. 3618.
59. For similar contacts mainly through Wiseman-Eustace Percy, R.Cecil cf. Lawrence E.Gelfand, op.cit., chapt.4. The Inquiry and the Allies.
60. G.L.Beer, "The Future of Mesopotamia", in: Gray, Ed., African Questions at the Paris Peace Conference, New York, 1923; also Gelfand, p.233.

look. Whether or why the India Office failed to win the full support of George Louis Beer is relatively unimportant. The important factor was its gradual shift from behalf of the Government of India towards dependence on the United States. President Wilson absorbed more attention (and animosity) than did any other political factor. As Balfour once stated, Wilson since he had entered the War for great world objects had every right to a voice in questions of peace, even where he not at war, as in the case of Turkey.[61] In detail, as Balfour pointed out, the realisation of the great objects would give to the one and take away from the other as the new standards in international relations might determine.

Thsu when Smuts plucked the mandate concept from the lower levels of political debate and presented it to the world, he acted like a croupier producing new regulations for the same old international game of Roulette. With the India Office near the table, and the bets of all the players placed, he could spin both wheel and ball. It was at high level inside the War Cabinet that Smuts's main contribution to the mandate concept lay.

Earlier and elsewhere in its Middle Eastern context and from the British side, it is Mark Sykes who must be credited with its first emergence.[62] When he had spun the wheel at the beginning of the year, the psychological moment seemed to have arrived. Wilson's and Lloyd George's statements on the principles of peace coincided with the Turkish peace feelers. Further, as Smuts had then pointed out, Russia's

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61. CAB 23/14, Cabinet Meeting, 3 October 1918.
62. Gelfand's book on the Inquiry as all other accounts of the emergence of the mandate concept are completely ignorant of the role which Sykes played in it. As to Gelfand, see particularly, op.cit., p.233.

exit from the war, gave the British Government greater diplomatic freedom. Yet there were several flaws in the pattern that Sykes desired: Wilson`s and Lloyd George`s statements had not yet sunk deeply enough into the fabric of the India Office, and of Whitehall at large. And by the time Brest-Litovsk boosted the morale of the Turks the moment had passed. Further Sykes acted from a much lower level than Smuts; he was able to broach his suggestion only to a small, in fact almost an "esoteric", audience. Though privileged, he was not in a strong enough position to keep the ball in play. Had he attempted to do so in any overt way, he might have failed.

In politics, Sykes counts rather as a middleman, and it is in this context that one must read his communications to Picot, intended to dissuade the French from a course of annexation in the Middle East. As he wrote in one of his frequent letters to Picot:

> "I am of opinion that as matters now stand certain points should be taken into consideration. One is that the comsent of the governed and the consent of the world are essential to any form of foreign influence or control over an emancipated people.
> Secondly, it is no use thinking in terms of the past. Kerenski`s disappearance and the advent of the Bolsheviks have made a decided difference in world affairs. President Wilson`s voice is now the important one, and ideas that do not fit in with his speeches won`t have much influence on the peace conference. Any question of annexation or direct control as a post-war form of settlement I think is now fairly disposed of." 63

In conclusion, among the men concerned with the Middle East at Whitehall, Cairo and Simla, Mark Sykes was by far the most complex, if judged by the political pattern suggested for the Middle East.This

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63.Mark Sykes to George Picot,3 March 1918,F.O.800/221;similar communications were made throughout the year,see Memo by Sykes,3 July 1918 in: F.O.371/4354, several records of teleprinter conversations with Picot are contained in F.O.800/221.

His pattern reflected his multifarious lines of reasoning and modes of action - all geared to the ultimate purpose of weaving the internal and extraneous political forces in the Middle East into a durable and living fabric.

However, since his complex thought stemmed largely from his juggling with political events and trends, in which he was guided, on the one hand, by political opportunism, and, on the other, by sentiments of a dilettante, one wonders what real life there was with which to imbue his pattern. Sykes was spared to face this question so long as the pressures of the war lasted. By the end of the war he tried to escape "the hour of truth" by replacing the war-time exigencies with pressing strategic bonds for the Middle East; in other words, he tried to inspire co-operation by stressing the importance of the "Arab-Jewish -Armenian barrier" as a sort of Cordon Sanitaire running across the Middle East to counter any future Turco-German combine using Islam as a political weapon.[64] But the bogey of such a Turco-German combine, though it might possibly hace prompted joint talks inside the C.I.D., did not impress the peoples of the Middle East.

Sykes`s hectic hurrying from one rostrum to another in the Middle East and in Paris during the last months of his life was directly connected with the fact that once the war had ended, the balls he had kept juggling in the air fell one after another to the ground.

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64. Apprcciation of the Situation in Syria, Palestine, and Lesser Armenia, by Colonel Sir Mark Sykes, 22 January 1919, Lord Lothian Papers, GD 40/17/37.

## Chapter III

### The A-Mandate before the Supreme Council

"Under Art.22 of the Covenant, the mandate can be varied to an almost infinite extent".

Eric Drummond, 1924, C.O.730/66/27132

For lack of prior definition of the term mandate, article 22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations was ambiguous. Its ambiguity has seldom been adequately studied; as a result its significance has been overstated and distorted, for it has too exclusively been equated with the tutelage of backward peoples and indeed with the issue of self-determination. However article 22 was to all intents and purposes also a formula for providing expansion of imperial strategic control with international consent or, more generally, to fill the vacuum left by defunct enemy empires with law and order.

Mandate enthusiasts, such as Robert Cecil wanted prior definition, both in the interests of making powers think twice before taking on the job[1], and because prior definitions would remove the objec-

1.Eastern Committee Minutes, 9 December 1918, Milner Papers 119.

tions of native politicians and colonial officials already on the spot who were hostile to "anything savouring of internationalism".[2]

But in the end nothing formal had been decided when the mandates were allotted - a sad result due not to neglect but to the struggle that raged between two sets of contestants - the opponents[3] and the temporizers. Since the Iraq mandate was in the end run without any formula at all, and since its officials later claimed that the absence of definition amounted to a victory for British policy, the struggle merits description.

When Smuts retreated from a policy of annexation to that of mandatory rule in Africa,[4] and when Lloyd George submitted the compromise formula of the three-tier mandate system to the Council of Ten on January 30,[5] there was great relief among the members of the Conference. For in view of the series of postponements of actual negotiation about the German settlement, nervousness began to spread among its members.[6] Small wonder that there was spontaneous and unreserved readiness to accept and pass the mandate compromise as it stood. Even its drafting was not questioned. As Cecil reminded Lloyd George two years later:

> "Art.22 dealing with mandates was drafted by Philip Kerr and presented by you to the Council of Ten and adopted by them. In consequence the League of Nations Commission was always warned off any modification of the article".7

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2. Cecil made this point in an undated letter to Milner, presumely in 1919/1920, in which he advocated the inclusion of Egypt within the mandate system, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/75.
3. These were the League- and the mandate-enthusiasts who tried to restrain imperialism.
4. cf. Duncan Hall, op.cit., pp.351-2; Roger Louis, op.cit., p.132.
5. The formula is contained in: Foreign Relations of the U.S., Paris Peace Conference, III, pp.795-6.
6. cf. Harold Nicolson, Peacemaking 1919, London 1933, 1967, p.47.

Understandably, the Peace Conference down to drafting committee level was anxious not to rewaken the dominion quarrel over the mandates.[8] However, while Art.22 was being carefully polished, discussion of the mandates in the Middle East went on. Luckily the dominions were not involved here so that the British Delegation could outwardly at least act in harmony. Yet the Middle East was no less a hornets nest than Africa and the Pacific Islands.

The overriding issue was whether and when the United States would take up the mandate for Armenia.[9] Connected with it was the question of what should be done about Syria, Palestine and Iraq till Wilson had made up his mind. Orlando, the Italian Prime Minister, pointed out the three choices; either the military occupation of the Ottoman Empire should go on as at the current moment and the settlement of the mandates be left to the League of Nations, or action should be taken on provisional mandates leaving their definite form to be settled by the League, or else the Council of Ten should act as the League of Nations and settle the business immediately.[10]

The last solution appealed most to Lloyd George. He made it clear that he would in any case no longer accept the status quo, in which the armistice had left the Empire with 1.084.000 troops stationed in the various parts of the Middle East. The heavy expenses thus incurred were becoming unbearable.[11] Yet Wilson refused to be stampeded

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7. Cecil to Lloyd George, 4 April 1921, Lloyd George Papers, F/6/6/64. About his many private and informal conversations at Paris which touched the mandates Cecil gives only short references in his Diary of the Delegation, Cecil Papers 51131, British Museum.
8. cf. Roger Louis, op.cit., pp.133-137.
9. In late 1918 it was temporarily contemplated to give Palestine or East Africa to the U.S., but probably due to Amery's strong protests Lloyd George discarded such ideas.

into the role of a mandatory. In principle, he was, as he put it once, "disinclined to see the United States shirk any burden or duty";[12] yet in view of the weight of the burden involved in the mandatory duties, he must explain the whole matter to his people and ask for their consent. Why should military control over the Ottoman Empire not be redistributed by the Allies rather than resort to the awkward procedure of provisional mandates? Lloyd George thought this a good idea and he told his colleagues that he was ready to withdraw the British troops from Syria. Anyone who expected Clemenceau to jump at Lloyd George's hint was disappointed. For Clemenceau pointed out that everything hinged on the situation in Russia and that therefore French troops could not so easily be recalled from Odessa and the Caucasus.

This impasse entailed another serious delay in the settlement of the mandates. Its good effect however was that it spurred on the drafters of the mandate. The British mandate enthusiasts Robert Cecil, Philip Baker and Eric Drummond were alarmed by the likelihood that a reshuffle of occupation forces in the Middle East might prejudice the final allottment of the Arab provinces as provided for in Art.22. Their ranks were reinforced when Arthur Hirtzel from the India Office began to push for an immediate definition and approval of a model A-mandate.

However whereas the former seem to have been pure theoreticians primarily concerned with the prestige of the League and ordinary procedure, and oblivious to day to day local complications such as those with which A.T.Wilson was dealing in Iraq, Hirtzel had practical

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10.see 5.ibid.,p.806.
11.ibid., out of the 1.084.000 troops 250.000-300.000 were British.As for the amount of expenditure see p.102.
12.see 10.ibid.,p.807.

salient points in view. He thought that a model A-mandate would provide Arnold Wilson with those guiding lines that would set his policy in Iraq on the right path. Further one must read into his anxiety the general concern of the India Office, as of Mark Sykes, in a homogeneous administrative system for the entire Middle East, no matter whether the various regions were assigned to different powers. Only thus would peace be preserved in the Middle East. Otherwise the Arabs, because of their common bonds, would play off the powers against each other as an indigenous population under international administration was wont to do.[13]

The same group had yet another motive for wanting Art.22 rendered less vague by means of definition of model-mandates. Baker and Cecil saw advantage in a package solution, i.e. insertion of the mandate-terms together with the names of the mandatories into an annex to the general treaties with Germany and Turkey respectively, which in any case embodied the Covenant with its Art.22.[14] They reckoned that if the mandate settlement was split up and dealt with in several conventions, any parliament that had to pass these would be given ample opportunity for obstruction.

Those complex motives underlay Hirtzel's memorandum of April 9 and Cecil's full approval ofthe points raised in it. He saw in President Wilson's suggestion of an Inter-Allied Commission[15] a welcome

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13. see pp.235-6.;also: Observations on Arabian Policy, by Mark Sykes, 17 May 1917, PRO 30/30/12.
14. Eric Drummond to Balfour, 7 Augsut 1919,Lothian Papers GD 40/17/75; with particular reference to the Senate cf. Bonar Law to Lloyd George, 3 May 1919, Lloyd George Papers, F/30/3/52.
15. On the King-Crane Commission see Harry N.Howard, The King-Crane Commission. An American Inquiry in the Middle East, Beirut, 1963.

delay in the allotment of the mandates. This breathing space should, he urged, be used for defining their terms. As he concluded his memorandum:

> "One further point might be considered now. As a matter of tactics it would seem desirable to get the mandates approved by the Allied Governments before it is decided what Powers are to be the Mandatories, especially as in the case of the Middle East, if the proposed International Commission is to go out, there must be several months' delay before the mandates are allotted. It is therefore suggested that the question should be taken up with the Allies as soon as possible."16

Cecil thereupon suggested to Hankey the appointment of one or two commissions for settling the terms of the mandates.[17] He obviously thought of separate commissions for the German colonies and the Turkish dependencies. However, when Bonar Law, a member of the British Delegation, took up Cecil's suggestion and drew Lloyd George's attention to it he qualified his approval of it with the observation that no suggestion was made about the Turkish mandates as they did not yet arise.[18] There was obviously a divergence of opinion as to the expediency of settling the terms of the A-mandates in the manner advocated by the League of Nations champions.

This manner was summarised by Philip Baker in a three point programme which ingeniously sought to reconcile the maintenance of the League's authority on that of the Supreme Council with the imperialist designs for carving up the Middle East. Surprisingly Philip Baker and Eric Drummond reckoned that by the mere fact that their procedure fol-

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16. Robert Cecil (Paris) to Maurice Hankey, 26 April 1919, Lloyd George Papers F/6/6/34, this letter contains the quoted passage from Hirtzel's Memorandum.
17. ibid.
18. see 14. Bonar Law to Lloyd George, 3 May 1919.

lowed on some points of the Covenant, both League and Mandates would rise in the general esteem of the public, and favourably affect Labour opinion. As the points read:

> "(i)The Council of Five must instruct the Mandates Commission to draft the general principles of "A" Mandates.
> (ii)The Council of Five must decide that, while Territorial arrangements must be made by the Allies, the Council of the League must draw up and confer all Mandates.
> (iii)The Council of Five should publish the Commission's drafts as recommendations by the Allies to the League". 19

Point two of the programme reveals how deeply the discernible anti-imperialist intent of the scheme was compromised.

Although the bridge was thrown to the other side, the imperialists and would-be mandatories refrained from entering it. They were beginning to feel the financial strain at home; they rejected any pre-fabricated mandate-constitution,because it might burden them with too many material obligations, or, the other way about, deprive them of economic assets held by the territories they desired.No doubt a natural shrewdness in avoiding what had not yet proved its practical value played a due part.

There was indeed danger that the terms of the model-mandate might become too artificial to meet the practical problems on the spot, or else correspond to the capacity of the mandatory. In this respect the League of Nations people displayed indeed gross neglect and indifference. Abundant empirical data could have been supplied, for instance by the findings of the proposed Inter-Allied Commission, or even of its emaciated remnant the King-Crane Commission. For according to the

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19.P.J.Baker to Robert Cecil, 7 August 1919, Turkish Mandates "A Draft" Lothian Papers GD 40/17/75.

instructions given to this last it was more than a mere inquiry about Self-Determination. Yet the Bakers and Cecils were keener to exploit the delay than the findings that resulted from it. In this respect they certainly shared a conviction expressed by D.G.Hogarth, though not his conclusions.

D.G.Hogarth who had become utterly disillusioned about the Allies' policy in the Middle East[20] believed that the course of events in the various territories had already outrun the purpose of the Inter--Allied Commission. Indications as to who was to be mandatory were everywhere only too clear to the local peoples; no one could make them believe in pretences. Instead they ought to be given time "to realize and, in some way, accept their assignment to their respective Mandatories".[21] If the Commission departed before such acceptance or acquiescence was secured it would bring "not peace, but a sword!"[22] Hogarth also suggested that in the end separate commissions from each of the mandatories to their particular territories might be the best alternative.

Unlike Hogarth, however, the League champions still saw a chance of getting Art.22 complemented before the mandates were formally assigned. Their hope was primarily a tactical and legal consideration which, if it met with success, would have strengthened the League's position in any future dispute about the interpretation of the mandate concept.As for the mandate peoples the League speakers

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20.see D.G.Hogarth to G.Clayton,19 May 1919, Hogarth Papers.
21.Hogarth to Balfour, 19 May 1919, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/38. In this letter Hogarth referred particularly to the French attitude of non-cooperation with regard to the A-mandates, pending the substitution of their troops for the British ones in Syria.
22.ibid.

ignored their wishes just as much as did the French and British Governments; indeed, they belittled the King-Crane Commission no less than did those who obstructed it.

The development that caused the League of Nations champions to be optimistic about the supplementation of Art.22 with a model A-mandate was that by the beginning of August 1919 the Americans began to join the fray.To be sure, nobody yet knew whether they would become a mandatory, but by sending a Draft A-mandate of their own to London they indicated readiness to participate in the preliminaries.[23]

Incidentally, the Draft was signed by House who was the United States representative on the Mandate Commission that had been suggested by Cecil.[24]It was dated August 1, and was a consequence of a Draft A-mandate by Cecil sent to House in the previous month.[25]

Even more promising was the fact that Milner, the Secretary of State for the Colonies, had in the meantime become the British representative on the special commission charged with the drafting of model mandates for all three classes. Milner had in March not only been opposed to discussing the A-mandates, but had also deprecated the idea of drawing up a "typical mandate" for the Ottoman territories.[26] That he now meant business was clearly demonstrated by his efforts to bring his French colleague, Monsieur Simon, to the table.[27]

Inspite of Milner's endeavours, Simon categorically refused to come to London and discuss the problem of the A-mandates. In giving

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23.see Milner Papers 153, American Draft, Class "A" Mandate, M.C.17.
24.see p.139.
25.Cecil to Milner,11 July 1919, Milner Papers 153 , the cover to the annexure that contains the mandate explains the need for a "skeleton mandate".

his reasons Simon summarised the many problems of the Ottoman Empire that had not yet been dealt with by the Supreme Council. He argued that the Supreme Council must not be frog-marched by the Commission on Mandates. In essence, however, his fear was that the Supreme Council might interprete the model A-mandate as a replacement for the Sykes-Picot Agreement and the Anglo-French-Italian Agreement of 1917. As he concluded his reasoning:

> "Under such conditions of uncertainty when the Anglo-French agreement of 1916 and the Anglo-French-Italian agreement of 1917 are still on the table of the Conference, and when the Supreme Council has been obliged to reserve its definite attitude in regard to them, it does not seem to me comprehensible that the Commission on Mandates should be able to undertake indirectly the solution of these questions. In any case the French Government cannot accept such a proposal."[28]

The impasse was complete. Compliance with the French interpolation must lead to abandonment of the entire scheme of the League of Nations advocates. Yet worse was foreseen. In Drummond's opinion the French would not only shelve the discussion of the general principles of "A" mandates until they knew the exact territories to be allotted to themselves as mandatory power; thereafter they would endeavour "to Whittle down the mandate to suit their convenience".[29] Ironically he himself was later to assist the British to do just this. Cecil suspected the French of trying to "give the go-by to the whole idea of mandates in Asia".[30] To Philip Baker it was a "pointblank refusal to recognize the obligations involved in previous agreements".[31]

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26. Memorandum by Lord Milner, Mandates. Under Clause XIX of the Draft Covenant of the League of Nations, W.C.P.211, Secret, 8 March 1919, CAB 29/9/1, also in Milner Papers 153.
27. The correspondence between Milner and Simon at the turn of July/Aug. 1919 is contained in the Milner Papers 153 .
28. Simon to Milner, 4 August 1919, Very Urgent, ibid.
29. Drummond to Balfour, 7 August 1919, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/75.

Yet all these men's inflammatory petitions to Milner to save their cause were in vain. Britain no longer possessed the means to wage a diplomatic war of attrition in the Middle East. Her all - but exclusive occupation of the Middle East had been shorn of its diplomatic bargaining power because retrenchment of military expenditure there had become an absolute necessity. Therefore, British action could not, even in the last resort, be made dependent on a French quid pro quo. Britain's diplomatic strength was further diminished by the intrinsic incompatibility of her numerous commitments and declarations. Altogether, Britain's diplomatic position vis-a-vis her rivals in the Middle East was the direct opposite of the role in which Lloyd George had expected to find himself at the end of the war. She was perched on a quicksand which once trodden upon would suck away all her constructive ability and initiative. Resistance would merely proclaim her debility. Recovery of strength could be hoped for only thanks to some happy circumstance at the end of a long line of least resistance. This conclusion did not commend itself to Lloyd George.

Much to the alarm of Curzon, Milner, Chamberlain and Herbert Fisher Lloyd George suddenly became set on a large speculative deal with the French. As Curzon described it to Balfour in August 1919:

> "In return for giving to the French (with or without Palestine) Syria, Cilicia, and Armenia, Great Britain should have the Mandate for Constantinople and Asia Minor. Or, alternatively, if France hankered after the two last named regions, she should surrender her Syrian ambitions and let us have Syria, Palestine and Cilicia."32

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30. Cecil to Milner, 8 August 1919, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/75.
31. Baker to Cecil, 8 August 1919, ibid.
32. Curzon to Balfour, 20 Augsut 1919, Balfour Papers 49734, British Museum. The long letter is in many ways revealing. It gives evidence of the general exhaustion of the ministers at the end of the war, e.g

As a basis for negotiation this deal would have had the advantage of by-passing the issue of military retrenchment. Its opponents agreed, however, that a British flag flying over Constantinople would expose the Empire to unfamiliar and treacherous winds. A British mandate over Constantinople would disturb the true orientation of the Imperial policy in the East. As Curzon expounded their view:

> "we (Britain) would presently become entangled in the cockpit of the Balkans, and we might later on have to face the resentment of a resuscitated Russia."33

Surprisingly , and much to the amusement of Curzon, it was the "lifelong Radicals" such as Montagu and Barnes who supported Lloyd George in his imperialistic line, whereas it was the Conservatives who were anxious to curtail the responsibilities and keep out of"the Eastern Question on its European side".[34]The same split of opinion seems to have applied to Palestine. According to Curzon the Prime Minister clung to it and talked about Jerusalem "with almost the same enthusiasm as about his native hills".[35]By contrast, Curzon discarding all sentiment, pointed to the negligible strategical importance of Palestine for the defence of Egypt. He further referred to the mounting difficulty of drawing a boundary between Syria and Palestine and placing both countries under separate European Powers. Instead the Cabinet should discard its commitments in Palestine. As he put it to Balfour:

> "I am so convinced that Palestine will be a rankling thorn in the flesh of whoever is charged with its Mandate that I would withdraw from this responsibility while we yet can."[36]

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32.ibid. contd. Milner,Balfour,Curzon himself. It also reveals the mounting distrust of Lloyd George's "policy" in the East by the Cabinet. For the background of this latter see also Zeine N.Zeine,op.cit., p.107. In this letter which Zeine has not seen Curzon explaines why he cannot accept Lloyd George's offer to go to Paris replacing Balf.

33.ibid.Curzon to Balfour, 34. ibid.

For Britain, the sine qua non among the mandatory stakes remained, of course, Iraq including Mosul. Everybody insisted that it must be entrusted to Britsin. Incidentally, indicative of this unvarnished interest in Iraq was that Lloyd George had exempted Iraq from his speculative deal with the French suggested to the Cabinet. One may even assume that he constructed that choice between either French Constantinople or French Syria on the assumption that France, because of her large financial interests in Turkey, would finally leave Syria to the British Connected with this latent assumption was without doubt the "excessive" importance which Lloyd George, according to Curzon, attached in those talks to the necessity of having a railway and a pipe-line exclusively in British hands from Iraq to a Mediterranean port.

On the whole, however, the criteria for the delimitation of frontiers were those suggested by Balfour; they should be economic and ethnographic rather than strategic. As he urged the Cabinet:

> "Do not let us further impede the already slow and difficult movements of diplomacy by providing needless safeguards against so remote a possibility as a war with France. It will probably never take place; if it does take place it will probably be waged with weapons whose character and use we cannot foresee; in any case it will not be decided in Syria. Let us therefore for the moment forget these local views of strategy and take a more practical view of the position". 37

It was in the same memorandum that Balfour urged that the fundamental conception underlying the Sykes-Picot agreement should be maintained

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35.ibid.

36.ibid., according to Curzon, Lloyd George in reaching for Constantinople was ,however, supported by "a few stout Tories of the Walter Long and Eric Geddes School, who revel in the thought of the British flag flying over Constantinople".

37.Memorandum: Syria,Palestine,Mesopotamia, by Balfour, 11 August 1919, Balfour Papers 49752, British Museum. For Lloyd George's views see also Note of Conversation between P.M. and M.Loucheur,CAB 21/158.

namely "a French sphere centring round Syria, a British sphere centring round the Euphrates and the Tigris, and a home for the Jews in the valley of the Jordan".[38] Closer harmony between the agreement and the Covenant could be brought about by the abandonment of the special privileges in the blue and red territories. They should be absorbed into the general sphere of areas A and B. Further the economic monopoly assigned to France and Britain respectively should be abandoned. Balfour's principles governed the decisions taken by the autumn of 1919.[39]

During the period in which the British Government abandoned Faisal to the French and both powers began to take up and consolidate their positions in the spheres claimed by them, the work on the model A-mandate had come to a standstill in the Mandate Commission of the Supreme Council. This feature of how dependent the League champions and their draftsmen were on imperialist diplomacy has often been overlooked in assessments and interpretations of Art.22. By mid-September, Milner, in view of the French boycott of joint discussions, had deprecated any further action until the time when the Turkish treaty came up for negotiation.[40] In the end he may have welcomed the French boycott for in view of the wave of nationalism that went over the Middle East and British experiments in Egypt, he felt that any pattern of A-mandates had to await designing until the internal political situation in the Middle East had cleared up and the strategical desiderata on its north-eastern flank been obtained.

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38. see 37.; cf. also Zeine N.Zeine, op.cit., pp.99-100 for a similar memorandum of July.
39. cf. Zeine N.Zeine, op.cit., chapt.VI, The Settlement of the Syrian Question - 1919, pp.107-127.
40. Foreign Relations of the U.S., Paris Peace Conference 1919, vol.XI, p.647.

There was no longer any chance of approval of a skeleton A-mandate by the Supreme Council, for at about the same time Lloyd George had suggested adjourning the Peace Conference until after the American position with regard to a mandate had cleared up.[41] Consequently, given no clear interpretation of Art.22, the A-mandate became something like a "plaything" bossed between the individual mandatory and the Council of the League of Nations. In the political calculation of the mandatory power, Art.22 ran as the lowest common factor.

A further defect was that the very practicability of the League completely depended on the patronage of Whitehall. British politicians such as Curzon therefore underwent moments of great temptation to exploit this relationship in order to push through some delicate matter. For instance as Curzon backed by Hurst, the legal adviser to the Foreign Office, were later to prepare their stance on the "unequal" Treaty with Iraq:

> "We are in a position to take a fairly high line at Geneva because it is always open to H.M.G. to say that if the Council of the League makes difficulties...Britain will throw up the Mandate altogether and leave the League."42

There were other moments to come which although perhaps less dramatic touched a yet more fundamental issue. One such was when, in June 1920 two months after Iraq had been allotted to Britain at San Remo, Lloyd George rejected the British Draft Mandate for Iraq because it compelled the mandatory power to provide for eaqual trading rights

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41. see 40, vol.VIII, p.203. On 31 October 1919 Lloyd George informed the Cabinet that it was becoming clear that U.S. would not accept a mandate, CAB 23/18.
42. Foreign Office (Hurst) to Colonial Office, 19 Jan.1922, C.O.730/27/3028; see also C.O.730/28/5434.

with all other nations.[43] In Lloyd George's opinion that stipulation went beyond the Covenant, and if laid down so precisely in the Mandate would almost certainly tie the hands of the British Administration in Iraq and involve the mandatory in endless controversy and litigation. As we shall see Lloyd George was in favour of a restricted open door in Iraq. He really thought that Britain had acquired the Garden of Eden which would yield huge profits to British trade and economy.[44]

Yet at the same time Lloyd George's rejection of the Draft Mandate was part of the "revolt" of standard policy-making against infringement by international administration. With his keen sense of politics Lloyd George was reacting to the development that Leonard Woolf had prophesied and advocated during the war, and that was deliberately to be enhanced by the League: namely the dethronement of power from politics through administration.

It remains to be seen how much of the ensuing mandate practice was determined by administrative necessity and how much by political opportunism. Embarrassingly, Art.22 gave scope for both phenomena.

Since there was no generally agreed model A-mandate, Art.22 of the Covenant was as disturbing as it was elastic.

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43. Philip Kerr to Hurst, 25 June 1920, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/75.
44. cf. Churchill to Lloyd George, 14 Jan. 1921, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/55.

Part Two

# The Fulfilment of the Mandate in Iraq up to 1926

## Chapter IV

### The Political Role of the Oil-bearing Regions of Iraq

"One of our first acts as controlling Power will apparantly be - by recognising the 1912 Agreement and reconstituting the Turkish Petroleum Company in our own interests - to deprive the new State of a free hand in disposing of one of its most valuable assets".

Montagu to Harcourt, 23 Dec.1918, CAB 21/119

"I had independently arrived at the conclusion that so long as the Americans are excluded from participation in Iraq oil, we shall never see the end of our difficulties in the Middle East."

Churchill to Curzon, 1 Febr.1922, C.O.730/27

British mandatory-policy in Iraq, with all its pretences, vacillations and actual achievements, cannot be understood without a prior assessment of the role that the oil-wealth of the country - at the time largely hypothetical - played in its formation. Owing to the sudden and vital importance of fuel oil for the Royal Navy, not to mention its rivals and merchant shipping at large, as well as to disquieting estimates of world oil resources, the acquisition of oil-bearing regions (or at least a majority share in their exploitation) had rapidly become a major objective of the British Government in the Middle East. Further, because of the significance for the Empire of controlling the oil of Iraq, not to mention the appeal that this asset

had for the Cabinet, the oil-argument appeared to politicians as a powerful lever for attaining other political objectives. Among these were the territorial unification of Iraq, or the attempt at extending imperial control to the Caucasus. From this point of view the oil issue helped to buttress the deteriorating imperial edifice in the East.

Accordingly, the political role of the oil-bearing regions of Iraq embodied three distinct aspects: first the oil as a state asset in British Government and particularly Admiralty calculations; second the oil as an objective for private and foreign entrepreneurs;[1] third the oil-argument as a vehicle for justifying imperial expenditure and British commitments to Iraq.

No one aspect, however, was the sole responsibility of a single person or group of persons or office in the sense that their actions and thought were consistently determined thereby. Some of their attitudes and measures were prompted by variable or mixed motives. Furthermore after about 1923, the Admiralty's strong pressure on the Cabinet to secure physical control over all oil-bearing regions including Mosul, began to coincide with, if not to be gradually substituted by, the Turkish Petroleum Company's strong interest in the administrative and territorial unity of the Bagdad and Mosul vilayets, to which its concession applied.

But whatever the complications, the explosive nature of the oil-policy stemmed in the main from disputes over the terms of the Ottoman concession given to the T.P.C. on the eve of the war. Although

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1. As we shall see some private British oil-interests did not hesitate to ally themselves with foreign interests rather than supporting the Government policy.

the validity of the contract was proclaimed by the British Government, its members were consumed by mounting apprehension that the Government of the United States might submit the oil-issue for arbitration to the Hague Tribunal; British expert opinion held that in such an event H.M.G. might lose their case.[2]

Consequently, H.M.G. evaded direct challenge before The Hague by admitting the Americans onto the scene. Their entry is a major turning point in the political role of oil in Iraq. For once there was American participation in the T.P.C., Iraq as a whole became rather an international concern than an exclusively British responsibility. Legally H.M.G. remained solely responsible to the League for the maintenance of law and order in, and for the development of, Iraq. But once the T.P.C. became multi-national, Iraq's national fate was increasingly orientated towards the political convenience of international oil interests. Strangely, the British Empire in Iraq began to see itself as the custodian of those interests, a role which appealed more to the mind of L.S. Amery, Secretary of State for the Colonies at that stage, than did that of a mandatory of the League. Although Amery had mixed motives, his action, as we shall see, was determined by the fact that he fully agreed with the Admiralty argument which gave priority to P h y s i c a l  C o n t r o l over the oil-bearing regions rather than to the composition of the T.P.C. Yet how did H.M.G. become entangled in the oil speculation and concession hunting in Iraq, and how did oil affect her policy towards Iraq, particularly under the mandate?

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2.Churchill to Curzon, 1 February 1922, C.O.730/27.

## 1. The Beginnings of Whitehall's Entanglement in the Oil of Iraq.

Both in July 1913 and in March 1914 Sir Edward Grey had sent strong ultimatums to the Ottoman Government protesting at its plans to set up an oil company of its own in the vilayets of Mosul, Bagdad and Basra.[3] He threatened reversal of the whole British policy towards the Ottoman Empire and made firm reservations about the connection between their customs increase and the oil question. In short, he contended that any Company set up in the vilayets must offer the D'Arcy group at least a 50% share in its operations. His demand applied, in the main, to the vilayets of Mosul and Bagdad. As for Basra and Nejd, any concession must respect the "green line" limits of Koweit and give preferential rights to British groups.[4]

Ottoman endeavours to improve Turkey's financial situation, either by monopoly or a partnership in the exploitation of the oil in the Arab dependencies, showed that the sick man at the Porte was not quite so anaemic as Britain and Germany would have liked him to be. Germany, especially, was willing to sacrifice him if to do so would buy her the desired overall understanding with the British Empire. Significantly, unlike his colleagues, Edward Grey was at some moments pre-

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3. Grey to Mallet, 11 March 1914, and Parker (F.O.) to Hakki Pasha, 12 March 1914, in: F.O. 424/251. Grey's letter of July 29th, 1913 is contained in British Documents on the Origin of the War 1898-1914, vol. X,ii, p.198. See Mallet to Grey, 12 March 1914, F.O.424/251: "His Highness, for the first time, spoke of native company as having claim at any rate for participation which could not be ignored. I reminded him of promise to D'Arcy...I said that the worst impression would be created by failure to carry them out. His Highness complained of interminable delay in coming to agreement with Germans and said that it was injust in present state of Ottoman finances to keep them waiting"

4. Parker to Hakki Pasha, 12 March 1914, F.O.424/251.

pared to go to the length of opening the Persian Gulf to unrestricted German naval and commercial activity.[5] He had to give way, however, to the protests of the Empire strategists and the chauvenistic Board of Trade. Britain remained suspicious of Germany's naval policy and, in the Middle East, had to court Russia, a choice of evils. Yet despite Britain's lack of affection for the Wilhelmstraße, German interests in the oil of Iraq had certain indisputable claims under the Bagdad Railway Convention of 1903. The D'Arcy group, by contrast, had merely received a subsequent oral assurance.

On the 16th January 1914 the Foreign Office informed Greenway, the Director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company, that a stage had been reached in the general negotiations with Germany and Turkey which rendered essential a settlement of the Mesopotamian oil-question also. On March 19th an agreement was signed which fused the interests of the T.P.C. and the D'Arcy group. This achieved, the amalgamated group applied to the Ottoman Government for the oil-concession in the Mosul and Bagdad vilayets. The Grand Vizier informed the British and German Ambassadors on the 30th June that he agreed in principle; certain conditions, however, had still to be fixed before a concession could be given. The outbreak of the war prevented a final settlement.

So far as the British Government's interests in Middle Eastern oil in pre-war years were concerned, two facts were outstanding. First, the Foreign Office was unwilling to accept, for Mesopotamia, any company giving the D'Arcy group less than a 50% shareholding. Second,

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5.cf. H. Llewellyn Smith to Churchill, 18 March 1911, B.T. 11/4

on May 20th, 1914 the British Government entered into an arrangement with the A.P.O.C., which afforded it a majority shareholding and vote. The purchase of the Government shares[6] set a precedent for possible Government involvement in Mesopotamia's oil-bearing regions.

The itch to own oil was there even before signature of the actual purchase of the Anglo-Persian shares. On the 6th May the Admiralty, which had informed the Foreign Office about the proposed purchase, observed inter alia that the A.P.O.C. intended to find L 100.000 of capital in order to form a holding company for the D'Arcy group's shares in the T.P.C.. The Foreign Office objected to this proposal on grounds of foreign policy, because throughout the negotiations with Germany and Turkey it had been emphasising that the D'Arcy group and not the A.P.O.C. was the party interested in Mesopotamian oil.[7] The Foreign Office consistently followed this policy of non-involvement throughout the war years, though under heavy pressure from the Admiralty and the Board of Trade to do otherwise.

The Board of Trade was not so easily brushed off; nor was the Admiralty. The former suggested that the capital for the D'Arcy group should be subscribed by the Burmah Oil Company, and that the Company should allow Mr. D'Arcy to participate in the capital to the extent of one-fourth. Furthermore it argued that the capital thus subscribed must be placed under the guarantee of the A.P.O.C.. In fact, its sug-

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6. On the purchase of the government shares see Marian Jack, The Purchase of the British Government shares in the British Petroleum Company 1912-1914, in: Past and Present, No.39, April 1968.
7. cf. Survey of International Affairs 1925, vol.I. Note on Oil, p.530. The transfer of the National Bank of Turkey's interest in the T.P.C. to the A.P.O.C. was part of the plotting of the liquidation of the (non-British) Anglo-Saxon group.

gestion turned the proposal into an agreement subject to Treasury approval. On the 2nd November 1914, Greenway of the Company stated this position to the Foreign Office, pointing out that if the agreement of March were carried out, a safe hold would be established and control of the T.P.C. obtained.

In February 1916, after A.P.O.C. prospectors had carried out extensive geological reconnaissance and had proved that over an area hundred miles inland from the Shatt-el-Arab, lying between Koweit and Ur of the Chaldees, there were possibilities of finding oil,[8] the extension of the concession for Bagdad and Mosul to those districts was considered by the A.P.O.C.. It thought that it must be given ail rights over any portion of the Ottoman territory that might come under British influence at the end of the war,[9] and sounded the Foreign Office to this effect. In reply it was told that H.M.G. were not prepared to express unqualified assent to its claims and assumption and that any further consideration of the matter had to await more settled political conditions. As Maurice De Bunsen put it in a confidential note of March 1916

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8. Memorandum Respecting Oil Concessions in Mesopotamia, by Edward Parkes, F.O., 27 April 1918, Confidential, C.O.730/10/(10967). Annexed to it are the arrangements for fusion of the interests in Turkish Petroleum Concessions of the D'Arcy Group and the T.P.C.
9. Parkes summarized the company's representations as follows:"(1) that the rights, acquired after negotiations extending over several years, of the A.P.O.C. (and its predecessor, Mr.W.K. D'Arcy) to the oil-concessions in Mesopotamia had always been recognised and supported by H.M.G.,(2) that the D'Arcy group (i.e. the A.P.O.C.) was the sole British party to the Agreement of March 1914; (3) that a considerable sum of money had already been spent in connection with the acquisition of the concession, and (4) owing to the British Government's interest in the A.P.O.C. it would not be in the national interest to allow any other rival groups - whether British or Foreign - to acquire concessions in the territory in question". ibid.

to the Admiralty:

> "Sir E. Grey considers it important that the assumption should be at once controverted that the company would, in any case, in the event of any change in the Middle East favourable to British interests occuring, be given complete oil rights over any portion of the Turkish Empire which may come under British influence." 10

Though the company was deterred from pursuing its assumption, Grey nevertheless regarded the oil position as disquieting enough to be considered forthwith by a special committee. This suggestion was transmitted to the Admiralty in the above mentioned note by De Bunsen. In fulfilment, the committee was set up as the Petroleum Department at the Board of Trade. Besides the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade, the Treasury and the India Office were also represented on it. Two main issues predominated on their agenda: first, whether the A.P.O.C. which was controlled by the Government should become involved in the exploitation of Mesopotamian oil; second, how British control could be secured in the T.P.C.,[11] and whether the T.P.C. had good grounds for claiming priority in any concessions that might be given outside the Mosul and Bagdad vilayets. This second topic entailed debate as to whether the A.P.O.C. should be given priority and Government support in obtaining concession rights in those districts to the south of Bagdad vilayet not covered by the T.P.C.'s concession.

In general, both the Admiralty and the Board of Trade doubted whether the T.P.C. had good grounds for claiming priority outside the

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10. Maurice De Bunsen (F.O.) to Admiralty, 2 March 1916, Annex 2 to Memorandum by Parkes (see 8). The note was also sent to the Treasury, Board of Trade and India Office.
11. According to De Bunsen, Grey regarded it as desirable to examine whether the Royal Dutch-Shell Group (also called Anglo-Saxon group) could not be brought under British control. ibid.

two vilayets. They were frank enough about wanting to see the Government-controlled A.P.O.C. involved in Mesopotamia, at least in the strategically important zones at the Persian Gulf head. The India Office, according to Parkes of the F.O., supported the T.P.C.'s claims in the two vilayets but was unaware that the D'Arcy group and the A.P.O.C. had interests outside those boundaries.[12] The Foreign Office deemed it inexpedient that the A.P.O.C. should become interested in the Mesopotamian oil at all. They feared the adverse effect that a government controlled undertaking would have on the scope of British diplomatic freedom and maneuvering. "Government shareholding was a liability whenever the British Government wanted to act as a government".[13]

While the Foreign Office was bound to resent the restriction on diplomatic freedom incurred by the shareholding, it had other pre-war legacies such as Government support of Lord Inchcape's[14] attempt to secure a navigation monopoly in Mesopotamia, or the backing of Mr. D'Arcy's stake in the T.P.C., which were less of a liability. As Edward Parkes put it:

> "In any case, the establishment of an oil monopoly raises very serious considerations, and,...it will, perhaps, not be out of place to mention here that objection, on political and other grounds, is now entertained by some authorities to the maintenance of a river monopoly in Mesopotamia. Thus although His Majesty's Government supported Lord Inchcape in securing a navigation monopoly before the war - indeed, invited him to negotiate for one - altered conditions are considered to make the monopoly no longer desirable despite previous assurances.
> It would seem, therefore, that H.M.G. are not precluded even in face of any pledges they may have given to Mr. D'Arcy in the pre-war period, from dealing with the oil question solely in accordance with present or future conditions, political and commercial." 15

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12. According to Parkes, see 8.
13. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit.,p.99 (University Paperbacks).
14. Mackay, James Lyle, first Earl of Inchcape (1852-1932) shipowner.

The "altered conditions" were international in kind and, as such, connected with the war-time alliances. Would they be temporary and finally revert to their previous state once these alliances came to an end? At any rate, so long as these alliances served their war-time purpose men such as Curzon, Balfour and Sykes persistently tried to shelve any issues that might jeopardize them. However the extent of their measures and the significance of their thought cannot be assessed without first examining the formidable position of Lord Inchcape on the one hand, pressure from the spot for early investment in Mesopotamia on the other, and, finally, the world oil-situation and the imperial conclusions as estimated and pressed upon the Government by the Admiralty.

## 2.The Impact of Oil and other Economic Interests on the British Government during the War.

The case of Lord Inchcape embodies the entire problem of Britain`s monopolistic policy in Mesopotamia. His formidable position was broad based. In the course of the Bagdad Railway negotiations before the war the British Government had requested him to obtain a navigation concession on the Tigris from the Turkish Government, and to amalgamate his shipping line from India to the Persian Gulf with the small firm of Lynch Brothers that ran shipping on the Shatt-el-Arab and the Tigris. Thus, with a view to establishing British interests in Mesopotamia and off-setting German rail-transport, the firm of Mackay

15.Parkes`s Memorandum, see footnote 8.

Lynch & Co. had been constituted at the suggestion of the British Government.[16] Soon after the capture of Bagdad, in March 1917, Inchcape began to exert heavy pressure on the Foreign Office and the Middle East Committee for permission to start the business in Mesopotamia that had been forestalled by the outbreak of the war. Further he urged upon those in charge of Mesopotamia the importance of developing a powerful banking syndicate, in which British, Indian and Australian interests should be associated, a scheme for which he offered to exert his influence.[17] As he concluded one of his letters to Lord Hardinge on 30th October 1917:

> "You will, moreover, I feel sure, appreciate how vitally important it is that German commercial penetration, which politically has proved so insidious in Turkey, should, at the initiation of a new era, be forestalled by timely British enterprise in Mesopotamia, where our interests centre."[18]

Inchcape also gained a powerful position in oil-matters as one of the government directors on the board of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company. As such he was also a member of the Petroleum Executive of the Board of Trade.[19] He even remained a member of the executive when, in 1919, he was appointed to the chair of the Anglo-French Syndicate, the "Messageries Maritimes",[20] for the development of the oil in Syria (Palestine) and Arabia. The shipping interests represented in that combine were mainly concerned with the coal situation, and wished to secure control

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16. Lord Inchcape to Lord Hardinge, 30 October 1917, CAB 27/23; For the pre-war correspondence between Inchcape and the Foreign Office see F.O.424/251.
17. cf. Middle East Committee Minutes, 18 Febr. 1918, CAB 27/23.
18. see footnote 16.
19. G.Kidston (F.O.) to G.R.Clerk, 29 July 1919, F.O.800/217.
20. Kidston (see 19) stated that Inchcape and the Messageries Maritimes were the moving spirits of the new combine. cf. also: S.H.Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, Oxford 1968, p.42. For more information see footnote 21 below.

of a source of oil fuel in the Mediterranean, so as to evade being at the mercy either of the coal-miners or of a gigantic oil trust.[21]

Nevertheless the link between private and public interests in a government body of control continued to disturb the Foreign Office As Kidston put it with reference to Inchcape:

> "The Petroleum Executive, I believe I am right in saying, is largely composed of persons who have a direct personal interest in oil enterprises. What can one expect, therefore, when private and public interests are inextricably mixed up in a Government body of control?"22

To return to Inchcape`s interests in Mesopotámia, there was no doubt some logic in his general argument that the development of that country`s natural wealth required action at the earliest possible moment. Further, in view of the economic retrenchment that was bound to follow the war, as well as from a Treasury point of view, self-sufficiency was regarded as one of the important prerequisites of holding

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21. Kidston to Clerk, 1 August 1919, Private and Confidential, F.O.800/217. Kidston referred to information which E.Weakely (F.O.) had at his request obtained from Sir John Cadman, the Director of the Petroleum Executive, cf.E.Weakely to Kidston, 31 July 1919, F.O.800/217. According to Weakely the Anglo-French Syndicate was composed of the following members: British Group:Lord Inchcape, Chairman P&O SS Co.;Sir Thomas B.Royden, Bart.,Vice Chairman Cunard SS Co.;Sir John M.Frost, Chairman of Frost Sms&Co.;Mr.Ernest B.Royden, Messrs. Royden & Sons, Shipowners, Liverpool;Mr.W.C.Bagshaw, President Liverpool Commercial Trades Association;Mr.J.Settle, Chairman Settle Spealman & Co. Ltd, Colliery Proprietors; Colonel W.M.Falbe, Messrs. Falbe Halsey & Co.;Earl of Drogheda; Mr. Charles Livingston, Chairman Messrs. David Mac Iver Sons & Co. Liverpool. The French Group is enumerated ibidem.

22. Kidston to G.R.Clerk, 29 July 1919, F.O.800/217. Kidston`s letter contains interesting revelations about the speculation in oil-shares that was going on in 1919. As he wrote:"You may remember that I told you some time ago that I could not act as F.O.specialist in oil matters as I was to a small extent personally interested in oil shares. I think my attitude was justified,for I have received this morning from the Shell Company an option to take up some further shares to the extent,I think, of half my original holding which,I may add,I inherited.I am offered these shares at par, and I can only hope that the information which reached Mr.Balfour though dinner table gossip

onto the country. In addition, the British assumed that sooner or later German and Japanese competition would find its way into Mesopotamia. Naturally there was some agreement even among the contestants from the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade that the British commercial position must be strengthened and that the establishment of a British controlled banking system should have priority.[23] But there remained a gulf between the would-be monopolists and concessionaires on the one side and the politicians and opportunists on the other. Although there was some awareness of the new principles then current, what separated them was not so much matters of principle as a question of what was favourable in the context of the war aims speeches and an "anti-imperialist" Parliament. As Mark Sykes put it in the meeting of the Middle East Committee on 18 February 1918:

> "if we played our cards well and in accordance with the underlying political principles now current in the world, we should have a good chance of remaining in control of Mesopotamia after the war, but should we be charged with encouraging profiteering or establishing monopolies we should run grave risk of seeing Mesopotamia pass out of our control at the Peace Conference. The proposal put before the Committee was equivalent to handing over the future Mesopotamia and its inhabitants to Lord Inchcape. Such proposal would be howled down in the House of Commons." 24

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22. contd., will prove to be true".

23. see Middle East Committee, Mesopotamia Trade, Note prepared by the India Office, 6 Febr.1918, Secret, M.E.C.-72 (Revise), CAB 27/23. The note leant heavily on the recommendations of the C of I Trade Commissioners Messrs Holland and Wilson who had visited Mesopotamia in the early part of 1917. The I.O.note stressed the "immense importance" of the strengthening of the banking system in the future interests of trade and the advantage of enlisting the "powerful Hackney interest in this direction", see also: M.E.C.Minutes of 16 Febr.1918 "Lord Hardinge stated that the F.O. attached special importance to the opening up of banking operations in Mesopotamia. The Ottoman Bank at Bagdad was now closed, and such banking operations as were now being conducted were being carried out by the Eastern Bank Company, of which Lord Balfour of Burleigh was chairman, which bank had entered the field at the Government's invitation".

24. Middle East Committee Minutes, meeting of 18 February 1918, ibid.

The Committee did not take a decision on principle: this would have possibly taken too much time, if not brought about the wrong result. For opportunistic reasons it refrained from forcing the issue. Instead debate was shelved until Percy Cox was present for consultations.[125]

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Percy Cox, Civil Commissioner in Bagdad, was most anxious that immediate steps should be taken to open up trade and banking facilities in Mesopotamia. As he was convinced as convinced as Inchcape that Mesopotamia would finally fall under British protection, the controversy over the principle of monopoly did not bother him.[26] He suggested that the ground should be prepared for British Companies to go ahead as fast as they liked once Mesopotamia's status and political fate had been decided by the Peace Conference.

