

عبد العزيز آل سعود والسياسة البريطانية في الخليج العربي في الربع الأول من القرن العشرين

مقدمة:

في مطلع القرن العشرين كانت الاحوال العامة في الجزيرة العربية والخليج العربي تتلخص في بعض الوحدات السياسية التالية:

كان عبد العزيز آل سعود قد أصبح أميراً على نجد، بعد أن بسط نفوذه، فيها وجعل من مدينة الرياض عاصمة له، في حين كان ابن الرشيد أميراً على جبل شمر وعاصمته مدينة حائل، غير أن عبد العزيز آل سعود انتصر على ابن الرشيد في موقعة البكيرية، واستطاع بذلك أن يكسب الجولة الأولى من الصراع بين الرجلين، ثم نجح (فيما بعد) من ضم إمارة حائل ومنطقة جبل شمر نهائياً، بعد أن اضطر أميرها طلال بن الرشيد إلى التسليم.

أما في جنوبي الجزيرة فقد بسط الإدريس سيطرته على عسير، أما المناطق الأخرى المطلة على الخليج العربي، مثل الكويت، والبحرين، ومسقط، وقطر، وحضرموت، فقد بقيت تحت سيطرة حكامها العرب، غير أن النفوذ الحقيقي كان للإنجليز الذين كانوا يهدفون للسيطرة على المنطقة وإبعاد أي نفوذ آخر عنها. وكانت الدولة العثمانية تحاول عبثاً - أن تنشط في بعض المناطق العربية، مثل محاولة دعم نفوذها في الأحساء، ومساعدة ابن الرشيد في حائل قبل هزيمته على يد عبد العزيز آل سعود.....

في تلك الاثناء أيضاً كانت حمى الاستعمار قد انتابت الدول الأوروبية الكبرى بعد أن كانت هذه الدول في نهاية القرن التاسع عشر مشغولة بتدعيم كيائها وتثبيت وحدتها،

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وظهرت في الوجود دولتان تجديدتان أصبحتا في عداد الدول الأوروبية الكبرى هما: ألمانيا
وإيطاليا. ووجه رؤساء هذه الدول سياسة بلادهم نحو استعمار أراضٍ جديدة، أو إنشاء
مناطق نفوذ لسد حاجات بلادهم الاقتصادية أو الاستيلاء على قواعد بحرية جديدة، ورفع
مهاة الدولة وزيادة نفوذها، وكانت السياسة الألمانية في عهد إمبراطور ألمانيا وليام الثاني
(١٨٩٠ - ١٩١٤م) تعتمد على كسب صداقة السلطان العثماني، ومحاولة التودد إلى
المسلمين عامة، بل إنه أعلن بأنه حام وصديق للمسلمين، وذلك لكي يجد مخرجاً له
لبسط نفوذه في الشرق، فعمل على مساعدة الدولة العثمانية بتدريب جيشها وتسليحها،
وتوطيد علاقاته معها، كما عمل جاداً بالفعل لتنفيذ خط حديد برلين - بغداد بامتداده
إلى البصرة على الخليج العربي، ليصل النفوذ الألماني بذلك إلى الشرق عامة، ومنطقة
الخليج بصفة خاصة، وفي هذا تهديد للمصالح البريطانية في هذه المنطقة التي كانت
بريطانيا تحاول احتكارها لأهميتها الاقتصادية والاستراتيجية، وخاصة أن الشركة
الإنجليزية للبترول حاولت أن تتحكم في تلك الأجزاء واعتبرتها مركزاً مهماً لنشاطها في
استخراج الزيت. كما أن الوجود الألماني عن طريق الدولة العثمانية في هذه المنطقة كان
يهدد المصالح البريطانية في منطقة المحيط الهندي، الشريان الحيوي لبريطانيا في الهند
وبلاد الشرق الأقصى.

وكانت حكومة الهند البريطانية هي التي تقوم بتنفيذ السياسة البريطانية في تلك
الجهات، كما كانت تعمل على تنفيذ برامج حكومة لندن وتوجيهاتها السياسية
والاقتصادية والاستراتيجية في بلاد الشرق بوجه عام. لذلك حرصت حكومة الهند
البريطانية على إقصاء أي نفوذ دولي في الخليج العربي، سواء يتمثل في الدولة العثمانية
أو حليفها ألمانيا، كما كانت تراقب بعهدر التطورات السياسية في داخل الجزيرة العربية،
بعد النجاح الكسر اللذ، أعراه عبد العزيز آل سعود بعد أن نت نفوذه في عهد
ومحاولها، وبعد انتصاره الأوار، على ابن الرشيد في البكورية، الأمر الذي جعله يربو
ببصرة إلى منطقة الخليج، مما أزعج السياسة البريطانية، فحاصه أن عبد العزيز آل سعود
في ظل الوجود الإسلامي أعلن عن عزمه (بارة مسقط والساحل في ذلك العام
(١٩٠٤م)، فحسنت بريطانيا أنه بذلك يعبد سياسة أسلافه بفرض الزكاة والتوجه
الإسلامي على مسقط وغيرها، فتلما كان الحال في عهد الإمام عبد الله بن فيصل عام
(١٨٨٦م).

وكما سبق القول، فإن السياسة البريطانية ممثلة في حكومة الهند البريطانية كانت تعمل على دعم نفوذها ووجودها في الخليج، وتجد تبريراً لذلك تحت ستار ودعوى أنه تكافح القرصنة وتجار الرقيق، وأنه بذلك حققت سياسة ما أسماه اللورد كيرزون «السلام البريطاني عن طريق سلسلة من المعاهدات مع شيوخ وأمراء ساحل الخليج العربي»^(١)، فاكتملت بريطانيا بذلك وضعاً متميزاً، لدرجة أن أصبح المقيم البريطاني في الخليج الحاكم الفعلي في هذا النطاق، إن ظلت عازفة عن سياسة التدخل في الظهير العربي^(٢)، ولذلك نرى أن بريطانيا كانت تحول دون تدخل الشيخ مبارك حاكم الكويت في سياسة الصحراء حتى لا يتدخل الأتراك بصورة نشطة في الكويت، وقد فطن عبد العزيز آل سعود إلى هذه الناحية برغم قناعته التامة بأن الوجود العثماني في منطقة الأحساء وجودٌ هش، ومع ذلك فهو يكاد يخفق مراميه^(٣).

لكل ذلك وما عداه بدأ اهتمام عبد العزيز آل سعود بمنطقة الخليج العربي^(٤)، وركز جهده وفكره للقضاء على الهيمنة الأجنبية وتدعيم السلطة العربية في الخليج.

تلك هي مقدمة هذا البحث الذي يبرز الدور الكبير الذي اضطلع به عبد العزيز آل سعود لإبعاد النفوذ الأجنبي عن المنطقة العربية، وفرض الهيبة والسيادة العربية والإسلامية.

ما تقدم يتبين لنا أن الحكومة الهندية البريطانية أصبحت تنظر إلى طموحات عبد العزيز بن سعود في الخليج بعين الحذر، خشية أن يؤدي ذلك إلى إلحاق الضرر بالرعايا البريطانيين المقيمين من جهة، وحدوث تضارب بين القبائل العربية المتحالفة مع بريطانيا من جهة أخرى.

ولذلك اعتبر السفير البريطاني في القسطنطينية أن ثمة نتائج خطيرة ستنشأ من إعادة تكوين سلالة (سلفية - وهابية) على حد قوله - حاكمة على يد عبد العزيز، وأن المسألة ستصبح أكثر تعقيداً إذا اعترفت به الحكومة العثمانية، واعترف من جانبه بسيادة

(١) عبد العزيز عبد الغنى إبراهيم: السلام البريطاني في الخليج العربي ١٨٩٩ - ١٩٤٧. دراسة وثائقية، ط أولى (١٩٨١م)، دار المريخ، الرياض ص ٨٠.

(٢) حكومة الهند البريطانية والإدارة في الخليج العربي. ط أولى، دار المريخ، الرياض ص ٢٣٤.

(٣) المرجع السابق ص ١٦٨.

(٤) Kumar, Ravinder: India and the persian Gulf Region 1858 - 1907. PP. 200-201.

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السلطان، ثم إن السياسة البريطانية حتى ذلك الوقت كانت منقسمة على نفسها،
فالخارجية البريطانية اتخذت خطأ بعدم التورط مع حكام نجد في أي علاقة، في حين
كانت حكومة الهند تريد اتخاذ عدة تدابير، من بينها توجيه تحذير بعدم التدخل في عمان
أو الساحل المتصالح، فضلاً عن تقديم مساعدة عسكرية من السفن البريطانية في الخليج
إلى الشيوخ هناك في حالة الضرورة وفرض حظرٍ صارمٍ على استيراد الأسلحة للكويت
وغيرها، وإن كان ثمة خشية من هذا الإجراء الأخير أن يمتد هذا الحظر إلى الأسلحة
المستوردة للرعايا البريطانيين^(١).

لكن جاءت زيارة عبد العزيز للأحساء في أغسطس ١٩٠٥م مفاجأة كاملة، فلقد مكث
هناك بضعة أيام، وقام باستدعاء الأهل والأهل، ولم يستطع أحد الاعتراض
عليه. ثم عين ثلاثة شيوخ لسماع شكوى الأهالي، ونشر السلام بين البدو، وصالح بين
العجمان والقبائل الأخرى، واتخذ موقفاً حازماً بعقوبة أي شخص يرتكب جريمة
السرقه^(٢)، مما يعني أنه حرص على تطبيق أحكام الشريعة الإسلامية في الأحساء قبل أن
تصبح تحت سيطرته الفعلية بثماني سنوات. ثم أنه في تحركاته السريعة لجمع شمل
ما تفكك من أجزاء الجزيرة العربية كان حريصاً على أن يستعيد كل ما كان تابعاً للدولة
السعودية الأولى والثانية.

ومما يلفت النظر طاعة العسكر الترك لأوامره، ويبدو أن ذلك جاء كرد فعل لتأثير
التسوية التي كان أبرمها الإمام عبد الرحمن بن فيصل، والد عبد العزيز في (صفوان)
مع مستول عثمانى، والتي تم الاعتراف فيها بوضع عبد العزيز الجديد في (نجد) وبقبوله
للسيادة العثمانية في مناطق أخير، بمعنى أن تكون إمارة القصيم كمنطقة حاجزة بين
«حائل» و «نجد»^(٣)، فليس من المستبعد أنه عدَّ وجود الترك في الأحساء أمراً لا يثير القلق
بحكم العلاقة الجديدة، والتي استطاع عبد العزيز توظيفها بذكاء، إذا استمال إليه شيوخ
القبائل من مرةً وبين هاجر، ودخلوا في طاعته.

غير أنه يبدو أن لتلك الزيارة أثرها في العام التالي ١٩٠٦م ضد الترك في

F. O. 406/27: India Office to Foreign Office No. 31-6662 India Office, Feb 22, 1906. (١)

F. O. 406/27: Inc. 10 in No. 31: From Khalid-Bin Abdulah-es-Soueidin to Sheikh Zaeed-bin Khalifa (٢)

27th Jemad es Sani 1323/August 29, 1905.

Kumar, Ravinder: or. cit P 204.

(٣)

«الهفوف»، حينما نظر الناس بعين الريبة إلى المطلب التركي حينما شرعوا في أخذ إحصاء رسمى للسكان وللأغنام فى واحة الأحساء، فرفضوا تنفيذ ذلك، مما كان مدعاة لأن تركز القوات العثمانية قواتها فى قلعة «الهفوف»، نبعد أن تم إخلاء المخافر الأمامية العسكرية التركية^(١).

وفى أعقاب زيارة عبد العزيز للأحساء قام بزيارة أخرى لقطر، وأرسل عدة رسائل إلى الرؤساء المتصالحين، عبر فيها عن نيته لزيارة أقاليمهم فى ربيع عام ١٩٠٦م^(٢)، وجاء فى رسالته إليهم: «إن بلادنا طيبة بمشيئة الله. إنى أكتب لأخبركم بأننى حضرت إلى هذه الأجزاء بسبب الخلاف الذى وقع بين قبيلة يام «عجمان». زرت قطر وأنجزت مصالحة بين المختلفين، وعاقبت المذنبين. كان هناك اقتراح بالبقاء للبت فى بعض الأمور ولكن حرارة هذا البلد ساخنة جداً، وأننى عزمت بمشيئة الله زيارة هذه الأجزاء حينما يأتى الربيع، هدفى من ذلك البت فى بعض الأمور. وأننى أعتقد أنه من المرغوب فيه إخباركم بذلك، وسوف يزودكم حمد الحربى بتفاصيل أكثر»^(٣).

مما تقدم يتبين لنا أن عبد العزيز حرص على ممارسة بعض السلطة والنفوذ على هذه البلاد من خلال هذه التحركات، ويحاول فى الوقت نفسه جس نبض بريطانيا فى الخليج بالوقوف على رد الفعل نتيجة إطلالته على ساحل الخليج.