He himself had already taken some initiative in this direction by starting two demonstration farms near Bagdad to experiment with different varieties of high-grade cotton.[27] In fact, by passing the entire crop of 1918 to Bombay and Manchester for appraisal he had aroused the attention of the British Cotton Growing Association and the Empire Cotton Growing Committee[28] and had received an immediate reward with shape of 75.000 Rs for setting up two more demonstration farms to be run by the Agricultural Directorate. Besides cotton, Cox also kept

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25. see p.125.
26. According to Curzon, see footnote 24.
27. cf. Report on Deputation to England of Captain Roger Thomas, 3 Nov. 1919, I.O.5160/1917 Mesopotamia Cotton. Thomas was Deputy Director of Agriculture (Research), Bagdad, and took in summer 1919 the produce of 1918 (14 different sorts, altogether 32 bales each weighing an average of 100 lbs) for appraisal to India and Britain.
28. The committee was a branch of the Board of Trade, in which the private Association was well represented. On Thomas's contacts in Britain and the measures taken by the Association see: W.H.Himbury >

pointing out the immense potentialities of Iraq as a grain producing country. His activities were, of course, not yet yielding commercial profits. It would take time to develop rewarding samples and grow adequate seeds for the large scale agricultural development that the country needed. From this point of view, his agricultural experimenting could easily be explained away as designed for the ultimate development and benefit of Iraq and its population. In reality, however, his object was restoration of Imperial autarky. His reckoning was that Iraq should become an important contributor to Imperial wheat supplies, a commodity in which Britain had become "unduly dependent upon extra-Imperial sources".[29]

Taken together, it is not difficult to discern in such early economic activities - agricultural experimenting, concession hunting and, in particular, the secret debates which they involved - the common concern to learn the right lesson of the bad pre-war experience concerning trade in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia. Significantly, there was a small but persistent body of opinion that blamed the very principles that Inchcape and others tried to revive for having helped the pre-war growth of German competition. Both General Macdonogh, the War Office representative on the Middle East Committee, and G.A.Lloyd, the eminent economic expert for Mesopotamia and adviser of Percy Cox, pointed out that the pre-war growth of German competition had been brought about by virtual monopoly of British trade and shipping interests in the Persian Gulf in the hands of the British India Company,

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28.contd., (General Manager) to C.C.Garbett, I.O.,30 June1920,5160/1917

29.cf. Report:The Economic Situation in the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamian Markets. from Percy Cox to A.H.Grant, Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, Simla, 18-24 July 1916, I.O. B 240.

and by its management by Lord Inchcape.[30] The methods of his firm had been unenterprising and narrow,[31] and a monopoly, if in the hands of one firm, would always tend to dull enterprise. Thus, for all its strength, Inchcape's position was seriously jeopardized by the fact that his stakes as well as his management were rooted in the semi-political business principles and diplomatic power constellations of the now obsolete Bagdad Railway Era. Inchcape, therefore, like Albert Ballin,[32] his German counterpart, embodied an age of overseas enterprise the life-line of which was anchored in nationalist and imperialist diplomacy. Their eclipse was inherent in the principles of a new age.

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In the last months of the war cotton, grain and navigation rights became negligible interests compared with the oil-rush initiated by Admiral Slade and his seconders in the corridors of power. Involved in the oil problem was the whole issue of the Open Door principle. To assess the full impact of the oil issue and the Open Door challenge, as well as of the Admiralty's reaction to them on policy making, one has to look at the estimated capacity of world oil resources and of Empire demands. The figures, and also the wording, are revealing.

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30. Captain Lloyd, M.P. (later Lord Lloyd) had served with the 1st Warwickshire Yeomanry in Egypt where he had been doing duty under the Director of Military Intelligence. He was the author of a valuable report on British Trade in Mesopotamia in 1908. Because of his expertise Percy Cox had obtained the temporary loan of his services in 1916 to study and advise upon the important commercial questions that would arise for the British in Mesopotamia; cf. footnote 29., Cox's letter to Grant. An annex to Cox's letter contained a new and up to date report by George Lloyd on the Economic Situation in the Gulf and the Mesopotamian Markets. See also F.O.406/36.
31. Loss of British trade was explained by preference given to Indian trade.
32. cf. Lamar Cecil, Albert Ballin, Business and Politics in Imperial Germany, 1888-1918, Princeton 1967.

P h y s i c a l  C o n t r o l was the slogan under which a massive campaign was set on foot against the Open Door principle. That Slade wanted more than the Open Door under British control is clearly stated in one of the conclusions of the policy that he suggested. As he urged upon the Admiralty it was necessary:

> "To encourage and assist British Companies to obtain control of as much oil lands in foreign countries as possible, with the stipulation (to prevent control being obtained by foreign interests) that the oil produced shall only be sold to or through British oil distributing Companies. These oil lands can be developed to assist to provide our requirements in peace whilst our own resources in British territory can be conserved for war." 33

It is evident from his conclusion that, in addition to figures and principles, experience of the important role of bunker fuel for sustaining naval actions and blockade must have greatly contributed to the rush for oil, and to the pleas for the establishment of monopolies.

The facts about oil fuel and oil reserves are as follows. Before the war, coal had begun to be replaced by oil, which as a means of raising steam was about twice as economical, and was four times so if used in internal combustion engines. Not only were oil burning vessels more economic, they were also faster. Therefore, as Slade stres-

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33. The other conclusions were:
"1. To press the Government to take the most energetic measures to prevent the enemy in any way from endangering the oil fields and works in Persia. This is indispensable to the success of the war.
2. To push forward as soon as possible the further development of the oil lands of Persia and those in Mesopotamia by purely British interests.
3. To push forward the exploration and development of all possible oil lands in the British Empire by purely British interests.
5. To exclude from participation in British Petroleum business all foreign interests in any shape or form, such participation being only a stepping stone to ultimate control and a very great danger in any future war.

sed,[34] oil was certain gradually to take the place of coal for all maritime purposes; consequently it was of paramount importance to obtain the undisputed control of the greatest amount of petroleum possible. Moreover, the control should be absolute, with no foreign interests of any sort or kind involved. However, as foreign interests were already taking between 20 and 25 million sterling a year out of the profits of British oil concerns, Britain must first become master in her own house. Yet because most of the new oil-deposits lay outside the boundaries of the Empire the master must enlarge his domain. Another contingency rendered enlargement necessary: experts reckoned that the exportable surplus of the main sources of supply hitherto tapped, would begin to decrease rapidly after the war. Consequently the major oil-producing countries of the day would be in a position to impose a serious squeeze on the Empire's demands.

The following table shows Britain's main sources of supply, the total output of those sources, the exportable surplus and the amount of the latter received by Britain in the year 1913:[35]

in tons

| main sources | total output | exportable surplus | amount received by Britain | | % of Brit. intake |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| USA | 33.150.000 | 7.120.000 | 16% or | 1.100.000 | 62.3 |
| Roumania | 1.880.000 | 940.000 | 19% | 230.000 | 11.6 |
| Russia | 8.370.000 | 670.000 | 19% | 130.000 | 7.7 |
| Dutch Indies | 3.480.000 | 1.740.000 | 14% | 70.000 | 7.7 |
| Mexico | 1.500.000 | | 8% | 125.000 | 4.1 |
| Other countries | | | | | 6.5 |

34. Most of the following account is based on Slade's elaborate Memorandum together with the annex on Mosul. Slade based his information partly on German pre-war reports on the Middle East resources and geological surveys. But see also: Naval Estimates 1918-21 and Pro-

When Roumania and later Russia dropped out of the Entente, the supply percentages altered to the extent that 80% came from the United States. Although the temporary dislocation and its causes would probably cease to apply after the war, other conditions of a far more radical nature were by then bound to impair the entire petroleum position. An inquiry ordered by the United States Senate in 1916 had reported that most of the American fields had already reached and passed their prime and were on the down-grade. Given a rise in yearly consumption, the estimated resources would, according to the most optimistic calculation, last for less than 25 years. As a consequence the Americans reckoned that exports would have to be curtailed drastically. In Admiral Slade's view, supplies from America would greatly diminish after the war, if not entirely cease within 10 years, because the Senate would not allow U.S. petroleum resources to be jeopardised by export.

Predictions for the other supply resources were similarly pessimistic. The output of the Russian fields, though likely to increase in the future, would nevertheless be absorbed by the increase of industrial development in Russia.

No increase of supply was to be expected from(Russia) Roumania, quite apart from any question of political control, because output there had also shown signs of diminution and was generally likely to be

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34. contd., vision for Oil Fuel Reserve in Navy Estimates 1920-21, Adm. 116/1677, Case 5846.

35. In an annex he followed the production figures of the principal sources up to 1917. There were also figures on the American market drawn from US Geological Survey 1917.

absorbed by the domestic market or controlled by the Central Powers.

A great increase of output was likely in Mexico's large fields; but since stocks in the United States were decreasing and consumption at the same time increasing, the USA was bound to increase her present intake of 75% of Mexico's exportable surplus. A large proportion of Mexico's crude oil was in any case of very low grade, and yielded only 60% of usable oil.

The Dutch East Indies and the Burmah fields were not capable of great expansion and were likely to be absorbed by markets nearer to the sourse of supply.

Slade next turned to the estimates of the future demands both of Britain and the Empire. The prospects were rather bleak. In mid-1918 imports of petroleum into Britain amounted approximately to 6.000.000 tons a year, made up of 3.2 million tons for home consumption 1 million tons for building up stocks of naval fuel and 1.5 million tons for other purposes. The requirements of the Dominions, Colonies and India added a total of 4 million tons, which made a grand total for the Empire of 10 million tons a year.

Obviously the Empire had to look for fresh sources from which these requirements could be drawn. At the same time the increasing demands of other countries, and the resultant stiffening of competition for the limited supplies available had to be considered. In the Admiralty's view the greatest bid was likely to come from the German Empire which, having experienced the effect of Britain's absolute control over her coal reserves, would stick at nothing to prevent the

control of liquid fuel from passing into British hands and would endeavour by every means to secure it for herself. Severe Competition was inevitable and Britain must prepare for it.

## 3. The Political Response at the End of the War.

As we have already seen, owing to strong representations by the Admiralty, the Air Ministry and Maurice Hankey, physical control of the oil-fields on the upper Tigris and around Mosul suddenly became a prime military objective in the last stage of the Mesopotamian campaign in the late of summer 1918.[36] Strictly speaking, this policy of physical control was in line with the recommendations of the De Bunsen Committee of June 30, 1915. Oil, this body had stressed, made it commercially desirable for Britain to extend her control as far as Mosul.[37]

In the same vein Maurice De Bunsen had written in March 1916 on behalf of the Foreign Office:

> "The oil question had an important bearing upon the considerations of foreign policy...after the war it will probably be essential, if an avenue is not to be afforded for German economic penetration in Egypt, in Mesopotamia, and elsewhere, that the handling of concessions for the supply and the distribution of oil should be entrusted to a British Group" [38]

However, by 1918, the perspective had changed completely. The oil-question in Mesopotamia no longer solely hinged on Anglo-German rivalry. For some officials, such as Curzon and Milner, France was rareemerging as the bogey in the East. Consequently they were jubilant

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36. De Bunsen Committee Report on Asiatic Turkey, 30 June 1915, CAB 42/3/12, Preliminary Considerations 14 Course (A), 26-28.
37. see footnote 11; cf. also chapt.II,1, footnote 58.
38. see footnote 10.

about the reversal of Kitchener's strategy which had assigned Mosul to the French as a buffer in the north.[39] But as Anglo-French rivalry primarily stemmed from a conflict of territorial strategy rather than trade rivalry, the oil of Mosul was not the ultimate reason for Curzon's support for the thrust to the north and for entirely dislodging the French from the Middle East. Admittedly, he used the oil-argument with regard to the French, but only because he noticed that it was a powerful one in the Cabinet in that it appealed strongly to Lloyd George. By comparison, Curzon's Fashoda spirit and general strategical views would scarcely have appealed to Lloyd George. Thus, by 1918, strategically, Mosul was in Curzon's view to be an intermediate station on the route to the Caucasus and the Caspian.[40] Even there he pointed to the oil-wells of Baku and their loss to the British empire if they fell into French hands.[41] But he used this bogey to court support of his far-fetched strategical ideas for the East. Oil, seen in the perspective of Anglo-French rivalry, seems to have been merely a means to a wider end.

However, strictly speaking, control over the oil-resources as far up as Mosul had inextricably become part of the complexion of British strategy in the Middle East. Ever since Slade had circulated his oil-survey in the Cabinet, pure north-west frontier instinct from Indian days looked narrow. Nothing demonstrates this better than the

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39. The Mosul oil, though a topic in Anglo-French negotiations, in general, entailed no complications for their mutual relations.
40. cf. War Cabinet Minutes 491 B, 26 October 1918, CAB 23/14.
41. Eastern Committee Minutes, 9 December 1918, pp.13-14: "somebody must be there (Caucasus)...I do not see why we should...our interests being so closely involved...propose anybody but ourselves...are we prepared to let the French, the most imperialistic people in world...in respect of oil she would be sure to reap very considerable profit".

British response to the challenge of American oil-interests in the Middle East.

The American struggle for a share in the exploitation of the Mesopotamian oil has become well known for its salutary effect upon the implementation of the Open Door principle. Accordingly the long and stiff British opposition against it has come to be regarded as a particularly reactionary policy; for in international trade the Open Door principle has been rated as enlightened and progressive. In an imperial context, however, its connotations are of a different nature. It was no more than the greed of one power checking the cupidity of its rivals.[42] What is more, wherever implemented, it was bound to disturb the existing balance of influence and to substitute a new one.[43]

Admittedly, in the case of the nineteenth century China market, where America, by implementing the Open Door principle for the first time, had asserted her influence against that of the European powers, the substitute for the old balance of influence had entailed a certain consolidation of the Chinese Empire. Interestingly, at the end of World War I both Turkey and Persia, by courting American oil-interests, hoped to incur similar benefits in regard to the restoration or consolidation of their rule.

As for the British, however, the penetration of American oil-interests into the Middle East signified more than a mere change in balance of power in a confined area. Owing to the importance that a

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42. cf. Barrington Moore Jr., Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy, London 1969 (Peregrine Book), p.176.
43. cf. K.M. Pannikar, Asia and Western Dominance, London 1967, p.147.

monopolistic control over the oil supply from Middle Eastern sources had for the maintenance of the balance of sea-power, the American oil--challenge was, in British opinion, closely connected with the issue of the freedom of the seas. The prominence of both issues was underlined by the occasional British claim that thanks to her naval supremacy and the resultant capability of enforcing peace throughout the world, the royal navy must be accorded the mandate of the world's sea--police. These Admiralty views were generally shared by the League of Nations champions in Britain. As Balfour recorded their views:

> "They recognise that in the general interests of mankind sea-power cannot be narrowly limited to purposes of self-defence, nor ought the maritime nations to be required by law to occupy the role of profiteering neutrals - the prosperous spectators of other peoples' agony. The efficacy of sea-power to stop wars and to shorten them they are ready and even anxious to preserve, but they hold that it should be used for international purposes and should therefore be exercised under international control". 44

However, on the issue of sea-power there still remained a deep gulf between Balfour and the League champions on the one side and what may be called the Long and Wemyss school on the other side. The latter took the view that U.S. naval power should, by convention, be kept inferior to the British one. At some stage in the backroom peace talks at Paris, Walter Long and Admiral Wemyss seemed even to have told American delegates that "the British Government would not sign the League unless America agreed never to build a fleet as large as the English".[45] In contrast, Balfour, departing from the view that

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44. Memorandum by Balfour, Freedom of the Seas, 11 January 1919, Balfour Papers 49750, British Museum.
45. Cecil to Lloyd George, 4 April 1919, Cecil Papers 51076, British Museum. On the Admiralty views and for an American comment cf.also: Skinner (U.S. Consul General in London) to S of S, 5 Dec.1918, U.S. Foreign Relations, 1919, vol.I,p.285.

America unlike the European continental powers was both a land- and maritime power, advocated a joint Anglo-American naval force that should operate under League control. As a former First Lord of the Admiralty he was impressed by the way in which the United States, by committing her sea-power, had shifted the balance in the last war. As she would maintain that capacity in any future war, the role of sea-power must be internationally defined; above all it must be consonant with American stipulations. Any such convention would be seriously jeopardised were it prejudiced by some attempt at a monopolistic oil policy as suggested by Slade and supported by the Admiralty and the Air Ministry. It was from this wider viewpoint that Balfour deprecated their recommendations as imperialistic.

Though Balfour also refused the views of the Amery and Curzon school who thought that U.S. sea-power should be confined to America's proper strategic area in the new world, he nevertheless shared their apprehension about unqualified application of freedom of the seas. As he summarized the argument:

> "it is clear that the doctrine of the Freedom of the Seas, in its extreme and logical form requires qualification. The justification must be based, in the first place, on the fact that the doctrine of the "freedom of the seas" metes out a different measure of restrictions to the nations whose power lies mainly on the land and to those whose power lies mainly on the ocean...The freedom of the seas therefore, howsoever it be defined, decreases the offensive power of nations that depend on fleets, and increases absolutely as well as relatively, the offensive power of those that depend on armies... Germany (Englishmen argue) is a naval power, Britain is a maritime power: no change in international law which adds to the offensive strength of Germany and diminishes the offensive strength of Britain can be good either for Britain or the World; the freedom of the seas does both these things: therefore the adoption of this alteration in maritime law must be resisted to the last..." 46

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46. see footnote 44.

As has become evident, the issue of the freedom of the seas touched the core of British imperial thinking. Balfour took the view that its only settlement lay within the framework of the League of Nations. He deprecated a monopolistic oil-policy as suggested by the Admiralty, because its underlying premises stemmed from a wrong imperial self-assessment. Like Lloyd George he proceeded on the line that once the League was approved by Britain and the United States, everything else stood a better chance of satisfactory and quick settlement.[47] Consequently, when America failed to approve of the League Covenant, his efforts at settling the oil-issue on the basis of a new international maritime law were set back while the front of oil-monopolists and advocates of a simply pysical control over the oil-supply was strengthened.

Meanwhile at Whitehall, Curzon - "who beamed all over at being in charge of the Foreign Office"[48] - had tried to restrain all (economic) activity in Iraq that might prejudice or confirm existing oil-interests or concessions. His policy in part followed Sykes's counsel of February 1918 that if Britain played her cards well and in accordance with the new political principles she might remain in control of Mesopotamia.[49] Further, convinced of the validity of the pre-war T.P.C. concession and, subsequently, obsessed by the new diplomatic possibilities afforded by America's departure from the League, he tried to push through an interpretation of the Open Door principle

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47. cf. Lloyd George, The Truth about the Peace Treaties, London 1938, vol.I, pp.185-6.
48. As Lloyd George once casually remarked to Cecil in Paris, see Lord Cecil's Diary of the British Delegation, 13 Jan.1919, Cecil Papers 51131 British Museum.
49. see footnote 24.

that, on the one hand, left existing concessions unimpaired, and, on the other, restricted its applicability to League members only.

However, Curzon's restraining hand on the oil-development in Mesopotamia put too great a strain on the buoyant interests in Britain. Since nobody knew exactly how much oil there was, and since the vast military expenditure on the occupation of Iraq precluded buying a pig in a poke, severe pressure was exercised on the Government at least to permit oil-prospecting. As things turned out, Curzon was by-passed by the War Office. Without consulting either the Foreign Office or the India Office, in early 1919 it despatched General Cowan together with two oil experts to Mesopotamia to start systematic oil surveying.[50] At the same time, it began its survey of the desert "for the purpose of advising on the practicability of having a pipe and railway line through the British sphere of influence".[51] This act placed the Foreign Office in an awkward position. It could neither stop the War Office, which could label its activity as military expediency, nor prevent the formation of large scale combines and syndicates for the eventual exploitation of the supposed oil resources. All it could do was to keep the concession hunters out of the territories in military occupation. As Kidston described its view:

> "I should like to make it quite clear that we here at the F.O. are in no way responsible for the situation which has arisen. From the very first we have held strongly the opinion that in all the areas in our military occupation no sort of penetration by the concession-hunter should be allowed until the Peace Conference had given a final decision as to their future status We have maintained this point of view over and over again in writing, and the breach in the wall has been made, not here, but in other quarters and we are not to blame if the flood is now being let loose." 52

50. Kidston to G.R.Clerk, 29 July 1919, F.O.800/217.
51. Conference of Ministers, 23 Jan.1920, CAB 23/20.

It seems that the Foreign Office tried to apply the term concession hunter in a very loose way. For, as was to be expected, the bona fides of Slade`s papers of July and August 1918 had at moments been questioned; the Government-controlled A.P.O.C. seems to have been treated like any other company. By autumn 1918, the First Lord of the Admiralty found himself compelled to state to the Cabinet that the papers and their endorsement by the Admiralty should not be read as an "ex parte statement on behalf of the A.P.O.C. vis-a-vis its trade rivals, especially the Royal Dutch Company."[53] The Admiralty, he stressed, were entirely impartial and their endorsement referred only to the contention that "the oil-bearing districts of Mesopotamia and Persia were of very great national importance to us."[54] Further, he expressed the hope that the Admiralty`s view would in no event be used in support of the claims of any one oil-company against an other.

However, since the oil-settlement lay not merely in the lap of the Peace Conference, but also hinged on the question and the success of the British claim of the validity of the pre-war concession given by the Turkish Government to the T.P.C., in which the A.P.O.C. had a share, such manifestations on Cabinet level were mere rhetoric and make-belief. If the oil-resources of Mesopotamia were of great national importance to Britain then the A.P.O.C. surely commended itself as the best safeguard of immediate national interests. Anything

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52. see footnote 50.
53. Memorandum to the War Cabinet by the First Lord of the Admiralty. A Note in Reference to Admiralty Memorandum on the "Petroleum Situation in the British Empire", by Eric Geddes, 17 September 1918, CAB 21/119.
54. ibid.

less implied that the diplomatic situation did not afford Britain scope to pursue to the full her national and strategical interest. But even in such an event, the only option lay between the old, and a newly composed T.P.C.. Either way it would be backed, if not indirectly controlled, by the Government. Further, the Admiralty, by stressing the national importance of both the Persian and Mesopotamian oil-fields in one breath, left little room for doubt that their sympathies lay with the A.P.O.C.

4. Another Round of Claims and Makeshifts.

The spectrum of British official opinion on the oil issue reveals yet another group of practicians with strong interests. This consisted of Edwin Montagu and the men on the spot who pushed the revenue interests either of the mandate state or British administration to the fore. Some like Montagu, suggested Iraqi participation in the T.P.C.,[55] others advanced the view that the development and working of oil should be nationalised, either in their entirety or part, in Iraq's state interest.

Montagu's proposal was entirely motivated by events in Whitehall: by the end of 1918, the Petroleum Department was considering the reconstitution of the T.P.C. without consulting the India Office even

55. Montagu to Harcourt, 23 Dec.1918, CAB 21/119:"The basis on which we propose to remain in Mesopotamia is that of a Power controlling an independent Arab State, and we shall purport to control it primarily in the interests of the inhabitants...but one of our first acts as controlling Power will apparantly be - by recognising the 1912 Agreement and reconstituting the T.P.C. in our own interests - to deprive the new State of a free hand in disposing of one of its most valuable assets. The least that we can do, therefore, is to ensure that the interests of the new State are fully safeguarded, and I suggest that the best way in which this can be done is by providing for the participation of the State in the new Company".

though the latter was still in charge of Mesopotamia. Its largely theoretical nature is confirmed by the fact that, at that stage of British planning, the idea of a unified Mesopotamian state which could figure on the governing board of an oil-company side by side with Britain, France and perhaps other powers was still a vague assumption. But, no doubt, it fitted well with the proclaimed mandate spirit.

In contrast, from 1919 onwards the proposals of the men on the spot were prompted by considerations of how to increase revenue income. From this angle the working of the Naft Khana oil-fields is of some interest. These oil-fields, which had been assigned to the A.P.O.C before the war, and which were situated on a stretch of territory transferred from Persia to Turkey, after the war were regarded as not lying on occupied enemy territory. Because of their particular territorial status therefore the A.P.O.C. was given Foreign Office permission to start with their development.[56] It is interesting to note that by April 1919 Sir Arnold Wilson, at a meeting at the India Office, was recommending that a new Company should be formed to work these fields and that the Treasury should hold an interest and control in the new concern equal to their holdings in the A.P.O.C. Wilson was further convinced that from the first tests important deductions could be made as regard the prospects of oil in other areas of Mesopotamia.

The need of revenue which Wilson had so early foreseen began

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56. A valuable summary of the entire correspondence in regard to Naft Khana of the years 1918 to 1921 (15 pages) is contained under the headline: Oil Concessions in Iraq, dated 11 Jan.1922 in: C.O.730/27/1948. The I.O. meeting took place on 8th April. Indicative of the secrecy of all oil-business is that although the Naft Khana fields were by their different territorial status free for being worked the F.O. nevertheless insisted that the working should be wrapped in the cloak of military necessity; see also C.O.730/28/11031, 7 March 1922; cf. also S.H.Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East. p.43.

to worry Percy Cox in 1920. In general, Curzon's restraining hand on the development of the oil resources of Iraq did not only deprive the officials there of urgently needed revenue: according to Percy Cox it also greatly increased the annual deficit because of the high rate at which oil fuel and kerosine was sold for use by Iraq's railways and irrigation pumps.[57] The men on the spot argued that the deficit on the working of the transport system would be substantially reduced if oil fuel were obtainable at a cheaper rate. Similarly, they expressed doubts whether, at existing kerosine prices the irrigation pumps in the Bagdad area, which were essential for the cultivation of wheat and barley, could continue to work at their full capacity. British and Iraqi officials alike, burdened by the Treasury problems that sprang from cavalier choice of priorities and as they witnessed rigorous curtailment of British expenditure on the one hand, and rumours of a British withdrawal to the Basra vilayet on the other, were puzzled as to why the development of the most important of their "national" resources was frustrated by considerations of high policy.

But the policy makers had not entirely closed their eyes to the prospects of additional revenue from oil. In fact Britain could lay double claim to the oil wealth of Iraq, the oil revenues were both to pay back any capital which the mandatory might advance in future and to meet the costs of its service and administration. As a foreign oil company would take too much money out of the country in profits, nationalisation of the oil wealth by the mandatory on behalf of the mandated state was therefore a desirable measure. Needless to say this

57. Memorandum by Churchill, 13 March 1922, C.O.730/28.

notion of nationalisation did not conflict with the official view of the mandate as a cover for British interests.

In readiness for such action the Cabinet, by January 1920, expressed the opinion that:

> "as a matter of principle the profits arising from the exploitation of the oil fields of Mesopotamia should accrue for the benefit of the State rather than for the benefit of Joint Stock Companies." 58

As a result, the claims of the Standard Oil Company of America were dismissed as running counter to that principle. On the other hand, the high-handed action of the War Office was now authorised in retrospect. The lack of confidence in the self-proclaimed principle is obvious from the great caution that marked the final decision by the Cabinet; it read:

> "the W.O. should proceed with the survey of the Mesopotamian oilfields but that all propecting must be done on behalf of the State and not for the benefit of private Companies, and should be undertaken in such a way as to attract as little attention as possible." 59

It must be assumed that this prospecting for oil served mainly as a preparation for the compromise which Churchill submitted to Hankey, the Secretary of the Cabinet, in June 1921. For it was when Churchill was Secretary of State for War that prospecting had begun.[60] The scheme amounted to the reduction of the T.P.C.'s claim to certain limits outside of which the Iraq Government would have a free hand to grant concessions to others.[61] From this point of view the findings of

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58. Cabinet meeting, 23 January 1920, CAB 23/20.
59. ibid., it was also decided that the survey of the desert line for pipeline and railway should be continued.
60. Churchill was S of S for War from 10 Jan. 1919 to 13 Febr. 1921, after that he became S of S for the Colonies, in charge of mandates.
61. see footnote 57, Memo. Iraq Oil, C.O. 730/28/( Secret C.P. 3832).

the prospectors allowed the British authorities to select and assign the more promising areas to the T.P.C. Of course, the T.P.C.'s working of the oil would still provide the main revenue for the administration. But this subtle concoction contained two flaws which rendered the application of the scheme illusory. First, it confirmed the monopolistic character of the T.P.C.'s claim, to which the Americans strongly objected. Second, since the new regime in Iraq would be anxious to augment its sources of revenue as speedily as possible, it would be extremely hesitant to throw open any areas containing promising oil resources to development by foreign and private agencies whose chief aim was profit making.[62]

These flaws once more revealed the three cornered antagonism which continually frustrated the settlement of the oil-question: the T.P.C.'s monopolistic claim to the Mesopotamian oilfields, the American objection to this claim, and Iraq's own interest in its oil resources as a national asset, and a substantial source of revenue for the administration and its development.

Although Britain had considered Iraq's own interest in its oil resources to be a convincing and useful argument which might successfully screen off her monopolistic oil interests in the international world, it was Iraq itself as the weakest contestant in the above antagonism, that was sold down the river when the British were forced to give up their monopolistic claim to the T.P.C. concession.[63]

Significantly, the destruction of the Iraqi "screen" was not solely

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62. see footnote 61.
63. It is interesting to notice that the Iraqi regime so far as it existed suffered a fate in oil-matters similar to that inflicted upon the Turks on the eve of the war, see p.153.

brought about by the diplomatic power game. Strong criticism of the government's support for nationalisation schemes also came from the Petroleum Department of the Board of Trade. It based its view on considerations of political and practical expediency and on doubts whether the oil business was an appropriate field for governments. Obviously it was airing the views of private interests. As its minister put the matter:

> "Apart altogether from the question of principle, the oil business is peculiarly unsuited for Governments to engage in: it is speculative, very technical and requires audacity in an exceptional degree. The engagement of the necessary staff alone would be a serious item, as it is practically impossible to get experts of the proper calibre except by outbidding the large oil companies who are keenly competing at the present time for good men. If we refuse to carry out terms to which we practically stand pledged as regards the T.P.C. we cannot expect to get any assistance from the principal oil interests." 64

There was also logic in its additional point that the need to raise at least L 5.000.000 of initial expenditure before any substantial returns could accrue from the working of oil would drain the revenues of the new regime in its most crucial formative years.[65] On the other hand, since neither the position of the new regime nor the status of Iraq was as yet fixed and consolidated, it would be extremely for any Company registered in Iraq to raise the starting capital in the international money market.[66]

But it was primarily due to French opposition that any demands which implied nationalisation of oil production in Iraq had become illusory. The Whitehall officials engaged in negotiating the San

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64. Memorandum by the Minister in charge of the Petroleum Department, Mesopotamian Oilfields, 22 April 1920, CAB 1/29/16.

65. ibid.

66. Minute by Shuckburgh, 8 March 1922, C.O.730/28/11031 (M.E.D.).

Remo Agreement in April 1920 may well have been inclined to comply with Cox's demand for nationalisation. But as soon as the French learnt of this desire to exclude private interests, they raised their claim from a quarter to a half share. They explained previous restraint on the ground that they had understood the British Government to be committed to the recognition of certain private interests.[67]

This French opposition to British attempts at circumventing the Open Door issue by the nationalisation of oil production was only one episode in the large diplomatic power game that Britain provoked by maintaining pre-war monopolistic claims. In fact, apart from all opportunism[68] Curzon's tactics vis-a-vis the Americans lastly sprang from the same misunderstanding as to the limits of imperial might that lay at the bottom of the failure of the men on the spot to comprehend the political manouevering in London. However, in order to see British opposition to the spirit of the time in its right perspective attention must be drawn to the fact that British rival oil interests also challenged the T.P.C. concession. In one case, a British group went so far as to enlist the claims of twenty two heirs of Abdul Hamid who disputed the right of the pre.war Ottoman government to grant concessions, because, as they alleged, it had appropriated the property of Sultan Abdul Hamid's Private List.[69] However shadowy and monopolistic such

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67. see footnote 64.
68. cf. page 175 and footnote 49 (24).
69. The group consisted of the Central Mining and Investment Company on whose behalf Colonel Edwards was negotiating, and Mirsch Ltd. The most detailed account of their activities is contained in a letter signed by C.C.Muirhead Gould, Lieutenant Commander, written in the interest of Colonel Edwards on March 1921, see C.O.730/9/20161. According to the expert opinion of a Turkish Legal Commission, whose composition was not described, the Mesopotamian regions had belonged to Abdul Hamid's private properties and been confiscated by the

claims and legal contentions,[70] they became politically effective owing to the doubt and uncertainty that they spread among British officials, and because they added to the case for arbitration.

Yet the final change in British oil policy resulted from a need for the British Government to manouever itself out of the deadlock into which it had allowed itself to be led by Curzon`s high-handed tactics. Strictly speaking, government support of the T.P.C.`s claims had been achieved indirectly by making the Iraqi regime the assignee of the pre-war Ottoman concession-giver. The hope was to effect this by safeguarding the pre-war concessions[71] in Art.311 of the Treaty of Sèvres, by which the new regime in Iraq was to be bound. But the treaty

69.contd., Young Turks when they deposed the Sultan. They had refused to hand the properties over to his heirs when Abdul Hamid died. Following on their appeal to the Sharia, the above Commission had decided in favour of the heirs. Accordingly it was argued that the private property, as it could not be treated as part of the Civil List, could not be divided between the Allies.- Evidently Muirhead took efforts to please the Admiralty and comply with those views that favoured an unimpaired British oil-monopoly in Iraq. As he concluded:"Under these circumstances it is considered that Their Lordships might wish to make further inquiries both as to the legal position of the above mentioned firms, and as to their intentions with regard to the development of the oilfields to the best advantage of H.M.Navy. 6.I should further state that Colonel Edwards informs me that his Principals are prepared to accept any proposals or stipulations. Their Lordships might wish to impose in their development of the oilfields, and I understand that they are prepared to sink about 10 million sterling in these concessions." On the whole, the possibility of pursuing this case was officially more than once ventilated. To the experts in the government departments it seemed to offer a useful substitute if the T.P.C. concession proved to be shaky;see: Letter by The Central Mining and Investment Co. Ltd. of 11 April 1921 which referred to interviews of the group with John Tilley and E.Weakley of the F.O. on 6 Dec.1920. As the other letters all was printed for use of the Middle East Department,cf. C.O.730/9/23580;also minutes by H.Young (3 May 1921) and Amery (7 May 1921) in: C.O.730/9/20161.Further from Br.High Commissioner at Constantinople (Acting) H.C.F.Rattigan to Curzon,29 June 1921, C.O. 730/10/34643, and Memo by Ryan,28 June 21, C.O.730/10/34643.

70.ibid. The case of the heirs of Abdul Hamid was closely studied by government officials for eventual use as a good substitute in case

was never ratified by the Turkish parliament. At the same time, the American Government withheld its recognition of the Draft Mandate for Mesopotamia on the ground that the monopolistic T.P.C. concession contravened Art.11 of the mandate, which precluded discrimination by Iraq against nationals of other states.

In retaliation Curzon brought his heaviest artillery to bear when he denied the United States Government any right to interfere with the settlement of the terms of the mandates for Iraq and Palestine, on the ground that America was not a signatory to the Covenant. As he wrote to Davis in August 1920:

> "H.M.G., while fully appreciating the suggestion for discussing with the US Government the various propositions mentioned by you, with which they are in full sympathy, are none the less of the opinion that the terms of the mandates can only properly be discussed at the Council of the League of Nations by the signatories of the Covenant." 72

Curzon, as we shall later see, made use of the League of Nations as a political instrument on a variety of occasions when the Foreign Office view or H.M.G.'s stance was in need of a prop. Sometimes he seemed to have regarded it as the strong fist on the long arm of the Foreign Office, sometimes as a limb that might be disposed of without ado. Some points that he advanced had been supplied by the Americans themselves. One such was the Act of the Philippine Legislature of the 31st August, 1920, according to which participation in the working of all public lands containing petroleum and other mineral oils

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70. contd., the legal basis of the T.P.C. concession proved to be shaky.
71. i.e. the navigation concession to the Lynch Brothers and the "diplomatic" concession to the T.P.C.
72. cf.C.O.730/9/20634 survey of the correspondence between Curzon and Davis (US Ambassador in London).
73. ibid.;also Curzon to Davis,1 March 1921, Foreign Relations of the US, 1921, vol.II,pp.82-84.

and gas was confined to corporations or citizens of the United States or the Philippines.[73]

As an outcome of the long drawn-out and bitter controversy over the application of the Open Door principle, and helped on by the mounting suspicion shared by all rival oil-interests about the "secret" oil-surveying by the War Office and the working of the Naft Khana oil-fields by the A,P.O.C., Anglo-American relations in the Middle East rapidly deteriorated. On the American side Davis began to exert heavy pressure on the British Government by threatening to submit the T.P.C.'s claim to international arbitration.[74] On the British side,[75] Curzon brushed off all representations by Davis in a manner that was ill suited to Britain's precarious diplomatic situation and her position in Iraq.

Though never mutually allied the combination of Turkish menace and American pressure forced Britain into retreat. In the Middle East, the Turks had raised their claim to the vilayet of Mosul by stepping up the military threat posed by Kemalist forces on its northern boundary. However, this threat resulted less from the superiority of the Kemalist forces than from the awkward military and diplomatic circumstances in which the British Government found itself once it had decided on severe cuts in military expenditure.[76] Owing to the undue expenditure of the previous years and the unrelenting and fierce "anti-Mespot" campaign at home, the withdrawal of British troops from Mesopotamia had begun almost a year before the Royal Air Force was ready to take over responsibility for policing and defending Iraq. The command

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74. Memorandum by Davis to Curzon, 24 August 1921, see footnote 72.
75. cf. also S.H.Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East, pp.45-6.
76. see next chapter.

was to change in October 1922. The interim situation was well put by Shuckburgh of the Middle East Department:

> "We must therefore play a game of bluff for nearly a year, unless we can square the Kemalists in the interval." 77

Apart from Greece, there was no power to which Britain could turn for support in "squaring" the Kemalists. The French by their recent agreement with the Angora Government had relieved pressure on the Kemalists and their forces in Cilicia.[78] And as France had already received her share in the T.P.C. by the San Remo Agreement of April 1920 there was no bait left in the Middle East with which to tempt her. As regards America, British officials had begun to harbour an uneasy feeling that the Kemalists were partly backed by American activity in Anatolia, and partly encouraged in their "forward" policy and threatening behavious by the strained relations that they knew to exist between the British and American Governments.[79] Obviously there were no prospects for timely peace negotiations with the Turks, and consequently no way of safeguarding the continuity of the pre-war T.P.C. concession. It was in these pressing circumstances that, by mid-1921, a new policy can be seen to have gradually taken shape in the minutes of the experts. As Hubert Young of the Middle East Department wrote by May:

> "As a matter of fact we shall probably have to let in the Americans somehow, if we want to remove what we suspect to be one of the influences behind the aggression of the Angora Covernment in the neighbourhood of Mosul - But we should prefer to do it as an act of grace than by compulsion!" 80

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77. Minute by J.Shuckburgh to J.Masterton Smith, 9 Nov.1921, C.O.730/7/55287.
78. To this possible danger of the Kemalists attention was called in the Cabinet on 26 Oct.1921, CAB 23/27. Further Curzon gave a short assessment of it at the session of 22 Nov.1921, CAB 23/27.
79. cf.Quotation of H.Young below; also: Lancelot Oliphant, Undersecretary of State (F.O.) to C.O., 1 March 1921, C.O.730/9/10195. Oliphant re-

Again, in the middle of 1921, Whitehall was forced to admit that the T.P.C. concession stood on shaky legs. The British Government had reason to fear the outcome of any arbitration procedure. As Churchill stated the case, in March 1922, when summarizing previous arguments on the oil issue:

> "The highest legal opinion has been obtained privately by the T.P.C. and it amounts in effect to this: that the claim although indubitably justified by abstract considerations of equity, rests upon a diplomatic rather than a legal basis." 81

## 5. Whitehall's Partial Climb-Down on the Eve of the Lausanne Conference.

When the British Government stand on the monopolistic claim of the British controlled T.P.C. began to weaken, the initiative passed to Churchill. Even before Curzon had replied to the American Ambassodor on December 1921 that a full answer to his note of 17 November required "most careful consideration from numerous aspects and by several departments",[82] Churchill had arrived at the conclusion that there was no way round American participation in the T.P.C. As he wrote to Curzon:

> "Before receiving your official letter of the 20th December ...I had independently arrived at the conclusion that so long as the Americans are excluded from participation in Iraq oil, we shall never see the end of our difficulties in the Middle East. On the other hand, I am convinced that if we can satisfy their aspirations in that direction, such pressing questions as the ratification ofthe mandates by the League of Nations,etc.will prove comparatively simple and that even the Kemalists situation may be appreciably relieved." 83

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79.contd.,ferred also to reports by A.T.Wilson of the previous year according to which American oil-agents should have been connected with the revolt in that year.As for Cox's views see Cox to Shuckburgh,25 March 1924, C.O.730/58/13100;also C.O.730/28/(C.P.3566).

But, what is more important, Churchill had already taken action even before those "careful considerations" mentioned by Curzon. Before Christmas, he had discussed the matter with Philip Lloyd-Greame, Head of the Department of Overseas Trade. With Churchill's approval Lloyd-Greame had authorised Greenway of the Petroleum Department to telegraph to Cadman of the A.P.O.C., "authorising him to enter into negotiations for American participation in Mesopotamia".[84] With a delicacy of feeling for the diplomatic finesse called for by the precarious British position in the Middle East, Lloyd-Greame saw to it that "the first overtures should be made by the Standard".[85] Nothing should indicate the smallest lack of confidence in the strength of the British hand. In the same vein Churchill had confided to Curzon:

> "I am impressed by the need for caution and for avoiding anything in the nature of an official overture, which, however cautiously worded, might be interpreted as an admission of the weakness of the Turkish Petroleum Company's claim. It would be far better if we could manouevre the Standard Oil Company into making the initial advances and negotiating some preliminary settlement in the matter direct with the Turkish Petroleum Company or the Anglo Persian Oil Company. Then, when the commercial negotiations were sufficiently advanced, we could reply formally to the American Note." [86]

By this time, on 16 January 1922, an informal conference had been held in Shuckburgh's room in the Middle East Department.[87] Curzon had left the initiative entirely to the Colonial Office. The prepon-

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80. Minute by H. Young, 3 May 1921, C.O.730/9/20161.
81. see footnote 61.
82. Foreign Relations of the US, 1921, vol.II, pp.93-4.
83. Churchill to Curzon, 1 February 1922, C.O.730/27/3167.
84. Lloyd-Greame to Churchill, 12 Jan.1922, Personal and Secret, C.O. 730/27/3167.
85. ibid. On Cadman, in general, cf. J. Rowland/Lord Cadman, Ambassador for Oil, London 1960.
86. see footnote 83.
87. Minute by Clauson, 12 January 1922, C.O.730/27/1695.

derant role of the Middle East Department was clear from the number of its representatives compared with those of other offices. Shuckburgh, its Head and the Under-Secretary of State for the Colonies, was in the chair. Besides Weakley from the Foreign Office and Clarke from the Petroleum Department there were three more members of the Middle East Department: Bullard, Clauson and Hall. The main decision taken which is of interest here was that:

> "if possible we should attempt to avoid arbitration by a prior settlement on commercial lines." 88

The opposition to the submission of the case to arbitration revealed the monopolistic spirit that still coloured the thoughts of those present and the departments that they represented. The spirit was likewise noticeable when the question of Italian participation was discussed.[89] Although no active steps were decided upon, it was felt that some form of Italian participation would strengthen the British position vis-a-vis all those who had questioned the claim of the T.P.C. on the ground that it violated the Open Door principle.[90]

At bottom, the problem which confronted the meeting was how to maintain a British monopoly in face of all the foreign claims and aspirations. Since Iraq stood to lose by any such monopoly, Britain's true motives call for examination. In the case of the oil-bearing regions of Iraq Britain was determined to stick to "appearances" in both the literal and figurative sense, i.e. the Open Door was a facade, and

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88. C.O.730/27/1695.
89. In a correspondence of some length, begun in August 1920, the Italian Ambassador, with reference to the San Remo oil agreement, pleaded for some acknowledgement of Italian interests. He requested Italian participation in any benefits that might accrue from the Agreement.
90. see footnote 88.

British control of the oil bearing regions, as well as actual oil-development, remained the ultimate aim.[91]

The British were generally agreed that there were three possible courses for participation in the oil of Iraq: first participation in the shares of the T.P.C. and thereby in the actual oil development; second participation only in the output of oil; third a share in the allotment to Iraq provided for in § 8 of the San Remo oil agreement.[92] While they took the view that the second or else the third course applied to the appeasement of Italian interests, they wavered about what should be done with US interests. Significantly they were inclined to appease the Standard Oil Company with the second rather than the first course, although some doubted whether American interests rich in investment capital, would be satisfied with merely a share in the oil output. Churchill, in particular, thought that, as the US company was concerned to secure the control of large quantities of oil, an assurance of a constant supply of a definite annual quantity would prove a more attractive proposition than one of co-operation in the actual development of the oilfields. He summarized its advantages as follows:

> "the United States Government would no longer dispute the validity of the Turkish Petroleum Company's claim: that their objection to the monopolistic nature of the rights which that Company wish to establish would be weakened, if not entirely waived; and that the claim of the company would be recognised by the Iraq Government." 93

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91. For a short description of the complexity of the Open Door principle in practice see: John A.De Novo, American Interests and Policies in the Middle East 1900-1939, Minnesota 1963, p.202.
92. For the text of §8 see: J.C.Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, New York 1956, vol.II, pp.75-77.
93. Memorandum: Iraq Oil, circulated by Churchill, 13 March 1922, Secret. C.O.730/28/(C.P.3832); see also footnote 79.

By contrast, the Foreign Office, and also the Petroleum Department, were very sceptical whether the Standard Oil Company could be put off in this way, and the American Government be "bribed" into acquiescing to an Open Door facade in Iraq. In view of the large British share-holding of about 60% in the T.P.C.[94] the prospects for this method of squaring the Americans were dubious. Nevertheless, Churchill cited as a good omen the North Persia Agreement recently concluded between the A.P.O.C. and the Standard Oil Company.[95] After all, with the A.P.O.C. and the majority share-holder in the T.P.C., and the Standard Oil Company at the same table the two partners would surely be foolish to jettison the favourable atmosphere of co-operation they had so recently achieved.[96]

The gambit was worth a trial because Curzon was about to negotiate with the Kemalists at Lausanne, and it would, if successful, strengthen his hand. While there he would have to deal not only with the Kemalists but also with a series of disillusioned allies; hence if the Americans had acquiesced in the proposal described above, his position would be much stronger. The same consideration had led Churchill to suggest modifying the provisions of the San Remo Agreement in such a way that the Italians might get their share out of that due to Iraq.

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94. The holdings in the T.P.C. had the following proportions: A.P.O.C. 50%, British Anglo-Saxon (Shell) 25% of which 60% were Dutch and 40% British, French (ex-German, San Remo Agreement) 25%. These were the figures as Churchill used them at the time, however, in accordance with the Long-Berenger Agreement (San Remo) the exact figures were: A.P.O.C. 47.5%, Anglo-Saxon 22.5%, French 25%, Gulbenkian 5%.

95. also known as the Khostaria concessions.

96. Churchill to Curzon, 1 Febr.1922, C.O.730/27/3167; The fact that the Khostaria concessions came to nothing because the Persians rejected the transaction of a half-share made arbitrarily by the Standard Oil Company to the A.P.O.C. did not impair the spirit of co-operation thus displayed. See also S.H.Longrigg, Oil in...p.39.

He estimated the political benefits that would result from such a measure:

> "In the event of such a combination being possible, it would have an excellent effect on our relations with the Italian Government and incidentally might offer us assistance in getting them to accept changes in the Treaty of Sèvres as affecting the Tripartite agreement." 97

Evidently, on the eve of the Lausanne Conference, Churchill was the true impresario. He had taken a considerable and independent initiative[98] in breaking the stalemate in Anglo-American relations. Furthermore he had reduced Italian stubbornness by dangling before them a share in Iraq`s own share in the T.P.C.`s oil-output. Keen on widening the scope for diplomatic manoeuvering in the future peace negotiations he ruthlessly proceeded on the line that the Iraq government could be bullied into doing whatever the British wanted. However, without binding engagements the scope had remained precariously narrow.

In the course of events that led up to Lausanne Curzon`s scope for maneuvre became still further limited by the events at Chanak. Indeed Mustafa Kemal`s success there[99] had far-reaching effects on matters remote from the area. When the Chanak incident, besides leaving the British without an ally or friend on the international scene, caused downfall of Lloyd George,[100] a change of government followed.

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97. see footnote 93.
98. From Lloyd-Greame`s letter one may however assume that Churchill had been under the influence of the Oil Department.
99. For a short assessment cf. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit., p.54.
100. There was, of course, a long record of disenchantment among Lloyd George`s colleagues about his handling of peace making. Even towards the end of the war against Turkey men such as Curzon and Milner had been frightened by the speculative deals which he had suggested for appeasing the French. But by far the most vocative critic was Cecil. As he concluded his letter to Grey of 12 April 1921 after enumerating the unsatisfactory state of affairs in Turkey, Hungary, Russia, Persia, Armenia, Iraq, Palestine, Egypt and India, "It

But installation of the Tories under Bonar Law was by no means as favourable to Imperial interests in Iraq as might have been expected of a Tory Government. Not only did Bonar Law, the new Prime Minister, and the Duke of Devonshire, Churchill's successor at the Colonial Office, surpass their predicessors in ignorance of the Middle East,[101] they also made no bones about their preference for cutting down imperial and mandatory commitments, and for leaving development and humanitarianism to look after themselves.

On the whole civil servants were more consistent. The Middle East Department, though aware of the overall need of curtailment of government expenditure, nevertheless put up stiff resistance to this mixture of nonchalance and ruthlessness. The toughening of the Department's outlook, no doubt, was partly instigated by the men on the spot. In the autumn of 1922, Percy Cox began to worry about the disquieting rumours in Bagdad that Whitehall intended to restore Kurdistan and the Mosul vilayet to Turkey.[102] He urged the Colonial Office to give some

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100.contd., is impossible to believe that the present Government have no responsibility for these deplorable events. Making every allowance for the difficulties of the time, their policy has been too often vacillating and destitute of any clearly-defined plan or principle. Over and over again they appear to have had no opinion of their own, but merely to have taken the line of least resistance". see: Cecil Papers 51076, British Museum.

Cecil was even more specific in his letter to Smuts of 25 July 1922, two months before the Chanak crisis:"You reproach me with my hostility to Lloyd George. But consider what his foreign policy has been in the last two years. No more scathing condemnation of it can be found than in your explanation of why you signed the Peace Treaty. Every word you send then, has proved to be true, but I doubt whether the P.M. has really learnt anything.Cannes and Genoa were in their way just as objectionable as Versailles and Paris, and we have done almost as much harm. It is impossible to conduct a decent foreign policy if you always have more than one eye on by-elections and the newspaper press", ibid.;see also Cecil's declaration of political opinion,28 March 1922 in:G.Murray Papers.

101.Devonshire had been governor-general of Canada,1916-21.He was a free-trader.cf.Denis Judd. op.cit.,p.111.

official assurance to the contrary. At the same time he warned it that any withdrawal from the Mosul vilayet would entail unforeseeable disasters. In short, the withdrawal would be regarded in Iraq as a preliminary to the final British withdrawal to Basra; for, without Mosul, the holding of Bagdad would become extremely difficult. Further, revenue payment and recruiting for the levies would be seriously affected, while the Christian community of the Mosul vilayet, numbering some 80.000 people, would be faced with physical extinction by the advancing Turks.

But the British Government, with a general election just ahead of it, was in no position to make any statement of policy. This stumbling block began to worry even the departments at Whitehall, in particular, the Air Ministry[103] and the Middle East Department. Both feared that after the elections a new government might have too little time to decide on a final policy, and that the Turks would encounter a British Government that had not made up its mind. But underlying the demands both from the field and from Government officials in London for immediate consideration of future policy in Iraq was their view that Imperial interests were a permanent trust for any government, whatever its political complexion. This conception called for an uninterrupted formation of political planning in the departments responsible for Iraq

Thanks to Shuckburgh's skill, this process had been achieved by means of a flexible "Group Council" attended by various departments and summoned whenever some final decision need to be taken. The recom-

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102. cf. H. Young to Masterton Smith (Private Secretary to Churchill) for Churchill, 18 Oct. 1922, C.O.730/25/52191.

103. The Air Ministry was lastly only responsible for the military security of the British personnel and garrisons in Iraq.

mendations and summaries of this body

thought, possible alternatives and possible new departures than do any other records. Thus on the eve of the election, its thoughts on Mosul were summarized by Hubert Young as follows:

"(1) Air Ministry regard our position in Iraq as quite satisfactory from the military point of view.
(2) That the F.O. do not anticipate that the Turks will really hold out for the retrocession of Mosul and Kurdistan.
(3) That in the event of their doing so it would be possible for us to offer:
(a) Either 5% of the 20% participation in the Turkish Petroleum Company which is now reserved for the Iraq Government. or some percentage of the oil royalties derived from the Mosul vilayet and Kurdistan.
(b) A promise that if and when the Bagdad railway is completed (of which there is so far as I know, no intention whatever) we should promise that a friendly agreement would to come to with Turkey about the through running of the line.
(c) An announcement by Feisal and possibly Abdullah that they recognize the spiritual suzerinty of the Caliph.
(d) Representation of King Feisal at Constantinople, under Art.5 of the Iraq Treaty, which would entail Turkish representation at Bagdad.
(e) Treatment of Turks in Palestine and Iraq as foreigners with special privileges, provided that they extended capitulary rights to Iraqis and Palestinians in Turkey.
(4) That both F.O. and Air Ministry were departmentally strongly averse from any territorial concession bargain made to Turkey, but that it might be necessary in the last resort for us to drop our demand for the modification of the Treaty of Sevres frontier to include Amadiah in Iraq..." 104

The Middle East Department was, on the whole, pleased with the attitude taken by the Air Ministry and the Foreign Office. As for Cox, he remained worried about Whitehall's largely non-committal answers and kept introducing the bogey of an imminent menace from the Turks.It should

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104.see footnote 102.

here be added that Cox had some influence on the forthcoming negotiations with the Turks. All telegrams from Lausanne to London which touched Iraq were repeated to him and his views transmitted back to London.

## 6. The Role of Oil at the Lausanne Conference.

The role played by oil in the shoddy operations which eroded Iraq's share in the T.P.C.'s oil-output, which helped to set the stage for the negotiations at Lausanne and which continued to influence decision making, is particularly relevant because when, in 1924, Lord Curzon was accused in Parliament of having fought on behalf of oil interests at Lausanne, the role of oil was vehemently denied. Lord Curzon rejected as untrue the statement by T.Johnston, M.P. that "the trail of oil was all over the question of Mosul and Iraq".[105]

But Curzon's refutation, which he sought to maintain in a series of letters to the Times,[106] was a lie. He lied both to Parliament and the Public, and again in the Blue-book on the Lausanne Conference of 1923, which he later quoted and which stated that:

> "oil had not the remotest connexion with my attitude or with that of His Majesty's Government on the Mosul question, or the Iraq question, or the Eastern question in any aspect." 107

The truth, however, was that while Curzon was negotiating on behalf of the British Government at Lausanne, the representatives of

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105. Quoted in Curzon's letter to the Times of 2 August 1924.
106. The Times, 2 August 1924; 9 August 1924; 16 August 1924.
107. see 105.; Historical accounts that lacked the advantage of access to material now available in the PRO had, of course, to count such evidence while relying on the integrity of a man like Curzon, cf. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit., p.103.

the British, French and American oil interests in the T.P.C. were meeting in London. Significantly, Sassoon Effendi Hasktail, the (nominal) Iraqi Finance Minister, also attended the London talks.[108] These talks had begun in the autumn of 1922 on Churchill's and Lloyd-Greame's initiative.[109] At the time of the Lausanne Conference, Curzon was kept fully informed of their progress.[110] It was important for him to know because, since the Standard Oil Company and the French and British share-holding companies in the T.P.C. were all backed by their respective governments, the proceedings in London to a large extent governed Curzon's scope for diplomatic manoeuvre. On the other hand as Curzon found it necessary to promise participation in the T.P.C. to the Italians, and as a similar British promise to Turkey[111] began to look inevitable if Britain was to retain the Mosul Vilayet, diplomatic requirements began to work in the opposite direction and to complicate the talks on the composition of the Turkish Petroleum Company. Furthermore, the Admiralty's argument about the importance of Britain retaining physical control over the oil-bearing regions of Mosul also constituted a very important ingredient in the complex British decision to retain the Mosul vilayet at the time of the Lausanne Conference. At one stage in the negotiations about a frontier compromise it was even the sole British motive.

Certainly, the significance and complexity of the oil issue

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108. cf. Memorandum by L.S.Amery, "Iraq: Turkish Petroleum Company", 23 Febr. 1925, C.O.730/72/(C.P. 108/25). Amery was by then S of S for the Colonies, i.e. in 1925.
109. see footnote 86.
110. Minute by Shuckburgh, 10 Jan. 1923, C.O.730/47/1749;
111. Foreign Relations of the US, 1923, vol.II, p.949.

calls for a close examination of British decision-making at the time of the Lausanne Conference.

The Lausanne Conference began on November 20th,1922 and ended, after a temporary breakdown from February 4th to April 23rd, on 24th July 1923, leaving the Mosul question for bi-lateral settlement by Britain and Turkey. Of the many aspects of the conference three are particularly relevant in examining and assessing the role of the Mosul oil in British policy making: first Curzon's proposal of a frontier compromise in the north of the Mosul vilayet; second the plans for a new composition of the T.P.C. and graduation in the distribution of its profits; third the start of the transfer of the Mosul issue from power politics and ordinary diplomacy to settlement by the League.

On 16 November, the Bonar Law Cabinet authorised the course to be followed by Curzon at Lausanne:

> "at the Lausanne Conference the S of S for Foreign Affairs should be authorised to refuse to discuss any proposal which the Turkish Delegation might make for including Mosul within the Turkish frontiers, on the ground, among others, that Mosul had already been conceded to the Kingdom of Iraq, but that Lord Curzon should avoid committing the British Government more deeply than they are already committed to continued responsibility for Iraq." 112

The qualification that Curzon should not commit Britain any more deeply was set out more explicitly in the assurances which Devonshire sent to Percy Cox at Bagdad. Devonshire assured Cox that Whitehall continued to be strongly interested in retaining Mosul, that it would offer strenuous resistence to Turkish claims to any part of the vilayet, that it would try to keep Amadiah on the Iraqi side, and it would do its utmost to avert the disaster of a withdrawal to Basra. But for reasons of high

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112.Cabinet 67(22), 16 November 1922, CAB 23/32.

policy he could not pledge the Government's word. As he had written on 8th November 1922:

> "At the same time you will understand that situation might conceivably arise in which the necessity of achieving some object of still greater importance might oblige us to consider the possibility of giving up Mosul".113

Cox who was already disturbed by the welter of rumours among the Iraqis at Bagdad that the British might withdraw to Basra decided to mobilize national agitation for the retention of the Mosul vilayet; as the property owning classes, and in particular the big landowners became hesitant to identify themselves with any anti-Turkish course, he replaced the Cabinet under the Naqib of Bagdad, one of the richest landowners, with a new Cabinet composed of ardent nationalists.[114]

Meanwhile, at Lausanne, private conversations between Curzon and Riza Nur Bey, the second Turkish delegate, began on the 4th December alongside the official negotiations. On the following day, after protestations of friendly intentions by both sides, the Turkish case was seen by Curzon to "boil down" to Mosul exactly as had been feared. As he informed the Foreign Office:

> "Turkey would meet us on every point, conclude satisfactory treaty and even break with Soviet, if only we could give them Vilayet of Mosul." 115

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113. Devonshire to Cox, 8 Nov.1922, C.O.730/25. As for Cox's previous correspondence on this topic see C.O.730/24/45342, 42989 which reflect well the mounting anxiety before Chanak. As Churchill assessed the military situation on 19 Sept.1922, "It is quite possible that our troops at Chanak may be attacked by Kemal within the next ten days. Result would be a state of war between Britain and Angora...Kemalists would no doubt over-run the whole of Mosul if a state of war lasted for some time...question of its recovery would then be a matter for a peace conference and not for military operations".

114. see p.303.

115. Decypher, Lord Curzon (Lausanne), 5 Dec.1922, C.O.730/29/60539.

While Riza Nur Bey was presumably asked to await the outcome of consultations of Whitehall, Curzon worked out a compromise which touched only the question of the northern boundary of the vilayet, as distinct from the question of possession of the vilayet as a whole. It read:

> "it might perhaps be possible ostensibly and partially to meet Turkish wishes by offering them Kurdish part of Mosul vilayet following line of mountains and including Keni Sandjak Rowanduz and Suleimani etc. while retaining for Iraq Amadia for the sake of Assyrian Christians, Mosul town, Erbil, Kirkpa and whole of plain country inhabited by Arabs." 116

Curzon having no local knowledge of the boundaries of the Mosul vilayet, asked for the despatch of Hubert Young, or failing him Reader Bullard, to Lausanne. To the surprise of the Middle East Department Curzon ended with the statement that it was "not intended to exclude Turkish participation in Mosul oil on lines already under examination". 117 As Turkish participation in oil development had till then been contemplated only as the price of Turkish acquiescence in the existing frontiers of Iraq, his statement was bound to meet with severe criticism. As the Middle East Department put it:

> "The admission of Turkish interests in our oil projects would be extremely inconvenient...If we are forced to make concessions on the frontier, there seems no reason why we should also make concessions in regard to oil." 118

But Curzon had sound reasons for reserving a share in the Mosul oil for the Turks. The strip of territory suggested by him as a bargaining counter did not include land where discovery of oil was likely.[119] It can hardly have been by accident that he retained the oil-bearing re-

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116. see footnote 115.
117. ibid.
118. Note on Lord Curzon's tel. of 5 Dec. 1922 by Middle East Department, 7 Dec. 1922, C.O.730/29/60539.
119. Committee on Iraq Minutes, 1st meeting, 8 Dec. 1922, CAB 27/206.

gions and foothills, together with the dubious asset of their Turkish towns, while barbaining away the bare mountains with their Kurdish tribes. But oil and local Turks must somehow be reconciled under British control. It is from this angle that the significance of Curzon's emphasis on the maintenance of Turkish participation in Mosul oil is revealed.

Strategically, Curzon's frontier compromise passed the critical eyes of the General Staff as a defensible northern frontier for Iraq. As they explained:

> "The portion ceded possesses indifferent resources and worse communications. It will not give the Turks an area through which they can easily move troops and it is unsuitable for use as a base for further operations against Iraq proper." 120

Most significantly, as it emerges from their long list of critical observations, and also from the wholesale criticism submitted by the Middle East Department in the Committee on Iraq,[121] the experts did not think a defensible northern frontier for "Iraq proper" to be identical with a good strategical frontier for holding "Mosul proper". It was, in fact, on this latter aspect that their defence arguments concentrated.

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120. Appreciation by the General Staff, 7 Dec.1922, CAB 27/206, Annexure I. Lord Curzon's tentative proposals regarding cession of portion of Kurdistan. Incidentally this appreciation was taken by Bullard to Lausanne.

121. On 16 November 1922 the Cabinet (CAB 67/22(2)) had approved of the formation of a Cabinet Committee on Iraq to examine the situation in regard to Britain's situation in Iraq, and to make recommendations to the Cabinet in time to be considered, if desirable, before the completion of the Turkish peace negotiations. Further it should examine whether the Treaty with Feisal ought to be ratified. The Committee was composed of: Devonshire (S of S, C.O.), Derby (W.O.) Peel (S of S, I.O.), L.S.Amery (Admiralty), Philip Lloyd-Greame (B.T.) Samual Hoare (Air), Viscount Novar (S of Scotland), Wood (Board of Education), Ronald Mc Neill, Parliamentary Undersecretary of F.O.; Joint Secretaries were C.W.G.Walker (C.I.D.) and R.W.Bullard (M.E.D.); On 12 Dec.1922 enlarged by W.Ormsby-Gore, Parliamentary U-Secreaty C.O.;

Incidentally, previous historical accounts have oversimplified the issue of Iraq's northern frontier as a strategical requirement for safeguarding the territory of the Iraqi state. In general, their argument has been that the Mosul vilayet had to be retained for Iraq in order to provide Iraq with a defensible northern frontier beyond the Mosul plains. It follows that this strategical calculation has then served for explaining away the political role ofthe Mosul oil.[122] Seen in this light Curzon's policy could be reconciled with the orthodox view concerning the need for a strategic northern frontier for Iraq, but not with the need to assert British control over the Mosul oilfield

But as is obvious from the contemporary expert observations on Curzon's frontier compromise for northern Iraq, one must differentiate between the strategical requirements for holding the Mosul vilayet and those for holding Iraq as a whole. The holding of the (entire) vilayet of Mosul had its own raison d'etre, distinct from the frontier question of Iraq proper, though not distinct from Britain's reasons for holding Iraq. Therefore, as Iraq was held by the British for reasons of maintaining p h y s i c a l c o n t r o l over its oil-bearing regions, and since the Mosul oilfields were a declared objective of British policy and also part of the T.P.C. concession, the "partial" strategical requirements for securing the territory of the mandated Iraqi state from easy aggression in the north were absorbed in the greater strategical designs for holding and securing the oil-bearing regions and the territory covered by the T.P.C. concession.

This strategical entanglement is clearly discernible in the observations of the Middle East Department, the Admiralty and the

122.e.g.E.Monroe,op.cit.,p.103.

Committee on Iraq, at large. For instance, as L.S.Amery of the Admiralty observed in the committee meeting on 8th December:

> "it was most important to hold the territory in which Oil Fields and potential Oil Fields and Pipe Lines were situated; the question of how concessions with regard to oil were held was of less importance. The strip of country suggested by Curzon for bargaining purposes did not actually include the land where oil was likely to be found, but it was in close proximity to it." 123

Similarly, the priority of physical control over the oil-bearing regions and oil supply was underlined in a note of 11th December 1922, prepared by the Middle East Department and summarizing the views of the Committee on Iraq:

> "The question of oil remains to be touched upon. The Iraq oilfields have not only not been developed, but have not even been properly prospected. There is no doubt that there are considerable deposits of oil, particularly in the Mosul vilayet though the exact quantities still remain a matter for surmise. This is not the place to go into the question of the claims of the Turkish Petroleum Company or the various international difficulties that centre round the question of oil concessions. It is possible that, even if Mosul reverted to Turkey, the rights of the British oil interests could be maintained. What is relevant to the present purpose is the desirability of keeping within the British sphere of influence what may prove to be one of the most important oil-fields of the future." 124

Physical control over the oil-bearing regions of Iraq including Mosul has clearly to be regarded as the most important argument in favour of the maintenance of British control over Iraq. At no time in the next months and years was it absent from the levels of policy making. By

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123. see 119. Also: C.O.730/27/60792, Oilfields in Mosul Vilayet, Copy of a letter from Admiralty to F.O.,7 Dec.1922,"the essential point is that Great Britain should control the territories on which the oilfields are situated, as we should then be in a position to control the supply at the source." Further: Memorandum by the First Lord of the Admiralty, 16 December 1922, CAB 27/206.

124. Note prepared by the Middle East Department,11 Dec.1922, Secret, I.P.Q.3, page 4, CAB 27/206.

January 1923, Novar's memorandum read to the Cabinet Committee resounded with it:

> "The one serious reason advanced for continued occupation is to guard existing and potential supplies of oil, and that not only for ourselves but for America and other countries. It is not apparent why we should bear the whole cost of protecting property in which so many other powers are interested, while if the safety of the wells can be secured by a trifling backsheesh to the tribes, it will be better to adopt these methods rather than those of costly occupation." 125

And the minutes of the next committee meeting of 18th January 1923 read:

> "The situation with regard to Oil was also touched upon; the value of holding control of the country in which the Mosul and the West Persian Oil-fields were situated in the event of war was emphasized, and the British financial interests in the Mosul Oilfields explained." 126

Taken together, the strength of this motive for retaining British control over Mosul, no matter whether directly, or indirectly through the maintenance of Iraq's territorial integrity and a mandatory regime, led to the rejection of Curzon's frontier compromise by the Committee on Iraq. Although in their appraisal of Curzon's proposal the General Staff had pointed out that, in spite of unfavourable factors, his suggestion possessed "many advantages over the rendition of any portion of the Mosul Vilayet proper",[127] the proposal was discarded on grounds of defence owing to the strategic entanglement described above v.z. the vital line of communication between Mosul and Bagdad would be flanked for some 200 miles by a wild mountainous area inhabited by truculent tribesmen while constant trouble would place great strain on the

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125. Memorandum by the Secretary for Scotland, 10 Jan. 1923, CAB 27/206.
126. Committee on Iraq Minutes, 4th meeting, 18 Jan. 1923, CAB 27/206.
127. see footnote 120.

diplomatic line of communication to Constantinople, - a capital that was not only renowned for its inefficiency in diplomatic matters but ill-placed to control a distant and unruly population. However, the main criticism was that by cutting off the Kurdish hill country on the North and East of the vilayet, and leaving the foothills and the Turkish speaking towns of Erbil, Kirkuk and Kifri under Bagdad's control, further Turkish pretensions to these towns would in time have to be met, and that Turkey's ethnic case would be difficult to overcome.

Such arguments seem to be trifling compared with both the need of the Bonar Law Government for drastic saving and the extraordinary risks involved in an uncompromising British position vis-a-vis the Turkish claims. Admittedly some experts had pointed out that the refusal of Curzon's proposal saved the British taxpayer the extra cost of holding Kirkuk in great military strength.[128] But nobody raised the question of whether the Kurds would not entail equal or even greater cost by behaving in an as unruly fashion in Iraq as outside its frontier in the north. Further, nobody wondered whether the uncompromising stand on the territorial issue corresponded at all to a willingness to accord the Turks a share in the T.P.C. That the widening of the international basis of the company would reduce risks of diplomatic friction was clearly perceived by the Middle East Department. But the territorial aspect of the Mosul issue remained unaffected by this consideration. In short, p h y s i c a l  c o n t r o l over the oil-bearing

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128. Note on Lord Curzon's tel. of 5 Dec.1922 by the Middle East Department, 7 December 1922, C.O.730/29/60539.

regions had become the predominant notion in the mind of British policy makers.[129]

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The Admiralty argument, while determining the territorial expansion of British control to the Mosul vilayet, and remaining a potent influence in this respect, had with regard to the working of oil undergone an important change since the time of Slade's memorandum in that it permitted any composition of the T.P.C. that diplomacy might require. This question of the composition of the T.P.C. was also brought to a head at the time of the Lausanne Conference. Its handling by the British is, of course, revealing as to the nature of their mandatory policy in Iraq.

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While Curzon was considering his policy of offering the Turks participation in the Mosul oil on the condition that they relinquished any claim to the vilayet, the Turks for their part had approached the American observors at Lausanne, courting American support of their claim to Mosul by offering them generous participation in the Mosul oil should Turkey acquire the vilayet. By 22nd November 1922 Child and Grew of the American Delegation transmitted this offer to the State Department:

> "The Turks declared positively that their Government wished for participation of American interests in Mosul oil lands as great as and greater than the share taken by any other power". 130

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129. The conclusion of the Middle East Department by which Curzon's proposal was rejected read, "The upshot is that in the view of the Department the suggested compromise is no compromise at all. It envolves in effect the surrender of the Mosul vilayet with all the

From a diplomatic standpoint Turkish overtures of this kind were welcome to the State Department. At the same time its support for the Standard Oil Company remained firm. At no time was it faced with the alternative of supporting either the Chester concession[131] or the interests of the Standard Oil Company. For had it accepted the Turkish offer and thrown the government's prestige behind Admiral Chester's concession (confirmation of which the Turks seemed to have made dependent on the extension of the concession to Mosul) such an act would have been tantamount to abandoning the interests of Standard Oil in Iraq and to splitting the area to which the T.P.C. concession applied. In addition, such a policy would have defeated its own avowed principle of "the open door". Thus the State Department preferred to come to terms with the imperial powers rather than throw in its lot with the revolutionary states of Turkey and perhaps Persia, (in which case, of course, the United States would have accepted monopolistic privileges similar in kind to those claimed by the imperialist powers Britain and France).

However, as the State Department made no move about the Turkish offers, the Turks took the American attitude to be tacit support of their claim to Mosul and baulked all British attempts to include in the Peace Treaty an article specifying the validity of the T.P.C.'s concession.[132]

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129.contd., consequences which that surrender would entail." see 128.
130.Foreign Relations of the US, 1923,vol.II,pp.900-902,The Special Mission at Lausanne to the Secretary of State, 22 November 1922.
131.On some of the stages of the Chester concession see Longrigg, Oil in the Middle East,pp.28-31,46-47.
132.Memorandum by R.V.Vernon,Middle East Department,13 Dec.1923,Turkish Petroleum Company, Middle East No.5, Confidential, C.O.730/44.

In general, on the evidence of their offer to the American delegation at Lausanne it would seem that the Turks, by refusing in any way to acknowledge the validity of the T.P.C. concession, merely intended to use it as a lever to secure the return of the Mosul vilayet, and it would seem that they contemplated throwing up the T.P.C. concession once they had achieved their territorial aim. Since they gave priority to the territorial rather than the economic aspect of the Mosul question, Curzon's hope of buying their renunciation of the territory by offering them a share in the Mosul oil was in vain.

On the other hand, had it come to a territorial compromise, it is difficult to imagine how the T.P.C., with a concession extending across the frontier with Turkey, could have obtained congenial terms both from Ankara and Bagdad. Further, as these two regimes were primarily interested in profit making, they would have been likely to demand a say in T.P.C. policy. By contrast, the big Western share-holding companies, including Standard Oil, were interested in selling crude oil to their branches or affiliated companies rather than in making profits on production, for which, as the T.P.C. was registered in Briatin, the British partners would have had to pay high amounts of income tax.[133]

Purely business calculations were thus mixed up with considerations of diplomacy. This can be seen by the way in which during the Lausanne Conference, the Colonial Office exerted heavy pressure on the Iraqi regime to refrain from pressing for the maintenance of the

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133. Most of these points were apparantly raised in the negotiations in London, in 1922, at which Sassoon Haskail attended. There were simultaneous talks at Bagdad between Mr.Keeling, the representative of the T.P.C. and the Iraqi government, see: Memorandum by L.S. Amery, "Iraq, Turkish Petroleum Company", Febr.1925, C.O.730/72/(108).

provisions contained in the San Remo oil agreement.[134] As the Colonial Office instructed the High Commissioner at Bagdad on January 2nd, 1923:

> "Question of Mosul Oil concession is under consideration of His Majesty's Government in connection with Turkish treaty negotiations at Lausanne...San Remo agreement provided for Iraq government or native interests acquiring share capital up to maximum of 20%, which would of course mean subscribing large sum in cash, perhaps ultimately L 2.000.000. No definite scheme has hitherto been framed for provision of such capital. It is now suggested that this right should be surrendered by Iraq government in order to admit of Italian and Turkish participation, on clear condition that sovereignty of Iraq over Mosul Vilayet is recognised by Turkish government. Please press Iraq government to give immediate consideration to this proposal. You should point out that definite assurance of possession of Mosul Vilayet is Iraq's main interest in Turkish treaty, and is worth serious sacrifice...His Majesty's Government think that Iraq will benefit by showing that they are more concerned about integrity of their country than about oil dividends." 135

The ambiguity of this proposal stemmed, of course, from the implication that the integrity of Iraq's territory was economically more valuable to T.P.C. than to Iraq itself. Theoretically, one may explain this implication in terms of a conflict of principle between the concept of national territorial sovereignty and the international open door principle, which springs from the habit of an increasingly scientific world claiming absolute ius utendi wherever the exploitation of a particularly valuable raw material was in the interest of the technologically "progressive" part of mankind. Yet in the case of Iraq such an explanation is clearly absurd. For here the achievement of national territorial integrity and sovereignty was a precondition for the implementation of the open door principle. But that the implementation of the

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134. see footnote 92.

135. Paraphrase of tel. from C.O. to Bagdad, 2 Jan. 1923, Very Urgent. A copy of it was sent to Curzon on Jan. 4th. The secrecy of these instructions and the whole (oil) operation was underlined by the additional remark: No Distribution. C.O.730/47/1749.

open door principle in turn required of the Iraqi regime the forfeiture of its voting shares in the T.P.C. went far beyond its proper "precincts". Clearly the exclusion of the Iraqi vote from the governing board of the company was meant to safeguard the smooth business practice of an oil company which was primarily orientated to the tax-system and profit-rate of the nationals' respective home countries.

Thus the British Government was not only supporting the T.P.C.'s claim of the validity of its concession, but buttressing the concession by widening the composition of the company, but it was also actively representing the T.P.C.'s, and with it the A.P.O.C.'s, methods of profit making.[136] Needless to say, these methods did not make enough allowance for the specific needs of Iraq as a state in its particular stage of development. The external complement of this oil policy was, of course, the opportunistic diplomacy of pacifying the Middle East by putting the Iraqi oil share on sale to the various competing oil and power interests in the area.

It should be stressed that, as the instructions show, the Middle East Department was fully aware that their oil policy entailed "serious sacrifice" from Iraq. Accordingly arguments were found to mitigate its extent: the prospect of revenue from royalties was held out to the Iraq regime, while at the same time it was pointed out that this income would "not be dependent on profits which must be uncertain!"[137] Further, it was asserted that the acceptance of the royalty-basis of income would save the Iraqi Treasury both the trouble of finding a

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136. see also p.224.
137. see footnote 135.

loan on the international money market for financing the purchase of its shares, and the burden of an aggregate liability at the most crucial stage of the country's reconstruction.

No less revealing of the dilemma and, no doubt, the ruthlessness of British policy were the circumstances in which these instructions were sent to Bagdad. The British Government was in no position to give the Iraqi regime a binding assurance that the Mosul vilayet would be retained in Iraq, and yet at the same time it also refrained from letting Faisal's government know that it intended to refuse any territorial compromise on the Mosul question. Although this reticence was a true reflection of the precarious situation at Lausanne, nevertheless it was expected to stimulate more anti-Turkish sentiment in Iraq and to evoke preparedness for "serious sacrifice".

Surprisingly, the difficulty of making any territorial compromise on the Mosul question in view ofthe coincidence of the boundaries of the T.P.C. concession with those of the Mosul and Bagdad vilayets was only implicitly voiced by the factions arguing at Whitehall.[138] But the obstacle was apparent in the attitude taken by Lloyd-Greame of the Department of Overseas Trade. This department, more than other Government bodies concerned, was interested in furthering foreign trade and seeing that investments abroad remained unimpaired, whether by risky political initiatives pursued by a foreign power, or by the country in which capital was invested, or by British foreign policy. Therefore

138. This particular aspect is dealt with in more detail in connection with the international Mosul Boundary Commission.

it was bound to be worried not only about the uncompro ising and harsh British line taken over Mosul, but also about the indications on the Iraqi side that there would be no easy settlement of the terms of the T.P.C. concession, even if the Mosul vilayet remained with Iraq.

As a result Lloyd-Greame, in order to prevent such imminent complications from curbing the prospects of the T.P.C. undertaking, began to believe strongly in the need for Britain to clear out of Iraq altogether or, at least, to withdraw to Basra.[139] He obviously reckoned the Mosul and Bagdad vilayets to be a territorial unit, which for reasons of facilitating the working of the oil, should be safeguarded even after political retreat. Lloyd-Greame may also have fallen under the influence of a faction of British oil pressure groups which in view of Government plans for withdrawal to Basra or for drastic cuts of the man date period, preferred to deal with Constantinople rather than the unstable and unknown Bagdad Government.[140] His "bolting" in the opposite direction from Curzon's risky course at Lausanne was a good reflection of the tension with which the Anglo-Turkish talks were watched.

By mid-January 1923, the British and Turks were almost at daggers drawn at Lausanne.[141] So much so that, tragi-comically, Curzon, the arch-imperialist and haughty architect of the Empire in the East, turned to the League and played this instrument with all the stops pulled out. There was no other course open to him; Britain had to cause the League to attempt to bring about that weakening of Kemal which em-

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139. see: Minutes by Clauson of the Middle East Department, dated 11 November 1922, C.O.730/27/60792.

140. In general, numerous oil-intrigues seems to have been going on behind the scenes. e.g. Inverforth was said to have been working upon MacDonald to give up Mosul, in order to secure a concession from the Turks. Similarly Lord Beaverbrook was reported to be interested

ployment of the Greeks and of their military means had failed to achieve. Priding himself with holding the Turkish Delegation in a "cleft stick", Curzon wrote from Lausanne, on 19th January 1923, about his course:

> "In the opposite case, either of Turkish refusal or Turkish delay, it is still open to me and I am disposed to invoke article XI of the Covenant seeing that the rumours and even threats of Turkish military advance upon Mosul are undoubtedly sufficiently definite to constitute a menace to international peace and to the good understanding between nations. In that case Turkey would be invited under article XVII to accept membership for the purposes of the dispute. If she accepted, she would fall under the operations of article XII to XVI. If she refused and invaded Iraq, the stringent sanctions of of article XVI would then be applied to her with the united power of the League. Proceeding upon the above lines it seems to me that I have the Turkish delegation in a cleft stick and that whatever attitude they may adopt, I ought to have the advantage of them both in the effect upon public opinion, and in the practical solution ofthe problem." 142

Curzon's resort to the League entailed significant changes in both the type of arguments and in the procedure for the settlement of the Mosul question.[143] In the former case, ethnic criteria became the ruling ones in his advocacy of the retention of the vilayet in Iraq; in the latter, the Mosul question was submitted to an International Boundary Commission within the course of the next three years.

There was no real change in the British motive for retaining the Mosul vilayet: in the secrecy of their thoughts and debates the Admiralty argument remained powerful, but on the rostrum at Lausanne the battle was fought by means of ethnic minorities, remnants of peoples and market places. This facade was sustained by those masterpieces

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140.contd.,in the Inverforth syndicate,cf.Amery to Chamberlain,1925, F.O.800/258.; see also p.184, footnote 69.

141.see p.

142.Tel.From Lord Curzon(Lausanne),19Jan. 1923, C.O.730/47/4365.

in trickery - Curzon's public speeches and memoranda circulated among those in attendance at the conference.At Whitehall, where the departments concerned lacked any policy for the minorities in the Mosul vilayet, officials were first apprehensive that by turning to the League, the strings would slip from their hands. This uneasiness even increased when the Boundary Commission began its survey, after a last attempt at a bi-lateral settlement had failed. Nevertheless there were moments when they watched Curzon's tactics with delight. As Clauson once jotted down:

> "Lord Curzon's last memorandum is as much a pleasure to read as it must have been a pleasure to write." 144

Incidentally, as an indication of how a change in the addressee could modulate the form, though not the substance, of an argument there is the case of the Middle East Department in 1924. Its personnel was suddenly confronted with a need to change its tone and temper in the unfamiliar conditions of a Labour government at Westminster. A touch of uncertainty blended hesitation with defiance when the Department employed the Admiralty argument. In surveying the problems involved in the settlement of the northern frontier it stressed, as on previous occasions, that the question of the Mosul oil-fields was relevant

> "to the extent that, if the Mosul Vilayet was returned to the Turks the oil-fields (the value of which was quite conjectural) would, of course, pass wholly out of our control".145

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143.The significance lay rather in the principal preparedness of Curzon to make use of the League than in actual application.
144.Minute by Clauson, M.E.D.,5 Jan.1923, C.O.730/29/222.
145.Memorandum by the Middle East Department, British Policy in Iraq, 8 February 1924, Secret,C.P.264(24),p.4, C.O.730/64/6225.

But in sharp contrast to earlier assertive arguments the department ended up in a minor key:

> "The point is one that must be mentioned in this connection. It is not suggested that it can, or ought to be regarded as a determining consideration." 146

Much of the apprehension felt by the officials, who all stayed in the Middle East Department when the Labour Government assumed office, sprang from the fact that, once imperialist arguments fell on deaf ears, vote-catching problems like the Assyrian settlement lost all their power as arguments for territorial amalgamation between the Bagdad and Mosul vilayets. But fortunately for the imperialists, as well as T.P.C. concessionaires, the International Boundary Commission of the League of Nations soon began to realize after their arrival on the spot, that whereas the remnants of peoples and ethnic minorities could be moved about, the hypothetical oil deposits could not be transferred from one region to another but had to be exploited wherever nature had dumped them.

## 7. The Mosul Oil and the T.P.C. Concession in the Deliberations of the International Boundary Commission.

The impossibility of moving the oil resources accounted for the important and indeed intricate part played by the T.P.C. concession in the fate of the Mosul vilayet. More, entanglement of the boundary question of northern Iraq with the T.P.C. concession was clearly discernible in the deliberations of the Mosul Boundary Commission.[147] The

146. ibid.
147. On the formation and some of the proceedings of the Boundary Commission see: Survey of International Affairs, R.I.I.A., 1925, vol.I, pp.498-528. For a fuller account of the proceedings on the spot cf. C.J.Edmonds, Kurds, Turks and Arabs, London 1957, pp.386-435. Part 4.

ethnic and political camouflage for the oil issue, which had been so eagerly canvassed before, revealed its true nature as soon as the problem of the T.P.C. concession and its economic consequences for the development of Iraq began to worry the International Commission. As Henry Dobbs, the new High Commissioner at Bagdad, recorded a conversation between himself and two members of that commission, Colonel Paulis and Count Teleki, in January 1925:

> "Colonel Paulis then said that what I had said might be true, but he himself believed there could be no salvation for Iraq unless she could quickly bring about a great influx of international foreign capital. He himself believed in Chartered Companies for the development of backward areas and thought there should be in Iraq something like the Mozambique Company which had 85 per cent of British capital and ran the whole of Mozambique, including the local army, although the country was nominally Portuguese. When serving in the Belgian Congo he had had much experience of this Company. If the Turkish Petroleum Company with its large international interests could get the Iraq Government to sign the oil concession, he thought this might interest so many Powers in the stability of Iraq and so dominate the Iraq Administration that it would be a good substitute for a Chartered Company. The question whether Iraq did or did not accept the Turkish Petroleum Concession would weigh very greatly with him and his colleagues..
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> He also said that it was quite evident that there was no other combination of oil interests in the world which could undertake the exploitation of the Mosul oil, as the pipe line alone would cost L 1 a foot. He himself knew a lot about oil and had interests in some Roumanian oil companies. He added that the Turkish government had, during the visit of the commission to Angora, ascertained the ideas of himself and his colleagues about the Turkish Petroleum Company and the Mosul oil and that they had solemnly and officially assured the Commission that they would in the event of the Mosul Vilayet being assigned to Turkey, give the concession to that Company. This fact also would, Col.Paulis said, weigh heavily with the Commission in their considerations of the frontier question." 148

147.contd.,See also E.Monroe, op.cit.,pp.103-104, where she quotes Edmonds's view on the role of oil in the Mosul settlement.The plebiscete and the collection of ethnic data stood so much in the forefront of what was happening so that officials at Edmonds's level who were fully engaged identified their cumbersome work with the motives of British policy.

In the language used by the Boundary Commission, the term "frontier question" stood for the larger question of the fate of the entire Mosul vilayet. Indeed, the Commission seemed to have seen as its main task decision on the future interests of the Mosul vilayet,[149] rather than on the delimitation of an ethnically sound frontier line between Turkey and Iraq. It was the impression of Major Edmonds, one of the British officials circling round the Commission,[150] that the frontier question was made unduly dependent on the disposal of the Mosul vilayet, and not on the question of the limits within which Iraq could best attain economic, political, administrative and strategic stability.[151] In February 1925, Henry Dobbs even informed Amery that Colonel Paulis had "fallen much under the influence of the French Dominicans at Mosul",[152] and that it would no longer surprise him if Paulis finally recommended that Mosul should be transferred to the French Mandate.

Impressions and titbits of information such as these were at the time forwarded in great number to the Colonial Office. In fact, under pretence of security, British officials kept a close watch on the members of the Commission and insisted on "helping" them with questionnaires, and even arranging procedure for them. Not only were their personal records scrutinised; their every word, mood and idiosyncracy was also meticulously recorded and passed on to Whitehall. In general, these measures reflected both the anxiety and the resentment that pre-

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148. Copy of the Memo. of conversation, 23 Jan. 1925, C.O.730/72/6291.
149. Final decision, of course, was taken by the League Council. In trying to make their "recommendations" however dependent on political decisions such as the signing of the T.P.C. concession by the Iraq government, these were bound to become prejudicial to some extent.
150. see footnote 147.
151. Extract from Diary of Major Edmonds sent by Dobbs to Amery on 5th March 1925, C.O.730/73/12194.

vailed among officials on the spot and in the Middle East Department. They had, as Shuckburgh put it, "to make the best of a bad job".[153]

While the Commission occupied itself in collecting the views of qualified[154] representatives of each village and racial segment of the population its overriding concern remained settlement of the T.P.C. concession prior to the submission of its "frontier" recommendations to the League of Nations. Count Teleki even went so far as to offer Dobbs his offices "to persuade the Iraq Government to sign the Turkish Petroleum Convention".[155] As Dobbs explained the motives of the Commission to Amery:

> "Should both Iraq and Turkey agree, before Commission makes its recommendations in regard to the frontier, to grant concession to T.P.C. over Vilayet of Mosul and Baghdad so far as Iraq is concerned and over Mosul so far as Turkey is concerned Commission will be able to argue that wherever frontier is fixed powerful Oil interests will not be affected since they will enjoy concession over both Vilayets in any case. If however the Iraq Government do not come to a decision until after frontier is fixed and a portion only of the Vilayet is assigned to Turkey Iraq may be giving oil in remaining portion of Mosul Vilayet or in Bagdad Vilayet to some other Company be able to ruin the whole of Turkish Petroleum plan. Accordingly for so long as Iraq has not granted concession Commission would feel that international Oil interests would be opposed to the placing of Baghdad and Mosul under separate administrations or to the division between Iraq and Turkey of the Mosul Vilayet and that League of Nations might find it awkward to oppose these interests." 156

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152. Dobbs to Amery, 11 February 1925, C.O.730/72/7012.

153. ibid. Minute thereon by Shuckburgh, 16 February 1925, Revealing of the kind of assistance given to the Commission by British officials is the following information from Dobbs that he passed on to Amery, namely that he had secured from the Commission the undertaking that they would keep the British assessor informed of the names of the witnesses examined in order that he might be in a position to criticize their status and reliability. Dobbs went on: "Commissioners admitted that they had drifted into position of being on the defensive against Iraq and of occupying themselves largely in trying to ferret out evidence against her claims, partly out of irritation with the police measures and Iraqi demonstrations and partly from the circumstances that the sphere of their operations is under the

Dobbs suggested that the Convention to be signed by the Iraq Government should include a clause providing that the whole of the Convention should be "null and void in the event of the whole of the Mosul Vilayet not being assigned to Iraq".[157] This proposal, while rallying American and French support for the British case in the frontier question, was intended to prevent the Commission from recommending a partition scheme that gave the right bank of the Tigris to Iraq and the left bank to Turkey; thus ensuring that Iraq could not bar the oil from reaching the Mediterranean.[158] Unfortunately, Dobbs did not say how seriously such a scheme was actually contemplated by the Commission. Perhaps it was one of his own numerous conjectures which were often subtle, but often mere guesswork. But, such proposals, even if based on mere apprehension, reveal what was uppermost in the minds of men such as Dobbs, and of officials of the Middle East Department who either shared his anxiety,[159] or else dismissed the proposal as too obviously forcing the hands of the League of Nations Commission.[160] In the end Dobbs's proposal was rejected by the Foreign Office, which had to be consulted in all matters that affected the League.

## 8. The Settlement of the T.P.C. Concession.

The reasons underlying Whitehall's restraint were simple: the League of Nations Commission must be made a success; therefore any com-

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153.contd., Iraq Administration". On Teleki's Turanian ideas Dobbs reported to Amery on 29 Jan.1925, C.O.730/72/4885.
154.see footnotes 152. and 153.
155.Memo. by Amery, Iraq: T.P.C., 18 March 1925, C.O.730/82/13528.
156.Dobbs to Amery, 2 March 1925, C.O.730/73/10185.
157.ibid.
158.Dobbs to Amery, 8 March 1925, C.O.730/73/11184.
159.Minute by Hall, 4 March 1925, C.O.730/73/10185.
160.ibid.,Minutes by Vernon and Young.

plication likely to contribute to its breakdown was unwanted. The Commission was, in fact, a last resort of British policy in Iraq, the more so because the mandate period had by now been limited to four years.[161] Accordingly the hands of the Boundary Commission must neither be forced, nor used in the settlement of the T.P.C. concession.[162]

However as it was important to obtain the signature to the concession of the Iraq Government, Henry Dobbs was instructed:

> "to bring the utmost pressure to bear to induce the Iraq Government to accept the arrangement proposed without further delay". 163

Judging from previous experience, "utmost pressure" meant anything short of an ultimatum from Whitehall or a dismissal of Faisal's Cabinet - two measures that had been suggested earlier.[164] Yet for obvious reasons such high-handed interference with the deliberations of the Iraqi Cabinet was unwise. For Whitehall rightly feared that the dismissal of just a few ministers on grounds of opposition to the draft Oil Convention would entail the resignation of the whole Cabinet, an event which, in its turn, would inevitably cause the oil-question to become the key question of the new election,[165] as well adding grist to the mills of criticism of the government in Britain itself.

It was partly for these reasons that Dobbs preferred a stern ultimatum. Yet he also had more complex motives. Like Cox and many of the British advisers he shared the view that unless the nationalists were integrated into the political system there was no hope of stabi-

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161. see chapter VI.
162. Memorandum by Amery of 18th March 1925, C.O.730/82/13528.
163. ibid.
164. Dobbs to Amery, 26th February 1925, C.O.730/73/9364.
165. ibid.

lity once Britain withdrew from Iraq.[166] Therefore, the earlier there was a political showdown the better. He reckoned that the nationalists ought to be bent to the British course much as Britain herself had been forced to cede to American stubbornness. The nationalists must not be allowed to evade the responsibility of facing up to an irrevocable international situation, nor to whip up public resentment fed on vain hopes. Nor must Whitehall delude itself into believing that agreement obtained from men of straw would be lasting. As Dobbs stressed it:

> "I...see no way without ultimatum in some form as only men of straw could be get to sign the Convention". 167

Dobbs did not reflect upon the bad effect that high-handed action such as an ultimatum, particularly in matters of oil, would have on public opinion and on the League of Nations, both instruments to which Britain had come to resort. His suggestion was reminiscent of Arnold Wilson's attitude of all or nothing.[168]

In contrast, Whitehall which, in 1920, had been without any definitive policy for Iraq, was now, in 1925, fully in the picture. It calculated that, because the Iraqis felt as strong about the retention of Mosul as about a profitable share in the T.P.C. concession, the two issues could not be backed against each other. Yet being itself more interested in control over the oil-bearing regions and the territorial unification of the Mosul and Bagdad vilayets than in the composition of the T.P.C., it therefore tried to mediate between the Iraq regime and the T.P.C.

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166. Withdraval in this context was rarely used in the full sense of leaving Iraq to its own fate. Britain would still maintain her special treaty relationship, by which she enjoyed some measure of control.

167. see footnote 164.

168. cf. next chapter.

169. Amery to Dobbs 27 February 1925. C.O.730/73/9364.

Thus while Dobbs, by February 1925, was instructed to pursue a less tough line at Bagdad,[169] Amery submitted a compromise proposal to T.P.C. representatives in London.[170] His suggestion to the T.P.C. was to divide its shares into two categories, "A" and "B", the capital of the latter amounting to 20% of the total capital, i.e. the capital hitherto issued should be increased by 20% in form of new non-voting shares - the "B" shares. These new shares were to earn interest in proportion to the total dividends declared by the Company and chargeable against royalties.[171]

This compromise proposal was distinguished from other contemporary suggestions in that the Iraq Government was to be given a share in the profits of the Company - a share which the T.P.C. had never intended to give. It would seem that Amery's proposal missed the point. It did not bridge the gulf between Iraq's desire to gear the development of its oil resources as a large scale revenue raising enterprise to its total plans for economic and administrative development on the one hand, and, on the other, the business adjustments of the T.P.C. in view of the rate of British income tax. Amery was obviously more concerned about dispelling Iraq's suspicions about the T.P.C.'s commercial policy, than he was willing to meet Iraqi demands for a share in T.P.C. policy making. Nevertheless the compromise did not commend itself to the T.P.C. . As it gave the Iraq Government an opportunity of proving its capability of raising investment capital for

171. The royalties had been fixed at 4/- a ton on the crude oil raised. Accordingly as the dividends were to be set off against this rate, the shares would only pay if the dividends paid on them exceeded the equivalent of 4/- per ton. Further if the Iraq Government wished to dispose of any of the shares at any time, then these should be divided pro rata between the other holders; see 170.

buying "B" shares, it deprived the Company of the strong and convenient argument that Iraq had no say in the management of the Company because it was neither a share-holder nor capable of raising the capital required.

Amery's compromise came to nothing. It was after this failure to persuade the T.P.C. that he, on March 7th, after consultations with the Board of Trade and the Foreign Office, instructed Dobbs to bring the utmost pressure to bear on the Iraq Government.[172] A week later, on March 14th,1925, Iraq signed the Oil Convention. Instead of a vote in the T.P.C.'s governing board, it was only accorded the right of inspecting the T.P.C.'s production plants and managerial bureaus.[173]

As for the Mosul issue, by 1925 Iraq's signature to the T.P.C concession was no longer the sole pre-condition of settlement; another condition was the reversal of the Protocol of April,1923, whereby Britain had limited the period of its treaty with Iraq to four years after the ratification of peace with Turkey. The Mosul Boundary Commission, unconvinced of the stability of the Iraq regime, made its recommendation of assigning the Mosul vilayet to Iraq dependent on the extension ofthe period to twenty-five years.

While the Iraqis were resolved, though in vain, to use this opportunity to bring about an amendment of the burdensome Financial and Military Subsidiary Agreements[174] imposed on them under the provisions of the unequal Anglo-Iraqi Treaty of October 1922, the prolongation of the treaty period was easy for the British.

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172. see footnote 163.
173. Text of the Oil Convention in: J.C.Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, vol.II, pp.131-142.
174. see p.330-1.