حقاً، تلقى شيوخ الهناوية فى كل من أبى ظبى ودبى هذه الرسائل بنوع من القلق، خشية الحد من سلطتهم، وفى المقابل إتاحة الفرصة لشيوخ الغافرية للقيام بالتخلص من حكم شيوخ الهناوية (حكّام أبى ظبى ودبى) الذى زاد على عشرين عاماً. فلا غرابة أن اعتبر الشيخ ابن خليفة الأمر خطيراً^(٤) ولاسيما أن الشارقة وأم القوين قد أيدتاً خصوم الشيخ زايد، فالغافريون أصبحوا فى مقاومة موحدة لزايد، ومن الممكن أن ينظروا إلى

F. O. 406/28: India Office to Foreign Office. Inc. in No. 35. Memorandum of Information received during the Month of April 1906, regarding external Affairs relating to Arabia. (١)

F. O. 406/28: Ibid: Enc. 1 in No. 31. Government of India to Mr. Morley. Forst William, Jan. 11, 1906. (٢)

F. O. 406/27. Enc. 9 in No. 31. from Abdul-Aziz-Bin Abdul Rahman-Bin Saood, to the chief of Oe- bai. 20th Jemad el Sani 1323 (August 22. 1905). (٣)

(٤) سمور، زهدى عبد المجيد: الوضع السياسى فى ساحل الصالح البحرى ١٨٥٦ - ١٩١٤ رسالة دكتوراة غير منشورة آداب القاهرة ١٩٧٩ ص ٣٢٦.

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طلب ابن سعود بترحاب كبير، لذلك كان الشيخ زايد متشوقاً للغاية كى تتخذ حكومة
الهند خطوات من شأنها الخيلولة دون تحرك عبد العزيز تجاه الساحل المهادن، وأن تصدر
الأوامر إلى شيوخ الغافرية بالأا يقعون تحت تأثير عبد العزيز^(١).

والملاحظ أن حكومة الهند البريطانية في تعاملها مع هذه الأزمة كانت تنسم بالخذر،
فهى لا تريد الاحتكاك معه مباشرة، ففضلت استطلاع رأى شيخ الكويت، بحكم صداقته
مع عبد العزيز، عمماً إذا كانت تطلعات أمير نجد للساحل المهادن جادة، وأن على الشيخ
جابر تشييط همته، خاصة أن هؤلاء الرؤساء مرتبطون بمعامدات مع حكومة الهند^(٢).

لكن الخارجية البريطانية لم تكن مطمئنة لمثل هذا الإجراء غير المباشر مع عبد العزيز،
وأنها ترى من الأجدى توجيه تحذير إليه فى حالة ظهوره على الساحل^(٣)، وفى نفس
الوقت يتم توجيه تحذير آخر إلى الرؤساء المتناحرين، وحتى لا تتضرر المصالح التجارية
البريطانية على الساحل من جراء التضارب بينهم وبين عبد العزيز^(٤) فكان لابد من وضع
حد لأن تقارب محتمل يمكن أن يحزره عبد العزيز على الساحل.

كذلك تابعت الخارجية البريطانية بقلق بالغ انتصار عبد العزيز على ابن الرشيد فى
حائل، باعتبار أنها قلعة إمارة نجد، ما يتيح الفرصة أكثر لإعادة الحكم السلفى فى قلب
الجزيرة العربية، ومن ثم تعزيز الأهمية المتزايدة لعبد العزيز، مما يستلزم مراقبة علاقاته
مع شيخ الكويت والرؤساء المهادين بحذر أكبر^(٥)، ولا سيما أن هذا الانتصار قد قلب
رأساً على عقب تصورات شيخ الكويت لتعامله مع كل من عبد العزيز وابن الرشيد، إذ
كان من رأيه أن يكون لعبد العزيز «نجد» ووادى الدواسر فقط، ولابن الرشيد حائل
وجبل شمر، فى حين اختص الشيخ مبارك لنفسه الكويت وعنيزة وبريدة وسدير
والوشم، فضلاً عن التحكم فى القبائل التى تحتل هذه الأماكن، وذلك من خلال تصوره
لتعاهد ثلاثى تقدم به فى أثناء محادثاته مع المقيم فى الخليج العربى^(٦).

F. O. 40 6/27: Inc. in No. 46: From Major Cox to Government of India - Bushire, Feb. 4, 1906. (١)

F. O. 406/27: Ibid. (٢)

F. O. 406/28: Inc. in No. 15 Mr. Morley to Governor - General the Earl of Minto. India office (٣)
April 13, 1906.

F. O. 406/27: India office to Foreign office 10543, March 24, 1906. also see: F. O. 406/28/ Inc. in (٤)
No. 6A. Mr. Morley to Government of India. India office, April 9, 1906.

F. O. 406/28: Sir N. O' Connor to Sir Edward Grey (No. 292) Constantinople, May 1, 1906. (٥)

F. O. 407/28: Inc. 2 in No. 25. Note of a conversation between the Resident in th epersian Gulf and (٦)
Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit, dated March 7, 1906.

ولكن حكومة الهند رفضت بشدة أى تورط لشيخ الكويت فى أمور وسط شبه الجزيرة العربية^(١)، وذلك على الرغم من التسليم بأن محاولات الشيخ بين عبد العزيز وابن الرشيد إنما هدفها منع الحرب التى تهدد رفاهية إقليم الشيخ وتجارتة^(٢). غير أن انتصار عبد العزيز أفسد على شيخ الكويت خطته، خاصة عندما أعلن نفسه حاكماً لكل الشرق، وأرسل عدة رسائل إلى القسطنطينية وولاية البصرة وبغداد والحجاز وشريف مكة يبنهم فيها بما أحرزه من انتصار^(٣).

كان من الطبيعى ألاّ تظلمن الدولة العثمانية لهذه التطورات الجديدة، إذ أنها كانت تؤيد ابن الرشيد وتمنحه مخصصات منتظمة حرصت على استمرارها لنجله متعب^(٤)، فى حين أعطى عبد العزيز أوامره إلى كل القبائل فى نجد بالكف عن الاتصال مع الرسميين الأتراك والقوات التركية، والتوقف عن حمل بريدهم وإمدادتهم، وذلك بلغة تهديد بعقاب صارم إذا لم يمتثلوا تماماً لأوامره. وبالفعل استجاب أولئك الذى كانوا لا يزالون يساعدون الترك، فأبلغوا ضباطهم بأنه ليس لديهم ما يفعلونه معهم فى المستقبل، وأنهم سيكفون عن حمل بريدهم ومؤنهم^(٥)، الأمر الذى يعنى عرقلة الاتصالات بين القوات التركية من جهة وتوفير السيطرة المتنامية لعبد العزيز من جهة أخرى.

وإذ كان عبد العزيز لم يقم بزيارة الساحل المتصالح مرة أخرى فإن رسالته المهذبة إلى الشيخ مبارك قد أكدت على أكثر من معنى، فهو يؤكد على أن أهل عمان كانوا متوافقين مع آل سعود منذ أن كانوا فى الكويت، وأنه إذ يعترف بإرساله عدة رسائل لكنها لا تحمل أى ضرر، ولكن ربما كان هناك شيء لم يؤله مزيداً من الحذر^(٦). وفى الواقع كان ذلك براعة سياسية من عبد العزيز، فهو لا يريد الصدام مع بريطانيا فى الخليج، لأنه كان يريد أن يتفرغ لبناء قوة كبيرة فى قلب الجزيرة العربية، حتى يستطيع

F. O. 406/32: India Office to Foreign office. 33052. India office, Oct 3, 1907. (١)

F. O. 406/32: Inc. in No. 9. Government of India to Mr. Morley. Simla, Sep. 26, 1907. (٢)

F. O. 407/28: Sir No. O'Conor to Sir Edward Grey (No. 400 Cofid.). therapia, June 11, 1906. (٣)

F. O. 406/28: Sir. N'O Conor to sir Edward Grey (No. 413) therapia, June 18, 1906. (٤)

F. O. 406/28: India office to Foreign office Inc. 2 in No. 37 political Agent, Koweit, to Major Cox. (٥)
Feb. 25, 1906.

F. O. 406/28: India Office to Foreign Office. Inc. 2 in No. 37. political agent, Koweit, to Major Cox. (٦)

Feb. 24, 1906.

٤٦٦ — عبد العزيز آل سعود والسياسة البريطانية في الخليج العربي في الربع الأول من القرن العشرين
الظهور مرة أخرى على ساحل الخليج، حيث وضع نصب عينيه استرداد الأحساء، لأنه
أدرك أهمية وجود منفذ لبلاده على البحر مع تأمين طرق القوافل البحرية التي تعرضت
للكثير من الاعتداءات^(١).

وفي ٩ مايو ١٩١٣م تهيأت الفرصة لعبد العزيز لإحكام قبضته على الأحساء، بعد أن
استسلم المتصرف التركي وجنود الحامية، فمنحهم الأمان، حيث تركهم يرحلون إلى
البحرين^(٢)، وإن حاولوا الارتداد مرة ثانية إلى القطيف تارة، والعقير تارة أخرى، غير
أنهم فشلوا، فاحتج عبد العزيز على تلك التحركات في مياه البحرين لدى السلطات
البريطانية في الخليج^(٣). هكذا أصبحت سيطرة عبد العزيز على الأحساء بمثابة قوة عازلة
بين النفوذ العثماني في شمال الخليج وبين إمارات الساحل المهادن.

لكن من الثابت أن شيخى أبي ظبي ودبي أثيرت مرة أخرى مخاوفهما، فقررا دعوة
أنصارهما من زعماء البدو لمواجهة أى نشاط سعودي قادم، خاصة أن عبد العزيز ضم
إلى ممتلكاته صحراء شاسعة، شملت الجافورة وواحة جرين^(٤). فقام الشيخ حمدان بن
زايد حاكم أبي ظبي بتعزيز قواته، واستيراد كميات كبيرة من السلاح والذخيرة، إلا أنه
حينما ظهر اتخذت بريطانيا احتياطاتها لمنع أى تقدم سعودي لمنطقة الساحل العماني،
فعدت الطمأنينة للشيخ^(٥)، إذ حرصت بريطانيا على ألا يقع الصدام بين أى القوى
الحليفة معها وبين عبد العزيز، درءاً لوقوع المشاكل^(٦).

وليس بخاف أن عبد الله بن جلوى حاكم الأحساء السعودي قد سعى لتحقيق
تطلعات عبد العزيز في السيطرة على الساحل العماني، والمقاطعات العمانية المستقلة عن
سلطنة مسقط، لاسيما أن قبائل البريمي والظاهرة كانت تميل إلى الدعوة السلفية، وفي
عداء مع الإباضية^(٧). وأصبح على بريطانيا التمسك بسياسة موحدة للخليج، على أساس

(١) محمد عرابي نخلة: تاريخ الأحساء السياسي ٨١٨ - ١٩١٣. منشورات ذات السلاسل، الكويت ص
٢٣١ - ٢٣٢.

(٢) المرجع السابق ص ٢٣٣.

(٣) F. O. 371/1820: 22067 Minute by A. P., 20 May 191

(٤) جمال قاسم (الدكتور) الخليج العربي دراسة لتاريخ الإمارات العربية ١٩١٤ - ١٤٥، ط أولى ١٩٨٣
ص ٢٩٣ - ٢٩٤.

(٥) المرجع السابق ص ٢٩٦ - ٢٩٧.

(٦) عبد العزيز عبد الفتى (الدكتور): السلام البريطاني في الخليج العربي ١٨٩٩ - ١٩٤٧ دراسة وثائقية.
دار المريخ، الرياض ١٩٨١م، ص ١٧٣.

(٧) المرجع السابق ص ٢٩٦ - ٢٩٧.

أنه يمثل كياناً سياسياً واحداً، إذ اقتضت دواعي الأمن الربط بين كل أجزاء الخليج لكي تتحقق السيطرة الفعالة عليه^(١)، وذلك مع الحفاظ على ممتلكات تركيا في آسيا^(٢)، والتي أكدتها اتفاقية ٢٩ يوليو ١٩١٣م، كما اعترفت فيها كل من بريطانيا وتركيا على أن الجزأين الساحلي والداخلي الغربي، والممتدين من الشمال إلى الجنوب من نقطة كائنة في البر الرئيسي حيال جزيرة زخونوية، حتى الدرجة (٢٠) من خط العرض في صحراء الربع الخالي، إنما يختصان بسنجد نجد^(٣).

وفي الواقع لقد أراد عبد العزيز تقارباً مع بريطانيا بتخفيف غلواء المطالب التركية، وذلك لإدراكه أن المعاهدة البريطانية التركية تعتبره ضمناً من رعايا الدولة العثمانية. فهو لا يريد قيوداً تركية تحكم قطعاً من نمو وتطور دولته الناشئة، إذ كانت اشترطت عليه شروطاً رفضها في البداية، وكانت على النحو التالي:

- (أ) القبول مجدداً بالحمايات التركية في الإقليم وساحل الأحساء كما كانت سابقاً.
 - (ب) تعيين القضاة وسائر الموظفين العدليين بفرمانات مباشرة يصدرها السلطان.
 - (ج) أن يدفع ضريبة سنوية قدرها (٣٠٠٠) ليرة تركية.
 - (د) إحالة جميع المراسلات من الدول الأجنبية أو من تمثلها إلى السلطات التركية تتصرف فيها كيفما تشاء.
 - (هـ) إبعاد جميع التجار والوكلاء من الإقليم.
 - (و) التعهد بالأداء لمنح أية امتيازات لأية شركات أجنبية^(٤).
- من الواضح أن بريطانيا وجدت في الشروط الثلاثة الأخيرة تعارضاً مع مصالحها فهي لا بد أن تشكل حاجزاً في التعامل بينها وبين عبد العزيز، فلا غرابة أن احتجت على تلك البنود الثلاثة الأخيرة، وحددت مطالبها بدورها على النحو التالي:
- ١ - ألا يتدخل عبد العزيز في أراضي أو سياسات الإمارات العربية في الخليج، وفي جملتها الساحل المتصالح وقطر.

(١) إيمان محمد عبد المنعم عامر: سياسة بريطانيا في الخليج العربي ١٩١٤ - ١٩٣٩، رسالة ماجستير غير منشورة - جامعة القاهرة ١٩٨٤، ص ١٧ - ١٨.

(٢) المرجع السابق ص ١٧٢.

(٣) F. O. 391/3390: Memorandum on British Commitments to Bin Saud. Special 7, Nov. 18, 1918.

F. O. 371/3390: I bid

(٤)

٤٦٨ — عبد العزيز آل سعود والسياسة البريطانية في الخليج العربي في الربع الأول من القرن العشرين
٢ - أن يساعد في التقييد بالهدنة البحرية وتأييدها، أن قمع القرصنة وقطع دابر
الأعمال العدوانية.

٣ - أن يساعد على قمع تهريب الأسلحة.

٤ - السماح للتجار البريطانيين بالدخول إلى القطيف بدون قيود، ومعاملتهم معاملة
حسنة^(١).

وإذا كان عبد العزيز قد وقع معاهدة مع والي البصرة ممثلاً عن الدولة العثمانية في ١٥
مايو ١٩١٤م، حيث قبل بصيغة القسطنطينية، فإنه أدرك أنها لا تجرؤ على تنفيذها،
ولكنها وُضعت لحفظ ماء الوجه، ثم أنه برر إقدامه على الاتفاق بأنه كان تمهيداً للتخلص
من ربة العثمانيين، في الوقت الذي ازداد فيه حرصه على جمع شيوخ الجزيرة العربية
في سياسة موحدة ضد الترك^(٢).

وليس صحيحاً أن السلطات البريطانية لم تكن تدرك من أمر هذا الاتفاق شيئاً، حتى
تسربت أخباره^(٣)، فالثابت أن عبد العزيز أطلع بنفسه الممثلين البريطانيين على مسودة
الاتفاق الذي كان الأطراف يحاولون حمله على القبول به، وطلب فعلاً الوساطة
البريطانية، كما أنه في ٩ مارس ١٩١٤م، قدمت وزارة الخارجية مذكرة إلى حقي باشا
الذي كان يجري آن ذاك مفاوضات في لندن باسم الحكومة العثمانية، أوضحت فيها
حججه موقف حكومة صاحب الجلالة بالنسبة لعبد العزيز، واستشهدت بالشروط التركية
دون ذكر المصدر، الذي أفاد بهذه المعلومات، مما كان موضع دهشة للجانب التركي^(٤).

والواقع أن الاتصالات بين عبد العزيز وبريطانيا لم تنقطع، بل إنها ازدادت بعد
إعلان الحرب بين تركيا وبريطانيا في ٣١ أكتوبر ١٩١٤م. ولم يلتزم عبد العزيز بتنفيذ
المادة ١٢ من معاهدته مع تركيا، التي كانت تلزمه بتقديم قوة تعاون قواتها الخاصة، إذا
طلبت منه ذلك في حالة نشوب حرب بينها وبين دولة أجنبية، فالملحوظ أنه تخشى
المساعي التركية لإقامة تعاون عسكري بينه وبين ابن الرشيد، فزاد تبعاً لذلك حرص
بريطانيا على التقارب معه من خلال تكثيف الاتصالات، بهدف مساعدتها على حفظ

F. O. 371/3390: Ibid.

(١)

(٢) عبد العزيز عبد الغني (الدكتور): المرجع السابق ص ١٧٧ - ١٧٩.

(٣) المرجع السابق ص ١٧٨.

F. O. 371/3390: Memorandum on British commitments to bin Saud. Special 7, Nov. 18, 1918. (٤)

السلام في شبه الجزيرة العربية، إذا حدث عدوان تركى يؤدي إلى الحرب. كما طلبت منه التعاون مع شيخى الكويت والمحمرة لانتزاع البصرة من الأتراك، أو على الأقل الحيلولة دون وصول الإمدادات إلى البصرة، مع اتخاذ جميع الإجراءات الممكنة لمنع سلب التجار البريطانيين أو نهب ممتلكاتهم في مدينة البصرة وما جاورها. وفي مقابل هذا التعاون تتعهد بريطانيا بالتصدي لاي عدوان من الأتراك ضده، بما في ذلك صد أي هجوم بحري على ساحل الخليج، كما أنها على استعداد للاعتراف به كحاكم مستقل على نجد والأحساء، والدخول معه في مفاوضات لعقد معاهدة بهذا الشأن^(١).

وإذا كان عبد العزيز قد رحب بهذه الخطوط العامة، مؤكداً من جانبه على بذل جهوده لتعزيز المصالح المشتركة لجميع الأصدقاء، فإنه اعتبر الوثيقة البريطانية رسالة غامضة، لم تحدد ما إذا كانت التأكيدات مقصورة على الحرب الراهنة فقط، أم أنها تشمل المستقبل أيضاً، «فلا يمكن اعتبارها صكاً ملزماً للفريقين في المستقبل» فاعتبر التعاون المقترح إنما هو مرهون بفترة استمرار الحرب^(٢). ومن هذا المنطلق شعرت بريطانيا أن عبد العزيز لاينوى التخلي عن موقفه القيادي في الحرب، حتى يبرم معاهدة معها، فهو لا يخطر خطوة أخرى نحو جعل القضايا أكثر سهولة بالنسبة لها أو أكثر صعوبة بالنسبة للترك.

كانت مطالب عبد العزيز واضحة وصريحة، فهو يريد اعترافاً بريطانياً بمركزه، فتقر الحكومة البريطانية بأن «نجداً» و «الأحساء» و «القطيف» والمناطق المجاورة لها والمرافئ الخاصة بها على ساحل الخليج العربي، إنما تخصه، وأنها بلاد آباءه وأجداده، وأنه حاكمها المستقل، ومن بعده أولاده والمنحدرون منهم بالوراثة، وأن تلك المناطق هي بلاد مستقلة، ولا يحق لأى دولة أجنبية التدخل فيها، كما لايسمح لأى أجنبي بالاستيلاء على شبر واحد من أراضيها، وأنه يتعهد بحماية السواحل والمرافئ الواقعة تحت سلطته من كل عدوان على رعايا الدولة البريطانية، وأولئك الخاضعين لحمايتها. كذلك أبدى استعداده لفرض حظر على تهريب الأسلحة والذخيرة، سواء كانت على يد حكومة أو بواسطة تجار من جميع المرافئ الواقعة تحت سلطته، على شرط أن توفر له الحكومة البريطانية احتياجاته منها. ثم تأكد على استمرار إخضاع جميع السلطات القانونية القائمة في

F. O. 371/3390: Ibid.

(١)

F. O. 371/3390: Ibid.

(٢)

٤٧. — عبد العزيز آل سعود والسياسة البريطانية في الخليج العربي في الربع الأول من القرن العشرين
أراضيه، وفقاً لأحكام الشريعة الإسلامية، على أن تطبق على جميع المقيمين، سواء كانوا
من رعاياه أو من رعايا البلدان المتاخمة^(١).

حقاً إنه من منظور المصلحة البريطانية ليس هناك أعباء ثقيلة تُضاف على عاتق
بريطانيا في المنطقة تبعاً لمطالب عبد العزيز، بل إنها كانت تطمئن لازدياد قوته وغلبته
على منافسيه، مما يساعدها فيما إذا دُعيت للعمل كوسيط بين شيوخ العرب على ساحل
الخليج للاستعانة به لاعتبارين:

الاعتبار الأول:

أن سيطرته شديدة على القبائل البدوية، ما يمكن أن تمنح رخصاً (دفعاً) عظيماً للتجارة
عبر مرافق الخليج العربي. ثم أنه من الممكن تحويل بعض التجارة المارة في مرافق البحر
الأحمر إلى الخليج العربي.

الاعتبار الثاني:

التفوذ الكبير الذي يتمتع به عبد العزيز لدى الرأي العام الإسلامي داخل أراضى
الجزيرة العربية، ما يمكن أن يزداد عند تفكك الدولة العثمانية وتصبح خلافة السلطان
العثماني أمراً مشكوكاً فيه.

لذلك جرت التصورات البريطانية على التركيز على المناطق الساحلية التي أصبحت
في قبضة عبد العزيز على عدة أسس لعل أبرزها:

(أ) استقبال ممثل للحكومة البريطانية إماً في عاصمته وإماً في مرفأ بحري، أو في
كليهما معاً إذا شاء.

(ب) جباية الرسوم الجمركية بمعدلات معقولة، مع الأخذ في الاعتبار المعدل السائد
في البحرين والكويت.

(ج) السماح للسفن التجارية البريطانية بزيارة مرافقة.

(د) المرافقة على إقامة مكتب للبريد، وربما أيضاً مكتب للبرق في مينائه، عندما
يحين الوقت لذلك^(٢).

F. O. 371/3390: Ibid.

(١)

F. O. 371/3390: Ibid

(٢)

وفى ٣٠ يناير ١٩١٥م أرسل مكتب الهند إلى الخارجية البريطانية برقية احتوت على عدد من الملاحظات المهمة، إذ جاء فيها:

«إن الرغبة فى إبرام معاهدة مع الأمير عبد العزيز لاتنبع فقط من مقتضيات الساعة التى توجب كسب صداقته بأى ثمن، بل كذلك للوضع العام الذى سينشأ فى الخليج نتيجة للحرب الراهنة، خاصة زوال الحكم التركى من البصرة، الأمر الذى أخذته حكومة حضرة صاحب الجلالة على عاتقها، فالمتوقع أن تخلو الساحة لابن سعود، فيصبح السيد المطاع، ليس على وسط الجزيرة العربية فحسب، بل كذلك على الرقعة المستطيلة من الساحل، ولا مندوحة للدولة المسيطرة على الخليج من أن تجرى معه تسوية عملية للحفاظ على الأمن والسلام، ولذا فالمدى الذى يجب أن تقابل به مطالبه ينبغى أن يقاس، ليس فقط بالخدمات الفورية التى سيؤديها، بل كذلك على احتكار ما يملك من طاقة على الإضرار فى حالة انتصاره، وهو بلاشك سيمارس ذلك إذا تم التخلي عنه بصورة نهائية»^(١).

إذا كانت الخارجية البريطانية، قد أعطت الضوء الأخضر بإبرام معاهدة مع عبد العزيز فإنه يلاحظ الإشارة فيها بتوصية على أن تشتمل على فترة تلزمه بعدم التدخل فى الكويت والبحرين وقطر وساحل عمان والأقاليم المحايدة، التى تحت حماية الحكومة البريطانية، وذلك فى إطار الحفاظ على السلام البحرى الذى أرادته بريطانيا توسيع مفهومه ليشمل السلام البرى أيضاً لشبه الجزيرة العربية بتوسيع النظام المهادن البريطانى، والذى اعتُبر التجربة الأولى بل والأصعب من العلاقة المهادنة^(٢). وإذا كانت معاهدة ١٩١٥م قد أبرمت بصفة مؤقتة، فلم يقصد بها أن تكون جامعة مانعة من جهة، كما عُدَّت بمثابة هدنة من جهة ثانية، ثم أنها أعطت بريطانيا من جهة ثالثة الحق فى أن تكون الحكم فى حالة نشوب منازعات بين عبد العزيز وجيرانه المرتبطين بمعاهدات معها، فكان كل التركيز على الحدود الشرقية لممتلكات عبد العزيز.

استمرت حكومة الهند البريطانية فى توطيد علاقاتها مع عبد العزيز من خلال المبعوثين، واستطاعت بذلك أن تمنع من اتساع ممتلكاته على حساب الإمارات العربية فى

F. O. 371/3390: Ibid.

(١)

F. O. 371/3390: Ibid.

(٢)

٤٧٢ — عبد العزيز آل سعود والسياسة البريطانية في الخليج العربي في الربع الأول من القرن العشرين
الخليج^(١)، كما حالت دون مد سيطرته على شيوخ الساحل، وذلك بتشديد السيطرة
البريطانية عليهم^(٢)، فهي في الواقع تريد الخيلولة دون وضع عبد العزيز في مركز يمكنه
من قلب ميزان القوى في الجزيرة العربية، لحد عدم تزويده بالأسلحة إلا بالنذر
اليسير^(٣).

كانت وجهة النظر البريطانية تربط ما بين تنامي قوة عبد العزيز من ناحية،
وإخضاعها لساحل الخليج العربي من ناحية أخرى، ذلك أن قوة وسط شبه الجزيرة
العربية بقيادته من شأنها أن تحمل العديد من المضاعف، وتجعل الإمارات الساحلية أكثر
اعتماداً على بريطانيا عمماً هي عليه، فيرى الوكيل السياسي البريطاني في البحرين أن
الكويت والبحرين والساحل المتصالح وعمان سوف تعيش في رعب إزاء جارها القوى،
ومن ثم يسهل قيادته اتباعاً لرغبات الحكومة البريطانية، ولاسيما أنه في أعقاب الحرب
الكبرى الأولى أخذت تلك الإمارات الساحلية تردد أيضاً الأحاديث عن حقوق الأمم
الصغيرة، لذا فإن مثل هذه الاتفايل ستذهب أدراج الرياح، وسيكونون هم أول
الصائحين إذا تهددهم جارهم القوى.