In fact, the maintenance of Britain's special "economic" position in Iraq after the four year period had already been provided for in an apparently technical clause of the Protocol stating that nothing in the current agreement should prevent conclusion of a fresh agreement. The economic and financial motive for this arrangement was nowhere better expressed than in a private letter from Churchill to Devonshire, After thanks for an advance copy of the official announcement of the Protocol, Churchill continued:

> "It seems to have been well received generally in this country, and it certainly constitutes an honourable fulfilment of our obligation. It seems to me, however, that we are rather letting ourselves in for all the work and costs, and excluding ourselves from any chance of return. If things go well, there ought to be some return both indirect and direct in four years; and I certainly feel that in these circumstances we should have a special interest in the country secured to us. However, I dare say it will be possible to provide for this later. It would certainly be a pity faithfully to receive all the kicks and to reject any of the halfpence when at last they arrive. I know how great your difficulties have been. I presume the words,"Nothing in this Protocol should prevent a fresh agreement from being concluded," etc, are intended to provide for the contingency I have noted". 175

The statement was explicit enough for Shuckburgh to give it the shortest comment he ever made:"Yes, certainly".[176]

9. Conclusion.

To conclude so involved a tale, it seems desirable to sum up the role played by the hypothetical oil deposits in the extension of British control and influence over Iraq, including the Mosul vilayet. The oil argument, as has become evident, ran like a red line through the decision making process. In autumn 1918, it led to the military

175-6.Churchill to Devonshire, 7 May 1923,Private, C.O.730/39/21834.

advance upon Mosul, and resulted in the integration of the Mosul vilayet into Iraq and in the retention of Iraq under British control as the aftermath of the Lausanne Conference. Strictly speaking, the oil argument, together with such arguments as did not conflict with it, marked almost every stage of British policy making. Hardly a ministry or an official either disagreed in the debate or else, for instance, wished to have any disagreement with respect to the Admiralty argument placed on record, when Committee resolutions or Cabinet conclusions were decided upon in which oil was an ingredient.[177]

This absence of dissent supports of the thesis that oil played a very important part in the British Government policy towards Iraq. The cogency of the oil argument can perhaps also be inferred from the fact that, in Cabinet and Committee meetings, it took up less time than for instance the exposition of the Assyrian problem or the needs of a traety with Iraq. Oil was not mentioned because it was ever in mind.

Yet the brevity of the references to it may well have been connected with the complexity of the topic. The Admiralty view-point which was relatively simple could be presented in half the time required for exposition of the T.P.C.'s case. Further, coincidence of all imperial assets in one and the same country precluded any real option; there could be no choice of priorities when British control over Iraq was of strategical importance to the position in the Persian Gulf, to the security of the Persian and Iraqi oilfields and to the development of the air-route between Cairo and Karatchi. Other considerations were that the water supply of the upper Tigris for the

177. Exceptions were the criticism by Balfour and Novar.

irrigation schemes in lower Iraq lay close to the oil-bearing regions, and that the Assyrians were settled in close proximity to the oil-wells north of Mosul. All these issues could become interchangeable without necessarily entailing a change of purpose. It meant that one issue could be raised to camouflage various purposes not really connected with it. The most glaring case of such camouflage was Hankey's advice to Balfour to secure control over the oilbearing regions by arguing on the grounds that it was necessary to secure the water supply for irrigation; that is by using an argument more likely to appeal to the anti-Imperialist and the humanitarian mind. This tendency to camouflage the more blatant imperialist interts was a noteworthy feature of British policy. In a similar vein Curzon wrote in January 1923 from Lausanne:

> "I shall hope also to dissipate the fumes of suspicion that have arisen in such noxious abundance from the still untapped oilfields in the Mosul area". 178

Statistics about the racial composition of the population of the Vilayet of Mosul no doubt enabled him to make a strong case on ethnic grounds, supported by the trade orientation of the various tribes and townships to non-Turkish marketing centres. But it would be wrong to assume that the case he made to the assembled conference at Lausanne was merely an ethnic one. Although the figures he held in his hand afford impressive evidence for the ethnic argument, oil was nevertheless a ruling criteria whenever a territorial concession to the

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178. Telegram from Curzon, (Lausanne), 19th Jan. 1923, C.O.730/47.

Turks was contemplated.[179] For instance, in Curzon's frontier scheme of December 1922 the territory ceded contained no oil deposits. By September 1923, Devonshire was ready to suggest to Curzon a frontier-line which, while retaining Mosul town for Iraq, went "a long way towards satisfying the Turkish claim for the retrocession of the Mosul vilayet".[180]

This was the "Young-Meinertzhagen line", yet, although this line was contained in the draft Colonial Office letter to the Foreign Office,[181] the whole proposal was dropped in the letter actually sent.[182] The extent to which oil must have weighed in any delimitation of a northern frontier for Iraq is obvious from the fact that the Young-Meinertzhagen line was not drawn without hesitation. Meinertzhagen's hand in it was a warrant of its strategical connotation, for Meinertzhagen was the military expert of the Middle East Department.[183] Yet the

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179. The figures shown below are taken from a Memorandum drafted by Bernard Bourdillon in August 1924 and sent to Eric Drummond to Geneva, C.O.730/66/39525:

| Division | Arabs | Kurds | Turks | Christians | Jews | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Mosul | 170.663 | 179.820+ | 14.895 | 57.425 | 9.665 | 432.468 |
| Arbil | 5.100 | 77.000 | 15.000 | 4.100 | 4.300 | 106.000 |
| Kirkuk | 10.000 | 45.000 | 35.000 | 600 | 1.400 | 92.000 |
| Sulaimani | ..... | 152.900 | 1.000 | 100 | 1.000 | 155.000 |
| Total | 185.763 | 454.720 | 65.895 | 62.225 | 16.365 | 785.468 |

+ including 30.000 Yezidis

The figures used by the Turks were as follows: C.O.730/67, Geneva, Sept-16th, 1924.

| Division | Kurds | Turks | Arabs | Yezidis | Non-Muslimans | Total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Sulaimania | 62.830 | 32.960 | 7.210 | - | - | 103.000 |
| Kirkuk | 97.000 | 79.000 | 8.000 | - | - | 184.000 |
| Mosul | 104.000 | 35.000 | 28.000 | 18.000 | 31.000 | 216.000 |
| Total | 263.830 | 146.960 | 43.210 | | | 503.000 |

nature of the hesitations and the final apologetic tone about the whole proposal are revealing; as the relevant draft paragraph ended:

> "It is true that the area which would, under this proposal, be ceded to Turkey would included one or two localities, in which it would appear from the map enclosed with the Turkish Petroleum Company's letter T.2 of the 17th August that oil is likely to be found, but His Grace does not regard this as an insuperable objection. There might indeed be some advantages in allowing to Turkey the possibility of carrying out those provisions of the Chester concession which relate to oil in the Mosul vilayet, by placing under her control a portion of the vilayet in which oil is understood to be present." 184

When the Mosul question was finally settled, by June 1926, and the British position in Iraq had been consolidated, both the Admiralty and the T.P.C. found their respective interests well secured. True, oil did not begin to flow in commercial quantities until the late thirties,[185] while large-scale production did not start until the fifties.[186] But, as has become obvious from the evidence shown, oil already disturbed politics in Iraq and the Middle East in the period under survey here. In fact, so decisive was this disturbance that politics, by interfering with prospecting and concession giving, was almost solely responsible for the long delay in the flow of oil.[187]

Finally, a full assessment of the impact that the oil-bearing regions of Iraq had on policy making thanks to their sudden importance to the British Empire, has also to take account of the in-

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180. Draft of a letter from C.O. to F.O., Sept. 1923, C.O. 730/66/17369.
181. Marginal Note on the letter by Hubert Young of 14th April 1924.
182. ibid.
183. The frontier should leave the Tigris at its junction with the Khabai Su, following the thalweg of that river to the neighbourhood of longitude 45; passing thence between Ghara Dagh and Amadia to the junction of the Greater Zab river and the Rowanduz Chai; thence leaving Rowanduz to Turkey and Rania to Iraq; see 180.
184. see 180.
185. cf. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit., pp.95-7.
186. For some statistical material see S.H. Longrigg, Oil in the Middle

fluence of the structures of political debate and decision making on the presentation of the oil case to the Cabinet and the public. Assessments of official policy are largely dependent on what filters into records of debates and conclusions and into minutes. The oil-bearing regions of Iraq were held as an imperial trust by the Committee on Iraq and its predecessors and the Middle East Department. These government "bodies" had their own instincts and senses. Accordingly the Cabinet that took decisions on the major issues of British policy in Iraq acted much like a higher living being, guided by complex instincts and a whole set of separate senses. But even in a hierarchy of senses, to superimpose the "higher" upon the "lower" perception does not necessarily evaluate the relevance of each. In other words, the Foreign Office which always regarded itself as a "noble animal" because it dealt with sovereign states, usually tended to "transform" economic or purely strategical terms brought to its notice into terms of high policy, and debate them on that level. Only rarely was this process reversed and the language of high policy decoded. Let us take the Foreign Office's apprehension about the Bolshevist menace in the East: as set out the Bolshevist encroachment upon the northern frontier of Persia step by step spelt first a Bolshevist alliance with the various nationalist movements from Afghanistan to Turkey, next the undermining of the Persian regime at Teheran, next the thrust to the Persian Gulf in an outflanking movement round the oilfields worked by the Anglo Persian Oil Company, and finally the liquidation of the

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186.contd., East, Oxford 1968, pp.478-9; cf also Sir Reader Bullard, The Middle East, A Political and Economic Survey, Oxford 1958, pp.263-6.

187. This is also demonstrated by the Anglo-American haggling over the Red Line Agreement.

A.P.O.C., which was controlled by the British Treasury, in Southern Persia.[188]

Thus when the Foreign Office referred simply to the menace of Bolshevism, it felt, in essence, the same concern as the Admiralty which spoke straighforwardly of the necessity of physical control over oilfields and oil-bearing regions. Cloaked in "ulterior" motives such as Turkish atrocities or Bolshevik menace, George Nathaniel Curzon could reckon himself to be honest when he misled public opinion by stating in August 1924 in the Times "that oil had not the remotest connexion with my attitude or with that of His Majesty's Government on the Mosul question, or the Iraq question, or the Eastern question in any aspect".[189]

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188. see p. 385
189. see p. 198.

## Chapter V

## Towards the Cairo-Conference of 1921

"We are not in a position to hold this country without their consent. We haven't the troops, we haven't the money (it sounds like a patriotic song reversed) and we haven't the temper. I am glad we haven't, incidentally, for I'm tired of trying to govern people for their good and against their will. In the Arab idiom, it has aged us."

Gertrude Bell to Edwin Montagu, 4 Jan.1920
Lord Lothian Papers GD 40/17/40

"The moral is, first shape your policy to your means, then see that the means are properly used. History teaches the fate of empires which neglect this elementary principle. At present we are trying to stretch our means to fit our policy, and coming to rely more and more upon native and subordinate races to help us out. That way lies disaster."

Major-Gen. Sir F.Maurice
Daily News, 25 June 1920

### 1. The Imperial Idea at the Cross-Roads.

More clearly than the international peace conferences at Paris, in 1919, and at Lausanne four years later, the Cairo Conference of March 1921 - an entirely British affair - revealed the limitations of Britain's financial and politiacl potential for launching its mandate policy in Iraq. But the Cairo Conference itself was no more than a terminus at the end of a long road lined with adverse critics, and a thinly cheering press, and tax payers who felt that Britannia should have a less expensive trident.

that the Irish Question haunted the British in the Middle East. Milner warned Curzon, in January 1920, that Egypt, unless handled very delicately, would be "something like the Irish situation over again".[6] In March 1922, Percy Cox sought to assuage British temper in Iraq by referring to the "fresh experience of Ireland and Egypt".[7] Yet how could this "universal"[8] Irish Question be solved when either the defeat or the prevention of the rise of "Kemals"[9] in the Middle East became the policy of the day? It was, of course, generally accepted that there was a "real awakening in the East"[10] which forbade colonization on the lines of the Belgian Congo. But the politicians and advisers entrusted with safeguarding the Imperial stakes in the Middle East were eager to claim that the national sentiment had been evoked by the West, and that therefore the West was entitled to nurse it to maturity. As Hubert Young, Secretary to the Eastern Committee, put it in May 1920:

> "The point is that this national sentiment is again awake in these Eastern countries where it has slumbered so long. It is the Western nations who have evoked it, and it is for the Western nations to direct it into healthy channels"[11]

Bluntly, the crux of the matter was how Arab nationalism could be shaped so as to accept British imperialism. It was on this basis that the host of British administrative personnel in Iraq began to erect the superstructure of a "civilizing mission". No doubt, there existed local problems in abundance. But the solution of most of them was orientated to the stretching and camouflaging of the limited means

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6. Milner to Curzon, 12 Jan.1920, Milner Papers 162, Bodleian, Oxford.
7. Cox to Colonial Office, 1 March 1922, C.O.730/20/10151.
8. Quotation marks are our`s .
9. see 8.
10. C.J.Edmonds to Colonel Paulis, Febr.1925, Extract from diary by Major Edmonds, C.O.730/73/10992.
11. DBFP 1st Series, vol.XIII, Document No.250, Memorandum by H.Young

of imperialistic control. In addition, the objectives of the Imperial interests had to be concealed behind a camouflage of up-to-date terminology. Ambiguity in the terminology was expected to adapt the objectives of the imperialist policy to the international opinion as represented in the League of Nations, to a hostile public opinion at home and, last but not least, to the sensibility of Arab nationalism and "patriotism of religion"[12] as an important ingredient of it.

The aim of this sketch has been to delimit the regional, political and psychological field as it directed the government officials on their route to Cairo. Accordingly part of the political thought on Iraq stemmed from considerations and conclusions of the British position in Persia and Egypt. In fact the unratified Anglo-Persian Agreement of August 1919 was supposed to yield the model for British control of Iraq and Egypt.[13] Complementary to it, the Milner Commission sent to Egypt, in December 1919, was to sound out the Government and the leaders of the various factions and, particularly, the Wafd, as to whether there was the basis for a similar treaty.[14] However, in contrast to the unequal treaty with Persia, there lay in the case of Egypt more emphasis on the internal constitution and the anchoring of a British presence within it. Both the Egyptian constitution and the treaty were supposed to become the pattern for Arab government and British control in Iraq. As Milner reminded the Cabinet in May 1920:

> "The question of the administration of the mandated territories - Palestine and Mesopotamia - is undoubtedly an important one, and must be considered in connection with the systems to be adopted for the future exercise of British authority, or influence, in other Arab countries - Egypt, the Hedjaz,& - and the control of those systems from home". 15

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12. Report of the Special Mission to Egypt, p.10, Dec.1920. see 6.

Since Milner referred frequently to the general Middle Eastern role of the Egyptian pattern of British rule, and since the delay of the Egyptian question entailed similar postponements in Iraq, Milner's views on Egypt must be given a place in the kaleidoscope of British attitudes towards the administration of Iraq.[16] An additional reason for this view is provided by the fact that, at the time of the Milner Commission, Egypt was still regarded as being assigned to the emerging Middle Eastern Civil Service, the highly trained personnel of which was supposed to be transferable from any part of the Middle East to any other.[17] How important the emphasis on the mobility of the personnel is becomes obvious when we look more closely at some essentials of Milner's conclusions on Egypt and on Gertrude Bell's thought.

There is first Milner's observation on the importance of supplying Arabs with a face-saving device in diplomacy. We have already pointed out how Curzon began to resort to terminological variants such as "perpetual lease" or "enclave" for annexation in order to outwit advanced ideas of the time and to camouflage an imperialist policy and an antiquated but familiar means of domination.[18] Milner made a good second to him in this dubious art. While on his mission to Egypt, in

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13. C.O.730/2/32882. see also footnote 16.
14. For the entire Anglo-Egyptian and inner-Egyptian background of the Milner Mission cf. Albert Hourani, Arabic Thought in the Liberal Age Oxford 1967, pp.209-21.
15. Memorandum by Milner, Secret, May 24th, 1920, PRO 30/30/12 Milner Papers.
16. Cabinet 30(20), 21 May 1920, CAB 23/21.
17. cf. footnote 12. Report, part IV Administrative Reforms.
18. see p.127, footnote 51.

December 1919, he wrote to Curzon about the desired treaty relationship with a frankness that is worth quoting:

> "What I do think worth considering is whether the definition of our several powers and duties in the relation of Protecting and Protected Power might not take the form of an Agreement, to which we should both be parties, rather than Ukase of ours. Of course their agreement would be "camouflage".They would only agree, because they could not help themselves. Still, from the point of view of "saving face", it would make a great difference to them if they could call their acceptance of our terms a Treaty of Alliance, or something of the kind". 19

Like Alfred Milner, Gertrude Bell was equally concerned, ~~thou~~ though for more complex reasons, with the point of view of saving face. In her suggestions for an initial Arab administration in Iraq, as submitted to Montagu in January 1920, she made a differentiation between what she called "apparent" and "real" sovereignty. She recommended to place the "apparant sovereignty" immediately in Arab hands.[20] This necessity of maintaining an overall show of appearances was partly rooted in the religious doctrines of Islam which precluded any political subordination of Muslim communities to Christian rule. This religious factor was fully appreciated in the Report drawn up by the Milner Commission; as the passage read:

> "Finally, there is the latent but ever-present impatience of the Muslim with Christian rule. That a Mohammedan should occupy a position of political subordination to a Christian is opposed to the essential spirit of Islam, and the sentiment which this spirit had engendered survives long after strong religious feeling has been greatly attenuated, or even become altogether extinct. Its existence no doubt exercised an influence in creating a prejudice which the religious element would make the most of against the name of Protectorate, interpreted as implying the permanent subjection of a Mohammedan Ruler and State to a Christian Sovereign. There is in the East a patriotism of religion which is an even more fundamental sentiment than the patriotism of home and tradition."[21]

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19.Milner to Curzon,10Dec.1919, Milner Papers 162, Bodleian,Oxford.

However, in the above lines, there were also undertones of an Islam in eclipse, and of a body politic heading for secularization. To British observers secularization in the Islamic East was predestined to follow the same path as in the West and to produce similar political forms. They took the emergence of nationalism as the confirmation of the turn of the East to the West. In general, this belief was at the roots of the wide-spread optimism which was expressed in the wish of officials to be transferred from India to the Middle East. The homogeneity and structure of Islamic society was favourably contrasted by them to Hindu society which was doomed to stagnation by its maintenance of the caste system. In addition, they were attracted by Arab individuality.[22] This awareness was implicit in British characterizations which described Arabs as persons with whom one could be on intimate personal terms. As Gertrude Bell, for instance, wrote to Montagu, in 1920, with indirect reference to India:

> "Aren't you banking, just as I am, on the capacity of the Englishman to get his way by tact and good sense, and above all by his integrity? Well then, I tell you that it's much easier here, the Arab is much easier to handle. You can be on intimate personal terms with him; we are - but we shall have to draw the links closer still. I bet you I can, and lots of us here can. It must be the tradition of the service from the first, and I see no reason why it should not be."[23]

Gertrude Bell's insistence on close personal links between the British officials and the various indigenous social and political

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20. Gertrude Bell to Edwin Montagu, 4 Jan.1920, Lothian Papers, GD 40/17/40.
21. Report of the Special Mission to Egypt, see footnote 12.
22. A nice example of this awareness of the British in the East is contained in the memoirs of L.S.Woolf, where he reflects on the different modes of behavious shown by Hindu and Arab pearl-fishers.
23. G.Bell to E.Montagu, 4 Jan.1920, Lothian Papers GD 40/17/40.

elites in Iraq was a deliberate departure from the traditional modes of British (colonial) administration hitherto practiced in India and Egypt.

Gertrude Bell knew from her long acquaintance with the Arab countries that their inhabitants cherished intrinsic concepts of efficiency and development; ideals of economic and social well-being as well as of happiness. Their standards, although inadequate for satisfying the demands of Western societies and states, did not need in her opinion to be raised to those heights of efficiency and kinds of happiness expected in the West, in order to achieve the social and political respectability of the Arab States within the international world. From this point of view, Gertrude Bell expected that as a result of the close personal links between British and Arabs, the British would gradually shape the social and political standards which they sought to introduce into the Middle East in the light of the values and ideals imbedded in the Oriental Civilization. As she confided her concern to Edwin Montagu:

> "British officials, if they have a free run, will create institutions which suit themselves but may very well not suit Arabs, with the result that when the Arabs take over, as some day they must, the work will have to be done over again. The chief danger is that we are certain to aim at a too high standard of efficiency...
> I also don't know any example in which, having taken on the government of a backward state, with the expressed intention of relinquishing it as soon as the state advances sufficiently, we have done so until circumstances (attended by considerations/ considerable upheaval) have forced our hand. This is even true of India (pace you!) and it's only thanks to you that we have recognised the force of the circumstances above mentioned. In fact...we're not to be trusted. And this is mainly because...we never think that the state has reached the stage of progress which alone would be compatible with our conception of efficiency." 24

24. see footnote 23.

This criticism of Britain's previous "civilizing" efforts and colonial practice reveals what Gertrude Bell meant by writing of the tiring and aging process of trying to govern people for their good and against their will.[25] Britain was still young enough for fresh civilizing efforts in the Middle East and elsewhere. But her administrators must abstain from applying their own constantly rising standards of efficiency indefinitely without squaring these standards with the intrinsic values of the "backward" civilization. Unless they stopped this mode of self-ordained missionary rule, driven on by unattainable norms and inconvertible values, Britain would age, i.e. outlast her proper mission.

One may infer from Gertrude Bell's statement an indication of the proceeding "decline of the British nerve"[26] to rule. However, at least Gertrude Bell herself was quite unlike the moody Britannicy on the Indian Tiger drawn by Punch in the famous cartoon of 14 May 1930.[27] on the contrary, she believed strongly in the validity of a British civilizing mission in the Middle East which she found worth serious financial sacrifice at home. She was enraged at the menace to her work, that sprang from the tax-payers' worries in Britain about the prospect of an "eighteen penny loaf".[28] Getrude Bell fought this petty and selfish materialism, as which she dismissed as merely the worries of the mass of ordinary men, with the zeal peculiar to a religious convert or fanatic. It was in this vein that she wrote on August 13,

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25. see p.233.
26. cf. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit., chapt.6, The Decline of British Nerve, pp.131-150.
27. The Cartoon has been conveniently reprinted as a cover design on: B.N.Pandey, The Break-up of British India, London 1969.
28. From collection of Press Reports held at the Office of the Civil

1921, some five month after the Cairo-Conference, to Shuckburgh:

> "I am eager to let the public at home know something of what we are really doing. With Sir Percy's approval I am sending you a short article with photographs taken by us for publication in one of the illustrated papers...
>
> I wish we could reach a far larger public than any I can get at with my pen or my camera.
>
> What we want - I think - is cinomatographic films. I feel certain we could get something, with Feisal as a central figure which would draw our gaping noodles...
>
> For look now, a fine thing is being done by Sir Percy Cox and Feisal. We are setting up an Arab state under British guide by consent...Has that ever really been done before? and if Sir Percy Cox succeeds...could it revolutionize the relations of Great Britain and the Near East? Our prospects noew are so rosy. We have so completely got the confidence - Sir Percy has - of the solid part of the community...I would like the...public to realize a little that they are paying for something that is worth doing and worth having when it is done." 29

In coming back to the importance of the face-saving devide, the concession of "apparant" sovereignty to the Arabs should, in Gertrude Bell's view, also ease the establishment of close personal and official links between the British and Arabs, However, there was the well known fact that Arabs would never put up with social inferiority. Accordingly there was some apprehension on the British side, that the personnel on the spot would be unable to create the sought-after equality. This issue, though not intensively discussed, elicited in the case of Milner some observations which reveal the importance of a facade for the British Empire itself. As Milner, while leading his Commission in Egypt, entered in his diary:

> "The Englishmen, who come into contact with the Egyptian as holding authority among them, must be most carefully selected, not too numerous, must cultivate personal relations with the people, know the language, and be capable, while inspiring respect, of exercising great patience and tact. Quality is more important than quantity in this matter: the multiplication of British officials in subordinated posts, has the

29.G.Bell to Shuchburgh,13 August 1921,Private,C.O.730/17/49826.

> double disadvantage of disappointing the Egyptians in their hope of getting them posts for themselves and lowering the respect for the Englishmen by introducing to the notion of the native Englishmen of an inferior stamp." 30

The probable implications of Arab contempt for the social inferiority of any low-posted British official was clearly perceived by Milner, Secretary of State for the Colonies, in political and even slightly racial terms. It is true that Milner was both embarrassed and impressed by the complete boycott of his Mission and the solid front of animosity that came from all sections of the community.[31] In such circumstances the establishment of British control in Egypt seemed indeed to be a more delicate problem than the consolidation of the British position in Iraq.[32] However, by January 1920, Gertrude Bell found the British in Iraq in analogous circumstances of being opposed by those people whom it was best worth having. As she wrote to Montagu:

> "If you attempt to set up anything short of an Arab administration, even though it be sovereign only in name, you will not succeed in drawing in to it the people who are best worth having, for it's no good blinking the fact that it is not only the most self-interested, but also the most intelligent people, here and in Syria, who are against us. If you don't get the Naji Suwaidies to take ( and keep ) office under the new regime, you may as well make your bow - it is doomed to failure from the first." 33

Further, like Milner, but with more emphasis, Gertrude Bell stressed the absolute necessity for any British administrator to exercise patience. But she added that he must also be guided by sympathy,

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30. Milner Diary written during mission in Egypt, Entry of 5 Dec.1919, Milner Papers, Bodleian Oxford.
31. ibid.
32. The importance of British control in Egypt was defined in the general conclusions of the Report of the Milner Commission as follows: "Cairo is the best centre of information for the Islamic world and the point from which British policy in all the Arab countries could most efficiently be directed. If it were found possible...to give the High Commissioner at Cairo the general supervision over British activities in all the Arab countries, it would at the same time faci-

to that incompetence which in accordance with the new international law, these new states such as Iraq, Poland or Yugoslavia were, in her opinion, supposed to embody.[34] It was on this point of sympathy for Eastern virtues that, as she stated to Montagu, she differed from most of her colleagues.[35] Needless to say she looked with dismay at Arnold Wilson`s policy of direct administration which aimed in the most ruthless way at the highest standards of efficiency. Consequently, Gertrude Bell blamed Arnold Wilson`s policy for the rising on the Euphrates in summer 1920.[36] Gertrude Bell was jubilant about Cox`s return as High Commissioner. She expected him to be capable of deeper understanding of the Oriental mind and the international situation, and consequently of displaying the kind of sympathy which should be the guide of any administrator in Iraq.

Significantly, Gertrude Bell found no fault with her own outright refusal of granting the population of Iraq the exercise of self-determination. As she put this point in her interesting letter to Montagu:

> "The tribesman wants a government under which he won`t pay taxes as he largely didn`t in Turkish days; the official classes want a government under which they can make official fortunes a la Turque, the religious leaders one which will take no heed when they pocket the pious bequests which they should administer for the benefit of the others, and so forth through all the categories.
>
> Therefore, don`t ask; these two words should be written in letters of fire. What we should do...is to say:This is what the great government ordains for you. But then - and here I differ from most of my colleagues - in ordaining we must be guided by a sympathy almost superhuman, with the ambitions, yes, and even with the pretensions which are agitating our world of to day,shaking it to bits,you might say."37

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32.contd.,litate his task in controlling the Government of Egypt and make that control less obnoxious to the Egyptians.

33.Gertrude Bell to Montagu,4.Jan.1920,see footnote 23.

34.ibid.

This language reminiscent of the Old Testament is in itself explanatory of the missionary spirit by which Gertrude Bell was moved; no doubt, it was also adapted to Montagu`s Jewish mind. For the Arabs there was no choice between freedom or dependence, only, in her own words, between chaos and disappointment. Getrude Bell`s thought represented the long-term trends of the British administrative policy in Iraq. That is why her considerations have been dealt with at some length. Arnold Wilson`s policy was a temporary though disastrous deviation. Its failure was largely due to the detachment from the intrinsic values of the Middle East. In short, his policy lacked the soul. But with hindsight one may add that it also lacked the support of aeroplanes.

The more obstinate challenge to Percy Cox`s and Bell`s ideas about the proper administration and procedure in Iraq came from Whitehall`s Middle Eastern Policy, full of day to day vascillations. The men on the spot were strictly opposed to being stampeded by the sometimes opportunist considerations of the Foreign Office. If their reaction can be expressed in one single sentence than it must read: don`t go too fast.

It is Whitehall that comes now into the picture. In general, in the months between the Paris Peace Conference and the Cairo Conference there was no definitive Government policy for the administration of Iraq. The formation of such a policy would have presupposed at least three factors: first a Cabinet with enough "freedom" and energy to devote its attention to the problems of the Middle East and the re-

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35.ibid.
36.G.Bell to Mr. Spender, 20 August 1924, Gertrude Bell Papers, Newcastle University.
37.see footnote 33.

organisation of imperial control; second a clear perspective of the political and "national" structure that the new Middle East should henceforth assume; third the focus of Iraq's internal needs and proper external interests in the Middle Eastern context.

However, for obvious reasons, none of these prerequisites was obtained. Whitehall was really captivated by the unprecedented dominating position in the Middle East, in which it found itself at the end of the war. Blinded by the extent and the grandeur of the victory in the East, the Cabinet, assured of the trophies on the Empire's belt, shifted its attention to the, no doubt, pressing problems of the reconstruction of Europe. Meanwhile the departments which had been responsible for the war-time strategy and policy in the Middle East, continued to be in charge of them. But both Cabinet and Departments overlooked two essentials; first that the extent of the victory had increasingly been made possible by specific political promises and concessions to both the indigenous population and the Western Allies, which because of their inherent antagonisms were however largely ambiguous; second that Great Britain had neither the military nor diplomatic power either to maintain her total territorial presence in the Middle East, or else to turn her political liabilities into dictatorial treaties or stable facades. Consequently, in trying to "cash in" the trophies with an arrogance out of all proportion to the narrow limitations of its power, the Lloyd George government produced not only a devastating number of new enemies and challengers, but in proceeding to subdue them also underwent the dreadful process of suffering one diplomatic defeat after another and experiencing step by step the

dwindling size of Britain's power in that part of the world. Summarily the retrenchment was demarcated by the Kemalists' defiance of the Treaty of Sèvres, the admission of the oil-interests of France at San Remo, the fall of Faisal's kingdom in Syria, the military withdrawal from Persia, the insurrection on the Euphrates, the boycott of the Milner Commission in Egypt, Ibn Sa'ud's unbridled challenge of the Hashemites' sway over Mecca and the Hedjaz, and the acceptance of American oil-interests in the Turkish Petroleum Company.

## 2. Press and Public Opinion.

The gradual erosion of British power and prestige on the spot was complemented and enhanced by a fierce press campaign at home, in which Britain's entire commitment in the Middle East was put to question. A particular feature were the so-called soldiers' views in the Morning Post, the Daily Mail and the Daily News, which broached the orthodox rules of the Empire's 19th century sea strategy. According to these papers Britain's real interests in the Middle East should stop where the tidal waters ended, and rather than policing Mosul or watching the Caspian the government should trust the mountains of the Himalaya and a good treaty with the Afghans. There were particularly wild attacks on Winston Churchill, the Secretary of State for War. Perhaps representative of the unsparing vehemence of such personal attacks and the general tone of the Dailies is an article by Lovat Frazer in the Daily Mail of June 1920, which culminated in the following lines:

> "Of course the real "nigger in the wood-pile" is that most mischievous of Ministers, Mr.Winston Churchill. There may be others also...You all remember Mr.Churchill's famous

> speech in which he explained how Mesopotamia could be held by armoured cars clanking across the Chaldean plain and by bombladen aeroplanes searching the recesses of the Kurdistan mountains.
>
> It is Mr. Churchill who is planning big cantonements at Baghdad and elsewhere and who is keeping mysterious forces at enormous cost in the neighbourhood of the Caspian Sea."38

Another recurring target was the Supreme Council which the Daily News also in June 1920, depicted as the most sinister example of despotism in the history of the Continent. Lloyd George and Millerand as well as their advisers Henry Wilson and Marshall Foch were called reckless pilots who plunged Europe into a whirlpool. The remedy pointed out was to get rid of them.[39] The ultra-Conservative Morning Post brandished the legacies of what she called the "strategy of the Side Show".[40] They were disastrous because the government had failed to supersede the war-time strategy in Iraq and elsewhere with a clear-cut policy at the end of the war. How such a policy should have looked was described as follows:

> "The best scheme would have been for all the Allied Powers to have made a declaration of disinterestedness in territorial acquisitions in Asia Minor, and for us all to have combined, while safeguarding the Straits, in establishing native rule in the territories freed from the Turks...We took no strong line, we had no real policy ready, and have succeeded merely in provoking the suspicions and antagonisms of friends and foes." 41

A more moderate, though still critical, tone was prevalent in the lines of The Times. Attacks were mainly made upon the heavy expenditure in the Middle East, for which, thanks to their frank statements in the House of Lords, Milner and Curzon could easily be held responsible.

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38. Daily Mail, 7 June 1920.
39. Daily News, 26 June 1920, Article by A.G.G.; see also p.233.
40. Morning Post, 29 June 1920, Article by Lieut. Col. Repington, who was military correspondent of the Morning Post, previously from 1904 to 1918 of The Times.
41. ibid.

There were, in June 1920, some particularly biting comments on a statement made by Milner, namely that the money spent in Iraq was not spent on Iraq but only "on the end of the war which in the East was not yet concluded".[42] But from the point of view of imperial strategy, the Times adhered to the Curzon and Milner school which placed Iraq as a link in the chain of the British Empire in the Middle East. There was therefore no criticism on that dangerous gap between policy and strategy, which, as the government-hostile press held, had developed under the Lloyd George Cabinet. Nevertheless, although the strategical importance of Iraq was only indirectly connected with the North-West frontier question of the Indian Empire, that fate of the British position in Iraq was considered to be closely linked up with that in Persia. As any events in Persia were therefore expected to entail an inevitable revision of the British hold over Iraq, Persia was naturally more in the focus of attention of the papers that stood near to the Government policy. Iraq was therefore predominantly surveyed in relation with Persia and seldom on its own merits.

This perspective applied above all to the Yorkshire Post, the distinct "pro-Emperialist" voice and Milnerite mouthpiece among the largely critical and hostile press. While conservative papers such as The Times and occasionally the Morning Post implied in their articles that the importance of Iraq for the Empire would decline in proportion to the deterioration of the British position in Persia, the Yorkshire Post held the reverse view, i.e. that the importance of the British control of Iraq would rise as a result of the general loss of British

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42. The Times, 26 June 1920.

power and prestige elsewhere in the Middle East. Thus, Iraq was described as a bulwark for stemming the tide of Bolshevism in the Middle East, a stronghold of Western ideas and a show of the sole practicability of Western statecraft as well as of benevolent humanitarianism par excellence. In short the British administration of Iraq emerged as a compensating factor which men such as Milner must have been in need of. Some passages from an article called "A Middle East Policy" by a special correspondent which appeared in the Yorks Post on 23 March 1921 are typical for this state of mind and its reflection on the Cairo Conference which had be then just proceeded halfway. As the lines read:

> "The storm clouds have moved from exhausted Europe to the East, and it is in the Near and Middle East, in those countries lying between the Mediterranean and Persia, that we may expect history to be made in the immediate future. It is our good or evil fortune, according to the use we make of our opportunities, to have received the task of shaping the destiny of a country which, from its geographical situation must in the future hold a commanding position in the Middle East. Mesopotamia, with Syria on the west, Turkey to the north, Persia to the east and a "backdoor" opening on the great trade routes of the Indian Ocean, is a centre from which a far-reaching influence may be exerted. What that influence is to be, and what effect it is to have on the surrounding countries, is for Great Britain to decide. There can be no question of the strategic value of Mesopotamia in the new conditions ruling in that part of the world..
>
> Mesopotamia runs, like a narrow wedge, up into a mess which is trembling on the brink of anarchy - Syria, "Kemalist" Turkey, Armenia, Georgia, Azerbaijan, Persia and beyond to Bokhara and Afghanistan. Where is there firm government, security peace, sanity in these countries? On all sides is war or rumours of war, everywhere whispers of that new power, symptoms of the virulent fever, which we call "Bolshevism".
>
> Alone in all the Middle East Mesopotamia presents an example of stability, of ordered government; here is the last bulwark which may yet stem the tide, but if it gives way, what will hold back the flood? Assuredly, not the mountain frontiers of India". 43

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43. Yorkshire Post, 23 March 1921, A Middle East Policy, by a special correspondent.

The Yorkshire Post continued to maintain its strong leanings towards the policy of "pacification", as, on occasion, Whitehall euphemistically called its imperious attempts at overcoming what it had generated before in a kindred imperialist spirit. In contrast, The Times underwent a certain development. In the course of British withdrawal from Persia its tone became more impatient and sharper, and by increasing its attacks on the British expenditure in Iraq it joined soon the bulk of the extremely government-hostile Press.

3. The Stock-Taking on the Eve of the Cairo-Conference.

By mid-June 1920, Iraq had come into the focus of Cabinet attention in the sense that it was realized that action on its proper administration must be taken. True, Iraq had figured on the agenda of Cabinet meetings before, as in January, March and May. But those considerations had turned on general aspects such as army estimates, the importance of retaining Mosul for Iraq,[44] and the military situation in northern Persia. As regards the administration or internal constitutional development of Iraq, the Cabinet had, by and large, resorted to reiterating previous statements that all future action would be taken in the spirit of the mandate. Even when, on 23rd March, the Cabinet accepted for the first time and in principle the possibility of the candidature of a Hashemite prince in Iraq, no constructive action was contemplated in this respect. For as is obvious from its reference to popular consent, the aim of the Cabinet conclusion was merely to provide

44. see also Cabinet Finance Committee meeting, 9 Febr. 1920, CAB 23/20.

a common formula to cover a possible official rejection,[45] in public, of the single-handed proclamation of Abdullah as King of Iraq made by the General Arab Congress at Damascus on the 7th instant.[46] In marked contrast to those months of inaction, the Cabinet took, in June, a deliberate stand against the kind of administration set up by Wilson in Iraq. Significantly, however, in devising and applying an alternative policy to Iraq a remarkably wide scope of discretion was left open for Percy Cox.

In general, the question of the discretion which Whitehall left to them men on the spot, as well of the way in which use was made of it, has so far been dealt with in some detail only in the case of Arnold Wilson.[47] In comparison, the policy of Percy Cox has been touched upon only incidentally. But on these few occasions he has emerged as an extra-ordinarily flexible administrator thanks to his qualities as a diplomat.[48] However, it was only when he was able to make use of the royal prerogatives that both the administrator and the diplomat were in their prime. Before the ascendancy of Faisal to the throne of Iraq and before the Cairo-Conference Percy Cox was no less at a losse than Arnold Wilson. Perhaps it was only the sympathy for the East which Gertrude Bell expected him to possess that prevented Cox from following lines similar to Arnold Wilson`s.

There is a second lens that needs adjustment before a full picture can be gained of Percy Cox`s, and also Whitehall`s, pre-Cairo

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45. As the Cabinet conclusion read: "The inhabitants of Mesopotamia, when consulted in 1918, rejected the proposal that they should be given an Arab ruler. Should, however, the inhabitants change their opinion the British Government would not oppose their wishes. They would have no objection to the candidature of a member of King Hussein`s family, if acceptable to the inhabitants". CAB 23/20.

views of the administration of Iraq. It is the question of the nature of Whitehall's responsibility for the postponements of the application of the mandate to Iraq. Some historians have referred to the general exhaustion of the Lloyd George War Cabinet at the end of the war as an explanation for the stagnation of the political course in the Middle East.[49] On the other hand, the Cabinet itself repeatedly postponed decisions on the ground that the legal prerequisites were not yet given, i.e. a common definition of the constitution which a regime under the A-mandate should obtain, the assignment of the Iraq mandate to Great Britain and the conclusion of the peace treaty with Turkey. From this point of view, the Cabinet conclusions of 17th June which provided for preliminary constitutional steps in Iraq and, at the same time, for a military offensive against Mustafa Kemal seemed to be interdependent. For, as the mandate could legally not be set up without the Turkish ratification of the peace treaty, the Kemalists had somehow to be induced to ratify. A similar cause of delay was the Anglo-American struggle over the application of the Open Door principle to the exploitation of Iraq's oil deposits.

From these examples it follows that the Cabinet was not so exhausted as has been assumed. It simply waited for the fruits which the departments responsible for the Middle East might reap. Finally, when the Cabinet began to act, most of its members were prompted by impatience rather than recovery from exhaustion. There was a sudden

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46. cf. Zeine N.Zeine, The Struggle for Arab Independence, Beirut, 1960, pp.138-9.
47. see also next chapter.
48. cf. P.W.Ireland, Iraq. A Study in Political Development, London 1937, p.282.
49. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit, p.54.

awareness that the Government was rapidly running short of the means necessary for the attainment of the objectives it had so far set to itself. This fact had been brought home to the Cabinet with much force by Winston Churchill strongly supported by the General Staff, the Finance Committee, and from outside the Government, by the vociferous Press.[50]

But even at this stage, after the mandate of Iraq had already been allotted to Great Britain, first Lord Milner and then Edwin Montagu tried to put a brake on the speed at which the majority of the Cabinet wanted to proceed. Both men, of course, acted out of different motivations. Taken together, however, they were revealing for the complex provenance of the retarding factors in the previous and current delay.

Lord Milner was worried about what appeared to him as a panicky withdrawal of British forces from Persia. The points which he raised against it in an impressive memorandum dated the 25th of May are of particular interest for two reasons. First, Milner had previously shelved any definition of the A-mandate when he had been the chairman of the Committee in charge of that task. His reasons were evasive and they implied much of what was explicit in his memorandum. Second, Milner was already arguing within the context of the incoming reports of the mounting unrest in Iraq; for the time of the insurrection on the Euphrates was near. From this angle his recommendations display an astonnishing negligence, which may be taken as representative for the

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50. see p. 102.

previous attitude of a large section of the Cabinet. As Milner argued his main point:

> "It seems to me to be both premature and somwhat ill-omened to attempt to-day to lay down a plan for the administration of Mesopotamia, for it is my intimate conviction that, unless the dangers which now threaten us in that quarter are faced in time, there will in another twelvemonth be no question of our administering Mesopotamia at all." 51

Milner spoke in gloomy terms of a "Bolshevik Empire extending from Archangel to the Persian Gulf".[52] Having projected the danger in such global dimensions he prophesied that this Bolshevik Empire would be generated by a chain-reaction of regional revolutions unleashed by Bolshevik elements in the country rather than from outside. Therefore, he regarded the maintenance of British forces in Persia and elsewhere in the Middle East as the only means of safeguarding the British position in the East.[53] Milner was obsessed with apprehension about the imminence of a Bolshevik revolution in Persia. To avert it, he urged the British Empire would do better to spend many millions at once rather than very much more in later years.[54] To emphasize the support and the purpose of British interest he rejected any kind of altruism. As to what was at stake he wrote:

> "It is not primarily a question of helping an Ally, but of securing our own vital interests in Persia and saving all that we have already spent on that country from being completely wasted. A Bolshevik revolution in Persia would involve consequences for the British Empire, which it would be worth our while to spend not one, but many millions to avert". 55

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51. Memorandum by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, May 24,1920, Milner Papers, PRO 30/30/12.
52. ibid.
53. ibid.
54. cf.p.248.
55. see footnote 51.

Milner's apprehension about the imminence of Bolshevik revolutions was a reality and not simply a bogey created for the sole purpose of driving his point better home to the Cabinet. He reacted against Bolshevism personally, socially and politically. On the whole, Milner used the term Bolshevik in much the same manner and sense in which the slogan "democrat" had been used against the ideas of the French Revolution a century before or as the term "Chinese Communist" is perhaps used to-day.

For him Bolshevism in a Middle Eastern context was above all revolutionary nationalism[56] which by uprooting the social basis of existing ruling elites would, if successful, bring a new kind of "ideological" elite to power. He foresaw great difficulties in coming to terms with such new regimes. Clearly his experience in Egypt began to manifest itself. It was also due to his sojourn in Egypt that he knew how much the local nationalists nourished their hopes on the speculation that something might happen in Russia, Turkey or America that would help their own cause.[57] To knock the bottom out of their hopes, Milner was therefore anxious for at least a temporary (peace) agreement with Bolshevist Russia. As he put it:

> "We ourselves urgently require some little time in which to turn round and try to stabilize the position in all South-Western Asia, where everything is still "at loose end",not to mention the repercussion of the unsettled state of this whole region upon Egypt and India. Our own position in Persia and Mesopotamia, the French position in Syria and Cilicia, the future of all the rest of Turkey in Asia are still quite indeterminate, and the settlement of all these problems will be intolerably complicated by the continuance of Bolshevik interference." [58]

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56. Milner rarely referred to personalities or political groups in the countries he enumerated. In the case of Persia he rather casually referred once to the Cossacks.

57. Milner to Curzon,26 Jan.1920, Milner Papers 162, Bodleian, Oxford.

Bolshevik interference, as Milner had earlier underlined, came through the mind rather than by overland routes. What a devastating blow for the revolutionary nationalists therefore if, from an international point of view, the Russian Bolsheviks could be corrupted by the conclusion of some treaty or agreement with the British Empire![59]

That Milner, in his suggestions for "pacifying" the Middle East, gave priority to the use of the means of military power and foreign policy may at first sight seem to contradict his emphasis on the internal origins of trouble in Persia or Iraq or Egypt. The immediate establishment of an administration with a wide scope for indigenous Arab participation must shurely have commended itself as the more appropriate means. However, the assumption of interchangeable alternatives, though of different kinds,meant overlooking the fact that in a law and order imperialism military presence has always been the prerequisite, or at least the complement of, rule by constitution, and never a means that could be done without. It is from this point of view that the impact of Milners suggestions on the Cabinet must be assessed.

Accordingly, Milner suffered a defeat only on his point that Great Britain could maintain its "overcommitment" in the Middle East if only the Bolshevik tide was stemmed. There was general agreement among the majority of the Cabinet that Britain must withdraw its forces from Persia. As regards the administration of Mesopotamia, the

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58.see footnote 51.

59.A good summary of the Cabinet`s general views on a Russian policy in the various theatres of the Baltic, Siberia, South Russia, Persia and Central Asia is contained in the Minutes of the Cabinet Meetings of Nov.4th and 12th 1919, CAB 23/18.

new steps were authorised as complementary to the military occupation of Iraq. Or, as Churchill once made the point when he exposed his Air Force Scheme for Iraq, the administration of the country had to be attuned to the new military methods of holding it.[60] Traces of this thinking are noticeable in nearly all the considerations and conclusions of the Cabinet before Cairo. For instance, when on 17 June the Cabinet decided on preparatory steps towards the creation of an effective Arab State, one of the accompanying draft military conclusions read:

> "Contract to railheads in Mesopotamia, and develop Air Force there, and gradually re-occupy as our strength grows and circumstances allow in the next few years." 61

What worried Milner, Curzon and also the men on the spot about this policy was the strong "element of gamble" in it. For in view of the Turkish menace on the northern frontier of Iraq and the growing unrest in the country itself the temporary reduction of the British forces entailed a gap between the maintenance of the Government's commitments for keeping law and order and the actual power available to guarantee the capacity for fulfilling those commitments should hostilities break out.

This incongruity did not disappear when, due to the insurrection on the Euphrates, considerable reinforcements of troops and army equipments were sent back to Iraq. They would not stay for long, but the commitments incurred by a premature definition of the mandate would continue to exist and overburden the Government's budgetary means if

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60. see p.102, footnote 70.
61. Conclusions of a Conference of Ministers, 17 June 1920, CAB 23/22.

that definition was not based on thorough assessments of the problems on the spot. It was Edwin Montagu who broached this point as late as October 9th,1920. By letter Montagu urged upon Lloyd George that the Cabinet which was to meet on the next day should not proceed to define the liabilities involved in the mandate for Iraq before Percy Cox had returned from his sojourn at Bagdad and been consulted. His advice for the meantime was tantamount to maintaining the appearance of commitment. As a relevant passage from his letter read:

> "There is no necessity for it (definition).We have accepted a mandate for Mesopotamia, and I should have thought that, so far as the public is concerned, the more indefinite that word is, the safer we are in our ground. Let us leave the public for the present/circumstances/ at any rate, to believe what I must confess in the present circumstances is the policy that I favour, that the Mandate will be to form an Arab Government and to relieve ourselves of all responsibility as quickly as possible". 62

This suggestion of continuing to allow the public to believe in a Government commitment to the establishment of an Arab State was marked by a strong undertone of radical doubt of the practicability of a well-defined mandate at all. Here Montagu appealed to a similar scepticism that must have been prevalent among a large section of the Cabinet. This scepticism expressed itself in constant bouts of worry about the possibility of being bound by each detail of the mandate policy. Significantly, the hope was entertained that with Faisal as ruler in Iraq the rigidity of the mandate would be mitigated and the British Government be afforded some freedom from responsibility for Iraq. It must be underlined that Faisal's rulership and the mandate were understood by the Cabinet as complements rather than alternatives. The al-

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62.Edwin Montagu to I.T.Davies (Secretary to Lloyd George), 9 Oct.1920, Lloyd George Papers F/40/3/25. Because of illness Montagu was pre-

ternative to the mandate policy was withdrawal to Basra, from where most British interests in that region could be protected.