فلا غرابة أن تلك الإمارات الساحلية سوف ترحب دائماً أكثر من أى شيء بالحرب
غير الحاسمة والمدمرة بين عبد العزيز وابن الرشيد، لذلك فإنه إذا أصبح عبد العزيز
يمثل القوى جميعاً في الجزيرة العربية، فمن المأمول لبريطانيا ازدياد نفوذها بقوة بين
الإمارات الساحلية. وما تجدر الإشارة إليه أيضاً أن معظم تلك الإمارات لديها طموحات
لزيادة أراضيها على حساب الداخل. فعلى سبيل المثال كان الشيخ عبد الله بن عيسى
يرنو ببصره للسيطرة على الأحساء وقطر بمساعدة بريطانيا. غير أن هذه الأخيرة لم تشأ
الاعتراض على دفع البحرين لـ ٥٠٠٠ جنيه إنجليزي لعبد العزيز شهرياً (كزكاة) - مما
يعنى تأييد بريطانيا له، وموافقتها على هذا الالتزام، إذ أنها كانت حريصة على ألا
تضايق هذه الإمارات عبد العزيز تحت ستار الحماية البريطانية لها^(٤).

من الملاحظ إطلالة للنفوذ السعودي في البحرين ابتداء من عام ١٩٢٢م، خاصة في

(١) جمال قاسم: المرجع السابق ص ٣٧.

(٢) المرجع السابق ص ٤٢.

(٣) F. O. 371/3389: Decyther 51. Sir Wingett to Foreign Office. Cairo. 7 Jan. 1918.

B. 349 Arabia: Political situation in Nejd Memorandum by political Agent, Bahrain, 12 th August (٤)

ظل وجود قلاقل قبلية ضد الشيخ عيسى، ونشاط ملموس من قبل وكيل عبد العزيز في البحرين - القصبي - الذي كان يرمى أيضاً أولئك الدواسر النجديين هناك، والذين فتح لهم عبد العزيز «القطيف» للجوء إليها عقب الاضطرابات التي نشبت في عام ١٩٢٣م في سوق المنامة بين الشيعة والسنة، الأمر الذي اضطر معه عبد العزيز إلى القدوم إلى «القفوف» ليراقب عن كثب تطورات الأحداث^(١). لكن بريطانيا كان عليها إما التحلي بالصبر وإما التوسط بين عبد العزيز والقوى الخليفة لها على الساحل إذا ما شجر أى خلاف. ففي هذه المرة أراد المقيم البريطاني في الخليج - الكولونيل تريفور - تذكير عبد العزيز بالمادة السادسة من معاهدة ١٩١٥م، التي تنص على عدم مداخلته في الشؤون الداخلية للإمارات العربية على الخليج، ومن بينها البحرين، مُطالباً أن يعمل كل ما في وسعه بالأيسر الدواسر استخدام الدمام كقاعدة للإغارة على البحرين، وأن من الأوفق إسكانهم في الجبيل، وإذا كان ذلك قد تم بصفة وقتية، فالملاحظ أنهم عادوا مرة أخرى إلى البحرين، واستردوا بعض ممتلكاتهم في المنامة والبدع^(٢).

كذلك كان الحال بالنسبة إلى قطر، إذ كانت ضمن الأراضي التي حاول ضمها داخل أرضيه، برغم أن إنجلترا كانت تعتبرها دولة حدود عازلة بين المناطق التالية لعبد العزيز ومنطقة البحرين، إذ أدخلتها في حيز المشيخات المتصالحة في نوفمبر ١٩١٦م^(٣). فاعتناق أهل قطر للسلفية بالإضافة إلى المنازعات التقليدية بين قطر والبحرين جعل شيوخ قطر ينظرون إلى عبد العزيز على أنه حامٍ لهم^(٤)، فلا غرابة أن أدخل عبد العزيز «قطر» في امتياز النفط للشركة الشرقية والعامية في عام ١٩٢٢م، ما كان مثار اعتراض من قبل «السير كوكس»، في مؤتمر العقير في العام نفسه، إذ كان من رأيه أنه لا بد من أخذ رأي الحكومة البريطانية بصدد ذلك، على أساس أن «قطر» منفصلة عن الأراضي السعودية بخط يمتد بين سلوى وخور العديد، ولو أن ذلك لم يمنع من أن يتلقى عبد العزيز الزكاة السنوية المعتادة التي كانت تُعدُّ دلالة على التبعية^(٥).

(١) جمال قاسم: المرجع السابق ص ٢٢٥ - ٢٢٧.

(٢) المرجع السابق ص ٢٣١ - ٢٣٢.

(٣) عبد العزيز عبد الغني: المرجع السابق ص ١٩٦.

(٤) المرجع السابق ص ٤٢.

(٥) المرجع السابق ص ٢٧٨.

٤٧٤ — عبد العزيز آل سعود والسياسة البريطانية في الخليج العربي في الربع الأول من القرن العشرين

أيضاً حينما أراد عبد العزيز إنعاش موانئه في الجبيل والقطيف والعقير عن طريق حمل رعاياه على الاكتيال والانصراف عن المسابرة من موانئ الكويت، لحرصه على توفير عائد جمركي، ولاسيما أن الكويت كان المستفيد الوحيد من مرور التجارة إلى «نجد» فلم تستطع بريطانيا فرض أى حل، فكلما الجانبيين يرتبط معهما بمعاهدة، ثم إن الكويت رفضت عقد اتفاق يقضى بالمناصفة على العائد الجمركي بين البلدين، وذلك على الرغم من ظهور اتجاهات من بعض تجار الكويت لإجابة مطلب عبد العزيز، حتى يستمر الاتصال والتعامل التجاري بين البلدين مما اضطر عبد العزيز لفرض ضريبة على سفن الغوص الكويتية التي كانت تأتي إلى موانئه في الأحساء خلال مواسم الغوص على اللؤلؤ، فزادت تبعاً لذلك إيرادات جمارك الأحساء إلى عشرة أضعافها، ولم يحسم الخلاف إلا في الأربعينيات، بناء على توسط بريطانيا من خلال محادثات مطولة^(١).

وإذا كانت مشيخات الساحل تقوم أيضاً بتأدية الزكاة إليه دلالة على الولاء، فإن بعض المشايخ من بني نعيم، وبين ياس، وبني قتب، امتنعوا في عام ١٩٢٥م عن تأدية هذه الزكاة، فأرسل عبد الله بن جلوي تهديداً إلى شيخ أبي ظبي، إذ كان لا يريد أن يخسر ولاءات الشارقة ورأس الخيمة، كما لا يريد أن يخسر ولاءات بعض القبائل، مثل آل شمس - وهم فرع من النعيم - بحكم أنهم سلفيون^(٢).

على العموم لقد فرض عبد العزيز وجوده على الساحة، وامتازت الفترة الأولى من بداية إطلاقة الخاطفة على الأحساء في عام ١٩٠٥م تحتى استرداده لها في عام ١٩١٣م بتنامي قوته التي جعلت الدولة العثمانية في حاجة إلى احتوائه، في حين نجد أن بريطانيا التي نأت كثيراً عن التعامل معه وعدم التورط في شئون وسط الجزيرة العربية انقلب مفهومها رأساً على عقب في الفترة الثانية، مع إرهابات الحرب الكبرى الأولى، ليتسع مفهومها في السلام البحري للخليج ليشمل الظهير الداخلي بما أسمته السلام البري. فلقد أدركت بما لا يدع مجالاً للشك أن اكتساب تحالف مع عبد العزيز سيحقق لها غايتين هما:

الغاية الأولى:

أن يلتزم بعدم الاعتداء على حلفائها في الخليج.

(١) لمزيد من التفاصيل انظر نفس المرجع ص ١٠٦ - ١٣٥.

(٢) المرجع السابق ص ٢٩٥ - ٢٩٦.

الغاية الثانية :

ازدياد تمسك هؤلاء الحلفاء بالوجود البريطاني، إذ أن تعاضم قوته من شأنه أن يذيب إمارتهم في كيان دولته، وهو أمل كان يراود عبد العزيز كثيراً في تحقيقه، واضطر إلى الوقوف عند حد أخذ «الزكاة» منهم كدلالة على الولاء والتبعية، والتي فضلت بريطانيا استمرارها كمظهر مادي، على عكس عبد العزيز الذي كان ينظر إليها كمظهر سياسي.

كذلك كان التأثير السلفي في أجزاء كثيرة من الساحل الخليجي يشكل مظهراً آخر من مظاهر الولاء، مما كان لا يرضى بأن حال بريطانيا، لأنه يعني ازدياد النفوذ السعودي، فكان عليها ضبط العلاقات السعودية مع هذه القوى الحليفة لها، ولو أنه في كثير من الأوقات كانت لا تقيد هذه الالتزامات، من منطلق حرصه على ألا يفقد الصلة بهذه المناطق التي كانت مجالاً للنفوذ من قبل أسلافه.

الخاتمة

والآن نخلص إلى القول بأن سياسة عبد العزيز آل سعود قد نجحت تماماً في تدعيم موقفها الاخواني الصادق تجاه منطقة الخليج، وأن تخطو خطوة مهمة في سبيل دعم رؤساء القبائل والمشايخ في تلك الجهة، لتأكيد التعاون، ونشر أولوية الوفاق والوحدة، الأمر الذي أدى إلى ترسيخ دعائم الوحدة والمحبة بين الزعماء والمشايخ على ساحل الخليج وبين عبد العزيز آل سعود الذي نشر نفوذه وسيطرته بصورة واسعة، بعد أن نجح نجاحاً كبيراً في القضاء على خصومه وأعدائه في الداخل، ما جعل السياسة البريطانية تفكر في كسبه إلى جانبها تجاه المتغيرات الدولية التي طرأت على المنطقة إقليمياً ودولياً، فأصبحت بريطانيا تعجب بصلاية عبد العزيز ويفكره الثاقب، خاصة بعد أن انضمت إليه القبائل العربية في أنحاء كثيرة من الجزيرة العربية، لحنكته السياسية، وقيادته الواعية، ونهجه الإسلامي القويم، ولتدبيره للأمر بحكمة واقتدار.

ومما تقدم نلاحظ أن بريطانيا التي كانت تحاول إبعاد عبد العزيز آل سعود عن منطقة الخليج لتكون منطقة نفوذ خالصة لها، نراها الآن - برغم أنها كانت تخشى قوته وشدة بأسه - تعمل جاهدة لكسب صداقته والتقرب منه. وكان موقف عبد العزيز من ذلك أنه يريد أن يستفيد من المواقف الجارية، ويحاول استغلال تلك المواقف بحنكة وحكمة، وبرغم أنه وافق على صداقة بريطانيا في تلك الأثناء، وهو ما عُرف باسم «سياسة الوفاق والتراضي»، فإن ذلك كان براعة منه وسياسة حكيمة، لأنه في تلك الأثناء كان يريد أن تكتمل دعائم دولته لمواجهة أعدائه المتربصين له بالداخل، وفي نفس الوقت كان يهدف إلى تقوية موقفه في منطقة الخليج، وكسب كل مشايخ المنطقة إلى صفه لتأكيد التعاون العربي، وترسيخ أسس الوحدة العربية والأخوة الإسلامية في ظل إيمان القبائل العربية وزعمائها بقيادته، وإيمانها الراسخ بإخلاص نواياه وأهدافه ومراميه التي ترمى إلى

التماسك والتألف، الأمر الذي جعل عبد العزيز آل سعود يعمل في ظل تلك الروح على إبعاد النفوذ الأجنبي بالطرق الحكيمة والوسائل التدريجية، ذلك أن طريقاً يسلكه غير هذا الطريق سيؤدي إلى زعزعة الأمن والاستقرار في المنطقة، ويقود إلى التفرقة والشنات، ويؤدي إلى التفكك والحرب والتمزق، لذلك وفي ظل تلك الظروف الحرجة ظل عبد العزيز يقود السفينة بحذر وحكمة وتؤده، وبقوة إرادة ومضاء عزيمة، قدماً نحو تحقيق سياسته الرامية إلى جمع الكلمة العربية، وتوحيد الصف، وتقوية علاقاته مع زعماء القبائل ومشايخ الخليج، لاعتقاده الراسخ أن ذلك التعاون سيقود في النهاية إلى تحقيق آمال الأمة في الاستقلال والوحدة، وسيقضى في النهاية على الهيمنة الأجنبية والسيطرة البريطانية بطريقة واعية وهادئة، وفي نفس الوقت سيتمكن من خلال ذلك من تحقيق أهدافه بالقضاء على خصومه وأعدائه، وهو مانح فيه تماماً عندما اكتمل بناء دولته بقيام المملكة العربية السعودية عام ١٩٣٤م.

Inclosure in No. 6.

Colonel Surtees to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 36.)

Sir,

Constantinople, July 1, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to request that you will be so good as to forward, for the information of the military authorities, the following résumé of the actual military and political condition of affairs in the Yemen:—

At the death of the Imam, Mohammed-el-Din, of the family of the Zeiditi, in 1904, two candidates for the Imamship appeared on the scene, viz., Yahya Hamid-el-Din, the son of the above-mentioned Imam, and Saïd Mohammed-el-Haschim-el-Dajani, the latter being a man of some 60 years of age, capable, educated, and Chief of the tribe of Dajan, which is located in the Sa'nda country.

The chief tribes of the Yemen, however, chose as Imam Yahya, who on the death of his father assumed the additional name of Hamid-el-Din (but is known by the Turks as Mohammed Yahya), and marched against Saïd Mohammed-el-Haschim-el-Dajani, conquered him, and compelled him to relinquish his claim to collect taxes from neighbouring tribes.

When Marshal Feizi Pasha in last September retook Sana'a, Mohammed-el-Dajani rebelled against the Imam, hoping that the Turks would reward him by nominating him Imam of the Yemen.

Several fights took place between the partisans of the Imam and of Mohammed-el-Dajani, finally resulting in the advantage of the latter. These hostilities were frequently interrupted by intrigues conducted by both parties against the Turks, and also by intrigues between the Turks and El Dajani against the Imam.

It seems that Yahya wrote a long letter to El Dajani exhorting him to come to terms and to operate jointly with him against the Turk, their natural enemy; but the Imam of Sa'nda (El Dajani) rejected this offer, refusing to admit a rival in the Imamship, arguing that it was not hereditary, but should be held by a member of the Zeiditi who was over 40 years of age (a condition unfulfilled by Yahya), and that the Imam should not only be the most learned in the doctrines of Islam, but also the most valiant in war. Moreover, El Dajani challenged his rival to a theological dispute, undertaking to recognize Yahya's authority should it be decided that the latter had vanquished him.

Yahya did not accept these proposals. El Dajani then developed a conciliatory attitude towards the Turkish Government, and applied for a small pecuniary subsidy and some munitions of war, promising if such were granted to fight against Yahya. This offer was submitted to Constantinople for the decision of the Sultan, by whom it was not unfavourably received, since a *modus vivendi* with Yahya appeared impossible, not only because of his unconciliatory demeanour, but because of the unbending attitude of the Zeidites, who do not recognize in the Sultan the Commander of the Faithful, alleging that this title is vested in the Zeid Arabs, who are descended from the Prophet, whereas the Sultan is a Turk and not an Arab. On the other hand, to arrive at an arrangement with El Dajani did not appear to present insuperable difficulties, since the latter did not aspire as Yahya did to the Caliphate.

It seems that the Sultan's reply—characteristic of the usual yielding diplomacy, which frustrates no one—was received about a month since by the Yemen authorities, and was to the effect that the pecuniary subsidy could be granted if the Yemen authorities considered it advisable, but that the request for arms could not be acceded to, as, if El Dajani should be victorious against Yahya, there was no guarantee that he would not appear at the head of the Zeiditi in arms against the Imperial troops.

Meanwhile, the whole country continues to be in a state of anarchy. The high-land Arabs are at present occupied in agricultural pursuits (the harvest is reported to be abundant) and are tranquil, but the struggle will shortly recommence.

The military situation shows no sign of improvement. Feizi Pasha is still at Sana'a, but with the scant forces available is unable to undertake any expedition, whilst discipline deteriorates and mutinous acts are prevalent.

About the middle of last month some *Redif* companies of the garrison of Imran left their post and marched to Sana'a, where they clamorously urged their claim to be discharged as some of their comrades at Sana'a had been.

Feizi Pasha caused these men to be paraded and addressed them, requiring them to return to their duty, but many refused to listen to him, and spread themselves over the city. Shortly after this the Pasha received information that the mutineers intended

to force one of the town gates of Saana by night and to march out thence to Hodoila, where they hoped to obtain possession of a ship and set sail from the Yaman.

The Marshal thereupon concentrated some reliable troops with artillery near the gate, and when the column of rautincors approached, opened fire. Many were killed, the remainder being made prisoners, and eventually distributed amongst the loyal battalions; only a very few contrived to escape, and these have probably joined Yahya.

It would seem that the Porte has decided to gradually withdraw from the Yemen all the remaining Redif battalions, and to send only recruits as reinforcements; 17,000 are required.

Information received from Smyrna states that these are to be supplied from this year's levy, from which only the most robust are chosen, and a proportion of two-thirds of those presenting themselves at Smyrna are destined for the Yemen.

I have, &c.
(Signed) H. CONVERS SURTEES, Colonel,
Military Attaché.

[23214]

No. 7.

Sir N. O'Connor to Sir Edward Grey.—(Received July 9.)

(No. 449.)

Sir,

Constantinople, July 8, 1906.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 400, Confidential, of the 11th ultimo, I have the honour to forward herewith a despatch from His Majesty's Acting Consul at Jeddah, respecting the state of affairs in the Nejd and Bin Saoud.

I have, &c.
(Signed) N. R. O'CONNOR.

Inclosure in No. 7.

Acting Consul Mohammed Hussein to Sir N. O'Connor.

(No. 34.)

Sir,

Jeddah, June 10, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to report that news has come here that Bin Saoud has lately given orders to all the Arab Sheikhs and tribes in Nejd to desist from keeping communication with the Turkish officials and troops, and to stop carrying their mails and supplies, under a threat of severe punishment if his orders were not complied with.

The Sheikhs of tribes who were till now helping the Turks in Nejd have informed the military officers who are with the Turkish troops there that they will have nothing to do with them in future, and that they will not carry their mails and supplies.

This information was sent by the officer in command of the Turkish troops in Nejd to Medina, and was telegraphed to Constantinople, wherefrom order has been given to the Military Mutassarif, who is still in Medina, to march with 600 troops and two guns to the help of the Turkish troops now in Nejd, and take the necessary steps to keep the lines of communication open.

It is also reported that the son of Bin Rashid has also gone out to attack Bin Saoud, and has asked the Turkish troops to co-operate with him.

I have, &c.
(Signed) MOHAMMED HUSSEIN.

[23435]

No. 8.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received July 10.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of (1) Secret
[1609]

line. Government of Bombay therefore recommends that either (1) Resident at Aden should first address *Mutesarrif* of Tais; or (2) a formal representation regarding violation of frontier involved in levy of these dues at Al Doka should be made to Porte. We propose to authorize former alternative subject to your approval.

Inclosure 2 in No. 23.

Mr. Morley to Government of India.

(Telegraphic.) P

India Office, May 2, 1908.

AFFAIRS in Aden hinterland. Your telegram dated the 25th April. Before any communication is made to the Turkish authorities I should like to consider the papers and to receive your opinion on the question whether the dispute is such as to require our intervention. It is possible that matter, which seems to be one of local interest, may involve no international complications. At present I am not sufficiently informed as to the nature or mode of collection of the dues collected on behalf of the *Mudir* of Mafalis.

[16899]

No. 24.

Treasury to Foreign Office.—(Received May 15.)

Sir,

Treasury Chambers, May 14, 1908

I AM directed by the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th ultimo, transmitting a copy of the India Office letter of the 3rd ultimo with reference to the provision of a steam-launch for the use of the Political Agent at Kuwait.

In the absence of any recommendation from Secretary Sir Edward Grey, my Lords assume that the India Office proposal has not received his concurrence.

I am, &c.

(Signed) G. H. MURRAY.

[17038]

No. 25.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 13.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 26th April, relative to affairs at Kuwait.

India Office, May 17, 1908.

Inclosure 1 in No. 25.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Bushire, March 18, 1906.

HAVING spent three days at Kuwait during last week, I have the honour to submit, for the information of Government, a few observations regarding the present aspect of affairs there.

I met Sheikh Mubarak on three occasions, and on the 7th instant had a lengthy interview with him at the Agency, for the details of which I beg reference to the attached Memorandum drawn up for me by Captain Knox, who was likewise present.

It will be seen that during it several topics were touched upon, some of which are subjects of separate correspondence.

2. The trend of our conversation regarding the affairs of Central Arabia, which was started by Sheikh Mubarak, is of some significance. The possibility of the Ruler of Kuwait smoking the calumet of peace with Bin Rashid, and Mubarak's own vision

of a three-cornered compact between himself, Bin Rashid, and Bin Saood, which would in practice probably be found to amount to a defensive alliance for resistance to Turkish expansion in Nejd and Haasa, is an interesting, if somewhat utopian, prospect to contemplate.

It is to be feared, however, that Sheikh Mubarak's own ambitions, as indicated in the second of the conditions suggested by him to Bin Rashid, are likely to form the chief obstacle to such a development.

On the other hand, there is no doubt that in the course of the strife of the last few years both Bin Saood and Bin Rashid must have been brought to realize what a strong position the Ruler of Koweit, territorially situated as he is, occupies both strategically and politically in relation to them, and they evidently see the advantage of maintaining friendly relations with him.

In connection with Bin Saood's doings, I may remark it is possible that his recent telegram to the Porte was sent to disarm suspicion preparatory to some further move, as recent reports from Dabrein show that the Turks are now having trouble at Hofuf, in which it seems possible, if not probable, that Bin Saood has had an indirect hand.

3. As for Sheikh Mubarak's attitude towards ourselves, I do not consider that on the whole it gives any present cause for dissatisfaction or anxiety; rather the contrary. As long as the practical expression of his sentiments in regard to us undergoes no change, the improvement of the relations between Mubarak and the Turkish authorities at Bussorah, within reasonable limits, is rather a convenience to us than otherwise. The Sheikh's treatment of our Agent, and his invariable demeanour towards myself, could not be more satisfactory and sensible than it is. He has always treated Captain Knox exceedingly well; more so than ever lately, and it is a matter of satisfaction to me as it will, I am sure, be to Government that our Representative seems clearly to have gained Sheikh Mubarak's personal regard, and that he is visited freely in a friendly way by many of the Sheikh's subjects. He is thus making useful influence of a kind which seems to be all we require at present and which we can legitimately cultivate.

It is only in regard to the Arms question that the position at the present moment leaves much to be desired, and this is partly owing to the fact that the general question of the Gulf arms traffic is *sub judice*. I do not know quite what line to take with the Sheikh in the event of our having an exhaustive change of views in this connection, and until I am sure of our intentions it seems better for me to keep off the subject and avoid any specific discussion with him.

4. The question of the conveyance of the Turkish postal bag to Al Haasa, of which a good deal has been said, has, I think, been somewhat misunderstood, and I concur with the Political Agent in thinking that there is nothing in the existing working arrangement which need cause us to take exception to, or be exercised by, Sheikh Mubarak's connection with it.

Inclosure 2 in No. 25.

Note of a Conversation between the Resident in the Persian Gulf and Sheikh Mubarak of Koweit, dated March 7, 1906.

ON the 7th March, 1906, at 4 P.M., the Sheikh of Koweit returned the informal visit paid by the Resident on the previous day.

The present interview lasted about an hour and a-half, and Sheikh Mubarak was friendly and cordial as usual.

The Sheikh informed the Resident that he thought he would be interested to hear that he had lately, on the 24th February (29th Zi-ul-Haj), received a letter from Bin Rashid, couched in friendly language and proposing that Sheikh Mubarak should be on the same terms of friendship with him as the Rulers of Koweit had been with his uncle and grandfather before him. The Sheikh said that he had replied to Bin Rashid that he, Mubarak, was a man who loved peace and quietness, and would welcome friendly relations with him, provided that Bin Rashid would keep within his own boundaries and not harass his neighbours, and was really sincere in his desire for peace.

The Resident, in the way of friendly interest, asked how peace could be arranged between the two; whether a personal meeting would be necessary or whether trusted messengers would be sent.

The Sheikh replied that it would be done by correspondence, and that a meeting

would be unnecessary. He proceeded to sketch the terms on which, in his opinion, a reconciliation between him and Bin Rashid could be considered practicable. These were:—

1. That Bin Rashid should have Chhaffa (Kassa) and Hail, and the Bedouins of Jebel Shammar.
2. That he, Bin Sabab, should have Koweit, Ancyza, Boreyda, Sedeyr, and Washm, and should control the tribes occupying them.
3. That Bin Saood should have Nejd and the Wadi Downasir.

The Resident asked if Sheikh Mubarak thought that he would be able to keep the parties to their agreement with himself and with one another; and the Sheikh replied that he could.

The Resident then asked whether, under such circumstances, Bin Rashid would have sufficient income to enable him to live without harrying his neighbours, and Sheikh Mubarak replied that he would have Hail and Chhaffa, the Zakat of Shammar, and the produce of forays on the Harb and Ancyza-tribes between Hail and Medina.

Asked what view the Turks would, in his opinion, take of this triple alliance, Sheikh Mubarak replied that they would undoubtedly regard it with disfavour.

The Resident then asked whether the relations between Sheikh Mubarak and Bin Saood continued the same as formerly; to which Sheikh Mubarak replied that they did, and that Bin Saood still listened to his advice. Major Cox then thanked the Sheikh for his co-operation in ascertaining the truth regarding Bin Saood's alleged intention to visit Oman.

Mubarak rejoined that Seyyid Feisal of Muscat had also written to him, and that he had told his Highness that there was no cause for apprehension, and that Bin Saood had quite enough to do where he was for some time to come.

A reference was then made to the long telegram sent from Bushire to Constantinople through Jasim-bin-Thani on behalf of Bin Saood. Sheikh Mubarak was asked what inference he drew from the fact that Bin Saood had not consulted him before, and regarding its dispatch. The Sheikh said that he had received full details from Bin Saood's messenger, Massad-bin-Suwallim, who sent the telegram, but admitted that he had heard nothing on the subject direct from the Bin Saood family or from Abd-ur-Rahman. He thought this was because the telegram had been inspired by Sheikh Jasim-bin-Thani, of whom he spoke in no very favourable terms.

Sheikh Mubarak next mentioned that Nasir-bin-Mubarak of the El Khalifah family had just been paying him one of his periodical visits and had only left a couple of days before. He continued that Nasir had told him of his meeting with Captain Prideaux, and had gone on to ask him (Sheikh Mubarak) to put in a good word for him to the Resident, with a view to a reconciliation being effected between himself and Sheikh Esa.

Sheikh Mubarak agreed with the Resident in thinking that Sheikh Esa would resent any overtures on behalf of Nasir Mubarak, and that it would be difficult to alter the latter's circumstances during Sheikh Esa's lifetime.

The Resident then introduced the topic of the flag and ships' articles to be carried by Koweit vessels.