Whitehall`s gamble on an Iraqi Amirate as a cost-saving device for cheapening the mandate was perhaps the most outstanding feature in Britsih policy-making on the eve of the Cairo-Conference. First signs of it had emerged in the Cabinet in March 1920.[63] By the beginning of August, soon after his fall at Damascus, Faisal became the pet of the Finance Committee of the Cabinet.[64] Due to the ensuing upsurge of Arab indignation in Iraq, his status as the candidate for heading the Amirate was submitted to the temporary vacillations of Cabinet opinion. But the hesitation was gradually overtopped by new hope. As this process manifested itself in Montagu`s letter to Lloyd George on October 9th:

> "I feel convinced that the Mandate will embarrass Sir Percy Cox. (if strictly defined).We have not yet abandoned wholly at any rate the possibility of Feisal as Amir. Supposing we found that Feisal would not accept the Amirate, or there was no prospect of its being workable if we controlled foreign relations in the form which the Mandate wishes us to control them. It might conceivably be possible to protect our interests by other methods, but we should have tied our hands".[65]

The more Faisal could be made into a puppet ruler the less obligatory would be the duties and responsibilities of the mandatory. This consideration was a strong element in the advocacy of a "One-Clause" Mandate in the Cabinet Meeting of October.[66] Nevertheless, by January 1921, Winston Churchill, who would have to take the final decision, was still apprehensive that by embarking on a Sherifian policy in Iraq he might

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63.see p.252.
64.cf.Meeting of the Finance Committee,12 Aug.1920, CAB 23/22.
65.see footnote 62.
66.Conference of Ministers,18 Oct.1920, CAB 23/23.

contribute to the spread of a movement which was aimed primarily at the destruction of British influence in the East. It was a prospect against which Percy Cox in a secret despatch had urged Winston Churchill to insure.[67] Churchill took this advice serious; as he wrote to Lloyd George on January 8th,1921:

> "A little more time and consideration are needed before definitely launching Feisal. I must feel my way and feel sure of my way.
> I have seen Lawrence and are making certain inquiries".[68]

As regard the liabilities involved in the mandate, Churchill like his colleagues was opposed to any detailed definition of the duties and obligations of the mandatory. But his motivation was different Although keener than anybody else on saving expenditure, at the same time he looked more eagerly for material rewards and gains of permanent advantage.[69] In this respect, he most resembled Lloyd George. But while the Prime Minister was convinced that the mandate, however rigidly defined in theory, would turn out different in practice and would be more to the economic benefit of the mandatory, Churchill was apprehensive that the mandate as drafted in January 1921 would deprive Britain of any material gains. The aims of the two men were well expressed in Churchill's letter to Lloyd George of 14 January 1921, The interesting passage read:

> "I must say, reading up the papers on Mesopotamia, that the impression forced upon me is that the mandates are so drawn as to make it very difficult for Britain to gain any real permanent advantage out of the country. We seem to have tied ourselves up in every detail to give it all back to the Arabs without compensation for our expenses as soon as they are

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67. Minute by Hubert Young, 14 August 1922, C.O.730/23/40582.
68. Winston Churchill to Lloyd George,8 Jan.1921, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/53.
69. see also p.226.

able to stand alone. I know of course that you think a different interpretation will be put upon these mandates in practice.

But as they stand they certainly constitute a very firm starting point for an attack on Mesopotamian expenditure."70

In contrast to Churchill`s disapproval of the mandate scheme as it stood in late 1920, Percy Cox favoured its rigidity.[71] Percy Cox had also caused Churchill`s temporary hesitation in embarking on a Sherifian policy in Iraq.[72] Such a display of expertise by Cox seemed not to have been anticipated by Montagu nor perhaps by Gertrude Bell. In fact Montagu`s conviction that a rigidly defined mandate would embarrass Percy Cox, as well as Gertrude Bell`s high expectations of Cox proving to be a more flexible and "sympathetic" administrator than Arnold Wilson, were in a sense mistaken judgements.

The explanation of this astonishing fact lies in a difference of outlook. Both Gertrude Bell`s and Montagu`s assessments of the administrative problems in Iraq were tempered with the speculative advantages that might accrue from Faisal`s "puppet" rulership.[73] In con-

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70. Churchill to Lloyd George, 14 Jan.1921, Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/55.

71. see Cabinet Meeting of 18 Oct.1920, Minutes: CAB 23/23. The following complaints and remedies were probably made and suggested by Churchill "Attention was drawn to the somewhat rigid character of the Revised Draft Mandates and to the fact that they imposed duties and obligations on the Mandatory of a nature which might unduly fetter liberty and action and prove unworkable in practice, In particular, it was pointed out that it would not be open to Great Britain to raise Arab troops for the general defence of the Empire, even if the Arabs were willing to fight outside Mesopotamia. It was also thought very desirable that Great Britain should retain the right to propound a claim to be reimbursed her heavy Mesopotamian expenditure should the circumstances hereafter justify the making of such a claim. In these circumstances it was suggested that it might be preferable to submit to the League a provisional mandate in vague and general terms, such as the "One Clause" Draft..., which might be superseded by a more elaborate document when experience had shown the extent to which it was necessary or desirable for the Mandatory to try to restrict her liberty of action in certain definite directions."

72. see p.261, footnote 67.

trast, Percy Cox made no allowance in his assessments for speculative results and conditions based on such wishful thinking. He based his judgement solely on the peculiar conditions of an Iraqi society which, in his view, did not possess enough public-spirited, honest and responsible men to run Western-type institutions. Incidentally, had Gertrude Bell restricted her judgement about the prospects of the British administration to this level of "empirical" data there would have been no room for her exuberant optimism.[74] But to return to Percy Cox, owing to his practical outlook his views of autumn 1920 did not depart from those he had held during the London consultations in April 1918.[75] By then, alerted somewhat by Curzon's gradualism, he had successfully barred any further Arab participation in the provisional administration of Iraq. Significantly, his main criteria for rejecting participation had been the lack of suitable indigenous personnel, rather than the normal prohibitions of the state of martial law. He used the same criteria, in November 1919, in his reply to Curzon's compalaint about the Indian-type administration set up by Arnold Wilson in Iraq.[76] As he wrote:

> "I agree that existing system of Administration does not fulfil in all respects either letter or spirit of Anglo-French declaration of November 1918, but it did not do so at the time and at all events up to recent date no Arab material has been available which would have made it possible to form Administration strictly on those lines and indeed I always doubted whether that declaration provided practical basis for administration of Mesopotamia". 77

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73. The term puppet ruler was officially used on various occasions.
74. Gertrude Bell did make complaints such as"Not only have we scarcely any trained natives, but we have very few reasonably honest men", but they used to be dispelled by optimism,cf. p.242,footnote 29.
75. see p.127.
76. Curzon to Cox,14 Nov.1919, DBFP 1919-1939,1st series,vol.IV,pp.531-2
77. Cox to Curzon,23 Nov.1919, Ibid. Document No.376.

Cox regarded the Anglo-French Declaration as one of the dangerous steps of Curzon`s gradualism; although,of course, he also rejected it as an unduly interference of diplomacy with the sphere of administration. It was probably from this latter point of view that he backed Arnold Wilson against his critics at Whitehall.

In view of such an attitude it was almost ironic that Percy Cox was sent back to Bagdad to revise an administrative policy which had proved so disastrous under Wilson`s hand, but which, in respect of the restriction on Arab participation, could so easily have been his own. In fact we wonder whether, under an administrative system set up by Cox, the insurrection on the Euphrates in summer 1920 would not have occured anyway.[78]

However Cox`s return to Iraq followed the complete change of outlook on British mandatory rule in Iraq, recently undergone by Whitehall. Feeling the squeeze of the tight budgetary situation at home that would probably last for years the Cabinet shifted its attention from an elaborate administrative set-up to an Amirate. Indeed, so much did the Cabinet begin to foster the latter idea as a panacea, that the Finance Committee saw reason for warnings of the kind that "it was more than possible that Sir Percy Cox would find that different forms of Government were required in different areas in Mesopotamia, and that the Arabs at first might not wish for a single ruler".[79]However, once the Cabinet`s attention was fixed on constructing the roof of the mandate state before the walls had been erected, the man for pushing the

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78.cf. next chapter p.289.
79.Finance Committee Minutes of 12 Augsut 1920, CAB 23/22.

British policy in Iraq through had to be a Cromer.[80] Certainly there was only one Cromer for Iraq: Sir Percy Cox.

Much of Percy Cox's policy on the spot belonged to the time after the Cairo-Conference. But some of his actions taken before the Conference revealed already typical characteristics of his response to Whitehall's policy making.

Percy Cox was on the one hand extremely allergic to demands from Whitehall that he servedthe opportunistic considerations of diplomacy and British foreign policy. In this respect, his relations to Curzon and the Lloyd George Cabinet were sometimes tense. On the other hand, as we have already seen,[81] he was very keen on calling capital investment into Iraq and opening the country up to immediate economic development. Here he was in complete accord with the Board of Trade people and also with Winston Churchill, the profit hunter.

In fact the Board of Trade had been the only Department that had enthusiastically backed Arnold Wilson's stern policy in Iraq. As an extract from a letter by Llewellyn Smith, the President of the Board of Trade, to Hankey of April 1920 read:

> "In Mesopotamia, Colonel Wilson and the group of men round him, are doing excellent work and deserve all encouragement and support. The Arab community does not at present afford any materials for organising an Arab Government with any real power or responsibility...Few if any of the Arabs appear to be able to withstand temptation to corruption. It is, therefore, undesirable to encourage hopes of self-government in the near future which are bound to be disappointed. In the present circumstances, an Arab Government would be a mere "facade", or it would be a kind of Government for which Great Britain ought to undertake no responsibility". 82

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80. Implicit in numerous minutes and memoranda inside the Government, this desirability was explicitly expressed at the time in a letter from George C. Buchanan to the Editor of The Times, dated 21 June 1920. It is of interest to know that Buchanan had administered the

For the time being the Board of Trade was both Arnold Wilson's and Percy Cox's natural ally at Whitehall;[83] as for the Colonial Office, economically, Cox did not enjoy similar support when Churchill was placed in charge of the Middle East. Although Churchill generally regarded the stimulation of British trade and Imperial communications as the most important business aspects of the Colonial Office,[84] he preferred to direct investment capital into tropical colonies rather than mandates. In fact, when he left for Cairo, he had "an understanding with Chamberlain that in the event of great reductions being effected on the Middle Eastern Section of the Colonial Office, a broad-minded view would be taken of the much smaller requirements of our East African colonies".[85]

The economic factor played an important role in Cox's allergy to what he must have regarded as a weak-kneed policy making of the Cabinet. His interpretation for Whitehall's, and particularly Curzon's, cautious handling of the mandate issue was largely based on the assumption that the Cabinet was all too readily giving in to the financial problems at home and to the pressure of the parties in opposition. It seems that he accused the Labour people of trying to use the financial drain of the expenditure in Mesopotamia as a political instrument for curtailing overseas commitments - an aim to which he thought they were sworn for purely ideological reasons. His dissatisfaction with

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80.contd., port of Basra from 1915 to 1917 and was thereafter till 1919 on the Indian Munitions Board.
cf.also: T.E.Lawrence in The Observor 8 Aug.1920, quoted in: A.T. Wilson, Mesopotamia, 1917-1920, p.110.

81.see p.163.

82.Llewellyn Smith to Hankey,12 April 1920,Lloyd George P.,F/24/2/25.

83.The Board of Trade changed its attitude later in the light of increasing internationalisation of trade in Iraq.

84.Churchill to Lloyd George,4.Jan.1921,Lloyd George P.,F/9/2/51.

Whitehall lay at the bottom of his vigorous attempts to turn the Iraq mandate into a self-supporting Imperial asset. Small wonder that Percy Cox regarded himself as the tutor of the British Imperial Mind. Cox insisted on having Whitehall strongly and in a well defined way committed to its policy in Iraq and to the way he chose to execute it. The most outstanding instance of his acting as a monitor was his condition that he would not return to Bagdad without having a binding assurance that an end would be made to "hydra-headed" policy making, and that a single Department be made responsible for the entire Middle East. This assurance was given by Curzon. Impressed by the argument Churchill, too, considered himself to be bound by it. - Just how seriously Churchill took it, is obvious from a private and personal letter which he wrote to Lloyd George on 12 January 1921:

> "The Arab problem is all one, and any attempt to divide it will only reintroduce the same paralysis and confusion of action which has done so much harm during the last two years. It will be fatal to all prospects of success to introduce conflicting or divergent policies.
> Feisal or Abdullah, whether in Mesopotamia or Mecca, King Hussein at Mecca, Bin Saud at Nejd, Bin Rashid at Hail; the Sheikh of Koweit; and King Samuel at Jerusalem are all inextricably interwoven, and no conceivable policy can have any chance which does not pull all the strings affecting them." 86

4. At the Conference.

When, on March 12th, Winston Churchill, together with representatives of the Middle East Department, the War Office, the Air Ministry and the Middle East Service gathered together for the Cairo-Conference, the stage was well set. The agenda for discussions had already

85. Churchill to Lloyd George, 25 May 1921, Lloyd George P., F/9/3/43.
86. Lloyd George Papers, F/9/2/54.

been drawn up by the Middle East Department on 26 February. Further, there was from the outset, a general agreement on the major issues concerning Iraq. These were: (a) the immediate curtailment of British expenditure in Iraq, (b) the estblishment of an Amirate under Faisal as the "best and cheapest solution".[87]

Taken together both factors warranted a smooth procedure of the decision-making process. The four major committees met almost daily:the Political Committee,[88] the Military Committee,[89] the Combined Political and Military Committee[90] and the Joint Political and Military Committee.[91] There were also a Committee on Mesopotamian Finance, and various Sub-Committees dealing with traffic communications, levies, civil service and subsidies. Altogether, as far as Iraq was concerned there were about thirty sessions within eight days. The decisions taken for immediate implementation and laid down in great detail extended from the exact schedule of Faisal's accession to the throne of Iraq down to the estimated number of army horses to be disposed of in order to save the Imperial Exchequer the cost of feeding them. In their decisions the Committees were helped by the presence of two Iraqi Ministers: Sasun Effendi Haskail, Minister of Finance, and Ja'far Pasha Al-'Askari, Minister of Defence. Both were, on occasions, requested to

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87. Churchill to Lloyd George, 14 March 1921, F.O. 371/6350.
88. It consisted of Churchill (in the chair), Percy Cox, Hubert Young, Gertrude Bell, T.E.Lawrence, R.D.Badcock (Secretary).
89. Lieutenant-General Sir W.Congreve (President), General Haldane, Radcliffe, Atkinson, Ironside, Air-Marshal Trenchard, Air-Vice Marshal Salmond, J.B.Crosland,Colonel Stewart, Frith, Slater, Wing-Commander Gossage, Burnett, Major Eadie, Waters Taylor (Secretary).
90. This committee comprised the political and military committees with full membership and constituted therefore the proper Conference.
91. It consisted of a core of the Military Committee joined by Cox and sometimes Young.

attend the meeting of the one committee or other. Also present was Arnold Wilson, director of the Anglo-Persian Oil Company and previously Acting Civil Commissioner in Iraq. In addition there was assistance from Churchill's personal and secret communication with Lloyd George by telegraph.[92]

The curtailment of British expenditure was to be largely brought about by the reduction of British military commitments. This should follow in two phases. In the first and immediate phase before the outbreak of the hot weather the Imperial forces should be reduced by one-third of their existing strength, irrespective of any political implications.[93] In contrast, for the second phase, which should fall within the current financial year, further substantial reductions were made dependent on certain political measures. The agenda specified the nature of the measures required:

> "This (substantial reduction) cannot well be considered independently of the political future of the country, as the garrison so reduced would be dangerously small unless satisfactory conditions had been, or were in process of being established at the time. It is generally agreed that no satisfactory conditions can be establsihed in Mesopotamia without the prior formation of a local Government or real prestige and authority". 94

Naturally the Conference regarded the establishment of the desired kind of Government as identical with the acclamation of Faisal as king of Iraq. Other candidates such as the Naqib, Sayed Talib, the Sheikh of Muhammarah, Ibn Sa'oud, the Agha Khan or even Bourhan Ed Din, the Turkish Prince, were only named or examined briefly. The reasons for

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92. Altogether this communication comprised 10 letters,in: F.O.371/635
93.Report on the Cairo Conference,p.36 Political Agenda 1.F.O.371/6343
94.ibid.Report p.37 Political Agenda 2.

their dismissal by the British have become well known[95] and need not be repeated here. But it is worth noting the short and interesting summary statement made by Gertrude Bell in reply to Churchill that:

> "the only possible opposition to be anticipated might be a movement in favour of the formation of a Commonwealth under the Presidency of the Naqib". 96

Faisal certainly had good friends among the British at the Conference, in addition his candidature may well have mitigated their sense of guilt[97] about having allowed the French to oust him from Syria, although none of these sentiments seem to have been heard of at the Conference table. While Lloyd George, it is true, referred to the general desire of the British Government to fulfil earlier promises to King Hussein, at Cairo comments were solely made on the hard facts of Faisal's utility as a political instrument. Since, after Cairo, Faisal did by no means maintain the affection of British officials, as has wrongly been stated,[98] it is worthwhile to summarize the advantages which the British saw in using him.

Churchill's argument was that a Sherifian policy generally enabled the British Government "to bring pressure to bear on one Arab sphere in order to attain their own ends in another".[99] Percy Cox favoured Faisal for his diplomatic experience with the Allies and his capacity "for raising an army quickly".[100] T.E.Lawrence pointed out

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95. cf.P.W.Ireland, Iraq, p.316; S.H.Longrigg, Iraq 1900 to 1950, p.130.
96. Report of the Cairo Conference, p.42, F.O.371/6343.
97. Elizabeth Monroe, op.cit.p.68. As to Lloyd George see his letter to Churchill, 22 March 1921, F.O.371/6350.
98. P.W.Ireland, op.cit., p.315.
99. see 96. Report, p.40. As Churchill continued: "If Feisal knew that not only his father's subsidy and the protection of the Holy Places from Wahabi attack, but also the position of his brother in Trans Jordan was dependent upon his own good behavious, he would be much easier to dâ€el with. The same argument applied mutatis mutandis..."

that the scattered, backward and only half-civilized Iraqi society needed as its first ruler "an active and inspiring personality".[101] Gertrude Bell emphasized that rather than leaving the Sherifian propaganda as a potential enemy, the British Government should make use of "the only pan-Arab propaganda...likely to make headway".[102]

Evidently, the political reasons for the British Government of launching Faisal in Iraq were overwhelming. However, to inaugurate such a policy either great frankness or considerable deceit had to be practised. It was with some opposition by Shuckburgh that the latter was chosen. The problem of launching Faisal in Iraq had four main aspects, (i) Faisal`s own acceptance of his candidature had to be secured. When, in late 1920, Faisal had been sounded in this respect in London, he had, according to Lloyd George, declared "that he would not become a candidate for Iraq until Abdullah`s claims had been disposed of".[103]

(ii) The British control and mandatory position in Iraq must be safeguarded. The creation of the monarchy as well as of an Arab army implied the transfer of power from the High Commissioner to the King. The difficulty was, on the one hand, what measure of gradualism could be applied to this transfer, on the other, how Britain, while transferring some of her commitments such as the maintenance of internal law and order, could secure ultimate control both over Iraq`s internal development and its external relations.

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100.ibid. p.40.
101.ibid. p.40.
102.ibid. p.41.
103.Lloyd George to Churchill, 16 March 1921, F.O.371/6350

In this context the shaping of Iraq`s relations with the limitrophe states of Persia and Turkey and the limitrophe Arab tribes of the Shammar,as well as with the Wali of Pusht-i-Kuh and Ibn Sa`ud, came under special consideration.

(iii)Faisal`s accession to the throne of Iraq had, for various reasons, to be given the appearance of following from an act of spontaneous and wide-spread acclamation by the Iraqi population. The main difficulty for the British was that, while they had to efface themselves as the instigators of that acclamation in order to give Faisal the chance of gaining some representative approval by the different sections of Iraqi society and also by the French Government, they had at the same time to prevent his candidature from becoming an issue in the coming election campaign for the Legislative Assembly. For, in such a cmpaign, he might possibly have to enter certain binding engagements with the electorate in order to outbid rival candidates. The British were aware of contingencies analogous to Faisal`s fate under the General Arab Congress at Damascus.

(iv) The French suspicions about the intents and purposes of the British policy of installing Faisal in Iraq and Abdullah in Trans-Jordania, countries adjacent to Syria from which the Hashemites had been ousted, had to be lulled. Both Churchill and Lloyd George were extremely sensitive to French opinion. It was here that Shuckburgh underlined the need "to treat the French with complete openness and candour and to abandon pretences".[104]

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104.Question of the Amir Faisal, A short note by Shuckburgh, 19 March 1921, Lloyd George Papers F/9/3/16.

The debate on the settlement of all four aspects was conducted at the Cairo-Conference and in the Cabinet at home. Since Churchill has been described as having referred with pride to the launching of Faisal in Iraq as "kindling anew the torch of civilization in Bagdad,"[105] it is worth recounting how, in the secrecy of the debate, the procedure was laid out.

Faisal`s own acceptance of his candidature was obtained more or less easily by installing Abdullah in Trans-Jordania, although it seems that henceforth Abdullah bore his brother a grudge for having usurped his throne.[106] In its further consideration of the accession of Faisal the Conference was not distracted by the fact that the Cabinet at home was dismayed at Abdullah`s candidature in Trans-Jordania for its possibly worsening effect on Anglo-French relations.[107] At Cairo Churchill alone seems to have been a little affected by the Cabinet`s worries, for he laid much emphasis on learning the comparative advantages of the two candidates.[108] But this emphasis may well have been a check to be placed on record in the final Report of the Conference. On the whole Churchill was confident that his general advice to Lloyd George would elicit the desired results from the French. As he had written in the first days of the Conference to the Prime Minister:

> "surely now while you are helping them (the French) in Germany would be the best moment for settling with them".109

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105. Henry A.Foster, The Making of Modern Iraq, Oklahoma, 1935,p.94. Foster has quoted from S.H.Slater,"Iraq", Nineteenth Century, XCIX 480. Slater was financial adviser in Cox`s staff in Iraq & at Cairo
106. cf. Patrick Seale, The Struggle for Syria, A Study of Post War Arabs Politics 1945-58. Oxford 1965,p.8. The book contains a good short introductory chapter on the Hashemites and the Fertile Crescent.
107. Lloyd George to Churchill, 22 March 1921, F.O.371/6350.
108. Report of the Cairo-Conference,pp.40,43.

But the crux of the matter was more complex. Lloyd George urged upon Churchill that in order not to affront the French too much the Government should refrain from openly supporting Faisal`s candidature and give his acclamation the appearance of an out-and-out spontaneous event. At Cairo, however, the experts regarded it as vital for the success of Faisal`s candidature that the British Government, in advance, announce that it would support Faisal should he be accepted generally by the population. Two main reasons governed this consideration. On the one hand, there was general agreement that the "solid" elements of the Iraqi society would only vote for Faisal (and any other candidate), if they were assured of his support by the British and of the maintenance of British protection for Iraq. The latter stipulation applied above all to the merchants and landowners and to the various minority groups of the Iraqi population. On the other hand, effects of the anti-Hashemite war-time propaganda of the Government of India, probably continued for some time under the administration of Arnold Wilson, were still lingering in the minds of some sections of the population. As the Committee minutes recorded Ja`afar Pasha`s reminiscences:

> "Ja`afar Pasha had often heard people say that they did not dare to mention their desire for the appointment of a member of the Sherifian family, as when they had done so previously the British Government had taken steps against them."[110]

Led by these considerations the Political Committee agreed to the three measures suggested by Churchill for procuring the desired success of Faisal`s candidature. The first measure was the announce-

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109. Churchill to Lloyd George, 14 March 1921, F.O.371/6350. Churchill was more outspoken on this point in another letter to Lloyd George written a month later on April 4th, 1921, Lloyd George P., F/9/3/29.

110. Report of Cairo-Conference, p.44, Minutes of the third meeting of the Political Committee of March 14, 1921.

ment of British support for Faisal. The draft was discussed at the second meeting of the Political Committee on 13th March.[111] Percy Cox showed his diplomatic skill in turning the draft into a "less committal" wording.[112]The form in which it was telegraphed to Lloyd George on the next day for approval read:

> "In response to enquiries from adherents of Emir Feisal the British Government have stated that they will place no obstacle in the way of his candidature as ruler of Iraq and that if he is chosen he will have their support." 113

In reply, Lloyd George rejected the formula and the whole undertaking of a public announcement on the ground that because it interfered with the appearance of a "real" initiative from Iraq the British Government would be placed in an embarrassing position vis-a-vis the Quai d'Orsay.[114]But Churchill did not give up so easily. He pressed strongly for a re-consideration of this decision which, as he alluded, was unduly influenced by the Foreign Office's presentation of wrong facts. In short, Churchill suspected Curzon of having allowed his judgement to be marred by his misconception of Faisal's views. There were echoes of the late departmental struggle over the control of the Middle East in Churchill's protestations to Lloyd George. For example:

> "Last sentence of your reference to Faisal is presumably conversation with him when these matters were under F.O. We think that we are very much better informed of his real views and wishes; we are sure this statement, of which the source is recognisable, no longer represents the facts distinctly...I am supported by the advice of best and most responsible authorities on the subject...I do hope you will give me personally the support to which I am entitled in a task which I certainly have not sought".115

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111.P.W.Ireland's account of the Cairo-Conference is misleading on some of the stages and aspects of the committee work,see op.cit.,pp.311-18.

112.Report of the Cairo-Conference,p.41.Political Committee 2nd meeting

113.see footnote 104. Note by Shuckburgh.

Although there was great force in Churchill's representations, Lloyd George carried his point. The public announcement planned for the eve of Faisal's appeal to the Mesopotamian people was cancelled. Instead Faisal was only allowed to inform his influential friends in Iraq privately of the British concurrence in a successful outcome of his candidature.[116] Influential friends carry authority in public life; no doubt, the British Government, by making use of such channels, hoped that the news of their support of Faisal would reach the desired sections of Iraqi society in due time. After that show of spontaneity Lloyd George was prepared to inform the French Government about the British attitude.[117]

In general, in view of the maintenance of the Proclamation of a General Amnesty,[118] a gesture of commitment which was to be made on the eve of Faisal's canvassing for rulership, one is surprised at the above efforts of self-effacement. At the time the vanity of this conceit drew some interesting comments from the Middle East Department. As Shuckburgh put them down in his note of 19 March 1921:

> "There is one argument...which appears to the Department to be of very great weight. Any attempt to ascertain "the wishes of the people" in Mesopotamia would not only be dangerous locally but would be futile vis-a-vis the French. They would not believe in any spontaneous expression of opinion. They would say that we had engineered the business in our own interests. Incidentally, they would not be far wrong. The fact is that a genuine plebiscite is an impossiblity in a country like Mesopotamia. We tried it once shortly after the armistice and got nothing but abuse for our pains. We have an awkward communication to make to the French in any case; but I venture to think that we are more likely to carry them with us if we put it to them in a form in which they will not suspect trickery of any

114. Lloyd George to Churchill, 16 March 1921, F.O.371/6350.
115. Churchill to Lloyd George, 18 March 1921, ibid.
116. Report of Cairo Conference, p.44, Annexure, Time-Table §6.
117. Lloyd George to Churchill, 22 March 1921, F.O.371/6350.

kind. Let us tell them plainly that situation has been reached when the Faisal solution offers the only possible way out of our difficulties. Failing that we must clear out of Mesopotamia altogether. A policy of scuttle would be so disastrous and would have such evil effects all through the Middle East that we are determined to adopt the one alternative that offers any hope.

In other words it seems to the Department that the time has come to treat the French with complete openness and candour and to abandon pretences which will not deceive them for a moment and will only increase their suspicions of our whole policy." 119

The second measure for securing the success of Faisal's candidature was a good complement to the policy of influencing Iraqi opinion through informal and less public channels. Accordingly the Acting High Commissioner in Bagdad was to instruct his staff "that all members of the Government should use their best endeavours to promote the policy to be adopted".[120] The whole undertaking was to be the work of great secrecy. The Commissioner should communicate the contents of the "extremely secret"[121] telegram only to those advisers whom he considered necessary. Further, Churchill laid down the stipulation that those advisers should remain as far as possible "responsible for the actions of Ministers".[122]

The third measure contemplated by Churchill and approved of in the first meeting of the Political Committee, on 12th March, was the need to ensure a suitable make-up of the Constituent Assembly that should eventually confirm Faisal's nomination. It was generally agreed

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118. The clause that one or two exceptions should be made to the Amnesty originated in the meeting held at the C.O. on 26th February at which the agenda for the Cairo-Conference was discussed. Owing to Arnold Wilson's protestations that Mahmud and Yussuf as Su-waidi were extremely dangerous, the exceptions were provided for. Major Noel had dissented on the case of Mahmud.

119. see footnote 104.

120. Report of the Cairo-Conference, p.43.

121. ibid. p.43.

122. ibid.

that this assembly should not elect the king, but only express a representative opinion. Besides this representation of the spectrum of Iraqi opinion, unanimity of the assembly's "decision" for Faisal was put forward as a second desiderata. Whether and how the two desiderata could be obtained, did not really bother the Political Committee. The short list of incompatibilities was left to the discretion of Percy Cox to be sorted out at some later date. But Churchill gave already a practical hint by pointing out that:

> "such a body might be to some extent composed of local men of affairs who would suffer by a British evacuation." 123

Notwithstanding this suggestion however in reply to Gertrude Bell churchill conceded that among the hundred or so members of the assembly there should also be place for some prominent rebel leaders.[124]

Although the exact role of the Constituent Assembly in Faisal's accession to the throne of Iraq was deliberately left undecided, such "stray" suggestions, even if they were later not geared to any action or constitutional measure, must be taken into account in any judgement of the Cairo-policy. For it is at this stage of its formation, that a policy reveals best its spirit, motivations and shortcomings.

Churchill's above suggestion to making use of those sections of the indigenous Iraqi society which maintained their privileges thanks to the British presence in Iraq was in a way symptomatic of the choice of criteria that were observed in the formation of the Cairo-

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123.ibid. Report of the Cairo-Conference,p.40.
124.ibid.; see also p.243, Gertrude Bell to Montagu referring to the Suwaidies. These were probably in her mind when she referred to prominent rebel leaders.

policy. In the deliberations of the committees favourable political factors and potentialities of the Iraqi society, such as the class of the landowners or the army and the levies or else the Kurds were taken almost at random in terms of their instrumental value in advancing the immediate and predominantly British objectives of curtailing expenditure and consolidating control over the country. No thought was given to their possible place or to their eventual value in a genuinely Iraqi body politic. Measured along those two coordinates of British interest, the heterogeneous elements of the Iraqi society were indirectly politicized and put into a balance of interests which, in accordance with political utility, were dictated by circumstances of either a short-term nature or else an abruptly imposed long-term nature.

One example of a short-term circumstance was the temporary lack of military means of British control. The shortage of those means resulted largely from the too rapid demobilisation and dismantling of the convential weaponry of infantery battalians and cavalry regiments on the one hand, and, on the other, its slow replacement by the new kind of air power and air-force strategy. The role or impact of financial saving was that it accelerated the former process of demobilisation and retarded the latter. As we have seen at the Cabinet meeting of June 1920, the decisions taken by then contemplated the re-occupation of Iraq by the Air Force over a few years.[125] Similarly, at the Conference of Cairo Air-Marshal Trenchard and Air-Vice Marshal Salmond were advising on how to implement the new method of Air Force policing

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125. see p.258.

and to re-occupy Iraq gradually. Incidentally, the strategical backbone of the local Air Force scheme was the larger military and commercial air route that should henceforth flank the routes to India. As the Joint Political and Military Committee put it on March 16,1921:

> "consideration should be given to the vital necessity of preparing and training an Air Force adequate to our needs in war, the importance of testing the potentialities of the Air Force, the need for giving its superior officers and staffs the experiance in independent command and responsibility, and the provision of an "All Red" military and commercial air route to India." 126

Judged by their frequent references to the political necessity to mobilize the stable elements of Iraqi Society in order to provide Faisal`s accession with a constitutional make-up, British officials took it for granted that the temporary thinning of Britain`s military presence in Iraq entailed certain socio-political processes in Iraqi society.

Distinct from such a politization of some sections of society the establishment of the monarchy may be described as the imposition of a long-term circumstance upon Iraqi society. Dependent on Great Britain the monarchy was expected by providing Iraqi society with a focal point to make the country "free from organised rebellion".[127]

In conclusion the results of the Cairo-Conference can be contrasted as follows: On the one hand definitive decisions, on the other a great number of half-measures which had piled up in the wake of the conference`s procedure. The definitive decisions comprised the launching of Faisal, the schedule for his accession to the throne, the decision that all local forces raised in Iraq must stand under the command of the High Commissioner, and, lastly, the exact sums of money to

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126.Report of the Cairo-Conference,p.73.
127.ibid.p.74.

be saved during the immediate first phase from April to October. The saving amounted to 5 million pound sterling. Further savings of about 3 millions were anticipated from the remaining months of the financial year. Thus the total annual expenditure of about 30 millions for the year 1920/21 was, for the following year, reduced to 22 millions.[128]

Part of the financial savings was already a mere "hoped-for possibility". In fact the success of the second stage of saving was dependent on the outcome or good start of those half-measures which should accompany if not accomplish Faisal`s candidature. Those tentative measures were the provision for the modification of the mandate terms and the eventual conclusion of an Anglo-Iraqi treaty, the eventual integration of the Kurds into the Iraqi body politic,[129] the shaping of Iraq`s external relations and finally the formation of an Iraqi army.[130]

Without doubt, these provisions contained new impulses to the political development of Iraq. However, there were several limitations which resulted basically from the shortcomings of the whole undertaking of the Cairo-Conference. The concept of the conference was wrong: its platform did not represent or reflect the various political forces that were shaping the Middle East and particularly Iraq. No single power could any longer determine and enforce the course of events. Latent conflicts and problems constituted by the complex constellation of the American, French, British, Italian, Turkish and Arab interests remained objects of political speculation and assumptions of doubtful reliability. Though talks with the Angora Delegation had been going on

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128.Report of the Cairo-Conference,p.69.
129.cf.minutes of the 4th meeting of the Political Committee,ibid.
130.Report,p.62.Under Air Force Scheme strength of Iraqi army 15.000men

in London, Churchill at some moments seemed to have missed them at Cairo.[131] As it turned out his assumptions of the imminence of the Turkish menace on the northern frontier of Iraq constituted an "element of gamble" in the Cairo-policy. Equally important, the Faisal policy was as narrowly conceived as Arnold Wilson had narrow-mindedly designed his system of direct administration. As we shall see in the next chapter, the splendour of Faisal`s enthronement in the great Sarai Square entailed for the British an anticlimax of politics no less dramatic and as disastrous and stagnatory as Arnold Wilson`s policy had been before.

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131. cf. Churchill to Lloyd George, 14 March 1921, Lloyd George`s reply of 16 March, in: F.O.371/6350; further Report, pp. 50, 52, 60, 63. On the Angora Delegation see p. 339.

# Chapter VI

## Britain's Political Gambits in the Constitutional Development of Iraq

"There is also too much talk about Mandates, Mandatories and things like that. All this obsolescent rigmarole is not worth telegraphing about."

Churchill to Masterton-Smith, 9 July 1921
C.O.730/3/33549

"The more nominal power King has the easier will it be for High Commissioner to influence course of events."

Sir Percy Cox to Churchill, 4 December 1921
C.O.730/8/60571

In the years after the Cairo Conference from 1921 up to 1926 Iraq showed an astonishingly full record of formal constitutional progress. By July 10th, 1924, there already existed a fully-fledged Iraqi constitution, known as the Organic Law, and built up from the abstract of numerous draft articles, paragraphs, sub-items and amendments.[1] Three weeks after its approval by the Constituent Assembly, the Electoral Law was passed, and a year later, in July 1925, the first Iraqi Parliament convened. Hand in hand with this constitutional development of the state went the organisation of the provinces and municipalities;

1. This process of drafting has been dealt with in great detail by P.W. Ireland, op.cit., chapters XIX, XX;
For a brief summary of the main facts and dates of the constitutional development, see M. Khadduri, Independent Iraq 1932-1958, Oxford, 1960, pp.10-33.

There was also the extension of the judicial system in its three aspects of civil law, shari'ah law and tribal disputes regulations. Although inovations were made in all three spheres, the major tendency was to transfer all law to the Civil Courts.[2]

Since a constitution channels and distributes authority and since the British Government as mandatory was the supreme authority in Iraq, the British High Commissioner and his staff of ministerial advisers were naturally part of the mandate state, i.e. their authority was legally present on the local and central administrative levels established by the constitution.

However, as the Iraqi constitution was meant to be a permanent instrument of indigenous government, while, by contrast, British legal authority was limited in time, the British Government sought to anchor and safeguard its temporary and practical authority in the guidance of Iraq`s internal development and external affairs in an agreement which was separate from the constitution in the form of a written mandate or treaty with Iraq and the League. Nevertheless, as has been rightly pointed out, the Iraqi Constitution tended to become an instrument of British policy[3] from the moment that its drafting was first begun early in 1921.

The most obvious case of the intrusion of British policy upon the Iraqi constitution was, of course, the shaping of the royal prerogatives. It was with their help that Percy Cox, putting all his confidence in Faisal`s willingness to cooperate with him, hoped to

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2.P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,p.443.
3.ibid.,p.372.

have an easy method of submitting the emerging parliamentarian system of Iraq to British control. In other words, in order to ensure that a recalcitrant parliament would not obstruct the fulfilment of the treaty obligation, the King should be enabled to overrule parliament by using the prerogatives of veto and legislation specially shaped for such a contingency.[4]

But before dealing at greater length with this preventive political gambit of the British in Iraq, it is necessary to give a general definition of what is meant by Britain's political gambits. They comprise all those British decisions, ultimatums, enactments and postponements which, while more or less determined by political circumstances outside Iraq and calculations unaffected by Art.22 of the Covenant, had a decisive impact on the development and shaping of the Iraqi constitution. Needless to say these gambits were often prompted by circumstances created by Britain herself, for instance in the case of oil policy.

This approach has certain advantages over a study of purely formal constitutional development. In what follows the British Government is seen as being constitutionally part of Iraq. Its political practice, as it interfered with the constitutional development, therefore had a constitutional significance.[5] On the one hand, it influenced the shaping of constitutional authorities; on the other, by manipulating the constitutional development over time the political practice gradually constituted a spiritual ingredient and political legacy which we believe must have been connected with the spirit of the con-

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4.cf. Percy Cox to Churchill, 4 December 1921, C.O.730/8/60571.
5.This applies also to the catalogue of instructions for the Council

stitution at large in the political consciousness of the Iraqis as it developed. Further political instruments such as the treaty signed by Faisal, on October 10th, 1922, interfered with the stipulations of the Organic Law; their study therefore discloses vacillations in the gradual transfer of power from British to Iraqi authorities.

But there was also some real apprehension in the Middle East Department that unless great care was taken Percy Cox might emerge as a Cromer in Iraq. As the office of the High Commissioner was part of the constitutional fabric of Iraq, its holders are therefore dealt with side by side with Faisal and in more detail than has so far been done. It is in this context that the question of Faisal`s prerogatives and of Cox`s views about the political expedience of Faisal and the Palace as well as Cox`s appreciation of the mandate must be dealt with.

That Faisal should have very strong prerogatives of veto and legislation vis-a-vis parliament was largely the desire of Percy Cox. Owing to Cox`s strong pressure Whitehall followed suit, though not without dissent. Faisal, it is true, had been launched by the Cairo--Conference because it was political convenience for the British Government to have a contracting party at hand.[6] His accession in Iraq was to all intents and purposes a Machiavellian fait accompli skillfully engineered as a way of balancing the political extremism of the nationalists. Accordingly Faisal was to remain submitted to the mandate.[7] Moreover he was also to be given a strong place within the constitution, not to strengthen the position of the extremists, but to ba-

5.contd.,of Ministers, described by Ireland as the first constitution of Iraq.
6.cf.P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,p.304.
7.Two months after the Cairo Conference a revised draft mandate failed to gain League approval.

lance it. In short, in principle, Faisal was expected to adapt himself to a system of representative government.

But, as is well known, Faisal behaved differently: he opposed the mandate and fraternized with extremists; he procured numerous Cabinet reshuffles, he sought to increase his own authority for patriotic and dynastic purpose. Significantly, by 1921, British officials such as Cox, but also Hubert Young from the Middle East Department, knew about how Faisal intended to make use of his power. As Hubert Young recounted his talks with Faisal of 1921:

> "He (Faisal) told me in so many words when I was in Bagdad that he did not intend representative Government to last long if he could help it!" 8

Nevertheless, Cox, Young as well as Churchill who followed their advice, staked all on Faisal, just as, in 1920, Arnold Wilson had staked all on direct administration. However, in his support of Faisal Percy Cox went further than Whitehall. But before his proper motives are dealt with the chain of political events must be completed by some hitherto unknown features of the day-to-day decision making and its more obvious consequences.

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After the Cairo-Conference, Churchill had told Cox neither to permit Faisal`s candidature to be hampered by the forthcoming elections for the Constituent Assembly nor, the other way about, to delay the elections because of Faisal`s canvassing tour.[9] As the Assembly

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8. Minute by Hubert Young, June 1924, C.O.730/58/18230.
9. Churchill to Cox, 23 May 1921, referred to in Cox`s answer of 24th May, C.O.730/2/25982; see also Churchill to Cox, 9 July 1921, C.O.730/3/33549.

should represent the whole mandated territory, the Kurds and the people of Basra were to participate in the elections. They were, however, each demanding some degree of autonomy and some tax-privileges. As they feared that early voting might prejudice the attainment of their demands in unfavourable degree, they favoured the maintenance of the Provisional Government for the time being. Churchill was "quite ready to meet the desire of the Basra Province for autonomy",[10] while with regard to the Kurdish question he adhered to "the principle of not putting Arabs over Kurds".[11] But he thought that, as both questions would best be thrashed out in the new assembly, the elections should start forthwith.[12]

Cox took a different view. He feared that elections for the Assembly during Faisal's candidature might be used by his rivals for making rulership of Iraq an election issue. He assumed that 'Abdur Rahman al-Gailani, Naqib of Bagdad, and Talib Pasha ibn Saiyid Payab, the formidable notable from Basra,[13] would gain considerable following in the elections. Cox therefore went further than merely withholding the promulgation of the electoral law; he also encouraged all those who obstructed early elections by kindling their hopes of a continuance of the Provisional Government. He had confided the advantages of such a temporizing course to Churchill already in May:

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10. Churchill to Cox, 9 July 1921, Secret and Personal, C.O.730/3/33549. As for Basra see also C.O.730/2/32697, Status of Basrah, 29 June 1921, with interesting minutes by Sir Reader Bullard, H.Young, Col. Lawrence and Shuckburgh, who favoured special treatment of Basra.
11. ibid. Churchill to Cox, 9 July 1921.
12. The formulation of an electoral law had been one of the tasks of the Provisional Government set up by Cox in Oct. 1920. By 30th Nov. the draft laws adopted from the Ottoman Electorate Law were referred to a special committee. Promulgation took not place until 4 March 1922.
13. As to his personality in the view of the Arab Bureau see: F.C.C. Balfour Papers. Box 248. Durham University, Oriental Department.

> "Only positive development which I perceive is that many people who formerly supported demand for Arab Government like prospect less the nearer they get to it and there is a considerable inclination to vote for continuence of present regime. As this solution is out of the question from our point of view and as at the same time it helps to sterilize chances of less acceptable candidates it seems to me not altogether inconvenient". 14

As this temporizing course complied with the more practical aspects of Churchill`s policy, Whitehall soon concurred in Cox`s policy. Strictly speaking, Percy Cox had a policy of his own as much as Arnold Wilson had had his own policy. How much Cox`s political views differed from those held by Whitehall is evident in his all-out effort to give Faisal the strong position he was pressing for. In turns Cox urged Churchill to drop the mandate altogether,[15] and to take courage in both hands and move with the wave of nationalism.[16] He maintained this pressure on Whitehall even after Churchill had made it quite clear, three days before Faisal`s enthronement, though without using the term mandate, that the mandate must remain the basis of Britain`s position in Iraq.[17]

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14. Cox to Churchill, 25 May 1921, Private and Personal, C.O.730/2/25982.
15. Cox to Churchill, 4 June 1921, C.O.730/2/27917. This suggestion was prompted by the failure of the British draft mandate for Iraq to pass the League Council in its June session. Cox had urged "to make capital out of the situation".
16. Cox to Churchill, 18 August 1921, C.O.730/4/41616. As he wrote in full: "having as it were created a wave of enthusiasm for Arab nationalism it is most important for us and to our advantage that we should move with the wave and carry people of Iraq with us. To create wave with more sincere intentions and then to allow ourselves owing to technical difficulties to check it is to lose half advantage of our generous action. Therefore as afar as our position and policy here is concerned I should be inclined to take courage in both hands and give Faisal position he presses for."
17. Churchill to Cox, 20 August 1921, Personal and Secret, C.O.730/4/41616. Britain`s oil-policy at that time played perhaps a decisive role in the decision of maintaining the mandatory basis. As the tel. read: "Feisal should be told on my behalf that I have in no way changed to his disadvantage. The only change which has taken place

As Cox wrote by December 1921:

> "I am bound to say that speaking generally in my opinion a line of policy tending towards his (Faisal's )picture is one which in all circumstances is most likely to lead us to success." 18

In his pressure on Churchill to drop the mandate Cox also referred to the fresh experience of Ireland and Egypt, where the British Government encountered great difficulty in enforcing a solution.[19] But, what was even more important, he also warned Churchill that any resort to a camouflaged form of the mandate would not help, because the Iraqis rejected the mandate in principle.[20] However, as Whitehall did resort to the camouflage of a treaty, in which no mention was made of the term mandate,[21] the extent of the difference of opinion between Cox and

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17.contd.,is we are now prepared to substitute Treaty for existing relation as soon as possible whereas we formerly contemplated doing so at some indefinite date in the future. Secondly it should be explained to him that British Government must proceed in lawful and regular manner in regard to their treaty obligations under the Covenant of the League of Nations and special undertakings like the Anglo-French oil-treaty. Under the pressure of oil interests U.S. are making difficulties in Council of League of Nations if they join with the French against the Faisal regime. There difficulties might well become insurmountable unless we follow absolutely correct procedure Feisal would be most foolish to seek to cut himself off from the august authority of the Covenant of the League of Nations which gives him his status in the international circle and in the eye of the whole world. That we shall work together quite easily and happily in practice I have no doubt whatever. Our object will certainly be to put as much responsibility and authority as possible upon him and to make him in the eyes of his subjects a real sovereign of a free people dwelling in permanent amity with the British people. But we must be in a position to show that in making the treaty we are still legally in position to discharge and are not seeking to evade the responsibilities we have assumed towards the League of Nations. It is essential that we be able to show that we have acted honourably before the nations of the world and in true interest of Iraq...". C.O.730/4/41616.

18.Cox to Churchill,21 December 1921, C.O. 730/8/63366.

19.Cox to Churchill, 1 March 1921, C.O.730/20/10151.

20.ibid.

21.The first draft treaty which Hubert Young, in October 1921, had taken with him to Bagdad, had in its preamble referred to the mandate.

Whitehall became more clearly revealed in the drafting of Article IV.

Article IV of the Treaty was the real crux of Britain`s relation with Faisal.[22] The Cabinet draft of early 1922 underlined the binding force of the advice to be tendered to Faisal by the British Government. To this stipulation Faisal raised strong objection. His substitute for the wording to be "guided by the advice" read "to accord all due consideration to advice given to him".[23]

As the deadlock between Faisal and Whitehall was complete, Cox at once tried to mediate. Significantly, his approach followed suggestions made on the eve of Faisal`s enthronement a year before,[24] which amounted to giving the High Commissioner a free hand on the spot. In other words, in giving advice to Faisal, the High Commissioner should not be submitted to detailed instructions by Whitehall. This should apply above all to the crucial sector of finance. As he put it:

> "comment or suggestions regarding details of expenditure should emanate from the High Commissioner and not from London."25

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21.contd., As Young recounted Faisal`s reaction:"Faisal nearly went through the roof when he saw the preamble and asked why it was necessary that his treaty with us should be based upon the Treaty of Sèvres which the French have torn up, and on a draft mandate which has not been approved by anybody".Young`s letter of 19 Nov. 1921, C.O.730/8/60457. Owing to Churchill`s strong intervention of early May 1922 the term mandate was dropped in the preamble of the treaty. Churchill to Young, 3 May 1922, C.O.730/21/20307.

22.cf.Cox to Churchill, 4 May 1922, C.O.730/21/21316. One of the main reasons for the prominence of Art.IV was that the article included originally all financial clauses.

23.At the stage of the treaty negotiations reached by 28 May 1922 the full Art.IV ran as follows:"Without prejudice to provisions of Art. XVII of the treaty His Majesty the King of Iraq agrees to accord all due consideration to advice given to him by H.Britannic Majesty through High Commissioner in all important matters affecting international and financial obligations of His Britannic Majesty for whole period of this treaty.

His Majesty the King of Iraq will consult High Commissioner in what is conducive to a sound financial and fiscal policy and en-

Although, with the exception of Shuckburgh, there were strict objections from the Middle East Department,[26] Cox's points were accepted so far as they referred to finance.[27] However, Whitehall's compliance with Cox's wishes was really no more than a half-measure, for, in essence, H.M.G.'s strict control over Iraqi finance remained unalterable. What happened was that Art.IV of the treaty was merely emasculated and cloaked in vagueness. In other words, the financial clauses which originally had all been contained in the article and had clearly been submitted to the binding force of H.M.G.'s advice tendered through the High Commissioner, were now partly tucked away in other articles, partly, under provision by Art.XV, reserved for a subsidiary financial agreement to follow after the signature of the treaty. To help the settlement of the treaty, Iraqi politicians were encouraged to believe that H.M.G. had loosened control over financial matters, whereas, in fact, that advice now partly emanated from High Commissioner.[28]

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23.contd.,sure the permanence and good organisation of finances of Iraq Govnt. so long as that Government is under financial obligation of Government of H.B.M.", Cox to Churchill,28 May 1922, C.O.730/22/25899. For the final wording cf. J.C.Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East,p.112.

24.Cox to Churchill,18 August 1921, C.O.730/4/41616.

25.Cox to Churchill,16 June 1922, C.O.730/22/29351.

26.see minutes by Bullard, Clauson and Vernon as well as Shuckburgh dated between 18th and 21st June 1922 on Cox's letter to Churchill of 16th June, C.O.730/22/29351.Bullard:"we must be armed against the possibility of some future H.C. (who)might try to become independent of H.M.G.'s detailed control in such matters".Clauson referred to bad experience in the past;Vernon:"finance is distinctly a weak point in Cox's armour".

27.Churchill to Cox,23 June 1922,C.O.730/22/29351.Churchill,though underlining the competence of H.M.G.left however considerable discretion to Cox for wording the article in accordance with his impression (sic!) of Iraqi reactions. A very ambiguous instruction!

28.see minute by Shuckburgh (14?) June 1922, C.O.730/22/25899.

But Whitehall failed to remove Faisal`s mistrust. The King seems to have been fully aware of the political consequences that had as in Egypt usually followed from British or international control over finance. He therefore demanded a special assurance from Whitehall that H.M.G. would not "allow international or private obligations and interests to prejudice the national interests of Iraq".[29] Reader Bullard from the Middle East Department thought this request "rather impertinent".[30] Whitehall gave no assurance.

Faisal`s request, which had annoyed Whitehall, was complemented by his agreement to the preparation of a resolution rejecting the Mandate, upon which the Council of Ministers was to make its acceptance of the treaty dependent. This "anti-mandate resolution" was the joint work of Ja`afar Pasha, Subih, Nuri as-Sa`id, probably also Faisal and some other members of the palace. Owing to their lobbying five ministers had already expressed themselves in favour of the resolution.[31]

The British were enraged about the preparation of the anti-mandate resolution and, in particular, Faisal`s "complicity" in those

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29.Cox to Churchill,21 July 1922, C.O.730/23/37877.
30.ibid.
31.Nigel Davidson to Major Young, 21 July 1922, C.O.730/23/37397. Davidson was legal secretary to the High Commissioner at Baghdad. He referred also to news of an imminent tribal upheaval in Hillah which he described as a subtle plot that could be traced to the brain of Nuri; as he connected this scheme with the anti-mandate efforts of the palace, his account is worth quoting:"There is a serious danger in Hillah that the pro-British sheikhs may be goaded into rising - The Mutasarifi Quaimiams are all Feisal`s men and extremists - the anti-mandate sheikhs are treated generously in assessment etc. - their pro-British neighbours are done down in every way and the officials try to undermine their authority by corresponding with their subordinate sheikhs. It is a subtle plot and points I think to the brain of Nuri...".

efforts. They turned sharply against Faisal, condemned his character and never again showed any sincere respect for him. Already, by April, on the occasion of Faisal`s backing of the nationalists` gathering at Karbala, Percy Cox had written to Shuckburgh:

> "Faisal...unmistakably displayed the cloven hoof. I have endeavoured to be absolutely straightforward and frank with him, and to treat him like a brother, but there you are, when he is scratched deep enough the racial weakness displays itself." 32

Now, by 29 July 1922, he wrote to Churchill:

> "the tactics adopted by him have been without any doubt both crooked and insencere. I find it difficult to have any confidence in him".33

A month later, Cornwallis, Faisal`s intimate friend and adviser, wrote about the king`s character:

> "My opinion is that he must be saved from himself..." 34

These comments by the experts on the spot spread rapidly in Whitehall,[35] and their reverberations lasted throughout the following years.[36]

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32. Cox to Shuckburgh, 28 April 1922, Private, C.O.730/21/21941. Cox`s letter is also very interesting for his views about the value of Intelligence Reports in general, but of still greater interest for his account of Faisal`s motives for backing the Karbala meeting. Of the Reports he wrote:"read as a whole...they convey an unduly unfavourable impression."Military Intelligence" like Scotland Yard are rather inclined to build up a theory from a co-ordination of reports from all directions and without realising proceed to work up to it." "He continued with regard to Karbala:"For this reason, if the perusal of the above reports conveyes to you too glaring a picture, I think you may safely water it down. I am convinced that Faisal said to himself: (1)Ibn Saud has put himself in the wrong (Akhwan raid), the British Govnt. must support us, here is a splendid chance of doing a good turn to my father. I must use this weapon for all it is worth and the Ulema will help me,(ii)At the same time the Ulema may very conveniently take up the question of the mandate and a little pressure from them may have the desired effect on H.M.G.".
33. C.O.730/23/37397.
34. 29 August 1922, C.O.730/24/43046.
35. Minute by Reader Bullard,31 July,"We have to struggle not only with political problems but also with serious defects in Faisal`s character. Churchill in Cabinet ,5 Oct.1922:Faisal weak and intriguing

Meantime, by the end of July, while the Middle East Department began to draft alternative policies, such as the removal of Faisal and his replacement by Abdullah or the Naqib,[37] the king was summoned to appear in London together with Cox.[38] But Faisal, probably fearing rightly that he would be asked to resign, stayed at Bagdad, loyal, not to the British, but to his own cause.[39]

To break the general stalemate in treaty negotiations that also seriously affected the drafting of the Organic Law,[40] two proposals were made to Churchill, one by Cox, the other by Young.[41] Cox urged Churchill to procure a debate on Iraq in the Commons and use the opportunity for making a general announcement about the alternatives of British policy in Iraq failing a settlement of the treaty with Faisal. These alternatives, which were immediately to be spread by Reuters, should be shaped in such a way as to put Faisal under heavy pressure. In effect, though not in form, the announcement in parliament was to be an ultimatum. In contrast, Hubert Young suggested leaving the treaty for decision in the forthcoming elections for the Constituent Assembly. Prior to that occasion Britain should, in carefully timed statements, set out what the mandate really implied for the Iraqis. In both cases the final alternative was British withdrawal to the Basra vilayet.

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35.contd., personality. CAB 23/39; see also Churchill to Cox, 14 Sept. 1922, C.O.730/24/45501.
36.Minutes by Hubert Young in 1924, C.O.730/58/18230, C.O.730/64.
37.see C.O.730/23/37397 minutes by Bullard and Young.
38.Churchill to Cox,3 August 1922, Personal and Secret,C.O.730/23/37397
39.see footnote 37.Bullard:"Feisal has himself repeatedly said that mandate and treaty do not matter:only he matters:everything depends on his loyalty to us.He is quite right;and he is disloyal".
40.see footnote 31.
41.Cox reiterated his proposal of April,see Cox to Churchill,22 April

Churchill rejected the two proposals. Parliament, he thought, was a body that must be placated with the news of success, not failure, particularly in view of its opposition to expenditure in Iraq. Thus the parliament should be given no idea of the tension that existed between the British Government and Faisal.[42] As for Young's proposal, Churchill rejected the idea of making the treaty an election issue, largely on the advice given by Cox. Percy Cox, whose new policy was to separate Faisal from the extremists, was simply at a loss what to do in the event of elections in which the"nationalists"were openly backed by Faisal;[43] consequently, at the same time as the rejection of Young's suggestion, the elections for the Constituent Assembly were again postponed.[44]

Instead Churchill began to wage a diplomatic war of attrition. In other words, he deliberately cornered Faisal, expecting that in the end Faisal, tired and disillusioned about the nationalist course, would return to Whitehall like as the gates of Canossa. To accelerate Faisal's remorse, Churchill urged that all administrative work should become stagnant for the time being, however,British presence should still be maintained. As he wrote to Cox by August 17th:

" I hope you will not get tired of playing a long game "[45]

The state of acute crisis was reached faster than Churchill had assumed: by the 23rd instant, when the Naqib's Cabinet resigned,

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41.contd.,1922, C.O.730/21/19350; for later date C.O.730/23/40582.
42.Minute by Young, 14 August 1922, C.O.730/23/40582.
43.Cox to Churchill, 10 August 1922, C.O.730/23/39941.
44.The question of elections was left for consideration to the first meeting of the British Cabinet after the summer pause.
45.Churchill to Cox, 17 August 1922, C.O.730/23/40582.

Iraq was virtually being ruled by Air Force demonstrations. Cox was resolved to "take action in the event of any advice being neglected".[46] Two days later, Churchill seemed already to have booked Faisal's passage to Ceylon into exile.

The removal of Faisal and the return to the provisional government system with the Naqib at the Head of the Council of State was Churchill's policy on the eve of Faisal's sudden illness. This policy was outlined in a series of draft telegrams destined for Cox, but never sent after Faisal's illness. Nevertheless, these paper designs merit some description, for they reveal some of the makeweights and motives for the final retention of Faisal on the throne. Again, on the other hand, they shed light on what the mandate concept was really worth at that crucial moment.

Churchill was sure that the Cabinet would never agree to spend the extra money necessary to quell a general rising in Iraq; the Cabinet would be divided on the lines of either immediate withdrawal to Basra or else perseverance within the limits of the current expenditure. Churchill preferred the latter course. Yet, as he was strongly inclined to remove Faisal from Iraq, he feared that such action, by demonstrating too openly the failure of British policy, might tip the balance in favour of those Cabinet colleagues who advocated evacuation. A similar consequence might result in the event of a general rising prompted by Faisal's removal, and it was in this respect that he was prepared to consult Cox's views and advice. Nevertheless, Churchill thought his policy of removing Faisal worth the risk because nothing

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46. Cox to C.O., 23 August 1922, C.O.730/24/42370.

stood in the way of withdrawal in the event of failure. Thus he left no doubt about what course he preferred:

> "Is this course (pre-Feisal regime headed by Naqib) practicable? ...It would of course involve the removal of Feisal from all effective control in affairs, and this again would I presume entail his deposition and deportation. This would no doubt make a hero and a martyr of him among his adherents, but he would be a hero and a martyr on his way to Ceylon. Would his removal in these circumstances in your opinion lead to a general rising outside Bagdad and would it fatally impede the elections and prevent a favourable decision by the Constituent Assembly? The removal of Faisal...would be acclaimed here as proof that our whole policy had failed, and the demand for instant evacuation would be increased enormously...Our task might well become impossible both through internal and external causes. Still at the end of every road there is evacuation: and it seems to me that almost any course is preferable to going on with Faisal after we have definitely reached the conclusion that this man, who was put in to help us and who owes everything to us, is himself continually counterworking us, persecuting and provoking our friends and supporters in the country, and adding to our difficulties in every way." 47

Churchill's successive steps during the days when Faisal was on the sick list clearly showed his anxiety to conceal the failure of the Cairo policy to Parliament and Cabinet. On 28 August, when the Cabinet met unexpectedly to discuss unemployment and reparations, Churchill could have brought the Iraq issue on the agenda; but anxious not to stimulate the advocates of a "bag and baggage policy" he preferred to wait for a meeting in September.[48] Meanwhile, he modified his previous views and suggested to maintain Faisal on the throne, though in a strictly limited constitutional role:

> "My suggestion in principle is to take advantage of present situation to establish the Naqib and the Ministry in a position of far greater strength than they have hitherto occupied and to reduce Faisal to a strictly limited and constitutional role." 49

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47. Churchill to Cox(25 August 1922) Telegram Draft "D", C.O.730/24. There were altogether four drafts: A,B,C,D,
48. Churchill to Cox. 28th August 1922. C.O.730/24.

This suggestion met with no objection from the Middle East Department. Cox, too, happily concurred in it; in fact, he later pleaded that H.M.G. might give Faisal "another lease of life" on the lines suggested by Churchill.[50]

Everything, of course, had depended on whether Faisal would acquiesce in the action taken by Cox and submit himself to the role provided for in the new constitution. In the end a strong ultimatum had brought about the desired effect; as Churchill had insinuated to Cox on 30th August:

> "Feisal's answer to your forthcoming ultimatum is the point on which everything turns...I presume that you will point out to him that it is very likely that a final breach with him will involve a complete change in our whole policy in Arabia. At the present time it is only with great difficulty and a considerable expense that we are holding back Ibn Saud from attacking the Hedjaz, and if we disinterest ourselves in these regions, as well we may, Feisal will have accomplished the ruin of his house as well as his own downfall for a second time." 51

Thus the British bent Faisal to their course; but Cox, in return, had to give him an assurance that they would not "impose Naqib upon him as permanent Prime Minister".[52]

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Obviously, after only one year, the Cairo policy had failed in all but one respect: i.e.the lever of the Hashemite dynasty in Bri-

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49.ibid.;the draft of this telegram in Churchill's handwriting dated 27 August had read:"I had drafted a whole series of telegrams dealing with the situation; but in view of the fact that Feisal is now on the sick list (a crossed out phrase read: that Feisal has now got something to keep out of action him quiet for a few weeks) I content myself with a cordeal expremier and approval of your action. It seems important to take advantage of Feisal's condition, to secure the reinstalement of the Ministry under the Naqib of a pronouncedly undoubtful character.Let me know what you propose to do".

50.Cox to Churchill. 10 September 1922, C.O.730/24/45501.

tish hands[53] had helped Britain to maintain its position in Bagdad. For it must be doubted that the British, once having withdrawn to Basra, would have been able, or even would have been allowed by their Western allies, to reconquer Bagdad and Mosul.[54] In all other respects the Cairo policy had left a deplorable legacy: a wreck of a king, a halt to the policy of saving money, a host of postponements in constitutional development and finally delay in the treaty settlement.

Although politically fruitless, however, the one year of Cairo policy cannot be judged only by its measure of political failure. What is also important is the kind of new policy that sprang from failure.

However the British gambits in the constitutional development after August 1922 cannot really be understood without some closer assessment than has already been done of the motives that had led Cox to stake all on Faisal; for in the years to follow there was some come-back for him from this policy.

Cox's motives had stemmed partly from economic considerations partly from insight in the dynastic principles that seemed to have determined Faisal's policy during and after his accession to the throne To begin with the economic considerations, Cox had urged the abrogation of the mandate simply to stop the long drawn-out struggle over the application of the Open Door principle; for there would be no foreign capital investment nor any stimulus to Iraqi commerce nor any develop-

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51. Churchill to Cox, 30 Augsut 1922, C.O.730/24/(43045,22).
52. see footnote 50.
53. cf.p.270.
54. Cox himself had already excluded military re-conquest on the ground of the expenditure involved.

ment of the oil resources so long as that struggle went on. Pointing to the precedents of Armenia, Georgia and Azerbiyan, which had recently been accorded independence by the League of Nations he insinuated to Churchill that Iraq would fully be justified in fending for itself and shaking off the restrictions imposed upon the country's commercial enterprise.[55] In order to stop economic stagnation Cox, on one occasion had even urged more flexible negotiations with the Americans to reach a mandate settlement. Cox thought that a successful Faisal policy would convince the Cabinet of the practicability of his views; hence his campaign for strengthening Faisal's position. Further, by proving that Iraq could be run on a self-sufficient basis he also hoped to take much wind out of the sails of those who demanded immediate evacuation of Iraq on grounds of expenditure. Further, he expected that flourishing trade and commerce would generate loyalty to the British and Faisal among merchants, shopkeepers and all those who profited from trade and investment. A feature of his anxiety to stimulate economic development was also his occasional reminder that since his advice was limited, because he could not go outside the competence of his post, he could not gauge its broader bearing on the question of oil-interests.[56] In other words, he urged to Churchill to modify his advice lest it impaire the early development of oil.

Since Cox was an adherent to the forward school he also reckoned that the flag would benefit if it was followed by trade. But he must have felt the growing apathy of Whitehall, as well as of the

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55. Cox to Churchill, 30 June 1921, C.O.730/2/32882.
56. Cox to Churchill, 4 June 1921, C.O.730/2/27917.

Government of India, towards investing or encouraging any investment in Iraq. In the case of India this apathy took the form of outright obstruction to any amount of expenditure for services tendered through personnel still on the Indian list. This attitude of not giving a brass farthing to Iraq enraged Cox and Whitehall. But the difference between the latter and the Government of India was only a small one.

In principle, both Churchill and the Government of India rejected investment in Iraq on the ground that under the A-mandate Iraq would ultimately remain of dubious value to the Empire. To Whitehall the sole exception was investment in the oil-development sector. Apart from this Churchill regarded expenditure in Iraq as sterile, an attitude that must certainly have helped his ruthless saving.[57] At any rate while ruthlessly aiming at a reduction of expenditure on Iraq he urged investment and a wise policy of economic development in tropical African colonies:

> "It is a most improvident policy to starve and neglect the whole development of our tropical colonies. The comparatively small sums which are needed to foster an active productivity in East and Central Africa have been denied to me by the Treasury. Before leaving England I had an understanding with Chamberlain that in the event of great reductions being effected on the Middle Eastern section of the C.O., a broad-minded view would be taken of the much smaller requirements of our East African colonies. However, no sooner was I out of the country then the estimates of each of these were cut down in the most harsh manner. In particular the Tanganyika Colony which we have just got from the Germans was cut down by upwards of L 600.000 out of L 1.500.000... I am at a loss to know why it sh. be worth our while to acquire new possessions at enormous cost when we are unable to contribute the small sums which are necessary to develop the very valuable estates we have in our hands. A wise policy of development by loan in East and Central Africa would be found not only to create a demand for British manufacture, but to open up an almost unlimited supply of some

57. see p.266.

> of the most necessary raw materials which our industry requires. I shall therefore continue to press to the utmost for further assistance in developing the tropical Crown Colonies while endeavouring to save much larger sums by the reduction of the sterile expenditure on our Middle Eastern obligations." 58

Cox's second motive for urging Whitehall to give Feisal the strong position he was pressing for[59] sprang from complex political calculation. At its root lay the same hope that once Faisal gained momentum in Iraq, the enemies of the Imperial Idea at home might be more easily warded off and, in consequence, Whitehall be allowed to commit itself more definitely to Iraq. Cox hoped with the help of Faisal to shape Iraqi nationalism into a malleable tool in the hands of the British. But in Faisal's way there stood the Naqib of Bagdad. Cox felt that, beyond the temporary use it might be possible to make of the Naqib, the Naqib's political affiliation with the British was a dubious asset in a long-term sense.

Politically the Naqib was hampered too much by his spiritual position as the hereditary guardian of a mosque, as well as by his vested material interests in both his vast landed property and by the rich pious bequests from the annual Indian pilgrimage to his mosque. Owing to the former he kept aloof from committing himself too strongly against the Turks; for, thanks to frequent rumours of British withdrawal from Iraq, the return of the Turks could not be excluded. For similar reasons he was alleged by the Middle East Department to have played up to the Indian revolutionaries and their Moslem brethren who demanded the removal of all infidel British control from Bagdad and the mosque.

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58. Churchill to Lloyd George, 25 May 1921, Lloyd George Papers F/9/3/43
59. cf. p. 291.

In connection with this he was said to have agreed to the Government of India`s demands for installing a Turkish caliph in Bagdad.[60]

In British, and particularly in Cox`s, eyes the Naqib was the real difficulty. According to Hubert Young "it was not Faisal but the Naqib who insisted upon the abrogation of the mandate". The Naqib had suggested the insertion in the preamble of the treaty of the words "without protection, tutelage, or mandate";[61] Faisal, in contrast, while taking care not to identify himself with the Naqib`s point of view, had pointed out that he could hardly run counter to "this strongly expressed view of his most responsible adviser".[62]

In intimate talks with Cox, in May 1922, the Naqib had explained his opposition to mandate and treaty. According to Cox he feared that by signing the treaty that placed a Muslim State under the mandate or control of a Christian State he incurred "great risk of damaging his spiritual prestige and influence in Islam without standing to gain anything from the worldly point of view".[63]

The Naqib`s vague protestations of friendliness towards the British could not make up for his failure as a tool in British hands. Further by combining within his person both the demands of the Iraqi nationalists whose candidate he was[64] and his consideration for the Turks and Moslem Indians he blocked not only the British but ultimate-

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60. Minute by Bullard, 3 March 1922, C.O.730/20/13549, Bullard in describing the Naqib as "the Vicar of Bray" (Bray was intelligence officer of the Government of India) and the mosque as his "gold mine" continued:"So it pays him to take the extremist line on this point:if the Turks come back he still has his mosque;if not, he can figure as a hero striving for nationalism and religion".
61. Minute by H.Young, 6 March 1922, C.O.730/20/10405.
62. ibid.
63. Cox to Churchill, 17 May 1922, C.O.730/22/24038.
64. P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,pp.320-1.

ly also the Iraqi cause. The latter was concealed to most Iraqi nationalists so long as the British were their sole, or at least most overt, adversaries.[65]

As the Naqib tied the loyalty of many nationalists and notables to his person, he was a challenge to Faisal when he tried to assume royal authority over the Iraqi population; in other words, the Naqib diverted much of the loyalty due to the king. Indeed Faisal, in founding his dynasty in Iraq, seemed to have much concerned himself with procuring that "group feeling" which Ibn Khaldun has described as indispensable for founding dynasties in certain circumstances.[66] Any way, in appealing to nationalists, Faisal undertook to outbid the Naqib who, on his part, may have been quite satisfied with driving Faisal to bid for raising stakes. It is from this angle that Faisal probably regarded representative government, if applied to Iraqi society, as being as sterile a balance of group and family interests in Iraq as the balance of personal and alien interests and concessions ambiguously upheld by the Naqib. And he seems to have reckoned that instead royal grace and favour would create more malleable loyalties.

Faisal's dislike of representative government commended himself to Cox who, like so many of his colleagues, considered Iraqi society to be utterly incapable of constituting or expressing a volonté générale. From this angle Cox seemed to have regarded Faisal as a sort of "fellow-conspirator", while the awareness that Faisal was also a

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65. The Naqib finally dropped out when the Turkish menace grew on the eve of the Lausanne Conference, see p.201.
66. Ibn Khaldun, Abd al-Rahman, Muqaddimmah/Engl. trs. by F.Rosenthal, New York, 1958, vol.I, pp.313,332-6.

stranger in Iraq possibly added weight to the brotherly affection Cox claimed to have had for the king.[67] In essence, however, Faisal was for Cox a means for an urgently needed political - and psychological - re--conquest of Iraq, declarations, promises and plebiscites had lost appeal and become blunt by previous abundancy.

Cox relied on two more of Faisal assets: by his leading role in the Arab revolt Faisal had drawn a clear cut line between himself and the Turks; further he was not hampered by any material interest in the complaisance of the Moslem Indians and the Persian Shi`ah ulama of the Holy Cities. No doubt, as the latter were reactionary, Faisal occasionally used them to make the ranks of the nationalists look more impressive, but to the delight of Cox and his staff he also condemned them. In fact in this respect Faisal was "sold" to Whitehall as an enlightened and progressive monarch bent on secularism[68] - a card which Faisal, on his part, tried to turn into a trump when he forecast that, provided he was given a run, Persia would soon follow his example of enlightened rule, shake of the "pernicious influence" of the ulama and revolve in imitation round Iraq.[69]

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However, in trying to outbid the Naqib, Faisal had, by appealing the nationalists, drifted beyond the mark where compromise with the British was still possible. It was also unfortunate for him that by stepping too boldly to the forefront of political commitment he had

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67. Cox to Churchill, 28 July 1922, C.O.730/23/37397.
68. Memorandum of Unofficial Interview with Faisal, 10 Dec.1921, C.O. 730/8/1764. In general, secularism was referred to in its original sense of applying to temporal power versus religious institution, not in its modern sense of applying to happiness of the individual.
69. Cox to Churchill, 20Dec.1921, C.O.730/8/63348.

lost any chance of securing the loyalty of those with material stakes in the country or who were anxious about the safety of their minority position to his person and throne. The Naqib continued to represent a considerable proportion of notables and landowners.

Thus the political tension and balance between Faisal and the Naqib, which Cox had tried to solve in favour of Faisal, continued to exist after Faisal`s "fall" from British favour. For evidence for this comes from later political measures and features of the king`s political behaviour. For instance, one of Faisal`s main concerns soon after his "fall" was that the Naqib should not permanently be imposed upon him.[70] Again when the treaty negotiations were resumed Faisal was particularly keen of saddling the Naqib with responsibility for the treaty; in other words, Faisal tried to commit the Naqib, definitely and publicly. Faisal was so keen about this that Churchill suspected him of having a trap in mind;[71] but Faisal was covered by Cox who pursued the same aim.[72]

While the tension between Faisal and the Naqib continued, Whitehall shifted its favour from both to the Cabinet. Of course, in view of the fact that Faisal had failed the British, this choice of the "floor" was a method of reducing Faisal to the role of a more constitutional monarch; but Whitehall`s perspective was narrower than that of a constitutional adjustment. Meanwhile Iraq was still without a proper constitution, a point with which Faisal tried to defend the

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70. see p.17; cf. E.Burgoyne, op.cit.,p.302,Gertrude Bell,"king bitterly jealous of Naqib".
71. Churchill to Cox,14 September 1922, C.O.730/24/45501.
72. Cox to Churchill, 10 September 1922, ibid.;cf. also E.Burgoyne, op. cit., vol.II,p.300.

strong influence he hoped to exert on the formation of Cabinets in the future. But due to Cox`s strong pressure Faisal invited the Naqib to form a new Cabinet.

Strictly speaking, H.M.G. hoped that closer links between its High Commissioner and the ministers of the Naqib`s cabinet, who each commanded a large following among the electorate, would bring about, in the forthcoming elections,[73] that large consensus which was needed to push through the treaty together with a new saving programme. It was planned that further saving should reduce expenditure from L 8.000.000 to L 4.000.000 in the next year compared with L 32.000.000 two years before.[74] Despite the revival of the Turkish menace to Iraq in the wake of the Chanak crisis of late September 1922,[75] the Lloyd George Cabinet, then on its last legs, hoped to make political capital out of the situation - provided that warlike measures could be avoided:

"Trouble with the Turk was the time for friendship with the Arab".[76]

The armistice of Mudania, on 10 October 1922, fitted well with the signing of the Anglo-Iraqi treaty by Faisal and the Naqib at Bagdad on the same day. But Mudania did not remove the Turkish menace from Mosul; and the signatures under the treaty did not push the Iraqi nationalists out of the picture: they still had a say in its ratification. On the other hand, although the signing of the treaty was, by itself, a success for British policy, the Treasury point of view must

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73. Though the elections were not mentioned in the Cabinet minutes of October 5th, the British must constantly have had them in mind as they had been postponed and were due any time; in fact Faisal ordered the elections for the Constituent Assembly on 19 October to begin on 24 inst., cf. P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,p.391.
74. Cabinet Minutes of meeting of 5 Oct.1922,The Iraq Treaty, CAB 23/39.
75. There is a comprehensive file on Chanak in PRO CAB 21/334.
76. see 74.

also be taken into account for a proper evaluation. Briefly as the treaty did not commit Britain to giving any definite military or financial assistance, Whitehall thought that the prospects for saving were good. In contrast, among the experts on the spot, such studied vagueness increased uncertainty about Whitehall's designs on Iraq. Some of them, such as Gertrude Bell, seem to have regarded it as another piece of "roguery". As she wrote about the new men in power after the collapse of the Lloyd George Cabinet:

> "I feel sure he (Devonshire) will respect solemn obligations. I'm suddenly aware of how much I hated serving under Winston. He's as clever as he can be and I'm bound to say he hasn't let us down, but one never knew whether he wouldn't. Now they may be rather stupid, the new Cabinet, but they are not rogues - upon my soul I think that's what matters most." 77

The Turkish menace to Iraq did not weld a new Arab-British friendship as the opportunists of the Lloyd George Cabinet had expected the reasons for the failure were simple: the uncertainty about Whitehall's designs on Iraq had spread from the High Com issioner's staff to the Naqib and his ministers. The latter were primarily concerned about their large vested interests in the country and their own safety; as they feared that Britain might evacuate Iraq and the Turks return, they neither committed themselves as candidates in the election nor did anything to stimulate other moderates to some forward. Their uncertainty was increased by the beginning of the Lausanne Conference, on 30 October, and the uncertainty of its outcome.[78] In view of this impasse Cox suggested to Devonshire that he either give the Naqib the

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77.E.Burgoyne, op.cit.,vol.II,p.301.
78.Cox to Devonshire, 19 December 1922, C.O.730/26/62860.

assurance he wanted or permit the latter's replacement with a premier assisted by a ministry of ardent nationalists:

> "The present position is that Kemalist propaganda is daily more and more active and we cannot in this circumstance expect any Cabinet under the Naqib who has very large vested interests in the country to take a strong anti-Turkish line that is necessary. The only thing that will encourage them to act more boldly is an assurance from us that they are safe and that there is no question of our evacuation or of rendition of Iraq or part thereof to Turkey.
>
> If that is not possible, then the best course would be to let Naqib go and allow the formation of a Cabinet of ardent Nationalists unhampered by any material stake in the country...and prepared to take the risks involved and embark on an out and out anti-Turkish policy". 79

It is necessary to underline the fact that the political conduct of the Naqib and others with large material stakes in the country delayed the elections well before the ulama began to exploit the prevailing uncertainty. Elizabeth Burgoyne, in her selection and arrangement of Getrude Bell's letters, wrongly conveyes the impression that the replacement of the Naqib's cabinet by a strongly anti-Turkish one was solely due to the anti-election fatwahs issued by the Shi'ah mujtahids on November 8th.[81] Cox had suggested the alternative of a nationalist cabinet already on November 2nd, without mentioning the ulama at all. Indeed, the nationalist "rally" was not so much needed to counter the influence of the Shi'ah ulama but rather to help recruitment of levies and tribal forces in the north in order to relieve the undermanned British forces.[82] In fact, Cox seems to have held the

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79. Cox to Devonshire, 2 November 1922, C.O.730/25/55421.
80. E. Burgoyne, op.cit., pp.391-3.
81. cf. P.W. Ireland, op.cit., pp.305.
82. As to the preparation for a "preventive" military forward operation north of Mosul in the event of Turkish Invasion see Memo by S of S for Air of 5 Dec.1922, C.P.4339 in: C.O.730/27/60316, a further two highly secret despatches between Air Chief Marshal Trenchard and Air Vice Marshal Salmond (Bagdad) of later November, ibid.; further

view that action against the ulama could be taken at random, preferably by Whitehall abstaining from giving the Naqib assurance of the safety of his stakes.[83] But when Whitehall declined to give any guarantee, no immediate action was taken against the ulama; although the latter, stimulated by the increasing uncertainty among both Iraqis and the British staff,[84] pursued their aims even more rigorously. Indeed action was not taken until summer 1923 in the absence of Faisal from Bagdad.

The fate of the ulama and Faisal`s annoyance about it were part of the larger intricate struggle between the Cabinet of nationalists and Faisal for ascendancy to power. The struggle ended in favour of Faisal when, on November 22nd, 1923, the Cabinet under Abd al-Mushin Beg as-Sa`dun was replaced by Faisal`s henchman Ja`far al-Askari as premier of a cabinet completely submissive to the king.[85] From a constitutional point of view this outcome of the struggle was significant because it determined the further constitutional development by, finally, consolidating the king`s position in the Organic Law: Strictly speaking, the way by which Faisal brought about his come-back not only made a deep impression on the form of the respective provisions of the Organic Law but it also prejudiced future constitutional practice.[86]

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82. contd., notes of an informal meeting held at Downing Street, 24 January 1923, CAB 21/270.

83. Cox to Devonshire, 19 Dec. 1922, C.O.730/26/62860.

84. Owing to Shuckburgh`s insistence, even Cox was kept in the dark as to Whitehall`s resoluteness to retain Mosul. Shuckburgh feared that Cox who was known to be very keen on retaining Mosul would understand any indication as a "pledge" or at least misinform the Iraqis, see: Minute by Shuckburgh 15 Dec. 1922 and Devonshire`s despatch to Cox, 19 Dec. 1922, both in C.O.730/26/61829.

Apart from its immediate consequences, Faisal's come-back merits detailed description for its equally important effects on the Iraqi political environment. These reveal the very intricate web of political interests, power and socio-religious sensitivity in Iraqi society. Broadly speaking, Faisal rose, and then was allowed to ascend anew so soon after his fall from British favour, because of the rapid shrinkage of the mandate concept from the over-exaggerated notions with which it had been puffed up by "philanthropic" war-time propaganda. At times it had looked as if the politicians' themselves had come to believe in their own propaganda. But thanks to the immense financial strain at home, the need for financial saving and the trouble with Faisal they soon had come to their senses again. Churchill had ruthlessly reduced expenditure from L 32.000.000 to L 8.000.000 anually and even tried to bring it further down to the L 4.000.000 limit. The Bonar Law Cabinet, even more committed to saving than their predecessors were jubilant when, on April 30, 1923, the Protocol was signed by Cox and Mushin Beg which limited Britain's mandatory responsibility for Iraq to a maximum period of four years from the date of the ratification of peace with Turkey. As Devonshire aired this achievement to Churchill, who by then expected immediate returns:

"After that period we shall spend no more money on Iraq".[87]

Altogether this somewhat "hasty" saving[88] prompted numerous official comments on the mandate concept, the gist of which was that

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85.cf.E.Burroyne,op.cit.,p.317.
86.As distinguished from constitutional form or theory.
87.Devonshire to Churchill, 2 May 1923, C.O.730/39/21834.
88."hasty" because the rate of saving entailed a policy of bluff which

it implied non-committal moral advice rather than material assistance.[89] For instance, comments in the special Cabinet Committee on Iraq went so far as to suggest that:

> "the Arabs were not sufficiently advanced to need the expenditure on Sanitary and Educational Services now being incurred".[90]

Some of the implications of such thought already began to materialize in the administration of the provinces where British advisers were withdrawn to be gathered together in cost-saving inspectorates.[91] On the whole, measures like these, together with the drastic cut of the mandatory period, were bound to create the impression on the spot that British evacuation, if not imminent, was likely to happen at even shorter notice than laid down in the Protocol.

As a result Faisal was very much concerned with consolidating his authority in the country. Accordingly, while taking great care to retain his popularity with the Shi`ah who formed the bulk of the Iraqi population, he also campaigned strongly for the integration of the Sunni Mosul vilayet in Iraq.[92] Further he contemplated dislodging Abd al-Mushin Beg from his office as Prime Minister and replacing him with the more extremist Yasin Pasha, Minister of Communications and Works; for Mushin Beg, together with Naji Suwaidi, an even more ardent nationalist, were presumably in favour of a republican Iraq. Faisal abandoned his plans when the xenophobe Yasin Pasha turned out

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88. contd.,if called by the Turks or the supporters of Faisal in summer 1922 could have turned out extremely costly;cf.p.26,footn.77
89. see minute by H.Young, 18 April 1922, C.O.730/20/18574.
90. Minutes of Committee on Iraq, Meeting of 18 Jan,1923,CAB 27/206. Comments like these must to some extent be distinguished from those which enfeebled the concept in order to make it more acceptable to the Iraqis.For Cox see P.Cox 11 May 1922, C.O.730/21/24557.
91. Salmond to Trenchard, 7 April 1923, Persoanl, CAB 27/206.

to be less anti-Turkish than anti-British.[93] Meanwhile the crisis with the ulama had reached its peak, when Mushin Beg, with the reluctant concurrence of the absent Faisal, had Sheikh Mahdi al-Khalisis, together with some relatives, arrested and deported to Persia.[94] To the delight of Mushin Beg, who was a fanatic anti-Shi`ah, but to the utter dismay of Faisal who feared loss of popularity with the Shi`ah, a larger group of Shi`ah ulama left in protest for Persia. When Faisal returned to Bagdad he immediately tried to restore his reputation among the Shi`ah community. In order to demonstrate his impartiality he urged Mushin Beg to arrest and deport a number of the Sunni small fry of the Bagdad coffee-shops, and when Mushin Beg rejected the request, Faisal made contact with the exiled ulama.

On the whole, Mushin Beg seems to have been not only strongly anti-Shi`ah but also intent on asserting the authority of the ministry against Faisal, if not to lessen Faisal`s authority in the country. Thus he kept Faisal badly informed about the promulgation of some financial decrees about which there had been some controversy in the government. He also rejected Faisal`s request several times to forbid the traditional practice of the principal mosque in Bagdad of reading the Khutbah in the name of the Sultan and Khalifat, a tradi-

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92. ibid.; see also Minute by Young, 20 June 1923, C.O.730/40/30136: "Faisal and his entourage, blind to the helpless position in which they will find themselves when we go, and mistakingly supposing that what they may succeed in getting through now under cover of our aero-planes will remain unchanged when the aero-planes have gone, are pursuing a reckless policy of Effendi domination over the powerful tribes and Arab domination over the alien Kurds and Assyrians

93. Yasin Pasha was suspected of having made contacts with the Kemalists, see H.Dobbs to Devonshire, 10 Dec.1923, C.O.730/43/60034, also previous tel.of 29 Nov.1923 and lengthy minute thereon by H.Young of 5 Dec., both in C.O.730/43/58636; see also p.314

94. cf. P.W.Ireland, op.cit., pp.391-3.

tion to which Faisal had taken strong objection for dynastic reasons ever since Turkey had been declared a republic by the end of October 1923. In March 1924, the name of the Sultan was substituted with that of King Hussein, the self-styled caliph. Meanwhile, Faisal, upset by Mushin Beg's stubbornness, thereupon tried to make his brother Zaid Prime Minister, and when Henry Dobbs rejected this nepotism, Faisal confronted the High Commissioner with the choice of accepting either his own or Mushin Beg's abdication. Finally they agreed to let Mushin Beg fall and installed Ja'far Pasha in his place.

Faisal's political manoeuvers need no further scrutinizing, for they were all geared to the consolidation of his position. He was persistent and straightforward in these efforts; he was not the capricious plotter and unstable character as whom he emerges from Gertrude Bell's letters and Hubert Young's minutes.[95] The timing of his day-to-day efforts was largely set by the vacillations of British policy. Even though the British on the spot themselves became quite nervous as a result of the uncertainty of the situation, they expected Faisal and his entourage to react to the uncertainty with the same degree of ultimate composure as they did themselves, as if their notion that evacuation would always remain as their ultimate policy applied to Faisal in the same manner.[96]

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95. In his minutes of 5 Dec.1923, see above footnote 93, Young referred to the events of summer 1922, see pp.11-12. which had stamped Faisal as "crooked and insincere" in British eyes. As for G.Bell see: E.Burgoyne,op.cit.,pp.319-20, 317:"He always thinks there's credit to be got by hunting with the hounds and running with the fox".

96. For purely tactical reasons Faisal himself had repeatedly underlined that as an instrument of British policy he was with H.M.G. "in the same boat and must swim or sink together", but he had always made reservations for his personal ideas of directing Arab nationality".cf.Cox to Churchill,18 August 1921,C.O.730/4/41616.

No doubt, Faisal, by asserting his authority over the ministry, had easily scored a point; but afterwards, when challenged to defend his gain, British policy placed him in very awkward circumstances. In short, as quid pro quo for fighting Iraq's "frontier battle"[97] in the north, the British demanded the ratification of the Treaty, Protocol and Subsidiary Agreements by the Constituent Assembly. Further they limited time for discussion and adjournement by imposing the 11th of June, 1924, the day of the League Council meeting, as the latest date for ratification. They also clearly stipulated that if there was no ratification by that date the Assembly would immediately be dissolved.[98] Finally they severely restricted Faisal's scope for compromise by refusing both to assure a general or provisional agreement to the amendments desired by the Assembly's Special Committee[99] and to guarantee the territorial integrity of the entire Mosul vilayet and its integration into Iraq.

Although the British exploited Faisal's dilemma to the full, the harshness and stringency of their conditions sprang from more complex motives than those simply of spotting the opportunity that lay for them in Faisal's desparate situation: imperial temper, austere convictions and metropolitan politics involved limitations in their own scope of decision. Thus, among the British on the spot, imperial temper rose at the news of the advent of the Labour Government at

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97. Minute by H.Young, 12 March 1924, C.O.730/58/11898.
98. cf."The events leading up to the acceptance of the Anglo-Iraq Treaty by the Constituent Assembly", C.O.730/65/36484.
99. cf.P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,pp.397-9. Also: Thomas to Dobbs, 14 May 1924:"The people of Iraq have had it made clear to them by us (1) that the Assembly must accept or reject treaty, agreements etc. as they stand;(2) that when treaty has been ratified we shall be wil-

home.[100] Labour M.P.s touring Iraq for picking up some first-hand impressions and knowledge were held to ridicule for their ignorance and alleged mediocrity,[101] while Dobbs felt even more indispensable under MacDonald than under the no less thrifty Baldwin Cabinet. Accordingly, hand in hand with the lengthening of his despatches to Thomas[102] went a marked increase in his advice and his demands: thus Dobbs was entirely responsible for the policy of "no amendments".[103] In the Middle East Department, Shuckburgh seems to have pushed through the policy that, although the financial, military and judicial agreements were not yet finally drafted, Treaty, Protocol and Agreements must be ratified together so as to prevent parliament at Whitehall from tearing everything to pieces or the Press from feeding too long on headlines dealing with a delicate Iraq.[104] MacDonald, bravely playing up to the League[105] he had helped to foster, had Iraq placed on the League Council's agenda for June 11th, thus procuring the impression and effect of ultimatum in Iraq. Further, at a loss for new ideas, Thomas, when devising alternative policies in case the Iraqi Constituent Assembly rejected the treaty, went back step by step through all the previous policies:

> "H.M.G. may have no option but to revert to the system of Provisional Govt in force before Feisal's accession, if he is not in a position to secure this. Elimination of King himself would be involved by reversion to this system which

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99.contd.,ling to discuss in a reasonable spirit any amendments to Financial Agreement".C.O.730/65/25650.

100.The first Labour Government had come to power on 22 January 1924.

101.cf.G.Bell in E.Burgoyne,op.cit.,pp.353-4, her sympathy towards the Labour Government was of a negative nature in the sense that Labour precluded the return of a protectionist Liberal Government.

102.Thomas was Devonshire's successor in the C.O., for a short portrait cf.R.W.Lyman,The First Labour Government 1924,London 1957,pp.6-7, 106.

would be conditional upon active co-operation of local notables after his departure, failing which re-establishment of direct British administration for remainder of four years or for much shorter period as might be deemed desirable would appear to be only alternative". 106

Admittedly, other alternatives, among them such stereotypes as British withdrawal to the Basra Vilayet, had been ventilated in close consultation with the Air Staff and the Committee of Imperial Defence.[107] But they were dismissed on the ground of the additional expenditure involved,[108] of loss of prestige throughout the East[109] and of the difficulty of justifying such action before the League. A bolder suggestion but one which underrated Labour's bondage to the Imperial Idea,[110] was that of disposing of the mandate altogether. However there was genuine fear that it might be obtained by some other power.

Other suggestions had urged the Government to make public announcements indicating the line of alternative policy in case the Assembly failed to ratify the treaty. But they were disapproved of by Dobbs, and also dismissed as being too dangerous for Britain and Faisal: apart from prejuding the deliberations of the League Council meeting, it was feared above all that any public announcement would

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103. Minute by Young, 26 April 1924, C.O.730/58/19150, 20002, "Dobbs has now come down firmly on the side of "no amendments". It is a pity he did not wait for our tel....However we are committed now, and must support him - He said himself in his tel. of 17 April that he saw no reason why minor amendments should not be accepted".
104. Minutes by Shuckburgh, 11 Dec. 1923, C.O.730/44/59639; 12 June 1924, C.O.730/60/24646.
105. MacDonald to E.N.Bennet, 16 June 1924, F.O.800/219.
106. Thomas to Dobbs, 24 May 1924, C.O.730/65/25650.
107. see file C.O.730/65/20941 which includes besides Memo. by Shuckburgh for the C.I.D. the observations thereon by the Air Staff of 2nd May 1924. The file contains also a 13 pages long Memo by H. Dobbs of 5 March, discussing the various alternative policies.
108. ibid.
109. ibid.
110. cf. A.P.Thornton, op.cit., pp.264-315.

elicit fresh propaganda from the strong factions of the Assembly obstructing the treaty.[112] Instead it was provided that Faisal should dissolve the Assembly "immediately upon its rejection of the Treaty".[113]

But Whitehall's makeweights did not apply to political calculation on the spot, where the majority of the Assembly, by opposing the Treaty intended to oust Faisal and probably the British also from Iraq. As Dobbs reported to Thomas by the 28th of May:

> "It is now openly admitted to me by the King that the large party which desires his departure and the return of British control is engineering the growing opposition to the Treaty. He is very despondent." 114

But Thomas seems not to have understood the complexity of the situation. In any case his instructions of the 4th of June that "Assembly proceedings should...be left to take their course"[115] no longer helped matters.[116] For, as H.M.G. did not yield an inch from its position in the Treaty issue, its future position in Iraq continued to be bound up with the fate of Faisal. Faisal, in dissolving the Constituent Assembly and throwing in his lot entirely with the British, would publicly incur an indirect bur devastating "vote of no confidence"; while Britain would be deprived of any basis for maintaining influence or control in Iraq after her withdrawal, for Faisal would not stay in Iraq a single day longer. Faisal's own despondency was unmatched in pre-

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111. cf. Minutes by Young, 7th June 1924, C.O.730/66/27132. Also Dobbs to Amery, 30 Sept. 1925, C.O.730/78/46165. It was generally assumed that Italy would make a bid for the mandate.
112. Dobbs to Thomas, 26 May 1924, C.O.730/65/25650.
113. see footnote 98.
114. Dobbs to Thomas, 28 May 1924, C.O.730/65/25650.
115. see footnote 98.
116. E. Burgoyne, op.cit. p.344.

vious moments of crisis. The very coalition he had sought to weld and lead in political struggle with the British and in consolidating his position in Iraq, seemed intent on bringing about his departure and fall. Yasin Pasha, his former Chief of Staff at Damascus, had joined forces with Mushin as-Sa`dun in opposing the treaty as it stood. And, in fact, it was the previous Cabinet of ardent nationalists which dominated the Constituent Assembly and made life hard for Ja`far al--Askari, Faisal`s protégé and premier. Obviously Faisal`s only chance of a dynastic and political future in Iraq, and of his further use as a British instrument of control, depended on whether he, together with Dobbs, could succeed in winning a majority of the Assembly`s quorum for the treaty.

Much has already become known about the events that led up to the acceptance of the treaty.[117] But new evidence has revealed (has revealed) some hitherto unknown ingredients in the final vote for the treaty and entails some corrections of previous accounts.

From May onwards, Dobbs, who clearly foresaw the political consequences of Faisal`s possible elimination took great care to avoid any mention of the fact that H.M.G.`s political alternatives also provided for the liquidation of Faisal. As he wrote in a despatch:

> "I consider that the curtailed statement which I suggested is preferable because at all events it does not state definitely that if Faisal does not succeed H.M.G. will adopt a course which would I fear, be welcomed by the majority in their present frame of mind. If they do not know that we contemplate the latter course in the event of failure of the King they may fear that we will adopt some other course not so welcome whereas if they knew definitely they would work for and bring about his failure." 118

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117.cf.P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,pp.393-405;S.H.Longrigg,Iraq ...,pp.150-1.
118.see footnote 114, also Dobbs to Thomas, 26 May 1924, ibid.

Thomas left Dobbs considerable discretion.[119] Yet Dobbs, though preparing for all contingencies, confined immediate action to creating a situation in which the air was full of rumours of a British course of policy which would be not so welcome to Iraq.[120] At any rate, by the 6th of June, the Assembly had undergone a radical change of attitude towards the treaty. A rumour had gained ground among the deputies "that H.M.G. was now, owing to the situation at Constantinople secretely very anxious that Assembly should, by rejecting the treaty quickly, leave Britain free to make her own bargain with Turkey about Mosul".[121] As Dobbs continued his report to Thomas with a marked overtone of contempt for the Constituent Assembly:

> "The Assembly immediately behaved with the contrarity of an Irish pig and bolted in the opposite direction." [122]

Although the source of this rumour cannot be accurately identified, its logic was so striking that it points either to Faisal or, even more probably, to a British "leak"; for the rumour fitted in well with the propaganda of the British controlled "Bagdad Times" that Turkey had colonialist designs on Iraq, and that pro-Turkish agents in Bagdad had goaded the deputies into voting against the treaty or into keeping away from voting.[123] Further, by skilfully underlining the only concern common to Faisal, the "disloyal" nationalists, and eminent notables such as Mushin as-Sa`dun, the rumour appealed to

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119. see footnote 113.
120. see footnote 114: "It will be safer and probably more effective to keep silent".
121. Dobbs to Thomas, 6 June 1924, C.O.730/60/27166.
122. ibid. Dobbs was an Irishman.
123. cf. P.W. Ireland, op.cit., p.401, footnote 1.

the spirit that had led to the formation of the Cabinet of patriots under Mushin as-Sa`dun in the year before. This appeal was also in line with Faisal`s offer of premiership to Yasin Pasha, in May, after consultations with Dobbs.[124] In this offer one may see a deliberate attempt to make good for the "blunder" that had led to the replacement of Mushin as-Sa`dun`s Cabinet with the colourless ministry of Ja`far al-Askari. On the whole, the encouragement of an air of anxiety concerning the retention of the Mosul vilayet increased the prospects of acceptance of the treaty.[125] Dobbs, it is true, was still worried by the resultant rider in the Assembly`s majority resolution by which Treaty and Subsidiary Agreements should become null and void if the British Government failed to preserve Mosul for Iraq;[126] but to his surprise Whitehall took no exception to it.[127]

A very significant feature of the passing of both the Treaty, on June 10th, and the Organic Law, a month later, was the activity and subsequent rise of Yasin Pasha. According to Ja`far al-Askari, Yasin Pasha had voted against the treaty as a face-saving gesture while, at the same time, inducing others to vote for it. As Dobbs reported Ja`far`s testimony to Thomas:

> "Moreover even Ja`far himself admits that in the final crisis on the treaty, although Yasin felt compelled in order to save his face to vote against the acceptance of the treaty, he induced many others to vote for it."128

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124. ibid. p.397.
125. see footnote 113.
126. The resolution by which the Treaty was ratified is printed in P.W. Ireland, op.cit., pp.403-4.
127. For the reactions among the British staff on the spot cf. E. Burgoyne, op.cit., pp.346-48. In the Middle East Department there was some apprehension about delay of ratification in the Commons, cf. Minutes by Young, 11 June, and Shuckburgh 12 June, C.O.730/60/24646
128. Dobbs to Thomas, 12 July 1924, C.O.730/60/33448.