It may be mentioned here that the Resident had brought with him a specimen flag of the pattern previously selected by Sheikh Mubarak with the addition of the word "Koweit" in Roman letters as well as Arabic.

The "Articles" were read over to the Sheikh, and it was explained that it was proposed that the English translation should be verified by the signature of the Political Agent, and this the Sheikh considered would be an advantage. Sheikh Mubarak approved of the "Articles" with the exception of the item "Name of Nakhoda." To this he objected, as the Nakhodas were always changing.

The Sheikh then inspected the flag, and after doing so said that he would lay before the Resident what appeared to him the objections to the use of the flag as now shown him, and that then, if the Resident did not consider the objections of any weight, he would be prepared to order his subjects to adopt the new pattern.

The Sheikh then explained his objections at some length. He recited his grievances against the Turks and their oppression in the matter of his Fao date gardens and their ingratitude for all he had done in their behalf. He clearly showed that he considered that all the trouble he experienced at their hands was due to his friendly attitude towards the British Government.

He said in conclusion that he would accept the flag as it stood if we would give him

a written guarantee to protect him against any consequences that might arise to him from its use.

It proved, on further inquiry, that it was the addition of the English characters to which he objected. The reason for this addition was thoroughly explained to him, but the explanation did not remove his objections, and he was therefore told that the European lettering was only a useful addition and not an essential, and he then expressed himself as quite ready to adopt the flag, without the English letters, and combined with the "Articles," for use by his subjects.

Sheikh Mubarak next informed the Resident that Bin Rashid had sent a messenger to Meshed Ali, who had laid hands on all the money belonging to Yusuf-bin-Brahim in that place.

Sheikh Mubarak then went on to explain that he too had claims against the house of Bin Ibrahim; that account books, in Arab merchants' dealings, were the only evidence, and that the deposits belonging to himself in the hands of Abdul Aziz-bin-Ibrahim, the present Representative, amounted to 1,30,000 rupees; and that the advances against him were 70,000 rupees, showing a balance of 60,000 rupees in his favour.

He said that Abdul Aziz at present resided at Surat, in the Bombay Presidency, and would certainly contest the claim; and that he (Sheikh Mubarak) would be glad of assistance from the Resident to enable him to obtain a settlement of the accounts and the payment of the balance due to him. He said he would be glad to appoint an Agent who would take the account book to Bombay for examination.

In this connection Sheikh Mubarak seemed to be only putting forward a feeler and did not make any definite proposals.

In conclusion, the Resident asked Sheikh Mubarak whether he could inform Government that his affairs generally were, as they seemed to be, in a satisfactory and prosperous condition. Mubarak replied that they were. Asked, "as regards the Turkish authorities?" he rejoined "yes, just at present they are satisfactory, but it costs me £ T. 1,500 a-year in douccours to their officials to maintain that position."

The Sheikh then expressed his gratitude for the amount of British protection received; declared that the peace and rest he now enjoyed were, he knew, the result of British support; and that he desired no other or better protectors. He concluded by referring to the pleasant relations which existed between himself and the British Representative.

[17040]

No. 26.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(received May 18.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 12th ultimo, relative to the Political Officer at Dihala.

India Office, May 17, 1906.

Inclosure 1 in No. 26.—

Government of Bombay to Government of India.

Sir,

Bombay Castle, March 19, 1906.

WITH reference to paragraph 2 of Mr. Holland's letter dated the 8th February, 1906, I am directed to state that the Bombay Government have adopted the suggestion made in paragraph 2, and have gazetted the Political Officer at Dihala as a Political Agent.

2. I am to request that the necessary orders may issue to the Inspector-General of Ordnance, Southern Circle, to meet his indents for flags.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

E. W. EDGERLEY.

[6662]

No. 31.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received February 24.)

Sir, With reference to my letter of the 29th April, 1904, as to the affairs of Nejd, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Morley to inclose to be laid before the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, copy of a further Secret letter from the Government of India on the subject of a visit which the Wahabi Amir Abdul Aziz-bin-Saoud is reported to be intending to make to the Pirate Coast and Muscat in the coming spring.

It will be observed that on the 5th December, 1905, the Government of India authorized inquiries being made of the Sheikh of Kuwait as to Bin Saoud's intentions, but that the result has not yet been reported. In the meanwhile, the Government of India, in view of the serious consequences which would ensue if Bin Saoud should succeed in establishing his ascendancy over the Trucial Chiefs or the Sultan of Muscat, suggest that he should be approached, either through the Sheikh of Kuwait or the Sultan of Muscat or other suitable channel, with a view to ascertaining whether he is prepared to stand by the Declaration of his predecessor not to oppose or injure British subjects residing in his territories, and not to interfere with the Arab tribes in alliance with the British Government. In regard to this I am to observe that the Declaration made in 1866 was not proposed, or even formally accepted, by the British Government, and the Government of India further suggest that, in the event of Bin Saoud's failing to give the necessary assurance, he should be warned that any attempt on his part to interfere in Oman or on the Pirate Coast would be regarded as an unfriendly act, and that suitable measures would be taken to frustrate it. These measures, in the opinion of the Government of India, might consist either of a more stringent embargo on the import of arms at Kuwait and elsewhere, or, in the case of necessity, of actual armed assistance from British ships to the Sheikhs threatened.

The serious consequences which might arise from the re-establishment by Bin Saoud of the Wahabi dynasty throughout the centre of Arabia were referred to in the despatch from His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople, No. 373 of the 18th May, 1904, and the question is further complicated if, as appears to be the case, Bin Saoud has been recognized by the Turkish Government and has acknowledged the suzerainty of the Sultan. It will be observed that the Government of India consider that it would be needless and undesirable to bring pressure to bear on Bin Saoud through the Turkish authorities.

So far as Muscat is concerned, I am to observe that the French Government is, conjointly with the British Government, interested in its independence, and in the event of interference by the Wahabis with the Trucial Chiefs the measures proposed by the Government of India might not be effective. For instance, such control as we may be able to exercise over the importation of arms into Arabia is limited to arms imported by British subjects. The questions raised by the Government of India are thus complicated, and in view of our desire to refrain from any entanglements with the Rulers of Nejd, it seems desirable to take no steps, in the absence of any urgent necessity caused by Wahabi action, until His Majesty's Ambassador at Constantinople has been consulted on the proposal to approach Bin Saoud otherwise than through the Turkish authorities.

The suggestion of the Government of India that in the event of Bin Saoud's failing to give satisfactory assurances a more stringent embargo should be placed upon the traffic in arms appears to raise a further difficulty by conveying the implication that, in the contrary event, the Government of India would be prepared to acquiesce in the import of arms by the Sheikh of Kuwait. Mr. Morley is aware that in June 1904† it was decided to defer measures which were then under consideration for preventing the import of arms into Kuwait. He would, however, be reluctant to approve any permanent departure from the established policy of His Majesty's Government of maintaining an effective control over the arms traffic in these waters.

I have, &c.
(Signed) A. GODLBY.

* See Declaration of the Wahabi Amir, dated the 21st April, 1866 (Atchison's Treaties, vol. 1, p. 116).
† See Sir T. Sanderson's letter of the 21st June, 1904.

Inclosure 1 in No. 31.

Government of India to Mr. Morley.

(Secret.)
Sir,

Fort William, January 11, 1906.

WE have the honour to forward for your information, a copy of the correspondence regarding a proposed visit of Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman-bin-Saood to the Pirate Coast and Oman, and to invite a reference to the correspondence ending with Mr. Brodrick's Secret despatch, dated the 29th April, 1904, on the subject of our relations with the Wahabi dynasty.

It will be seen that Abdul-bin-Saood, who has been staying in El Katr, has addressed letters to the Trucial Chiefs expressing his intention of visiting their territories in the spring, and that the Chief of Abu Dhabi has conferred personally on the subject with the Sultan of Muscat, who is much agitated at the idea that the Amir of Nejd may possibly visit Oman. His Highness considers that, should Abdul Aziz make his appearance anywhere on the shores of Oman, it would be the signal for all the Ghafiri tribes to rise against him.

2. Reports from our local officers in the Persian Gulf seem to point to the recent reassertion by the Wahabi dynasty of its former position in Nejd acquiring a permanent character. The cessation of hostilities in Nejd has left Bin-Saood free to expand in other directions, and the visit of Sheikh Zaid of Abu Dhabi to Muscat shows that the situation is actually the cause of some anxiety to the Trucial Chiefs, of whom the Sheikh of Abu Dhabi is the most important. We therefore consider it very necessary that a course of action should be concerted at an early date, so that we may be prepared for developments. On being apprised of Bin Saood's intention to visit the Pirate Coast and Oman in the ensuing spring, we directed Major Cox to ascertain the facts from Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait. We desire, however, to point out how very serious to our prestige and influence the consequences might be if Bin Saood should attack the Pirate Coast Chiefs or the Sultan of Muscat, or succeed in extending his influence over them, and how important it is that we should prevent, as far as lies in our power, such a contingency, especially now that the Wahabi Amir has recognized the suzerainty of the Sultan.

3. In our Secret despatch dated the 24th March, 1904, we contemplated the possibility of having to revive the Treaty relations which existed with the Wahabi Amir, in case Bin Saood should succeed in establishing and extending his ascendancy. Now that the latter has come into power, and has given out that it is his intention to extend his influence towards Oman and the coast generally, it seems to us desirable to ascertain whether he is prepared to stand by the engagement of his predecessors not to oppose or injure British subjects residing in his territories, and not to interfere with the Arab tribes in alliance with the British Government. His Majesty's Government will no doubt agree with us that it would be both useless and undesirable to bring pressure to bear on Bin Saood through the Turkish authorities, since his proceedings at El Hassa and Nejd, as reported in the recent diaries from the Persian Gulf, indicate that he would not be likely to pay any attention to the remonstrances on their part, while we should be serving Turkish interests by involving ourselves in complications with the Wahabi Amir. We would therefore suggest that, if His Majesty's Government see no objection, this inquiry be made from Bin Saood through Sheikh Mubarak of Kuwait or the Sultan of Muscat, or other suitable channel, and that he be warned, in the event of his unwillingness to give the necessary assurances or to declare his intentions as affecting British interests in Oman or along the Arab coast, that any attempt on his part to interfere in that locality, or with the Chiefs and their subjects, would be regarded as an unfriendly act, and that suitable measures would be taken to frustrate it. These might amount, in our opinion, to a more stringent embargo on the import of arms at Kuwait and elsewhere on the Arabian coast of the Gulf, or even, in the case of an attack being imminent, to actual armed assistance from British ships to the Sheikhs threatened, as might be necessary.

We have, &c.

(Signed)

MUNTO.
KITCHENER.
A. T. ARUNDEL.
DENZIL IBBETSON.
H. ERLE RICHLARDS.
J. P. HEWETT.
E. N. BAKER.
C. H. SCOTT.

Inclosure 2 in No. 31.

Captain Trevor to Government of India.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, translation of the inclosed news-letter which I have received from the Residency Agent, Shargah, reporting, *inter alia*, the movements of the notorious Mohamed Abdul Wahab, of Darcin, in Katif district.

Bushire, October 13, 1905.

Inclosure 3 in No. 31.

Residency Agent, Shargah, to Major Cox.

(Translation.)
ON the 11th Jamadi Thani 1323 (13th August, 1905) the Chief of Debai proceeded to the village of Hatla for the purpose of repairing a spring for irrigation of date trees, &c. He returned to Debai on the 23rd Jamadi Thani (25th August, 1905), and it appears that he has appointed one of his men, named Abdullah-bin-Bauker, who belongs to the Lariyel Ajam tribe, to look after the spring.

Shargah, September 15, 1905.

On the 14th Jamadi Thani (16th August, 1905) Mohamed-bin-Abdul Wahab arrived at Debai by the mail-steamer from Bombay.

When he landed at Debai from the mail steamer the Chief of Debai's *locum tenens* fired a salute of two guns and hoisted his flag on the Government House. This Mohamed-bin-Abdul Wahab is a merchant and deals in pearls, but he is a resident of Darcin, in the district of Katif, and a Turkish subject. He visits Bahrein, Katr, and Bombay.

It appears that Mohamed-bin-Abdul Wahab is the bearer of presents sent to all the Chiefs of the (Pirate) Coast from Abu Dhabi to Um-el-Kowein, by a Bania named Nakandas Jowerjin, residing at Bombay.

Every Sheikh has been sent a silver tray, weighing 130 miskals, and one pair of binoculars, and one brocade shawl with a letter. I beg to forward herewith a copy of one of the letters for your information.

Mohamed-bin-Abdul Wahab arrived at Shargah on the 21st Jamadi Thani (23rd August, 1905). The Chief of Shargah fired a salute of two guns and hoisted his flag on the Government House, and entertainments were given in his honour by the Chief of Shargah and some of the inhabitants of that place. He remained at Shargah for three days and handed to the Chief the presents sent with him by Nakandas Bania, adding a small bundle containing silk cloth, abba (cloak), a watch, &c. He then returned to Debai. On embarking on the boat at his departure for Debai, he distributed 500 rupees amongst the servants of the Chief of Shargah.

The Chief of Ajman had sent two dromedaries to Mohamed. He, however, did not accept them, and returned them to the Chief, sending 100 rupees as a present at same time from himself to the Chief. The Chiefs of Shargah and Debai had each sent two dromedaries to Mohamed Abdul Wahab. He accepted them and dispatched them to Bahrein by the mail-steamer.

Mohamed-bin-Abdul Wahab tried to bring about a reconciliation between the Chief of Shargah and his uncle, Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan. The latter, however, did not agree that the reconciliation should be effected through him (Mohamed), saying, "You are a foreigner, and an understanding should be made by one who should (always) be present to see that it is not infringed."

I have heard that a friendship exists between the Headman of Fujeira and Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan, and that the former has invited the latter to come to Fujeira as his guest and has prepared for him some presents in the shape of dates, &c., and awaits Sheikh Salem's arrival at Fujeira.

It appears that, if no reconciliation is effected between the Chief of Shargah and Sheikh Salem, the latter will join the Headman of Fujeira and Zed-el-Heleli, the head of Shehiyeen, against the Chief of Shargah and take possession of the villages belonging to the latter in the mountainous districts of Ras-el-Kheima and Shargah. But this fact has not become public as yet.

Most of the inhabitants of Shargah and Ras-el-Kheima inwardly desire to be ruled by Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan. If the latter attacks Ras-el-Kheima and Shargah even

with only 100 men, the townspeople will join him. But Sheikh Salem is an old man and does not like fighting and quarrels, and only desires means of subsistence from the Chief of Shargah; but the Chief does not agree to grant him the same, and I think that, if the case remains in this state, Sheikh Salem will take some measures to involve the Chief in trouble. Mohamed-bin-Abdul Wahab gave Sheikh Salem-bin-Sultan 400 dollars and twenty bags of rice as a present.

Inclosure 4 in No. 31.

Nakaudas Jwerjin to the Sheikh.

(Translation.)

15th *Jumadi-ul-awwal*, 1323 (July 19, 1905).

YOU have of course heard the news of the marriage of (my) son Subhagh. We have sent marriage gifts to some of our friends. As you are one of the most respectable friends of ours, we send you, through Sheikh Mohamed-bin-Abdul Wahab Pasla, a present, viz. a silver tray and a pair of binoculars, which I request you to accept and oblige us.

My son Subhagh sends you salaams.

Inclosure 5 in No. 31.

Extract from the Diary of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Week ending October 15, 1905.

Shargah.

13. October 5, 1905.—Abdul Aziz-bin-Saood has addressed letters to the Tribal Chiefs in which he announces his visit to El Katr and his having effected reconciliation between the El Murrab, Beni Hajir, and Ajman tribes. He also expresses his intention of visiting the Chief's territories in the spring. He left El Katr and went to the watering-place Anzrookh.

14. Chief of Abu Dhabi is reported to have sent the letter received by him from Bin Saood to the Sultan of Muscat, and he himself proposes to go to Muscat to confer with His Highness on the subject. The Residency Agent, Shargah, has been instructed to keep a careful watch and report future developments.

Inclosure 6 in No. 31.

Extract from the Diary of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Week ending October 22, 1905.

Shargah.

1. September 27, 1905.—Sheikh Zaeed-bin-Khalifa, Chief of Abu Dhabi, came to Debai on the 23rd September with a view to endeavouring to effect a reconciliation with his wife, who recently left him and went to live at Debai with her father. The latter is Sultan-bin-Naser Sweidi, whom Sheikh Zaeed has been trying to settle at Zorn (a disputed peninsula between Shargah and Ajman). Sheikh Zaeed's mother was a relative of Sultan-bin-Naser.

2. The Chiefs of Shargah, Ajman, and Um-el-Kowein came to Debai to see Sheikh Zaeed, and matters about which there were disagreements between them were discussed. Sheikh Zaeed asked the Chief of Um-el-Kowein to refrain from entering into any relations with the Bedouins, assuring him that if he was afraid of them he would support him against them. The Chief of Um-el-Kowein, though he inwardly wishes to maintain his relations with the Bedouins, especially the Beni-Kuth, has accepted Sheikh Zaeed's advice. The Chiefs then returned to their territories, where they were visited by Sheikh Zaeed later on.

Inclosure 7 in No. 31.

Captain Tressor to Government of India.

I HAVE the honour to forward, for the information of the Government of India, a translation of a report which I have received from the Residency Agent at Sharjah, together with the inclosures. From the latter it will be seen that Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman-bin-Saood visited Katr during the hot weather, and that he proposes to visit the Arab Coast and Oman in the spring. These facts were briefly noted in the Diary of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the week ending the 15th October, 1905, and it was stated that the Chief of Abu Dhabi proposed to confer with His Highness the Sultan of Muscat on the subject.

2. I have now heard that Sheikh Zaeed bin-Khalifa duly visited Muscat, and that the Sultan is much agitated at the idea that the Amir of Nejd may possibly visit Oman. His Highness considers that should Abdul Aziz make his appearance anywhere on the shores of Oman, it would be the signal for all the Ghafsi tribes to rise against him.

3. I think it is unlikely that Bin Saood will endeavour to visit the Pimte Coast and Oman, but the appearance of the Wahabi Amir in this quarter would certainly cause trouble, and I think that steps should be taken to prevent his making any such visit, should it appear later that he seriously contemplates doing so.

I therefore submit this report, with the request that the Government of India will be pleased to favour me with instructions as to what action should be taken should such a contingency arise.

Inclosure 8 in No. 31.

Residency Agent, Sharjah, to Major Cox.

(Translation.) I BEG to forward herewith a copy of a letter from Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman, Amir of Nejd, to the Chief of Debai. He has addressed similar letters to the other Chiefs.

Herewith is also inclosed copy of a letter from Khalid bin-Abdulla-es-Soweidi, residing at Katr, to the Chief of Abu Dhabi, and of the letter from Amer bin-Shaban, of Beni Hejir, to the Chief of Abu Dhabi. They all contain reports regarding the aforesaid Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman.

The Chief of Abu Dhabi has dispatched the letter received by him from Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman, to His Highness Syed Fysel Sultan of Muscat, and intends proceeding to Muscat by the mail-steamers which is due at Debai from Bussorah on the 6th October, 1905. I have learnt from the Chief of Abu Dhabi that he intends to confer with His Highness Syed Fysel regarding the proceedings of Abdul Aziz, Amir of Nejd, who will probably visit the Arab Coast.

Inclosure 9 in No. 31.

Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman-bin-Saood to the Chief of Debai.

(Translation.) 20th Jemad-es-Sani, 1323 (August 22, 1905). OUR state is good, by God's grace. I write to inform you that I came to these parts in consequence of the disagreement which had taken place between the Yam tribe (i.e., Ajman).

I visited Katr, and effected a reconciliation between them, and punished the offenders.

It proposed to stay there to look into certain affairs, but it became too hot—the heat of this country is well known—and I will, if God please, visit these parts without fail when the spring comes. My object in doing so is to look into certain affairs. I thought it desirable to inform you of this.

Hamaal-el-Jareibi will furnish you with further particulars.

Inclosure 10 in No. 31.

Khalid-bin-Abdullah-as-Soweidin to Sheikh Zaeed-bin-Khalifa.

(Translation.) 27th Janu-ry-Sani, 1323 (August 29, 1905).

I HAVE received your esteemed letter, and was glad to hear of your welfare. Sheikh Humaidan's letter has been received and gladdened me. I wish to furnish you with the news of Bin Saoud and the Bedouins. After his arrival at El Hassa, he remained there for several days, and he was given a grand entertainment. He summoned them (the inhabitants) and issued bills on them. No one could reject the bills. He has appointed three Sheikhs at El Hassa for hearing complaints and imprisoning people. The Askers (Turkish soldiers) were obedient to his orders. He made peace between the Bedouins. And Bin Saoud will take action against whomever found guilty of having committed robberies. Maaynd and Nawleh-bin-Sherim of Al Murrab, Bin Shaban of Beni Hajir, and Mansour-bin-Ghanim of Kheyria came to him and were reconciled with him. He made peace between them and Ajman and other tribes, and proceeded to a watering place named Azarnookh to-day.

Mansour-bin-Ghanim came to me, gave me this news, and brought me a complimentary letter from him informing me of this arrangement.

After the peace was made, the representative of Mari (Al Murrab) went to Baccj, and that of Beni Hajir proceeded to Arinj.

As regards Ali-bin-Ahmed (El Khalifa of Bahrein), the Christians summoned him to Bushire, and told him either to remain as before, that is to say, as a wicked man (Shaki), or to undergo five years' imprisonment at Muscat. He preferred to undergo imprisonment, and proceeded to Muscat.

Inclosure 11 in No. 31.

Amer-bin-Shaban to the Chief of Abu Dhabi.

(Translation.)

[Undated.]

I BEG to inform you that I visited Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul Rahman-bin-Saoud and found him to be a highly qualified person like his relatives, or rather superior. I was reconciled to him; and he made peace between me and the Ajmans and others.

By God, O Zaeed! my eyes did not fail to see the trays, tents, house furniture, coffee-pots of Constantinople, made belonging to Bin Rashid (which were with Bin Saoud). Your turn has come now.

He said, "O Amer, by God I will explore the country belonging to my father and grandfather, from Muscat to Scalan."

O Zaeed, I saw that he turned his eyes (towards you). I asked him whether he had a good intention or a bad one. He said he would act upon God's will. I said,

"Zaeed is the Imam of the Arab Coast and has relations with your people at Katif and El Hassa, and this fact is not hidden." He said he would do everything properly. He is a man of high account. As to El Hassa, by God! the day he made his entry there, his men took charge of the Local Administration, and he deprived that place of all its valuables.

Inclosure 12 in No. 31.

Extracts from the Diary of the Persian Gulf Political Residency for the Week ending

October 7, 1905.

Muscat.

20. SHEIKH ZAEED-BIN-KHALIFA, the Chief of Abu Dhabi, arrived at Muscat on the 18th by steam-ship "Madura," accompanied by his son and Sultan-bin-Dhiyab; His Highness the Sultan, with Saïyid Muhammad-bin-Turki, met him on the steamer.

Inclosure 1 in No. 31.

French Consul, Muscat, to British Consul, Muscat.

Muscat, le 20 Avril, 1906.

AFIN de terminer la question de l'application de la sentence arbitrale de La Haye dans l'affaire des boutriers Mascatis Français, et comme conclusion de nos entretiens sur ce sujet, j'ai l'honneur de vous adresser sous ce pli un projet de Règlement élaboré par moi dont je vous serai obligé de vouloir bien transmettre le texte à Londres avec les observations que vous jugerez utiles d'y ajouter. De même serai-je particulièrement heureux de communiquer à Paris tout projet de Règlement similaire que vous voudrez bien m'envoyer.

Nos deux Gouvernements, à l'aide de ces documents, seraient par suite en mesure d'établir un Règlement définitif.

Veuillez, &c.
(Signé) R. LARONCE.

Inclosure 2 in No. 31.

Projet de Règlement concernant l'application de la sentence prononcée par le Tribunal Arbitral de La Haye le 3 Août, 1905.

Remarks by His Majesty's Consul at Muscat upon the French Consul's plan for applying the sentence of the Court of Arbitration.

ARTICLE 1. Les sujets du Sultan qui sont autorisés à l'avenir à arborer le pavillon Français sur leurs navires jouissent dans l'Oman du même traitement et des mêmes droits que tous les autres sujets de Sa Hautesse.

Art. 2. En principe les personnes autorisées à arborer le pavillon Français sur leurs navires sont celles dont la liste a été dressée par le Consulat de France à Muscat, et remise au Consulat d'Angleterre le 4 Mars, 1906, à moins de modifications pouvant résulter du décès de ces personnes ou du retrait par la France de l'autorisation.

Art. 3. Les propriétaires de bontres possédant pavillon Français pourront en toute liberté vendre leurs navires, ou en acheter d'autres sans que leur droit au pavillon Français puisse être contesté.

Art. 4. Les boutriers qui ont le droit d'arborer le pavillon Français ne pourront transmettre ce droit à leurs héritiers, descendants ou collatéraux, les bontres dont ceux-ci obtiendraient ainsi la possession arboreront le pavillon du Sultan.

2. Impossible, as, supposing every owner to have received authorization for one dhow between 1863 and 1892 (for which we are obliged to take the word of the French), only those would be entitled to retain it who had actually the same boat sailing under the French flag at the time the Hague sentence was pronounced, and his number of bonts could not be increased subsequently according to our reading of the terms of the Award (*vide* Mr. Graham's despatch of the 8th August, 1905, to which I was referred for guidance by the Government of India in their telegram of the 21st November last), and my list and remarks on that of the French.

3. There would be no objection to the proprietors selling their dhows, but the reply to (2) applies to the question of their replacement. If this concession is made, the purchase of a new dhow should at the most only be allowed to replace one lost or sold.

Art. 5. La juridiction du Sultan sera applicable dans l'Oman à tous les propriétaires de bœufres battant pavillon Français, ainsi qu'aux capitaines et aux membres de l'équipage; toutefois pour les crimes et les délits ou contestations, ayant eu lieu à bord en haute mer ou dans les eaux territoriales de l'Oman, et en général partout où le droit d'inviolabilité est réservé, la compétence restera au Consul de France, ou à défaut à son représentant, ou aux officiers de la Marine Nationale. Si le crime ou délit est établi, le coupable sera rennis au Sultan.

5. This should not be accepted; the views of His Majesty's Government, having been already communicated to the French, should be adhered to.

This clause throws much light upon the manoeuvre reported in my letter, dated the 16th November, 1905.

Art. 6. Les dispositions du présent Règlement, après approbation des Gouvernements Français et Anglais, seront communiquées, ainsi que le texte de la sentence, par voie d'affiches, aux sujets du Sultan.

6. A clause should be added to the effect that infringement of the arrangement come to by any of His Highness' subjects would be severely punished. The owners should be allowed to give up their authorization when they please.