Further, according to Dobbs' own information, "a certain number of anti-Treaty deputies (had) stayed away from the debate at the direct request of Yasin Pasha".[129] As to Yasin Pasha's role in the passing of the Organic Law, Dobbs reported:

> "As things are owing to the prospect of early office being dangled before him, it has been mainly owing to his instrumentality that the organic law quite contrary to expectation has passed through the Assembly smoothly." 130

But it was not by his clandestine services alone that Yasin Pasha became Prime Minister on August 2nd, 1924, in spite of his public defiance of the Treaty in June. Dobbs simply feared that, if kept out of office, Yasin's position would become "almost certainly analogous to that of Zaghloul in Egypt", as a result of the approaching elections, the British having "no alternative but to accept him as Prime Minister after having allowed him to drift into definite opposition to British influence".[131] He also agreed with Faisal that, for safety reasons, Yasin would better be made Prime Minister with no portfolio than minister in charge of a definite department.[132] As they both concluded:

> "He (Yasin) is quite the most able of Iraq's public men, and it will be a great gain to get him on the side of British policy and of King Feisal". 133

Yasin Pasha's assumption of premiership, together with the appointment of members of the eminent Sa'dun, Gaylani and Pachachi

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129. see footnote 113.
130. Dobbs to Thomas, 12 July 1924, cf. footnote 128.
131. ibid.
132. ibid., however when Yasin Pasha became Prime Minister he assumed also the portfolio for the department of defence.
133. ibid., also minute by Clauson: "It is unlikely that had he (Ja'far) remained he would have been in a position to control the Chamber of Deputies or would have been successful in securing the passage of the necessary legislation to implement the Ireaty obligations

families as Cabinet ministers,[134] ironically installed those political groupings of nationalists and notables in government office that had relentlessly opposed the Treaty. Dobbs and Faisal, though seemingly opportunistic in making Yasin prime minister, had no real choice of an alternative Cabinet likely to exert any authority or enjoy influence among the numerous political factions of Iraqi society.[135] Nevertheless, the ease with which, on the eve of Iraq's first elections for parliament, both men concurred with the ascendancy of the anti-Treaty coalition to office, as well as the naturalness with which they seem to have expected the Cabinet to comply with the spirit of the treaty, stemmed also from a determination to make full use of both the royal prerogatives under the Provisional Government and of the various control mechanisms provided for in the Organic Law which became applicable once that Law had come into force.

That Faisal should be enabled to control parliament and secure legislation necessary for executing treaty obligations had, by 1924, again become one of the primary concerns of British policy in Iraq. In fact experts such a Hubert Young regarded the Assembly debates, marred by the gathering of the political elite in a pronounced anti-Treaty and anti-British bloc, as foreboding worse troubles of future parliamentary rule. Their fears were not mitigated by the Intelligence Reports from Iraq:

> "Unless Govt.makes actively for the return of moderate men, the new parliament will be entirely in the hands of the extremists of the Hizb al'Ummah or People's party, who advocate a

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133.contd.,of Iraq. On the other hand, Yasin Pasha is an able debator and he has proved himself a sufficiently ardent nationalist to capture the imagination of the more vocal elements in Iraq politics".

134.Abd al-Mushin al-Sa'dun(Interior),Rashid Ali al-Gaylani(Justice),

repudiation of the agreements subsidiary to the Treaty and the expulsion of all British Advisers.

It seems very probable that in any case the majority of the new parliament will be in this complexion in which case the ship of the 'Iraq State will shortly again be on the rocks.

The Hizb al Ummah have sent delegates to Mosul for the purpose of persuading the Hizb al Istiqlal there to combine with the Hizb al Ummah...

Fa'thin A Jamal...Bagdad landlord has promised pecuniary assistance". 135

Hubert Young, who had been in charge of negotiating both Treaty and Organic Law ever since autumn 1921,[136] gave much attention to shaping procedures of legislation which made allowance for British interference through the instrumentality of the King. By the 18th of June 1924 he was still preoccupied with routine parliamentary exercises.[137] For instance, he brooded over the proper quorum for a parliament that consisted of the Senate of nominees of the King and the Chamber of elected deputies; his measure for the ideal quorum was the "most favourable contingency for the combined assembly to upset a decision of the lower house".[138] As the number of senators was already fixed at 20, he departed from the minimum quorum of 56 deputies of the lower house[139] and was willing to allow an objectionable law pass by the casting vote of the President of the Chamber, i.e. by 29 votes to 28. Accordingly, during its passage through parliament the combined strength of both assemblies amounted to 29 + 28 + 20 members. As the

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134.contd.,Muzahim Bey (Communications and Works).
135.Intelligence Report No.24, 27 Nov. 1924,in: F.O.371/10098, E11106.
136.The drafting of the Organic Law had originally begun in London,but was transferred to Bagdad on the eve of Faisal's accession to the throne so as to enhance his status, cf.C.O.730/3/38479, 4/41616.
137.Minutes by H.Young of late June 1924, and letter from Dobbs to Thomas of 28 June, in:C.O.730/60/29283; 730/60/31055.
138.ibid.
139.ibid.

optimum 48 votes against the law would still fail to reach the required two-thirds necessary for bringing about its rejection, the law, however strongly objected to by the British, would pass.

Since the number of senators was already fixed, and since the number of deputies would increase rather than become less, actual voting in parliament was fairly secure against detrimental British interference. Young therefore took resort to the royal prerogatives and to the emergency laws imbedded in the final Organic Law:[140]

> "for the purpose of forcing through any legislation which we consider desirable we must always fall back upon Art.26 (c) of the Law, i.e. we must wait until the session is over".[141]

For meeting further contingencies, Young continued:

> "for the purpose of blocking objectionable legislation we must induce the King to withhold his approval, which by Art. 62(1) is necessary before a bill becomes law...if by any chance we wanted legislation passed while Parliament was in session, we could move the King to dissolve and to legislate under Art.26/c". 142

Incidentally, the lengths to which British expertise was resolved to go in throttling unwelcome legislation or constitutional manœuvre is revealed by Young's reflection on an Iraqi motion for amending Art.32. This article stipulated that dissolution of the Chamber of Deputies automatically entailed dissolution of the Senate;

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140. Young referred to a Draft Organic Law that apart from minor textual alterations (cf.C.O.730/61/41563) and a different numbering of the respective articles came very close to the Final Draft. As the latter Draft has been published we have for convenience of comparing inserted the Arts. of the Final Draft in the above text.
Incidentally, the first parliament of 1925 had altogether 88 deputies. In his minimum number Young may have excluded the Mosul deputies, but there is no evidence for this assumption. On the whole, Young was however in favour of a "buffer state" Mosul, see:Minute by Young of 20 June 1923, C.O.730/40/30136.

141. see footnote 137, Art.26/c corresponds to former draft Art.24(c).

142. ibid.,Art.62(1) corresponds to draft Art. 61(1).

while the amendment suggested that the Senate should vote on its own temporary extinction. Young, with the agreement of Shuckburgh, opposed the amendment. Nevertheless,as a possible way of getting it implemented he considered a declaration of martial law, in case the Senate, if subjected to terrorism or itself assuming a revolutionary role, failed to vote for dissolution. As it turned out, Art.32 was not amended. However, Part X of the Organic Law provided for the proclamation of martial law in case of regional disturbances, but, significantly, only with the concurrence of the Cabinet not Parliament or the Senate.[143]

The powerful prerogatives of the King, together with the general framework of the Organic Law, were further underpinned by provisions safeguarding their continuity against easy inroads by constitutional amendments. The latter were restricted for the first five years after the Oraganic Law had come into force. Moreover, each amendment had not only to be accepted by a majority of two-thirds in the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies respectively, but, after acceptance, the bill must be delayed until the elections for the next parliament before it could again be submitted to both houses. It was only then that an amendment should be submitted to the King for his approval and promulgation.

As if this were not enough, in the following year, nobody less than L.S.Amery "coached" Faisal how to make full use of his prerogatives. Significantly, Amery in particularly urged Faisal "to take

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143.The Organic Law of Iraq. Passed by the Iraq Constituent Assembly, July 10th, 1924, cf.P.W.Ireland.,p.370, footnote 1.

144.Memorandum of a Conversation between S of S for the Colonies and the Prime Minister of Iraq on the 12th April 1925, in the presence of the High Commissioner, C.O.730/74/20175. In this conversation reference was made to the previous conversation with Faisal.

a more active part (than the English king did) in questioning the views of a minister or ministry".[145] In case of disagreement between king and minister he stressed that, provided the minister did not enjoy support of parliament, "the natural course of a minister who could not induce the King to accept his views on a subject of any importance, would be to resign".[146] On the other hand, if the minister was supported by parliamentary majority the king's view should not prevail. However, Amery expressed strong doubts whether, in view of the lack of a well-organized and rigid party-system, the criteria of parliamentary support was ascertainable and feasible. He obviously endeavoured to leave the king considerable discretion in this matter.[147] Thus he encouraged Faisal to interfere with the affairs of ministers and ministries in a manner which soon became known and which was widely deprecated as Faisal's rule by whim.

Faisal, docile in any lesson that dangled before him the prospects of consolidating his authority in Iraq, did not however spare criticism of the British presumption implicit in Amery's and Dobbs' expectations, that whatever H.M.G. decided to do, constituted the norm for proper Iraqi volonté général. Amery's equation that absolute adherence to the Treaty as it stood was a measure of correct political attitude and good parliamentarian behaviour, if not identical with submission to true "Staatsräson", revealed not only a totalitarian claim to British control in Iraq, it also suffered from the

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145. ibid.
146. ibid.
147. The Memorandum (see footnote 144) had been drafted by Dobbs; in a letter of 17 April 1925 Amery certified that it correctly represented all he had said, C.O.730/74/20175.

flaw that, while the Assembly had accepted the Treaty on the assurance that amendments were immediately to follow its acceptance,[148] Britain had gone back on her word, as well as, by the rigid provisions of the Organic Law, preventing Iraq's political intelligentsia from attaining the desired amendments by way of smooth constitutional procedure. The practice of sending confidential letters to the Mutasarrifs "to ensure the return of deputies favourable to the Treaty"[149] on the eve of elections, of walk-outs during debates or voting in parliament, or of frequent refusals to form a Cabinet or to assume office, resulted not at last from the heavy British hand that lay on parliamentary procedures and restricted the scope for legislation.

Significantly this switch of the internecine Anglo-Iraqi tension from the more or less open - because confined - metropolitan platform dominated by the provisional government and the High Commissioner to the broader but institutionalised platform of national parliament, heightened partisanship among Iraq's rival political factions. For the years 1925 and 1926 a good example is provided by the growing embitterment of the struggle between Abd ul-Mushin on the one hand, and Yasin Pasha, together with Rashid Ali al-Gaylani, on the other.

The point at issue, initially, was the amendment of the financial subsidiary agreement of 25th March 1924. The British by underwriting the amendment had, in June 1924, induced the Constituent As-

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148. cf. B. Bourdillon (Acting High Commissioner) to L.S. Amery, 2 June 1926, "It is...fact that the treaty and agreements would never have passed the Constituent Assembly had it not been for repeated assurances both verbal and written to the effect that H.M.G. would sympathetically consider the amendment of the agreements...". C.O.730/92/1535. See also: Faisal to Bourdillon, 30th Dec. 1925, According to Faisal, Dobbs had personally gone to the Assembly and

sembly to accept the unequal Treaty, but had afterwards not kept their promise. Apart from the change of government at home[150] the official reason given by Amery was that owing to the submission of the Treaty to the League of Nations, on 27th September, 1924, H.M.G. was no longer in a position to act without the express consent of the League Council.[151] However, when, in the summer of 1925, the British, prompted by suggestions of the International Mosul Boundary Commission, started talks on the prolongation of the treaty from four to twenty-five years, the Iraqis resolved to use the opportunity to force amendment of the Financial and Military Subsidiary Agreements.

The Iraqis had a strong case for complaint, for the report of the English Financial Mission to Iraq,[152] in the summer of 1925, had confirmed their criticism of the unbearable financial burden.[153] As

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148. contd., given the members in the name of H.M.G. a binding promise that amendments would follow immediately on ratification. C.O.730/92/872.
149. P.W.Ireland, op.cit., p.423.
150. On 4th November 1924, MacDonalds Labour Government was followed by the Conservative Government under Baldwin which lasted up to June 4th, 1929; important ministers were: L.S.Amery (C.O.), A.Chamberlain (F.O.), Churchill (Exch.), Birkenhead (I.O.).
151. see: Cmd 2317, Papers relating to the Application to Iraq of the Principles of Art.22 of the Covenant of the League of Nations; Decision of the Council, p.7. Art.IV. "No modifications of the terms of the treaty of alliance will be agreed to by H.B.M.G. without the consent of the Council of the League"; however, one may safely assume that reservations could have been made for amendments as they were in the case of the Extradition Law in fact made, ibid. p.5.
152. Cmd.2438 (1925).
153. The Agreements subsidiary to the Treaty of 10th October, 1922 are printed together with the Protocol of 30th April, 1923, in Cmd. 2120.
A great part of the burden was due to excessive military expenditure; Art.IV of the Military Agreement stipulated that Iraq should spend "not less than 25 per cent of the annual revenue of Iraq..." military expenditure. By Art.IV of the Financial Agreement the revenue was for this purpose defined as "the gross receipt in all cases under each head of revenue service with the exception of the

Bourdillon, the Acting High Commissioner, who had great sympathy with Iraqi demands, pressed the point home to Amery:

> "The demand for the lightening of the burdens imposed upon Iraq by the existing treaty and agreements is one that can be neither ignored nor dismissed as unreasonable...I do not wish to labour unduly a point upon which I have already laid considerable emphasis in my tel`s ...but I venture to call your attention to the remarks made by Dobbs in his report of the Finance Mission: 'The spirit of the Mission...strikingly justified many of the criticisms of the Financial Agreement made in the Constituent Assembly, as throwing upon Iraq burdens greater than she could bear." 154

However Amery turned a deaf ear on Iraqi requests;[155] he warned the Iraqi Government not to assume that H.M.G. might, in the end, give way to the joint forces of Iraqi demands and Labour opposition at home.[156] At the same time while underlining the fact that the Subsidiary Agreements, as they stood, must remain in force for the next four years [157]

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153. contd.,commercial services, other than Posts, Telegraphs and Telephones, of which the net-revenues shall be included." Revenues accruing from the Railways and Basra Port were in accordance with Articles VIII and X kept separate from the general revenues and charged on Railway services and maintenance and the Port Trust. A further prior and fixed charge on the general revenues was the annuity plus interest at 5% per annum of the total dept of R.S.94, 09,540 constituted by the transfer of (British constructed) works of public utility such as Irrigation, Roads, Bridges,Posts,Telegraphs etc.from H.M.G. to the Government of Iraq, cf.Art.V.

154. Bourdillon to Amery, 7 Jan.1926, C.O.730/92/1535. The telegrams to Amery mentioned were those of: 19.Dec.1925, C.O.730/80/57331, 27.Dec.1925, 30 Dec.1925, C.O.730/80/58167,58600, 5 Jan.1926, C.O.730/92/431.
Dobbs`lengthy report of 127 pages on Iraq 1920-1925, dated 6 Aug. 1925, is included in file C.O.730/77/37753.

155. As to the British assurance he wrote to Bourdillon on 11 Jan.1926: "H.M.G. never gave specific undertaking to amend agreements. What they did undertake to do was to consider in a liberal spirit the possibility of their amendment". C.O.730/93/751.

156. Amery to Bourdillon, 24 Dec.1925, C.O.730/83/58502.

157. This qualification together with the undertaking to consider Iraqs admission to the League every four years (cf.P.W.Ireland,op.cit., p.409) was a concession to Faisal`s request as submitted by him in the letter to Bourdillon of 30th Dec.1925, see footnote 148. According to Bourdillon, Faisal`s request stemmed from a suggestion

he employed, in the same manner as his predicessors, the lever of the Mosul frontier:

> "I request that you will make it quite clear to the Iraq Govt, in as emphatic a manner as possible, that the instructions conveyed in this despatch represent the last word of H.M.G. The Iraq Govt. must understand that the draft Treaty...represents the only means by which H.M.G. can obtain for them the frontier which they regard as essential for the future existence of Iraq". 158

The Iraqi response to Amery`s uncompromising course was diverse. Pro-Treaty deputies at first stood aghast at the prospect of having to meet the cost of increasing military expenditure out of a stagnatory revenue system which had not been improved since it had been drawn up provisionally by Colonel Howell during the military occupation;[159] instead of receiving possible grant-in-aids they preferred to see articles and supply of the British forces submitted to customes duty, for the former would only increase the public debt. Further there was, initially, a wide-spread belief that the British Government would never either desert Iraq or give up Mosul.[160] Accordingly some groups of de-

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157. contd., made to him by Hilton Young during the latter`s stay in Bagdad, see footnote 154, 27 Dec. Bourdillon himself, of course, had also pressed this point to Amery, e.g. on 30th Dec.:"To expect pusillanimous bodies like Iraq Cabinet and Parliament to accept some treaty for 25 years on mere repetition of assurances given 1 1/2 years ago and not yet implemented is, I submit, asking a great deal".see 154.

158. Amery to Bourdillon, 8 Jan.1926, C.O.730/92/691.

159. cf.Minute by Shuckburgh, (24) June 1926, C.O.730/94/13460.The stagnatory revenue system can be inferred from a survey of the annual revenue from 1921 to 1925: (in lakhs of Rs; a lakh equaled 100.000 rupees, which at the then current rate of exchange amounted to somewhat over L 7.000.)

| | Revenue | Expenditure | Surplus | Deficit |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1921 | 528.25 | 572.13 | - | 43.88 |
| 1922 | 474.67 | 485.81 | - | 11.14 |
| 1923 | 509.41 | 424.27 | 85.14 | - |
| 1924 | 527.33 | 464.86 | 62.47 | - |
| 1925 | 581.02 | 513.38 | 67.64 | - |

Figures are taken from Administrative Reports:Colonial Nos.21,29,see153

puties, particularly those under the influence of Yasin Pasha and Rashid Ali, tended to adopt procrastinating counter-measures, for instance, by demanding the transfer of the treaty debate from the Cham-

159.contd. see also:P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,p.437, however, there are gross mistakes for the years of the financial crisis 1930-32 in Ireland's table where he has signed in less expenditure than revenue, but considerable deficit.

160.Bourdillon to Amery,7 Jan.1926, C.O.730/92/1535.
The distribution of sterling subsidies which P.W.Ireland mentions on p.411, footnote 1, for the year 1927 was preceded by some financial transactions in 1926, amounting to a grant-in-aid to the Iraqi army of 12 lakhs for the current financial year and 18 lakhs for the next, further a reduction of claim in respect of transferred assets by 18lakhs,cf.Bourdillon's tel. from Amery,11 Jan.1926,see footnote 155. These were measures to mitigate the worse effects of the slight economic depression, cf.S.H.Longrigg, op.cit.p.163.
The Budgetary situation of Iraq is best demonstrated by the following Budgets for the years 1924/25 and 1925/26 with a rough selection of the more important items.Figures are taken from the annual Administrative Reports for the Mandates Commission.

( currence in lakhs of Rs - exchange rate cf.159)

| 1924/25 | | Revenues | 1925/26 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Estimates | Actuals | items | Estimates | Actuals |
| | | Taxes on Natural Produce | | |
| 109.50 | 111.36 | a)agriculture | 113.45 | 145.74 |
| | | b) | | |
| 150.05 | 152.92 | total | 149.90 | 183.10 |
| 234.58 | 249.00 | Customs&Excise | 243.63 | 253.72 |
| 509.97 | 527.33 | Grand Total | 533.52 | 581.02 |
| | | Expenditure | | |
| 55.17 | 17.09 | Public Debt | 37.64 | 17.34 |
| 48.05 | 42.68 | Interior | 41.39 | 39.54 |
| 70.54 | 70.43 | Police | 78.02 | 76.71 |
| 21.99 | 19.36 | Health | 20.17 | 19.48 |
| | | Education: | | |
| 2.75 | 2.36 | Ministry | 2.08 | 2.14 |
| 19.93 | 18.97 | Schools | 20.72 | 20.65 |
| 118.26 | 97.74 | Defence | 143.83 | 142.07 |
| 14.50 | 13.59 | Justice | 13.20 | 12.98 |
| 575.59 | 464.86 | Grand Total | 556.50 | 513.38 |

ber of Deputies into a special committee.[161] On the other hand, these groups hoped that, by prolonging the treaty debate and giving wide publicity to their views, they would catch the imagination of the electorate.[162] In contrast, Abdul Mushin`s Taqaddam or Government Party[163] had become very sensitive to any turn in the Mosul question since its reinforcement by the Kurdish deputies;[164] and it must have felt the impact of the deterioration of Anglo-Turkish relations and the sudden British shock of the Russo-Turkish Treaty of Friendship and Neutrality of 17 December 1925.[165] By consequence, Mushin`s party was open to the slightest British pressure that came from the direction of Mosul. Further as Faisal and his supporters had come largely to depend on the Sunni Kurdish deputies for the obvious reason of balancing his position against the Shi`ah, Abd ul-Mushin commanded a considerable majority in parliament. As Dobbs had put this matter to Amery on 6th December 1925:

> "The Kurdish representatives in the Iraq Parliament have been the chief steadying factor in politics, They voted solid for the Anglo-Iraq Treaty and always vote solid for the British connection. The result of their withdrawal could be incalculable. Moreover without them the Shiahs would have a predominance in the Iraq Parliament. This would be intensely resented by the Iraq Sunni ruling classes and would place the bigoted, ignorant and reactionary Shiahs, led by the Ulema, in power." 166

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161. Bourdillon to Amery, 21 Jan. 1926, C.O.730/92/2579.
162. ibid.;also Bourdillon to Amery, 5 Jan.1926, C.O.730/92/431.
163. Taqaddam was the name for his party of the Progressives, founded in 1925 and in the same year already in government. The party was dissolved when Abd ul-Mushin committed suicide on 13 Nov.1929,see: M.Khadduri, Independent Iraq, Oxford 1960, pp.29, 311; H.A.Foster, op.cit.,p.269.
164. cf.p.327.
165. see B.Lewis, The Emergence of Modern Turkey, Oxford 1961,pp.283-5.
166. Memorandum by Dobbs, 6 Dec.1925, C.O.730/86/54618.

Against this parliamentary majority Yasin Pasha's motion for transferring the treaty to a special committee stood no chance of success. Abd ul-Mushin, in following up his sweeping victory over Yasin proposed to continue the treaty debate in "secret session" in order to "prevent the heat of the discussion being reported in the press".[167] It was against this motion that Yasin together with eighteen deputies, sulkily and in protest, walked out of the Assembly of Deputies,[168] thus taking no part in the final ratification of the Treaty. On the next day January 19th, 1926, the Treaty was passed in the Senate with one dissentient vote.

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167. see footnote 161.

168. ibid.; P.W.Ireland, op.cit.,p.409, conveyes a somewhat wrong impression by not mentioning that by Mushin's motion,Yasin was deprived of the press, his only means for appealing to the public.

# Chapter VII

## The Shaping of Iraq's External Relations

> "I know of no precedent for a sovereign State entrusting any part of its foreign relations to another by Treaty. The real point is whether self-governing need necessarily involve sovereignty. Here I think we can argue that it does not, again on the precedents of the Dominions and India."
>
> Hubert Young to J.Masterton Smith, 2 Oct.1922
> C.O.730/24/48983

From the beginning of the mandate in Iraq the shaping of Iraq's external relations with her Middle Eastern neighbours and, after the Lausanne Conference, with the international world at large as well, was a delicate matter for British policy making. Its delicacy sprang from a variety of reasons. They can briefly be classified. First Iraq's own endeavours to establish diplomatic links with her brethren in the d a r a l - I s l a m , and her claim of international status or, at least, concession to armour propre; second the necessity for the British to solve problems arising from external situations that affected Iraq such as the (anti-Hashimite) caliphate movement among Indian Moslems, the Turkish menace to Mosul, the French suspicion about the motives of Britain's Middle Eastern policy and,

finally, the disturbance of the Middle East by the Wahhabi movement led by Ibn Sa`ud; third Britain`s strong imperial interests in safeguarding the acquired strategic and economic assets against any future interference, be it by the Arabs or her imperialist rivals at large.

Owing to this last overriding British concern the shaping of Iraq`s external relations, i.e. the partial transfer of external sovereignty to indigenous institutions in the sphere of conducting diplomatic negotiations and enacting international law such as diplomatic recognition, tended, on the whole, to be judged more by imperial calculation than by the provisions of the mandate concept. For instance, in 1925, when peace was concluded with Turkey, the Middle East Department happened to discuss the recognition of the Iraq Government by the United States.[1] In accordance with British imperial interests the department deemed it an indispensable American duty to acknowledge the Palestine mandate first before recognising Iraq as a state. On the surface such conditions imposed on Iraq`s diplomatic recognition by foreign powers implied the logical stipulation that whoever recognised a product of the mandate concept should also approve of the concept wherever it was worked. But, logic apart, politically, such conditions stemmed from the imperial notion that Iraq was an inextricable part of the strategic whole of the British Middle East. In other words, in an imperial context, the purpose of making US recognition of Iraq conditional upon prior acknowledgement of the British mandate in Palestine was to consolidate the political security

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1.C.O.730/84/17485 "Recognition on the level of Foreign Consular Representation.

of the strategically important trans-desert motor and air route from the Mediterranean via Amman to Bagdad and the Persian Gulf.

Complementary to the British conception of the Middle East as a strategic whole, there emerged from the concessions made to Faisal`s plea for international status the concept of a British controlled Middle East as a diplomatic unity. Thus, at the Conference of Cairo in March 1921, Faisal was given the right to establish diplomatic relations with the ruler of the Pusht-I-kuh and Ibn Sa`ud of the Nejd,[2] whose foreign relations with the outside world were solely conducted by Britain. Further, from 1922 officials of the Middle East Department began to ventilate the idea of diplomatically modelling Iraq after the dominions[3] which, as is known, constituted a pluralism within the diplomatic unity of the British Empire.[4] However, the concept of Iraq as belonging to a larger diplomatic unity came into conflict with occasional British suggestions advocating, for practical and opportune reasons, the extension of the Cairo concession to Iraqi diplomatic contacts with regimes uncontrolled by Britain and, as in the case of the Kemalists, without any international status.

Frequently, however, there was no causal connection between the rather theoretical assumptions sometimes current in the Middle East Department and the practical suggestions, say of Churchill. In fact the latter were often purely tentative, explored as convenient

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2. cf. Percy Cox to Shaikh Sir Abdul Aziz bin Abdu Rahman al Faisal a Saud, G.C.I.E., Ruler of Nejd and Dependencies, 4 May 1921, C.O.730/2/29463; also: Report on Middle East Conference held in Cairo and Jerusalem, p.42, "Major Young suggested that it might be possible for the Mesopotamian Government to conduct its own foreign relations with limitrophe States", F.O.371/6343.
3. cf. H. Young to Masterton Smith, 2 Oct. 1922, C.O.730/24/48983.
4. Speeches and Documents on the British Dominions 1918-1931, ed. by

substitutes for deficient military efforts, but abandoned when these regained momentum. Nevertheless, by a coincidence of political circumstances such suggestions, just as often, prompted further considerations and stipulations which, if taken together, crystallize the current official attitude towards the imperial problem of Iraq conducting its own external relations herself.

Take, for instance, Churchill`s suggestion of May 24th, 1921, to Percy Cox that Faisal should be encouraged to establish contacts with the Kemalists in order to take steam out of the Turkish menace to Mosul.[5] In a broad perspective this design was part of the general question of Arab-Turkish relations after the war, although, strictly speaking, it sprang from Churchill`s and Montagu`s failure of February to induce the Cabinet to invite an Arab Delegation to London to join in the talks between the British, French, Italians, Greeks and the Angora Delegation.[6] The idea of holding talks with the Kemalists at a conference that was to take place in London in March 1921, seemed to have sprung from the Greeks and also the Italians who, by revising the Treaty of Sèvres, hoped more easily to obtain their share of the Asia Minor cake.

But while the revision of the abortive treaty was also urged by British ministers, Montagu and Churchill used the opportunity to press for Arab participation in any talks with the Turks. They pointed out that talks with the Turks would inevitably involve the question of

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4.contd.,A.B.Keith, Oxford (1931),pp.38-9.
5.Churchill to Cox, 24 May 1921,tel.106, C.O.730/2.
6.Cabinet meeting of 18 Febr.1921, CAB 23/24. For a short diplomatic survey of the Kemalist diplomacy cf. Roderic H.Davison, Turkish Diplomacy from Mudros to Lausanne, in: G.A.Craig and F.Gilbert, The Diplomats 1919-1939, Princeton, 1953,pp.172-209.

the Arab territories; more, they added that the Middle East could not be pacified unless the Arab conception of guarding the Holy Places of Islam was settled with the Turks. But while Montagu was arguing from the background of the Indian caliphate movement[7] which, by demanding the endorsement of the Ottoman caliphate throughout the Islamic world, and at the same time joining forces with the Hindu nationalists, was becoming a great worry to the Government of India, Churchill was primarily concerned with bringing about an external situation favourable to the success of his drastic programme of curtailing British expenditure in Iraq.

As it emerges from their arguments both Churchill and Montagu were inclined to concede some form of symbolic representation of the spiritual authority of the caliphate in Iraq, as well as in the Hedjaz. However, their main project of bringing Arabs and Kemalists together at the London conference came to nothing. Curzon argued that because King Hussein had declined to sign the Treaty of Sèvres the Arabs, in general, had no "locus standi" in any negotiations dealing with the revision of that treaty.[8]

Nevertheless as Curzon himself had been engaged in secretely and unofficially sounding the Kemalists as to what peace terms they might accept,[9] Churchill's proposal of May of using Faisal as a British agent was not so absurd as one might assume, Indeed, Percy Cox, although initially deprecating the whole undertaking as a dangerous extension of the Cairo concession of autonomous Iraqi contacts with

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7. A good account of the movement has been given by A.J.Toynbee in: Survey of International Affairs, 1925, vol.I,pp.46-50.
8. see footnote 6. CAB 23/24.
9. R.H.Davison, op.cit.,p.178,footnote 17.

Ibn Sa`ud and the Whali of Pusht-i-Kuh, gave his consent in the end, provided that no dealings were made with the Angora Government "otherwise than through High Commissioner as his Foreign Minister".[10] As Churchill asserted in support of Cox`s reservations and of his warning about the detrimental effect to Art.3 of he draft mandate for Iraq:

> "I do not consider that the action proposed...would seriously contravene the provisions of Art.3 of the Mandate, since there is no question of permitting the Arab Government to conduct their own relations with the de jure Turkish Government, but only with the unrecognised nationalist assembly. Naturally you would be a party to any such negotiations, although the likelyhood of their successful issue would be enhanced if Arab ruler acted ostensibly upon his own initiative. If H.M.G. decided to get into direct touch with Kemal the necessity for this expedient would however disappear and without further instructions from me no action should be taken by you." [11]

By the summer of 1921, however, as Whitehall began to stake all on the Greeks, who, by July, were aiming a new offensive at Ankara,[12] Churchill`s clandestine design fell to the ground. But thanks to the fact that Faisal himself began, by the end of the year, to ventilate the idea of Iraqi exchanges with the Kemalists, British policy makers were forced to consider their policy.

Faisal had mixed motives. On the eve of his accession to the throne, in August 1921, he had still been prepared to leave not only his foreign relations but also all matters concerning foreign subjects in British, or, more accurately, in the High Commissioner`s, hands.[13] Soon afterwards, however, he like the British officials on the spot

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10. Cox to Churchill, 31 May 1921, C.O.730/2/27263.
11. Churchill to Cox, 10 June 1921, C.O.730/2/27263. This reply had been largely drafted by Hubert Young, who as a former member of the F.O. was the Middle East Department`s expert on international law, see Minute by H.Young, 30 May 1921, C.O.730/12/26795.
12. R.H.Davison, op.cit.,p.192.
13. see p.289.

began to be worried about the "element of gamble"[14] in Churchill`s policy of cutting expenditure in Iraq; he feared that the Kemalists might call Churchill`s bluff and that he would be left alone to face the invading Turks. Instead, he preferred to investigate possibilities of co-existence with the Kemalists, so long as he was assured of ultimate British backing. As his views were transmitted by Cox to Churchill, in November 1921:

> "it is my (Faisal`s) belief that we should be entirely free from fear of internal trouble in Irac while as regards the Turkish menace I am convinced that if we in Iraq were a united people supporting an Islamic Government with Great Britain frankly at our back though in background, Turks would never have the means or the excuse for organising a serious aggression against us. For any less serious aggression such as frontier raids and annoyance of that type we should be able to look after ourselves provided always that in last resort we can rely on a reasonable measure of British support.
> It is this same line of thought which makes me favour so much the idea of my being placed in a position to have a friendly exchange of views with Turks". 15

Faisal reiterated this argument in February 1922.[16] But the strands of his thought showed various other threads: he was somewhat apprehensive about his close affiliation with the British who, because of their ostensible instigation and support of the Christian Greeks against the Moslem Turks, were rapidly losing what had remained of their prestige in the Islamic world.[17] Further, in view of Faisal`s

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14. see p.280.
15. Cox to Churchill, 6 Nov. 1921, C.O.730/7/55287.
16. As Cox transmitted Faisal`s views to London on 8 Febr.:"if (Anglo-Iraqi) treaty were concluded at once and people of Iraq thereby united he confidently believes that he would be in a position to repel the Turks by raising the tribes to co-operate with his Arab troops. If on the other hand the situation continues gradually to deteriorate on present lines without his being in a position to take any measures of his own to prevent it he may one day, he fears, find the Turks in occupation of Mosul vilayet...Alternatively, he thinks that by diplomatic means he might be able to avert danger if placed

great annoyance at the French-Kemalist Agreement of October 20, 1921,[18] one may assume that his requests for talks with the Kemalists were also meant to secure Iraq a voice in any future agreements with the Turks lest the British come to an understanding with Angora as detrimental to the Arab cause as the cession of Syrian territory to Turkey by Franklin-Bouillon.

Taken together Faisal`s motives of demanding the diplomatic freedom necessary for talks with the Kemalists sprang from genuine concern about both the Turkish menace to Mosul and the uncertain British support of the Iraqi cause. That Faisal was not creating a bogey is sufficiently testified by Churchill`s similar concern and by the remedy contemplated. Indeed, how right was Faisal`s apprehension about the precarious situation is obvious from Churchill`s lines in one of his personal and secret despatches to Cox of 19th September 1922:

> "Kemalists would no doubt over-run the whole of Mosul if a state of war lasted for some time between them and Great Britain. The question of its recovery would then be a matter for a peace conference and not for military operations." 19

But irrespective of the practical requirements of the generalsituation, Faisal`s requests were subsumed under the Anglo-Iraqi struggle over the foreign relations article V of the unequal treaty. It was in the course of the general struggle over the signing of the treaty that the issue was transformed from a practical to a purely political and legal nature; further in the course of this transformation the question of Iraq`s external sovereignty was brought into the poli-

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16. contd.,in a position to enter into communications with Turks by reason of the conclusion of our treaty with him."C.O.730/19/6768.
17. cf.Memorandum of an unofficial interview with his Majesty the King Feisal, 10 December 1921, C.O.730/8/63348.
18. ibid.

tical arena even though it was a matter of international law.

Article V of the first Anglo-Iraqi treaty of 1922[20] was fought out in the Lloyd George Cabinet earlier in the same year, from February to April. Thereafter, it remained the governing instrument for the conduct of Iraq's external relations. In fact, when in the summer the Iraqi Council pressed for amendments, Shuckburgh jotted down at the London end:

> "I see no option but to stand firm. The matter has been fought out with the F.O. and in the Cabinet, and there can, I think, be no question of going back on our decision."21

In short, the Middle East Department was anxious not to revive the "internecine" struggle that had marked the Cabinet debates over the extent of British control over Iraq's external relations. Three factions had been discernible in the Cabinet. As their respective arguments shed interesting light on the official mind that took the decisions on Iraq, their relationship merits a brief description.

Churchill and Montagu, whose motives have already been traced were joined by H.Fisher from the Board of Education, who was the British representative at the League of Nations, and also by Worthington-Evans from the War Office. While Fisher was backing any course that was likely to accord the mandated peoples more liberty, the Secretary of State for War was as keen on cutting military expenditure in Iraq as Churchill. So also was Balfour; as he made his point in

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19.Churchill to Cox, Personal and Secret, 19 Sept.1922,C.O.730/24/45342

20.Art.V read,"His Majesty the King of Iraq shall have the right of representation in London and in such other capitals and places as may be agreed upon by the High Contracting Parties. Where His Majesty the King of Iraq is not represented he agrees to entrust the protection of Iraq nationals to His Britannic Majesty. His Majesty the King of Iraq shall himself issue exequaturs to representatives of Foreign Powers in Iraq after His Britannic Majesty has agreed

February:

> "the only way to deal with Mesopotamia in the present financial position was to give Faisal as large a measure of control as possible, though he (Balfour) did not know whether the Arabs had the stability to exercise such control." 22

But Balfour differed from this faction by the regard he showed for the French. It was on this point that he fully agreed with both Curzon and Lloyd George.

Although Curzon professed agreement in the "general proposition to establish King Feisal in a strong position",[23] he always laboured the point that France would never allow Syria to exercise the same powers as were suggested for Faisal. More, he feared that if Faisal were given control over Iraq's external relations and the right of separate foreign representation, "the present difficulties between France and ourselves would be accentuated".[24] Incidentally, Shuckburgh, the head of the Middle East Department, must have shared Curzon's consideration for the French, for when the Iraqi-Syrian boundary question cropped up a year later,[25] he wrote in retrospect:

> "I have felt for some time that we are going too fast all on Middle East...No good trying to do everything at once, ...Do not let us complicate matters by getting up a wrangle with French." 26

As for Lloyd George, who constituted a faction of its own because of his frequently changing moods, he questioned the practicability of giving Iraq control over external relations at all: in his

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20. contd.,to their appointment". see Hurewitz, Diplomacy in the Near and Middle East, vol.II,p.112.
21. Minute by J.Shuckburgh, 29 June 1922, C.O.730/22/31361.
22. Cabinet meeting, 21 February 1922, CAB 23/29, p.143.
23. ibid.,p.144.
24. ibid.
25. i.e. the exact delimitation of the provisional boundary agreed upon at Abu Kamal, in 1920, see: C.O.730/22/28898 and 38/8343.

view Iraq as "a mere collection of tribes"[27] had no claim to foreign relations. Otherwise, he was fully on the side of those who considered that French agreement to any concession of external sovereignty was indispensable. As he put it:

"it was important that we should march in step with France".[28]

It was on Lloyd George`s proposal that Percy Cox was informed about the Cabinet`s "greatest reluctance" to agree to any separate diplomatic and consular representation of Iraq, "until the State had become an established fact and made good".[29] Significantly, Cox was given a sort of casting vote in so far as he was requested to send back his view on the likely effect that the denial of Faisal`s claims would have on his prestige among Iraqis, a matter about which the Cabinet did not conceal its concern.

By April 1922, things came to a head when Faisal topped his previous requests with a demand of the formal abrogation of the mandate. At the same time Cox warned the Cabinet that the wholesale rejection of Faisal`s request for the permission of some measure of foreign representation would "injure Feisal`s prestige vitally".[30] As for Faisal`s stubbornness on the mandate issue there was full agreement in the Cabinet that any concession to it would raise serious international difficulties. As a result Curzon felt strengthened in maintaining his domino-theory. As he urged it upon Lloyd George with an edgy cajolery that reveals the mood of the Cabinet:

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26. Minute by Shuckburgh, 4 Dec.1923, C.O.730/43/57834.
27. see footnote 22.
28. Cabinet meeting of 5 April 1922, CAB 23/30.
29. see footnote 22.
30. see footnote 28.

> "I am loth to make concessions which may be very troublesome to us, and which almost inevitably lead to a demand for something more...But if you and the Cabinet think that the situation has changed and that we ought to reverse our previous decision I do not wish...to stand in the way, although it is the Foreign Office and not the Colonial Office who will be the sufferers by the surrender. For, once Feisal attains his representation he will not have much more to say to the Colonial Office. His man will sit on the doorstep of the Foreign Office and will cause us an amount of diplomatic trouble which I regard with the gravest apprehension and dismay. Mr. Churchill has been good enough to relieve me of Feisal. The last thing I want is to have him back again!"[31]

It was in these circumstances that Faisal was accorded the r i g h t of establishing a diplomatic representation in London.[32] The additional provision for representation in other foreign capitals was, at least for the moment, used as a bait in the general effort to induce Faisal to sign the treaty. While in its minutes the Middle East Department casually referred to Cairo, Teheran and Constantinople,[33] it refrained in spite of Faisal`s request for information, from specifying any of the capitals it had in mind.[34]

The issue of the shaping of Iraq`s external relations cannot be fully understood without examining the interplay of some political factors at the height of its discussion. In considering the seven months from February to September 1922 there was, first, the astonnishing vacillation in Lloyd George`s mind between extremely contradictory estimates of the value that Iraq had to Great Britain. By February, when Lloyd George had strongly deprecated giving Faisal the right of any foreign representation, he had ended his argument with eulogi-

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31. Curzon to Lloyd George, 5 April 1922, Appendix IV to Cabinet Minutes of the meeting of 5 April, CAB 23/30. Curzon was absent from this important Cabinet meeting.
32. On the struggle ofthe Middle East Department for getting the F.O. to concede the term r i g h t in the treaty article V see: Shuckburgh to Masterton Smith, February 1922, C.O.730/28/5434.

zing Churchill`s general policy in Iraq in the highest terms of appreciation:

> "It was due to his sagacity and courage that a policy had been evolved which had made it possible for us to hold it (the region of Iraq). Without this policy it was probable that we should have lost Mesopotamia, and he (Lloyd George) thought that in the future this country might become of great importance to the Empire." 35

However, seven months later, under the strain of Mustafa Kemal`s jubilant victory over the Greeks, and frightened by the loomings of Chanak and the menace to the Freedom of the Straits, the Prime Minister "bolted" into the opposite direction. Judged by his previous statements he must have lost his nerve when he begged the Cabinet to discuss the question that:

> "Mosul and the Tigris Valley were really of no account as a British interest. It was arguable as to whether we ought to remain there at all." 36

Thanks to the armistice of Mudania and Lloyd George`s fall from power, the Prime Minister`s motion was not debated by this high powered Cabinet. In general, Lloyd George`s changing moods once more demonstrated the utter ruthlessness with which, in the most dire political circumstances, Faisal was bent to the British will. Further in view of the contrast between British encouragement of Faisal`s mobilization of military means and her prohibition on the exploration of the less costly and more peaceful diplomatic means, one may duly speak of a predominance of militarism on the British side over political thinking. Its explanation has to be found in the British distrust of Fai-

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33.ibid.
34.cf.H.Young, 23 August 1922, C.O.730/24/42370.
35.see footnote 22.
36.Cabinet meeting 49(22),15 September 1922, CAB 23/31.

sal's character and ambitions.[37] It was this factor which prevented them from exploiting the French agreement with Mustafa Kemal, concluded behind their backs, as a precedent for according Iraq a large measure of external sovereignty. It is difficult to assume that such a step would have raised more international difficulties than the French precedent had done.

While these oscillations of opportune British policy making without doubt helped to shelve the settlement of Faisal's claims, the issue of Iraq's external relations was more essentially affected by the political implications for Iraq as well as the British Empire of the caliphate question. In particular to the British the caliphate question spelt the menace of Pan-Islamism to their "cordon-sanitaire" strategy in the Middle East. However, the British policy makers regarded this politico-religious aspect[38] of the issue as so intricate and so bristling with difficulties that they decided to put a taboo on the question of the caliphate with regard to its impact on the sovereignty of the Islamic successor states of the Ottoman Empire. In other words, the Foreign Office and the Middle East Department considered it to be:

> "most undesirable that H.M.G. became involved in this question." 39

Surprisingly, by June 1922, Churchill had completely changed his view on the caliphate. Previously, he had believed in the practicability of making a place for local religious sentiment by according some form

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37. see p.294.
38. see Epilogue.
39. Shuckburgh to Masterton Smith, 10 June 1922, C.O.730/30/25444.

of representation to the spiritual authority of the caliphate. Now he swung into the Foreign Office line of thinking and shared their warning as to the danger of trying to separate the Sultan's temporal and spiritual powers. Informing Cox about the dangers of attempting to make any such distinction he concluded:

> "if, as the Government of India suggest, the Ottoman flag were flown at Bagdad and an official representative of the Caliph resided there, it would be impossible for the people of Iraq to believe that this arrangement had no political significance." 40

On the whole, the Middle East Department was at a loss of how to bridge the discrepancy between their desire to conciliate the Indian Moslem susceptibility to the destruction of the Ottoman Empire, the Kemalists' exploitation of Islamic sentiment for their secular political cause and the British intention to discourage or hinder the rise of any form of Pan-Islamism. Their dilemma was enhanced by Faisal's concern with buttressing his prestige among Islamic peoples and canvassing his British controlled government as a truly Islamic government. It was probably out of a combination of these motives that, by August 1922, Iraqi officials in the presence of British advisers contemplated sending Nuri Pasha on a secret mission to Constantinople and express Iraq's readiness:

> "to recognise the Sultan as the spiritual Caliph in the same way and to the same extent as Afghanistan does but not in the way that Egypt does." 41

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40.Churchill to Cox, 24 June 1922, C.O.730/30/25444.
41.Cox to Churchill, 15 August 1922, C.O.730/23/41146.

Interestingly, Captain Clayton was to accompany Nuri "to keep him on rails".[42] But the mission seems never to have come off. Churchill`s warnings of June seemed to have prevailed at Bagdad. Thus the problem of settling the Caliphate question remained in abeyance. Fortunately, the gradual abolition of the Ottoman Caliphate and Sultanate by the Kemalists within the next two years spared the British further consideration of a final decision.

The issue of Iraq`s external relations regained its true international perspective, when in October 1922, the Middle East Department began to test arguments for retaining British control over Iraq`s external relations after her admission to the League of Nations. Significantly, British policy makers began to consider the early League membership of Iraq as a desirable objective because it entailed a loosening of existing British commitments to the overall development of the country. To bring about such a result was considered by British experts to be particularly urgent because they noticed that the League which was rapidly gaining in status stiffened its attitude towards the duties of the mandatory powers. They calculated that Britain, by sticking to the unequal treaty while severing Iraq from the burdensome fetters of international control, might fare better both economically and politically. In short, in their thoughts the emanci-

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42.ibid. Captain Clayton was one of the British advisers in Iraq; from Cox`s note it appears that the initiative came from the Palace. As to the difficulties that were foreseen in talks with the Turks, Cox wrote:"It is contemplated that the Turks will want to discuss the question of Kurdish areas...Feisal and his advisers feel that the Kurdish question is a dangerous one to touch and that they themselves had better avoid it but that if the Turk appeared inclined to give trouble in this regard Iraq shall counter them by demanding Arab areas still under Turkey (e.g.Urfa Mardin)they might also counter them by threatening to intice Northern Kurds to join

pation of Iraq constituted a cost-saving device; and by engineering the admission of Iraq to the League on the precedents of the Dominions, India and Haiti,[43] they hoped to retain the imperially vital sector of Iraq's external relations under British control. Of course, in the general testing of arguments for eventual negotiation doubts were expressed as to the applicability of the chosen precedents, for they enjoyed the non-recurring status of founding members of the League. But the argument was kept in store. As a minute from the Middle East Department of April 1923, called Iraq, Haiti and the League of Nations read:

> "The defence to our argument...would probably be that Haiti was one of the original members, and that her admission cannot be cited as a precedent, any more than the admission of India, which would not be granted if she applied now. But it's worth trying." 44

The question of Iraq's admission to the League did not become practical in the time under survey. Nevertheless, the issue of Iraq's external relations remained bristling with all sorts of attempts and partial solutions likely to be prejudicial to its ultimate settlement.

From Faisal's side much pressure was exerted on Whitehall for Iraq's mission to the peace talks with the Turks at Lausanne.[45] But the Foreign Office rejected these requests point blank.[46] Afterwards, at the conference, it was the Turkish delegation which refused

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42.contd.,autonomous Kurdistan under suzerainty of Iraq".
43.cf.Young to Masterton Smith, 2 Oct.1922, C.O.730/24/48983.
44.C.O.730/46. The minute was written for H.Young. It carried signatures by Bullard, Shuckburgh and Young. Young recommended the argument to Shuckburgh for future use.
45.Cox to Churchill,7 October 1922, C.O.730/25/50143.
46.F.O. to C.O., 23 October 1922, C.O.730/29/52805;further letter of 13 Nov.1922, C.O.730/29/56228.

to permit Iraqi participation in the frontier negotiations.[47] Further, in July 1923, Faisal, in order to raise Iraq's status, pleaded for the transfer of the entire Middle East Department in London from the Colonial to the Foreign Office.[48] But for the British this was a stale argument that they did not wish to revive.[49] Any way, already in April 1922, Curzon had made it quite clear that the last thing he wanted was to have Faisal back.[50] Yet slight progress was made when, in July 1923, the Foreign Office agreed to the formation of an Iraqi ministry of foreign affairs.[51] Needless to say its activity was restricted to organizing the department, to administering its budget and, probably, to routine drafting of policies. The condition imposed was that no direct relations with foreign powers were allowed "until treaty with Turkey (was) signed and status of Iraq recognised by League of Nations".[52]

While the British Foreign Office, because of its detached position from Iraq tended to dispose nonchalantly with questions which touched local susceptibilities in Bagdad, it took unusual care when it came to shaping Iraq's diplomatic representation in London. The explanation for this care has to be found in the particular atmosphere created by the multiform diplomatic corps present in the capital. Within their hierarchy of status each diplomat had only to look at his place in the diplomatic list to gauge his exact position and his country's prestige.

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47.F.O. to C.O., 24 September 1923, C.O.730/49/47137.
48.Minute by Shuckburgh, July 1923, C.O.730/41/33888.
49.see pp.105-6.
50.see footnote 31.
51.F.O. to C.O., 10 July 1923, C.O.730/48/34533.
52.ibid.

More importantly, besides "ostensible" status, there were the real business arrangements for actual diplomatic transactions. Thus Iraq's representative was given the status of a diplomatic agent. As such his position was modelled, partly after the pre-war representative of the principality of Bulgaria,[53] partly after the post-war diplomatic representation of Afghanistan.[54] The Afghan model was of particular significance, because Afghanistan although being accorded full external sovereignty and control over her foreign relations after the 1919 war against the British nevertheless, at London, communicated with the Foreign Office only through the India Office.[55] Likewise, the Iraqi diplomatic agent in London was supposed to confer only with the Colonial Office. But the facade was still more elaborate. As real business had to continue to be transacted at Bagdad with the High Commissioner as Whitehall's mouthpiece, the status of the Iraqi diplomatic agent was purely nominal no matter how much prestige with which it was compensated. As Vernon of the Middle East Department had suggested in July 1925 as basis for agreement in the interdepartmental struggle over the issue:

> "Ja'afar Pasha would have the extra prestige of being allowed to go and see the Foreign Secretary, but he would only talk to him about the weather and would come and discuss business with us". 56

Vernon, who was the financial expert of the Department, was the most stubborn among those who rejected the Afghan precedent as a model for

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53. F.O. to C.O., 5 March 1925, C.O.730/84/10475: "As diplomatic agent the Iraq representative would figure on the Diplomatic List after charrés d'affairs and would be entitled to diplomatic privileges.
54. cf. Minute by Shuckburgh, July 1923, C.O.730/41/33888, also: 74/16085.
55. cf. Dobbs to C.O., 3 April 1925, and minute by Young of 8 April, C.O.730/74/16085.
56. Minute by R,V,Vernon of 8 June 1925, C.O.730/82/25086.

Iraq's diplomatic representation. Even Shuckburgh had come round to accept the model, although he had rejected it in 1923 on grounds that:

> "we had much better make one bite of a cherry and postpone the transfer until it can be made without reservation".57

Strictly speaking, the opposition to the Afghan precedent was of three kinds. Officials such as Vernon regarded it as a "nightmare arrangement";[58] in his case he seemed implicitly to have deplored the abolition of the pre-war arrangement, whereby Afghanistan had delegated her external relations to the British Empire.[59] Closely connected with this seemingly reactionary attitude was the fear that any division of Iraq's direct communication with British authority would re-introduce the "hydra-headed" policy making of which British rule in the Middle East had only recently been cured. Lastly and most importantly, it seems that Shuckburgh had rejected the element of gradualism inherent in the Afghan precedent. As regards external sovereignty he had presumably once favoured a clear-cut constitutive act of emancipation rather than a policy of indecision and "shift". However, he became convinced by Dobbs's argument that the concession of diplomatic representation in London would make a tremendous impression on the Iraqi political scene.

Incidentally, an interesting strategem was involved when the British Foreign Office urged that Ja'afar Pasha's letter of credence should be signed by the Iraqi Foreign Minister rather than by Faisal. This stipulation had entirely to do with the discrimination against the Soviet representative in London. Faisal's signature would have en-

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57. see footnote 48.
58. see footnote 56.
59. as he wrote, "I cannot see that either our High Commr. in Bagdad or the M.E.D. of the C.O. will continue to serve...any useful purpose."

tailed a royal audience for the Iraqi diplomatic agent at Buckingham Palace, and since the Iraqi representative figured lower on the diplomatic list than the Soviet one, and since the Foreign Office was strictly opposed to honour the latter with an admission to His Majesty the King, such an audience would have torpedoed their policy of discrimination. As an official minute stated the case:

> "Ja`afar Pasha should not be given credentials signed by King Feisal for presentation to His Majesty. If he were, he would have to be given a Royal Audience which would make it very difficult for His Majesty to avoid giving an Audience to the Soviet Representative which has hitherto been possible owing to the fact that the latter was accredited to the S of S for Foreign Affairs and not to His Majesty...arrangements should be made for Ja`afar to be furnished with a letter of credence signed by the Iraqi Foreign Minister (Yasin Pasha) and addressed to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs." 60

On the whole, the shaping of Iraq`s representation in London appears at first sight to have been simply a matter of pure decor. Yet there were crucial political motives in play. The seemingly generous grant of more and more international status to Iraq was in reality a studious and complex British effort to maneuver Iraq out of the kind of internationalism as it was embodied in the Permanent Mandate Commission of the League of Nations. Hence, in December 1924, after L.S. Amery had gained the reins of mandatory power in Iraq, the Foreign Office was reprimanded by Amery`s department for using the word mandate in a note for the League. In the words of the letter:

> "Amery would remark...that on general grounds of policy it was desirable to emphasize, rather than to minimize the distinction in status between Iraq and the States administered under Mandates." 61

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60. Minute from Hall addressed to Amery, 15 June 1925, C.O. 730/82/25086: Hall referred to discussion he had had with Mr. Warner (Head of the Treaty Department of the F.O.) and Mr. Spring Rice of the F.O.

This "anti-mandate" policy, as it began to take shape in late 1924, was,in a formal sense, to help Iraq's entry into the League at the end of the four year treaty period of the Protocol. Imperially, however, this policy was to secure Iraq for the British Empire, just as the mandate formula had done before. The complete reversal of tactics was prompted by Amery's fear that Britain, as it continued to dismantle its material commitments in Iraq,[62] might in the end lose the mandate after the four years. For once the application for Iraq's entry into the League was made and the current treaty had expired, it was up to the League to decide what to do.

Amery had further reasons for being apprehensive ever since the Committee of Imperial Defence had told the MacDonald Cabinet that:

> "the Imperial forces in Iraq cannot be depended upon to guard Abadan or the oil-fields." 63

According to Hubert Young, the result of this state of affairs was that

> "one of the main objections to giving up the Iraq mandate had disappeared." 64

While looking to Geneva, Amery had to watch such an opinion as well. Yet Young expressly refrained from seriously suggesting that they consider the dismissal of Iraq from Imperial control. On the other hand, however, in order to provide Dobbs with a means for exerting pressure on the Iraqi Assembly he proposed to inform the High Commissioner of the possibility of an Italian take-over.[65] Although in this particular

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61. C.O. to F.O., 19 November 1924, C.O.730/67/53142.
62. For statistical data see C.O.730/83/58631; For the year 1925 see in particular Cabinet Committee on Policy with regard to Iraq, CAB 27/296.
63. Minute by H.Young, 7 June 1924, C.O.730/66/27132; Young was member of the Sub-Committee of the C.I.D. on the Protection of the South Persian Oil-Fields, see report of May 1924,CAB 16/62 C.I.D. cf.also: Reports on the Co-operation and Co-ordination between Adm.,Air,W.O.

case Young dismissed the possibility of an actual take-over on the ground that the Iraqis, if offered the alternative of the special treaty relationship with Britain, would never accept Italy as mandatory power, he must have been aware that matters looked different from the European end. For just about that time Eric Drummond informed the Middle East Department that "the Italian Government would be eager to assume the mandate" and that there was:

> "a distinct danger (sic!) that if the (League)Council were asked in general terms for their views on the subject, they might reply by suggesting another mandatory for that country".[66]

In these circumstances Amery had to see that Britain did not get involved in any major political showdown with the "recalcitrant" Iraqi Assembly which she might not be able to settle and which, therefore, might inevitably bring the League onto the scene. The same consideration applied to the danger of aggression from without. In both contingencies Britain might be deprived of the mandate or, more accurately, of her pre-eminent position in Iraq.[67]

In the years 1924 and 1925, the chances that the British Government might escape such a situation were not very good. As we have seen there was the constant danger of a Turkish invasion of the Mosul Vilayet. Further, owing to unrelenting British pressure on the Iraqi Assembly to ratify the treaty and the severe subsidiary agreements,[68]

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63.contd., C.I.D., National and Imperial Defence Sub-Committee 1923, CAB 16/46. cf. also:Cabinet meeting of 1st May 1924,CAB 23/48.

64.Minute by H.Young,ibid.;cf.also p.206, footnote 125,Novar's point.

65.ibid.

66.Eric Drummond (F.O.) to C.O.,6th June 1924, C.O.730/86/27132; see also Memorandum by H.Dobbs of 30September 1925,p.7, C.O.730/78/46165 in which Dobbs in retrospect referred to the danger of an Italian bid for the Iraq mandate.

67.In this context, cf. a letter from Churchill(Treasury)to Chamberlain (F.O.) written a year later,7 Sept.1925, in similar circumstances, F.O.800/258 in which he advises to exempt Iraq from military action.

Iraq was already staggering on the brink of serious internal disorder. At this moment of crisis a new danger loomed from the foreign claims of judicial and, in particular, economic capitulations. The latter the Iraqi Assembly would never accept.[69] To knock the bottom out of those claims and, at the same time, to avoid isolation from the American and Italian allies, Amery and Dobbs took great efforts to open Iraq to foreign enterprise and consular representation.

Strictly speaking, the admission of foreign enterprise was to start and should have been allowed once peace had been concluded with Turkey. Further, Iraqi apprehension about a revival of the capitulary system of Ottoman days had already been appeased by the MacDonald Government, though not without a claim for priority for British enterprise. As Thomas had put it in February 1924 when he instructed Dobbs to assure Faisal of British support against the revival of the capitulations:

> "If the Iraq Government continue to pursue an enlightened economic and fiscal policy, Great Britain will not insist upon the revival of the Economic Capitulations for herself at the conclusion of the Treaty period and will support the Iraq Government in resisting their revival in favour of other powers. Great Britain would however in any case require to receive most favoured nation treatment." 70

At Bagdad Dobbs spurred on this policy in his own way. For instance, when Fritz Grobba, the German official and expert on Middle East affairs, passed the city in 1924, Dobbs requested him to tell the

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68. see p.331.
69. Judicial capitulations were revived for those powers who had enjoyed them before the war. As Persia was therefore excluded from this system there followed a long period of strained relations between Iraq and Persia. Nevertheless Persia was represented by several consuls, see next page.
70. Thomas to Dobbs, 8 February 1924, C.O.730/65/3969.

Auswärtiges Amt that a German Consul would be very welcome at Bagdad.[71] Hardly a year later a German application for consular representation was made.[72] Further, when the Middle East Department in London surveyed the Iraqi railway system with a view of extending it in the north, Dobbs had urged that, as in respect to Turkey Iraq would "always have to trust mainly to diplomatic measures to defend herself its frontier delimitations should be governed by economic rather than strategic considerations".[73]

To return to Amery, the apprehension that at the end of four years Iraq might not be admitted to the League but be handed over to another mandatory[74] became a distinct element in his policy towards Iraq. He put particular emphasis on safeguarding the "ostensible" Iraqi right to issue exequaturs to foreign consuls. He underlined that consular representation in Iraq implied the recognition of the Iraqi Government. Altogether, by 1926, there were a French, Norwegian, Italian, German and American consul, further a Persian consul general. The latter two exercised their functions informally, whereas the others had recognised the Iraq Government. More, Amery took considerable effort to bring about a rapprochement between Faisal and the French.[76] Similarly, the Italians were accorded generous privileges for starting development projects and educational work in Iraq. In short,

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71. F. Grobba, Männer und Mächte im Orient, Göttingen 1968, p. 34.
72. see Memorandum by H. Dobbs, September 1925, C.O.730/78/46165.
73. Dobbs to Thomas, 28 February 1924, C.O.730/57/11693.
74. Dobbs referred also to rumours in the British press that Germany was pressing for early admission into the League in order to apply for the Iraq mandate as a compensation for its lost colonies, see footnote 72. Dobbs' Memorandum.
75. cf. F.O. to C.O., 16 April 1925, C.O.730/84/17485.
76. cf. correspondence between Amery and Dobbs in November 1925 and earlier, C.O.730/80/54901, 52143; 85/44596; 86/49655. This rapproche-

it seemed as if Amery intended to lull the European powers into believing that Iraq was independent, and into forgetting that Iraq was subject to the Permanent Mandates Commission. Hence in November 1924 the Foreign Office was admonished by Amery's department and its attention drawn to his line of policy in the following terms:

> "He (Amery) thinks it desirable to avoid the use of language which might appear to imply that the Permanent Mandates Commission has necessarily any legitimate concern with the affairs of Iraq, or which might prejudge the question of the competence or otherwise of that body to examine the Annual Reports upon Iraq." 77

Complementary to this effort to conceal Iraq's true mandate status was the Colonial Office's care of studiously avoiding any expression or reference that could suggest that Iraq was considered by the British Government as part of the Empire. For instance, when in April 1926 the Times report of the floods in Bardad was the only news under the heading "Imperial", Shuckburgh requested his department's public relation officer to see that henceforth news relating to Iraq appeared under the heading "Foreign".[78]

As has become evident, politically, Iraq's external status was constantly changing in accordance with the needs of British diplomacy in the Middle East. Its definition was geared to the pre-cautionary measures taken by the Middle East Department to safeguard Britain's predominance in Iraq after the expiration of the mandate. Thus, by 1925 on the ever of the Mosul decision by the League, Churchill, eager to make his office as Chancellor of the Exchequer a success, had

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76.contd.,should also help to open up the motor route to the Mediterranian via Syrian territory as the construction of the planned all-British route was too expensive for the moment; see also Desert Motor Route, 1 October 1924, F.O.371/10093, E8469.

77.see footnote 61.

78.Shuckburgh to Major Philip Graves.15 April 1926, C.O.730/98/8144.

come to regard Iraq as an independent state that must fight its battles alone should the Turks take to military measures instead of merely verbal protest against the League decision; at most Britain should act as a "benevolent bottle holder".[79] In the same year, Iraq's invitation by the Netherland Government to take a seat on the Industrial Property Conference at the Hague was grasped by the Middle East Department as an opportunity for underpinning its policy of emphasizing the difference between Iraq and other Mandated Territories.[80] The apprehension and the spirit in which Iraq's application for admission to the League was contemplated by the Middle East Department were well expressed when Hall sought to calm the minds of his colleagues:

> "I do not think that an Iraqi representative would embarras the British Delegation. He would, of course, be a mere cipher but his presence at the Conference even if as it is hoped, he contributes nothing to the discussions, would achieve the object which I have in mind". 81

Of all British officials the man to whom this atmosphere of constant political variation and change of status seems to have been most congenial was Henry Dobbs. But Dobbs, who was stigmatized in the eyes of some of his colleagues for being partly responsible for the "nightmare" arrangement of the Afghan Treaty, was suspected by the Foreign Office of being too careless about his status as a British High Commissioner vis-a-vis the Iraqis. So much did he bother the Foreign Office that, in December 1924, after the Conservative Baldwin Government had been in power for a month it considered it to be expedient to instruct the Middle East Department as to the present and

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79. see footnote 67. Churchill's letter to Chamberlain. For the C.I.D. study of the military situation, see C.I.D. CAB 16/62, 12 Dec. 1925.
80. Industrial Property Conference, the Hague, Note of 7 May 1925 with minutes from Hall, Young and others, C.O.730/82/20616.

future status of both the High Commissioner and the Iraq mandate state.[82] For the time being the High Commissioner was to be regarded as being near to the position of a Governor General. Faisal's relationship to him was described as analogous to that of "the Ruler of a native State in India and in other respects to that of the King of Egypt". As for the future, when the mandate had come to an end, Iraq's position was forecast as becoming similar to that of Egypt, where the High Commissioner, thanks to the British Army of Occupation and to tradition, continued to take unchallenged precedence of other foreign diplomatic representatives. Obviously Iraq was not going to be allowed to be fully independent, no matter how early it was admitted to the League of Nations.

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81. See footnote 80.
82. F.O. to C.O., 10 Dec. 1924, C.O.730/67/57887.

## Chapter VIII

## Iraq before the League of Nations

> "All peoples throughout the world who had grievances, whether imaginary or real, looked to the Paris Peace Conference to redress them and the very existence of this body was a disturbing factor. The League of Nations will not be able to avoid this danger altogether."

George Louis Beer, Memorandum (1919)
Milner Papers

When the Lloyd George Cabinet and the old-fashioned imperialists of the Garden Suburb such as Milner and Amery had successfully made their bid for Iraq, they were convinced that the "mortgage" of League control with which they had obtained this imperial asset could easily and at short notice be wiped off. Their indulgence in preserving the vagueness of Art.22 of the Covenant was a step in this direction. This, in turn, dovetailed into the somewhat half-hearted measures for calming the dominions' wrath at the formation, and particularly the composition, of the Permanent Mandates Commission.[1] At least like the dominions, they demured to being subjected to the supervision by "fussy busibodies".[2] However, as they sensed the predicament of the

1. see the Cabinet's League of Nations Committee, Minutes of the meeting of 14 Oct.1920, CAB 27/98. Members were, Balfour(in the chair) Curzon(F.O.), Chamberlain(Treasury), Fisher(Board of Education), Col.L.Storr as Secretary. Attendant were also W.Long(Admiralty) and W.Churchill(W.O.).
2. ibid.

dominions` stubbornness on this issue, for the sake of diplomacy they were satisfied with the general understanding that "the settlement and issue of the Mandates should precede the establishment of the Commission".[3]

That the League, rudimentary as it was in 1920,[4] should also accede to this understanding and to its offsprings such as the San Remo Agreement of April 1920 by which Iraq was allocated to Britain, must be explained both by the League`s dependence on the good-will of the Supreme Council and by the way in which it understood its own role. In fact, the latter aspect largely accounts for what, in the case of the Iraq mandate, appears at first sight as a most favoured nation treatment for Great Britain. But, confronted with the issue of the Iraq mandate, the League practised exactly what, as we have seen, Woolf and other advocates of Fabianism had preached. In other words, in following the course of gradualism and abstaining from forcing the issue of the Iraq mandate and the open door principle it provided the British and American contestants with a cooling-off period. In this respect, the League considered its function to be exactly what Amery, misled by bias and suspicion, had said it ought to be. As he has written of his stay at Geneva in 1925:

> "I felt that the League could be of real value as a standing conference at which statesmen could meet and exchange views, not so much at the Council itself, but in the many informal occasions provided for social intercourse. Limited to that function it could also provide convenient machinery for conciliation, and even for the expression of a definite opinion on the wrights and wrongs of any particular international issue".[5]

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3. ibid.; The Permanent Mandates Commission was constituted on 1 Dec.1920 its members appointed on 22 Febr.1921, it first met on 4 Oct.1921.
4. The League started work at Geneva in Jan.1920.

From this angle, the League generally welcomed the British practice of securing her allies' consent to mandatory policy in Iraq before submitting the matter to the Council. Other reasons why the League kept somewhat aloof of the Iraq mandate until 1923 were the absence of a peace treaty in which Turkey renounced its sovereignty over the Arab dependencies and its own shaky condition after President Harding had pronounced its death! Although the League rejected the obituary, nevertheless it took great care not to allow itself to drift into opposition to the State Department, which it hoped to receive back at Geneva one day. All these factors accounted for the calm that prevailed at the Council meetings.

Yet the League could afford periods of diplomatic stagnation, for a good deal of its channelling of "inter-state" activity took place at that level where professional organisations, private agencies and representatives of national government departments clustered together, attracted by the "assimilative power of the Geneva spirit".[6] It was at this level of new socio-economic "clusters" that the true alternative to imperialism manifested itself. In looking at it one remembers not only Woolf's sociological approach to international relations, but also de Madariaga's point, made in 1928, that:

> "if there exists an alternative to imperialism there is far greater strength in anti-imperialist public opinion".[7]

In comparison with this truly creative aspect of its life the League's peace-keeping in inter-state relations was only a fire-warden's job:

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5. L.S.Amery, My Political Life, vol.II, p.331.
6. cf. Alfred Zimmern, The League of Nations and the Rule of Law 1918-1935, London 1936, pp.310-11.
7. see: Can the League Cope with Imperialism? Discussion by H.N.Brailsford and Salvador de Madariaga before the F.R.A., New York, 4 Febr.

it was to preserve the status quo among the various powers as a shelter under which the new life could prosper.

Significantly, and unfortunately, this level of the League's activity was also a level on which the conception of national sovereignty was the ultimately governing principle. Strictly speaking, as regards the mandated territories, there was no absolute rule that they had first to pass the threshhold of national sovereignty before their various social components could represent themselves on the "non-diplomatic" level of the League. But the League failed to make use of such an opportunity. Indeed, it was an absurd feature of the League's gospel that the mandates were to be nursed to fully sovereign nation-states, whereas existing sovereign states were expected to transfer more and more of their sovereignty to the various sections of the League's secretariate in which the various interests and social groupings of the mandated peoples and civilizations could have found immediate indigenous representation.[8]

The explanation for this failure, one may say, lay in the League's pre-occupation with peace-keeping and the abolishment of Western territorial imperialism outside its respective state-borders. In the latter respect imperialism was regarded as a phenomenon of sovereignty, or as de Madariaga, for instance, defined it, as "an indefinite prolongation of sovereignty". From this angle, the raising of the mandates so sovereign entities lay underneath the Leninist concept of self-determination as intrinsically an act of "secession" from

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7.contd.,1928, de Madariaga was head of the Disarmament Section of the Secretariat of the League.

8.Woolf had probably provided for this possibility by demanding that the sovereignty of the mandates should be clearly rest with the Lea-

the rule of an imperialist power. It was perhaps because this act of secession or self-determination was extended over a considerable span of time in the case of the mandates, that de Madariaga on first reading the Covenant, had considered Art.22 to be "by far the worst fig-leaf in the whole show".[9] However, what reconciled him and others to the content of the article seems to have been, on the one hand, the fact that the immediate and revolutionary act of secession was institutionalised into a gradual transfer of sovereignty under the auspices of the Permanent Mandates Commission; and on the other, their belief that the mandate article had especial merits in that it put the imperialistic powers into the position of holders of a lease the expiration of which was finally decided by the League Council in conjunction with the Permanent Mandates Commission.

This quasi-personal relationship between the League and the mandatory powers[10] was so important a part of the bridge which, in the interest of peace-keeping, should span the gulf between the new world order and the still virulent, old-fashioned imperialism, that the League took great pains to make mandate contracts in any form, and not to jeopardise them once they were concluded. Hence the almost incredible lengths to which the League went in adapting itself to the vacillations of British mandatory policy towards Iraq. As is well known, in the end, Iraq was not even run by a proper mandate formula.

Take, for instance, the various instances in which either the

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8.contd.,gue. On the other hand, his frequent analogies between the administration of peoples and the Shipping Commission's work as to the waters and banks of the Danube point to rather harsh concepts of making use of such sovereignty.

9.see footnote 7.

10.cf.Problems of Peace , 2nd series, The Geneva Institute of Interna-

submission of the draft mandate to the League was shelved by the British or, the other way about, its acceptance rejected by the League. There is also the way the League acceded to the makeshifts of the treaty and protocol. As one can set out step by step, the League generally concurred in the violation of Art.22(4) which provided that the wishes of the ex-Ottoman communities must be a principal consideration in the selection of the Mandatory. In December 1920, Balfour handed in the draft Iraq mandate, which the League, however, did not pass: owing to the State Department's threat to bring its economic clauses before the Hague tribunal, its foundations were regarded as too shaky. In February 1921, Curzon withdrew the renewed application from the Council's agenda in the light of the forthcoming London talks with the Ankara Delegation.[11] In October, the President of the Council, Hymans, requested the British Government by letter to carry on its policy in Iraq in the spirit of the draft mandate. A month later, Herbert Fisher, the British representative at the League, made a statement to the Council that Britain would henceforth run Iraq by treaty, but that it would maintain the mandate as the operative formula. Finally, on 27th September 1924, the League council accepted the instruments of Treaty, Subsidiary Agreements and Protocol by which Britain had decided to run Iraq and in accordance with which she intended to end the current treaty four years after the ratification of peace with Turkey.

Naturally, the League had to see that it did not estrange Britain which had become its main buttress in Europe. The other way round, the

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10.contd.,tional Relations, August 1927, Oxford 1928,p.168.
11.F.O. to C.O. and I.O.,10 Febr.1921, F.O.371/ (E 1679/37/88).

British Government, advised as it was by such League experts as Cecil, Fisher and Eric Drummond, Balfour`s former private secretary had become the first secretary general of the League, knew exactly to what extent it could exert pressure on the League. On some occasions this balance between the League`s interest in self-preservation and Britain`s awareness of wielding superior political power was threatened with upset as when Curzon, for instance, sought the League`s acknowledgement of the treaty policy which Churchill was enforcing at Bagdad. As Curzon was reported to have reckoned:

> "In view of the fact that H.M.G. might at any moment say that if the Council of the League made difficulties for Great Britain in Mesopotamia, Great Britain will refuse the mandate altogether and leave the League to face the chaos which would ensue as the result, Curzon does not consider that the difficulties to be encountered at Geneva would be insuperable". 12

In mid-1921 there had also been some croaking from Churchill when he remarked to his secretary, Masterton Smith:

> "It is quite possible that in a year or two there will be no mandates and no League of Nations.Something quite different may have taken their place." 13

But there were encouraging voices as well, Reader Bullard`s for example. In July 1922 this burly and somewhat pugnacious Middle East expert, suddenly changed his usually pro-imperialist voice and warned his colleagues of the Middle East Department that to follow Faisal and secure the abrogation of the mandate would:

> "remove Iraq altogether from the purview of the League of Nations and would strike a blow at its prestige." 14

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12.F.O. to C.O.,19 Jan.1922,C.O.730/27/3028.On this Hurst, the legal adviser of the F.O.commented:"We are in a position to take a fairly high line at Geneva".
13.Churchill to Masterton Smith, 9 July 1921, C.O.730/23/33549.
14.Minute by Reader Bullard, 31 July 1922, C.O.730/23/37397.

In such circumstances the League no doubt had to fear for its own existence. Admittedly, there was some occasional indignation in the Permanent Mandates Commission about Britain's "shallow reasoning";[15] for example, when Britain denied the Palestinians' capability for self-government while at the same time giving representative institutions to the less civilized inhabitants of Iraq and Trans-Jordan. But such anger never took the form of an official rebuke or a demand for constitutional amendments.

Indeed, judged by the records of the examination of Britain's annual reports of her administration in Iraq, the Permanent Mandates Commission preferred to talk nineteen to a dozen rather than to sound out critically the motives or, more importantly, the adequacy of British constitutional measures. Let us look at the two sessions of 1926 and 1927 which examined the collected reports for the years 1923 to 1925 and the 1926 report respectively. Incidentally, the 1926 session was the tenth session of the Permanent Mandates Commission since its first meeting in October 1921, and the first session at which an annual report of British mandatory policy in Iraq was fully examined.

At its session in 1926 the Commission was seemingly pleased of being honoured by no less an "examinee" than Henry Dobbs, the British High Commissioner at Bagdad himself. The members of the Commission were agreeably surprised by Henry Dobbs's opening speech in which he resorted, with much eloquence, to the domestic analogy of the parent-child relationship before going in for detail. He compared Bri-

15. Marquis Theodoli in: Minutes of the 5th Session of the P.M.C. held at Geneva from Oct.23rd to Nov.6th, 1924, p.167, Annex 2.

tain's pre-mandate policy under Arnold Wilson with the old-fashioned form of child-raising by which the child is constantly cossetted, petted and comforted by an abundance of nurses and prevented by an "ever present parental restraint from exercising infantile initiative".[16] Percy Cox's administrative policy which, as we have seen, stemmed from some insight in the political necessity of affording the Arabs more liberty as well as from the bad budgetary situation at home and the Royal Air Force methods of holding the country, was described by Dobbs as guided by what he called the modern theory by which a child was allowed to burn itself when it played with fire, while parental control, though still there, was only exercised when the child might otherwise suffer serious harm.

The ensuing questions put by the members of the Commission centred on the fundamental provisions of the Organic Law, such as the relation between Great Britain and Iraq, the functioning of the mandatory's advice, municipal autonomy, royal prerogatives, working of the parliament or the limitation of the powers of the sheiks. The questions were largely factual, and the members listened with credulity when Dobbs explained that the representative institutions set up within three years really worked. As they gullibly put this information into their final observations for the League Council:

> "Sir Henry Dobbs also laid stress on the fact that...the representative system had been introduced into the country without any serious disturbance of public order, and this although Iraq was little prepared for such s system by its traditions and history".17

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16. Report of the 10th Session of the P.M.C. held at Geneva from Nov. 4th to 19th, 1926, Geneva 1926, VI A 24 Mandates. Dobbs was assisted by J.H.Hall and T.I.K.Lloyd from the C.O..The members of the P.M.C. were: Marquis Theodoli (Chairman), Van Rees (Vice-Chairman), Merlin

Further, it added that Dobbs' summary that "Iraq was governed for Iraqis and by Iraqis, helped by a small number of British advisers and inspectors" could not but make a favourable impression on the Commission. Finally, the Commission recommended that future reports should include a list of the international conventions applicable to Iraq.

The 1927 session differed from the previous one in various respects. First there were some changes in the personnel. Britain was represented by Bernard Bourdillon, Counsellor to the High Commissioner for Iraq, assisted by Thomas Lloyd. On the part of the Mandates Commission F.Lugard and M.Yamanaka were absent. But the most prominent event was the attendance of Dr. Ludwig Kastl, the first German member of the Commission, who had been appointed on September 9th, 1926.[18]

Bernard Bourdillon introduced himself with an elaborate oral survey of the general and special internal problems confronting the British in Iraq. Thereafter, the Commission gave primary attention to the economic situation of the country, to the state of external relations particularly with Persia, to the minorities and the general development of national loyalty. Apart from some haggling between Van Rees and Bourdillon over the interpretation of the trade figures and some expressions of regret over the strained relations between Iraq and Persia caused by the British refusal - approved of by the League - to grant the Persians judicial capitulations in Iraq, the Commission

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16.contd., Freire d'Andrade, Frederick Lugard, Pierre Orts, Leopoldo Palacios, William Rappard, Mme Wicksell, M.C.Yamanaka. Secretary was Catastani. Also present was M.A.Grimshaw, representative of the International Labour Organisation.

17.ibid. Report.

18.Kastl reported on a Petition of the Anti-Slavery and Aborigines Protection Society with reference to Samoa.

again displayed much credulity. This was particularly the case when Bourdillon described the boy scout movement as perhaps the only chance for the gradual development of national loyalty. However, the Commission showed a marked interest in the economic life of the country and the state of minority protection. In the latter respect in particular it felt very much in its métier. There was general agreement that the Kurds, while accorded cultural autonomy, could not be granted political autonomy. Finally, the British were requested to include in their next report "a comprehensive survey of important developments affecting the economic life of the country".[19] In this connection some inquiries were also made into the development of the oil indutry and the relations between the Turkish Petroleum Company and the Iraq Government.

To sum up, as it emerges from these two sessions, the Commission seemed to restrict its role to eliciting as much information from the British representatives as possible. As the sessions took place behind closed doors - although the reports were published immediately afterwards[20] - one must assume that the Commission adopted the tactics that the better informed the public was about the policy of an imperialist power, the more effective would be the check upon that power. This was an old idea developed before and during the war in the campaign against secret diplomacy. Significantly, by making it the governing principle in so far as the examination of the annual reports was concerned, the Mandates Commission adopted a distinctly

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19. P.M.C., 12th Session, Oct.24th to Nov.11th,1927, Publications of the League of Nations, 1927 VI A 10.
20. cf.F.P.Walters, A History of the League of Nations, vols.2, Oxford, 1952, p.173.

euro-centric view in its dealings with the Middle East. The resultant narrowness of its outlook on Iraqi affairs was well demonstrated by the following incident. When putting questions to Dobbs as to the procedure of the Iraqi parliament, one member of the Commission asked whether the protocols of the parliamentary debates could not be made available for the Mandates Commission; it seems that the questioner had at that moment been thinking more of the Hansard than of the great advantage of taking the Iraqi point of view into consideration, for when Dobbs replied that all parliamentary debates were conducted in Arabic, the matter was not further pursued. Surely, had it been considered to be sufficiently important to obtain the Iraqi point of view, the Commission could easily have appointed somebody on its staff who knew Arabic and read and analysed the records of the debates for their further consideration.

Without doubt, by questioning the British representatives closely on particular subjects, the Commission gathered valuable information in addition to the reports sent in, be it a census of religions[21] or the decreasing numbers of British officials in Iraq.[22] But as for the latter figures, for instance, the Commission did not ask for more information about, or even examine, the question of whether

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21. A census of 1921 submitted by Bourdillon counted, for instance: Sunnis 1.150.000, Shiahs 1.490.000, Jews 88.000, Christians 79.000, other religions 43.000.

22. According to Dobbs the number of official posts (railways excluded) had by August 1920 been occupied as follows: of 500 senior civil administrative posts, 473 were held by British officers, 7 by Indians, and only 20 by Arabs. In the subordinate posts of the civil administration, out of 5.886 persons employed, 515 were British, 1.109 Indian, and 3.162 Arab or Kurd. By comparison the figures for 1926 were 104 senior British officials; of the 91 British officers who had formerly formed the Executive Staff in the provinces there had remained 12; out of the subordinate posts less than 100 were British and some 600 Indian.

the sharp reduction in British personnel was balanced either by the increased capability of Arab officials or by the efficiency of aero-planes and air-demonstrations, not to mention the manipulation of the free elections or simply the reduction of posts. However, things turned out differently in the case of the minorities, the Kurds. In particular it was discernible in both their questions and observations that in this respect the Commission possessed first hand knowledge through the League's Boundary Commission. Incidentally, this was also the only sphere in which the Mandates Commission temporarily considered whether to send an observor to the spot. Although the purpose may have been to supervise the regulations for minority protection and to gather further information, this plan well expressed the Commission's feeling of being fully competent in affairs concerning minorities. Thus for the duration of the mandate period the Permanent Mandates Commission also fulfilled the functions of a Minorities Commission in the Middle East and particularly in Iraq, a Commission which, as has been deplored,[23] did not exist in a permanent shape elsewhere.

In conclusion, to judge from the various functions and procedures of the Permanent Mandates Commission, in a technical sense Iraq's position before the League of Nations was not solely and inevitably bound up with all the ups and downs of Britain's relationship with the League Council. What the Commission cared about was a high-standard information service by which Iraq's cause - as this was deemed proper in European opinion - was presented to the Council. Further, in the case of the minorities of the Mosul vilayet, it seemed

23. cf. C.A. Macartney, National States and National Minorities, Oxford, 1934, p.420.

even to have felt entitled to the right of inspection. However, politically, the authority of the Commission was closely linked up with that of the League in general. Thus its role could become of dubious value whenever the League ran danger of becoming too dependent on a single power. Such a contingency arose, temporarily, in 1922 when Curzon contemplated taking a high line at Geneva. Or, the other way round, the League at such moments tended to become in the last resort an instrument of Britain's strong fist.

To escape such a contingency the League was anxious to reassure itself of US support, even though America had refused to take a membership card. Further, it was active in preserving and enlarging its international composition. From this point of view also, Germany's entry into the League in 1925, indirectly steadied Iraq's position before the League Council as it did two years later, before the Permanent Mandates Commission.

On the other hand, the League, while restricting new membership to fully sovereign states only, gave too much credit to the revival of the old balance of power politics. From this angle and with regard to mandates the League acted as a distribution centre, whenever a mandatory contemplated to renounce or alienate its trust. This role of the League, which in a way had already become manifest in the League's acceptance of the allocation of the mandates by the war victors, was perhaps its most disturbing feature in the eyes of the peoples of the mandated territories. For instance, as the Bagdad news-

paper Al Mufid wrote in August 1922:

> "How shall the oriental rest while this hypocritical League exists breaking its pledges in its first years. It is a 20th century slave market. Britain did not obtain her mandate in Iraq until she had mollified France in Syria and granted the USA large concessions of oil. Does tyrannical Europe think that the East is asleep and not know how it is preparing to spring?" 24

A similar oriental notion of the meaning of the League was reported by Dobbs when, with reference to his treaty negotiations with Afghanistan, he informed Churchill that the Covenant of the League of Nations really frightened Orientals.[25]

However, the League's relationship with Iraq was more complex and subtle. In essence, the League was taking charge of both backward Iraq and imperialist Britain. Moreover, the League was aware that, spiritually, Iraq's long-term political prospects were bound up with the fate not only of British imperialism, but of imperialism as a general Western phenomenon. In this sense, it reckoned that the measure of Iraq's progress in state formation was also a measure of the decline of British imperialism. Perhaps the League was filled with too much of the "sweet lemonade" of Fabian tactics[26] in its relation with imperialist powers. On the other hand, by prescribing or advocating the introduction of those Western-style institutions within which the Iraqi society had to obtain its sovereignty, the League, by its

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24. Quoted from Intelligence Report No.16 by Gertrude Bell, 15 August 1922, C.O.730/24/45383.
25. Churchill to Cox, 30 April 1922, C.O.730/24/48983.
26. We use this phrase in analogy with what Ernst Bloch has written about the character of Fabianism, many features of which, we believe, had been adopted by the League-champions and re-produced in their working methods, cf.Ernst Bloch, Das Prinzip Hoffnung, Frankfurt a M.,1959,p.1104.

assistance in cutting the oriental social and political fabric into Western shapes, may well have added to Iraq's agonies in determining its identity. But as the institutions of representative government and the nation-state were regarded at the time as the most advanced and uniquely adequate political concepts with which the strenuous conditions of the modern world could successfully be met, they were naturally considered to be also the best means to effect the transfer of power from British to Iraqi hands.

In order to enhance this transfer of power through solid channels, the League created the Permanent Mandates Commission as the i d e a l colonizer, with the role of supplying the League Council and the public with regular X-rays of the Iraqi body politic as well as of chastening the British Colonial Office. For this purpose both institutions were to be forged into an efficient work-relation with each other. As it was planned the mandatory was to exert control and give advice to the mandated people in the same way as the Mandates Commission was supposed to exert control and offer advice to the mandatory. In the light of the annual reports of 1925 and 1926 the Permanent Mandates Commission thought that this standard of mandatory rule was almost reached. However it was ignorant of the local resentment against the extent to which the High Commissioner and his dwindling staff pushed through their binding advice and meddled in many matters of detail. There were numerous other discrepancies between the regular accounts of progress and the motives and consequences of the shrivelling of British overt power in Iraq which seem to have escaped

the Commission's notice. Nevertheless, both the Colonial Office of the mandatory and the international office of the Permanent Mandates Commission were considered by the League of Nations to be parts of that cograil on which the mandate-state could drive towards its national and international destination.

## Epilogue

Iraq entered the League of Nations on October 3rd, 1932. It was the first of all the mandates under Article 22 of the Covenant to reach formal independence. Thus the year 1926, in which this study has ended, was a mid-way mark. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently advanced to allow a panoramic sight. Territorially, the pegs by which the desired boundaries had been marked off during and after the war, had, with the exception of the desert frontier with Syria, been well secured to mark Iraq's proper delimitations. This applies particularly to Mosul. However, politically and socially, everything remained in turmoil since the war and a new pattern was slow to take shape. The various government institutions were no more than seismometers, carefully placed on the ground and secured by the politico-military presence of the mandatory.[1] Advice as to their proper use, it is true, was being

1. see Draft Report of Amery's visit to Iraq from 19 March to 15 April 1925, C.O.730/82/22162."If the writ of King Faisal runs effectively through his kingdom, it is entirely due to British aeroplanes. It would be idle to affect any doubt on that point. If the aeroplanes were removed tomorrow, the whole structure would inevitably fall to pieces. Any locally raised forces without assistance from the air could not maintain internal order or resist external aggression...So long as the Royal Air Force stays, Great Britain will have to pay a part, if not all, of its cost. I think that it will be possible to justify this expenditure on Imperial grounds quite irrespective of any obligations that we may have incurred towards Iraq. Iraq affords a splendid training ground for the Royal Air Force.Bagdad, so far as one can foresee, is likely to always be a pivotal point in our air communications with the East...";cf.also p.314, footnote92.

plentifully given; but, basically, these institutions were still only show-pieces to be fed with pre-fabricated results or manipulated data at critical moments of the experiment. Significantly, political parties tended to dissolve at the death of their founders and leaders, while in the Cabinet deposed or defeated premiers were made ministers of the Interior or Finance by those who had defeated them for the premiership. All this points to the presence of a limited personnel for top-level office and, as a general rule, to a situation in which loyalties changed swiftly from one person or prominent politician to another. One of the major tasks still to be solved was undoubtedly the amalgamation of the levies, recruited from the politically very conscious minorities in the north, with the bulk of the Arab army after the Mosul settlement. In particular, the Kurds, who had been kept by the British in a "revolutionised state" as a means of warding off the Turkish menace, were likely to pose the greatest difficulty to the successful end of such an undertaking.

Imperially, Iraq was being rapidly transformed from a costly charge into a pivotal point for the Empire's air communications with the East[2] and a strategical base and reserve for the protection of the Admiralty's oil-tap at Abadan. As for the oil-deposits of Iraq and their position in Britain's imperial (defence) strategy, the A.P.O.C.s share in the T.P.C. concession did not yet figure by tonnage on the charts and routine war-map exercises of the Committee of Imperial De-

2.A few flights may be recalled to attract attention to the general "air enthusiasm" in those years: First Non-Stop Atlantic Flight by Alcock&Brown, 14-15 June 1919; First England-Australia Flight 12 Nov. -10 Dec.1919.; First Zeppelin Flight to USA by Dr.Eckener 1924; West-East trans-Atlantic Flight by Lindbergh.1927.

fence: the oil-fields were still untapped and the C.I.D. preferred the latest annual figures in their yearly exercises. However , in 1928, when the oil-situation in the potential war theatres to the east and west of Suez were studied in connection with the possibility that America might become either a bad neutral who might turn off the supply from her direction or else as a good neutral from whom oil supply would continue to flow, the quality of the Iraqi oil was favourably compared with that of Persia. Meanwhile, the composition of the T.P.C. concession was scrutinized and the capacity of its pipeline with the Mediterranean port of Haifa assessed. It was observed with satisfaction that 10% of the oil lifted in Iraq went free to the A.P.O.C. and that, owing to the distribution of the remainder on a scale equivalent to the shares held by the various groups, the A.P.O.C. would receive altogether 30% of the oil lifted by the T.P.C.. Furthermore it was stressed that the T.P.C. was, by contract, only entitled to 70% of the carrying capacity of the line, and must transport oil for any other undertaking working oil concessions in Iraq within the scope of the remaining 30% of line capacity . Altogether the C.I.D. reckoned that it might secure 50% of the oil crude delivered to Haifa, amounting to a maximum of 3 million tons, within about fourteen days sea-carriage of the British Isles.[3]

Such facts were not studied by the Permanent Mandates Commission which kept its eyes fixed on what one might call "the phantom colonizer" of the previous century. They would have been good material

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3. see C.I.D.-Oil Board, CAB 50/9, OB (SC) Series. cf. also: C.I.D. Sub-Committee on the Protection of the South Persia Oil-Fields, CAB 16/62.

for the League's disarmament section. But Robert Cecil's resignation from the Conservative Government in 1927 over the general issue of disarmament was a bad omen for its treatment should it ever enter the purview of the League.

Thus, while British colonial experts were doing what they were told or else what they thought they were expected to advise and do, and while the Permanent Mandates Commission, inspired by the horizons of a new age, chastened these experts, Iraq was already enmeshed in the machinations of power politics.

Of course, and this is very significant, the props of the imperialist powers had changed in kind and size. In the Middle East Britain and France now asserted their power and their strategic positions under the pretence of protecting new nation states. Meanwhile, the Christian minorities, it seemed, were losing this traditional role; they were no longer the favourites of the power interests and their instincts. Of all of them, the Assyrian Christians experienced this loss of patronage in the bloodiest way. In view of their fate, caught between the grind-stones of Turkish and Iraqi nationalisms now turning in a new type of power politics, one finds it difficult to style the century that had afforded them shelter obsolescent. But was there more humanity in some of its representatives, a man like Curzon say, who, because he belonged to that century, showed more concern for the Assyrians than most of his colleagues? It is true that the Assyrians might, with a little luck, have been persuaded to emigrate to Australia. Nevertheless, whether accident or not, their fate symbo-

lises the brutality which lies in the utilitarian choice of wards and trusts by superior power. Seen in the light of the new patronage of the imperialist powers, and of the survival of such powers after the war, the League's failure to erect a permanent and efficient minority commission may be seen as more than accident. Was it also a failure of internationalism to cope with imperialism? Or could the imperialist powers divide their patronage between the nation-states, as they liked to call their trusts, and the minorities?

In the Middle East the answer to the latter question seemed to depend on whether internationalism would prevail. In the light of Sir R.Lindsay's Reports from Constantinople sent to the Foreign Office in 1925 this was more than doubtful. As he wrote:

> "The future holds out little or no prospects of alleviation, for Russian political thought can hardly be expected to move to the left, whereas it may well move to the right;and if the ostensible internationalism of to-day disappears, it can only be replaced by the open acquisitiveness of a former age. Nor is this all; the eclipse of Germany and the dismemberment of the Austro-Hungarian Empire have pro tanto removed two healthy checks on the Russian appetite, especially where Turkey is concerned...It is the Empire's interest to prop up a whole row of buffer States, and these States, of ourse with infinite tergiversations, blackmail, and playing off of north against south, will nevertheless come to recognise that on their national existence the British influence must exercise a preservative and the Russian a corrosive effect." 4

This is the cordon-sanitaire idea for the Middle East as it had emerged very early in Mark Sykes' synoptic visions. But its chances of realisation were bad. Like Sykes and Toynbee, Lindsay also saw the main obstacle as pan-Islam, accentuated, if the worst came to the worst, by its merging with pan-Arabism. Indeed it was the politico-

4.R.Lindsay to Austen Chamberlain, 16 October 1925, C.O.730/86/50803.

-religious nationalism in the d a r a l - I s l a m that lay at the bottom of the Empire's dilemma in the Middle East. As Lindsay put it when he advised Chamberlain to extend British patronage to both the new political communities and minorities:

> "For Great Britain the attainment of good Anglo-Turkish relations may be the easier because the problem of Chritian minorities has assumed far smaller dimensions than it ever had in the past. On the other hand, the need for it is the greater owing to the existence of politico-religious nationalism in India and other Moslem dependencies." 5

Impressed as he was by his experience during his mission to Egypt, Lord Milner had noticed the same phenomenon, although in his case he described it perhaps more aptly as politico-religious patriotism. Significantly, with his shrewd understanding or sense for social potentialities he, like Gertrude Bell, had advocated the need to subvert this element on the lesser level of personal relationships, banking, as Gertrude Bell had put it, on the capacity of the Englishman. This tactic, if looked at from the level of the state no doubt entailed a certain liberalism. But judged by their ulterior motives it cannot pass as the sudden conversion to progressiveness with which Milner is sometimes wrongfully credited for his post-war views on Egypt. The evil principle underlying this tactic was the deliberate use of personal relationship as an element of cultural decomposition in the service of the assertion and maintenance of imperialist power and sovereignty. Eulogistically, these personal links between Arabs and fine, selected specimens of the British race were to create bonds of permanent Arab-British friendship. It was on this very point that

5.see footnote 4.

Sykes at least differed from his imperial colleagues, at least if his Entente-spirit is put into the perspective of his sentimental conception of a Mediterranean civilisation, from the eastern shores of which both West and East had sprung.

By 1924 and later, such Utopian sentiments had waned, though not yet the problem of Pan-Islam. Perhaps there is no other way for the rational mind to deal with a religious phenomenon than either to acknowledge it or to observe its passage. The British choose the latter when Whitehall set up an Inter-Departmental Committee on Eastern Unrest[6] which was a keen observor of the decline and fall of the Caliphate Movement and Pan-Islamism. Just how inadequate were the means they had to deal with it in any other way was best symbolized by the attendance of an officer from Scotland Yard.

In a nutshell, from an imperial point of view Iraq, after 1926, settled down to become a dormant British asset which could be capitalized in the interest of imperial strategy if need arose.

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6. Inter-Departmental Committee on Eastern Unrest, 4 July 1924, Report on Pan-Islamism and the Caliphate, F.O.371/11066, E 5753. Members were: Sir Vernon Kell (Chair), S.F.Muspratt (W.O.), J.W.Hose (I.O.), G.L.M. Clauson (C.O.), H.J.Seymour (F.O.), J.F.C. Carter (Scotland Yard).

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