Mascat, le 20 Avril, 1906.

(Signé) R. LARONCE.

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No. 35.

India Office to Foreign Office. — (Received May 29.)

THE Secretary in the Political Department presents his compliments to the Director of Military Operations, and begs to forward herewith, for his information, copy of Memorandum of external affairs relating to Arabia, the North-East Frontier, Burmah, Siam and China, for the month of April 1906.

India Office, May 29, 1906.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Memorandum of Information received during the Month of April 1906, regarding External Affairs relating to Arabia.

[Note.—This Memorandum is based upon reports the accuracy of which it is not always possible to guarantee.]

ADEN.

(SEE paragraph 4 of the Memorandum for March 1906.) On the 20th April, 1906, the Secretary of State was informed that the Resident at Aden had reported that the local British officials would place no hindrance in the way of the Italian recruiting agents, but that the Sultan of Shehr and Mokalla, who derived considerable profit from the trade which passed between his port of Mokalla and the Mijjertain and the Ben Adir coasts, was, not unnaturally, averse to any action in the matter which might be construed into co-operation with the Italians in an endeavour to coerce the inhabitants of the coast district concerned.

2. (See paragraph 8 of the Memorandum for February 1906.) On the 7th April the Resident at Aden telegraphed that Major Jacob had reported further fighting between the Abdali and Subnibi tribes near Al Anad, and that further trouble was brewing near Nobat Dakim. One Sallani, a minor Abdali Chief, who had recently quarrelled with the Sultan, appeared to be at the bottom of the trouble. The Resident was calling upon the Abdali Sultan to restore order and to take Sallani prisoner, if possible.

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3. On the 25th February, 1906, the Resident at Aden reported that a party of the Barheimi tribe of the Subulhis had recently made a raiding expedition into Turkish territory, and looted eighty-five camels from the Hakami, Hatema, and Kawassama tribes in the vicinity of Moza. Orders have been given for the immediate restitution of the camels.

TURKISH ARABIA.

1. (See paragraph 7 of the Memorandum for March 1906.) The Resident at Aden reported, on the 25th March, 1906, that Major Jacob had heard from a Turkish deserter that Kunkban was still in possession of the Turks who were, however, besieged at Imran, Hajja, and Tawila, and were losing ground. Ahmed Feizi Pasha was still at Sanna. The Military Attaché at the Embassy at Constantinople had an audience with the Ottoman War Minister on the 30th January, 1906, and in the course of conversation, his Excellency stated that it was true that Liwa Hiza Pasha had been killed, and that there had been a slight disaster near Shehara, but that the statement that there had been a loss of one and a-half battalions was a gross exaggeration. The Veli was said to have reported to Constantinople that the rebels had begun to move their forces, together with the guns captured from the Imperial troops from Shehara, towards Firket-el-Azr. Both the Veli and the Commander-in-chief are said to have demanded the dispatch of a Nizam division with fresh drafts, and they have also asked for a battery of the new pattern of quick-firing guns with 20,000 rounds of ammunition and four howitzers. A despatch from General Feizi Pasha speaks of fifty guns having been captured by the rebels at Shehara, half of which were subsequently recaptured. The Resident at Aden, writing on the 1st April, 1906, reported that the Marshal, Feizi Pasha, was said to have applied to be relieved on the plea of old age, his real reason being the shortness of money and supplies. The Taiz authorities were said to be attempting to disarm the tribes in their vicinity. Sir N. O'Connor reported on the 26th February to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that there was reason to believe that there had lately been a considerable amount of friction between the Commander-in-chief of the forces in the Yemen and the Special Commission of Inspection under Ferik Ferid Pasha. The Commission apparently endeavoured to interfere with Feizi Pasha's conduct of the military operations, but the Commander-in-chief succeeded in compelling them to retire from Sanna to Hodeidah, whence they had been striving to obtain permission to return to Sanna.

5. *General.*—(Vide paragraph 15 of the Memorandum for March.) In connection with the recent attack on Messrs Lynch's depot at Marghil, the Naval Commander-in-chief telegraphed on the 4th March that His Majesty's ship "Lapwing" had been ordered to proceed to Bussorah from Bushire.

PERSIAN GULF.

6. *Muscat.*—(Vide paragraph 21 of the Memorandum for March 1906.) On the 9th April, a telegram was received from His Majesty's Secretary of State for India consenting to the unconditional loan of 20,000 rupees to the Sultan of Muscat. The telegram was repeated to Major Cox on the 24th April, and he was directed to advance the money, if it was still considered desirable to do so. He was requested to furnish the Government of India with his opinion as to the manner in which the repayment of the loan should be made.

7. On the 27th March a letter was received from Major Cox stating that M. Goguyer was preparing to build a house on the site of certain go-downs which had been purchased by a servant of his. The Sultan of Muscat had assured Major Gray that the sale of the property to M. Goguyer's servant had been genuine. There was little doubt, however, that M. Goguyer had advanced the money.

8. (Vide paragraph 17 of the Memorandum for March 1906.) A dispute has arisen between M. Goguyer and Ali Musa over the importation of arms. Large quantities of arms and ammunition have been landed at Muscat and Koweit.

9. *Koweit and Nejd.*—(Vide paragraph 23 of Memorandum for March 1906.) Early in March, Major Cox had a lengthy interview with Sheikh Mubarak at the Koweit Agency. The Sheikh expressed himself as grateful for British protection which had ensured peace and rest to his State, and testified to the pleasant relations which existed between himself and Captain Knox. He stated that at present his relations with the Turkish authorities were satisfactory, but confessed that it cost him £ T. 1,500 a-year in

douceurs to Turkish officials to maintain that position. Major Cox considers that as long as the practical expression of the Sheikh's sentiments in regard to us undergoes no change, the improvement of the relations between Sheikh Mubarak and the Turkish authorities and Bassorah, within reasonable limits, is rather a convenience to us than otherwise. Major Cox notes Captain Knox seems to have gained the Sheikh's personal regard, and that he is visited freely in a friendly way by many of the Sheikh's subjects.

10. The Political Resident announced in a telegram, dated the 25th April, that the Sheikh of Koweit had informed the Sheikh of Mohammerah that the Ibn Rashid and his immediate following had been surprised and annihilated by Ibn Saood. The telegram has been repeated to the Secretary of State.

11. (*Vide* paragraph 22 of Memorandum for February 1906.) His Majesty's Secretary of State telegraphed on the 14th April, approving of the Government of India's proposal that a warning should be given to the Trucial Chiefs to the effect that the Government of India would not view with complacency the intrigues of any of them with Ibn Saood. Major Cox has accordingly been authorized to convey the warning.

His Majesty's Government have accepted the view of the Government of India that a warning to Ibn Saood would be necessary, if he were to carry out his reported intention to visit the Pirate Coast and Oman. They consider, however, that it would be better that such warning should be conveyed to him only in the event of his appearing upon the coast, and that it should then be conveyed to him direct by the British Government rather than through the Sheikh of Koweit or the Sultan of Muscat. It is proposed that, in the event of a warning being necessary, a vessel of war should meet Ibn Saood at one of the places along the coast, which he proposes to visit, and that he should be given clearly to understand that no tampering with the engagements and Conventions of the Trucial Chiefs will be allowed.

12. *Bahrain*.—(*Vide* paragraph 21 of Memorandum for September 1905.) With reference to Major Cox's letter of the 9th September, on the question of obtaining reparation for the murder of certain Bahreinis by the Behah tribe, the Government of India recommended to the Secretary of State, in January last, the adoption of one of two possible alternatives:—

- (1.) To press for compensation from the Porte for the outrage committed by the Behahs in its territory; or,
- (2.) To drop the case.

His Majesty's Government have decided to accept the second alternative, and do not propose to pursue the matter any further, so far as the Turkish Government are concerned. They consider, however, that the Sheikh of Bahrain may be advised that a further remedy lies in his own hands, as he is competent to exclude from Bahrain members of any tribes which are in a position to exercise pressure upon the Behah to induce them to come to terms. Finally, they desire that the Sheikh should be informed that His Majesty's Government will not countenance any excessive action on his part in pursuance of this policy.

13. (*Vide* paragraph 29 of Memorandum for February.) In reply to the Secretary of State's inquiry as to how the case of the Persian subject who had committed an offence in Bahrain harbour should be dealt with, the Government of India telegraphed, on the 6th April, that the practice is for the Political Officer to dispose of such cases, the representative of the Sheikh being present. It was stated that, as the Persian Government had recently been notified formally that the Island of Bahrain was under British protection, there appeared to be no reason why the Political Officer should not follow the ordinary practice, especially as the offence in question was committed in connection with a British vessel. The Political Officer's action could be justified on the ground that he exercised jurisdiction either delegated by the Sheikh or derived from his position as Representative of the protecting Power. Major Cox reported on the 21st April that the offender, having restored the money stolen, had been released by the Political Agent on bail in anticipation of sanction.

14. In January last the crew of a Persian dhow bound for Bahrain complained to Captain Prideaux that, their boat having been driven by stress of weather into the anchorage of Abu Dhaluf, on the north-western extremity of the Katr Peninsula, they were ill-used by the Sheikh and people of the place, and the cargo of the boat was forcibly removed and appropriated by the villagers. Captain Prideaux proceeded to Abu Dhaluf on board His Majesty's ship "Sphinx," and summoned the Sheikh to reply to the accusation made against him. The Sheikh at first refused to comply, but on

being threatened with punishment he eventually appeared at Bahrein. He made a statement before Captain Pridcaux to the effect that a quarter of the cargo of the boat in question had been given to some of his subjects by the boatmen in return for assistance, and that the rest of it had been purchased from the Persians by the people of Kair. As no British or Bahrein interests appeared to have been involved in the case, the Government of India intimated to the Political Resident that Captain Pridcaux would have been better advised had he refrained from action until he had obtained the orders of the Government of India.

13. *Hassa*.—Events are reported from Hofuf which appear to have much excited the populace against the Turks. The disturbances originated on account of an announcement made by the Turks of their intention of taking a census of the people and cattle of the oasis of Hassa. The people regarded the proposal with suspicion, and refused to allow it to be carried out. The Turkish military outposts in Hassa are said to have been evacuated, the troops being concentrated in the fort of Hofuf.

16. *Miscellaneous*.—(Vide paragraph 31 of Memorandum for February.)—On the completion of his inquiry in the Persian Gulf, Dr. Thomson returned to India and had an interview with Sir Louis Duns, Secretary to the Government of India in the Foreign Department, at Agra on the 2nd April. He expressed himself as still of opinion that a quarantine station on any of the islands at the mouth of the Persian Gulf was quite unnecessary. Both Henjal and Ormuz would be, in his opinion, unsuitable for such a station, and he thought that if the Conference of 1903 had been aware of the sanitary arrangements introduced under the auspices of the British Government at the Persian ports from Bander Abbas to Mohammerah, and those now existing at Muscat, Bahrein, and Koweit, they might probably have waived the question of a new quarantine station.

17.—(Vide paragraph 30 of Memorandum for February 1906.) M. Hatinoğlu informed His Majesty's Vice-Consul, Bushire, that the Sponge Syndicate had, three months ago, sent out a Greek captain, with instructions to visit all localities in the neighbourhood likely to yield sponges. He added that the captain had since left for Europe in order to engage Greek divers. He will return with them and with diving apparatus in about two months, and will start operations at the Islands of Ormuz, Larak, Kishm, and Lingah, and, lastly, at Kharg Island. At the latter place, according to M. Hatinoğlu, some extraordinarily large petrified sponges had been found.

Sinla, May 1, 1906.

(Signed) R. E. HOLLAND.

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No. 36.

Sir Edward Grey to Sir F. Bertie.

(No. 288.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 29, 1906.

THE French Ambassador inquired on the 25th instant whether the Regulations to be applied to the Muscat dhows in accordance with the decision of the Court of Arbitration at The Hague had been approved, as some time had elapsed since the French Consul at Muscat had submitted them to the British Consul there.

M. Cambon was informed to-day that the negotiations in progress between Major Grey and M. Laronce do not appear to have as yet resulted in a satisfactory understanding, but that His Majesty's Government are awaiting a further report on the subject.

I am, &c.

(Signed) EDWARD GREY.

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No. 37.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received May 30.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated 26th April, relative to the reported desire of Bin Saoud to visit Oman.

India Office, May 29, 1906.

Inclosure 1 in No. 37.

Major Coz to Government of India.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Bushire, April 5, 1906.

IN continuation of my letter, dated 23rd February last, I have the honour to attach copy of a note addressed by Captain Knox to me from camp on the 25th February last, in which he gives the purport of the reply said to have been addressed to Sheikh Mobarek by Bin Saoud in connection with the latter's reported desire to visit Oman.

I have, &c.

(Signed) P. Z. COX.

Inclosure 2 in No. 37.

Political Agent, Koweit, to Major Coz.

Camp Rasul Arz, February 25, 1906.

I WENT to see the Sheikh this morning, and his Secretary handed me the copy of the following letter from Bin-Saoud to Sheikh Mobarek. I note below the translation:—

"May God prolong your life! Your Excellency knows from beforehand that the people of Oman have been our correspondents from the day that we were in Koweit, and it is true that we have sent to them letters and correspondence to them, but, by God, it was not intentional [? with any ulterior motive], and we did not mention in it any affairs in which we saw any harm, but there may have been something which we were not careful over. God forbid that there should be harm in it, and we have before written to your Excellency and Aboosahr: you know—may God preserve you!—that we are a little deficient in our knowledge of titles and how to answer them; and we fear [? to write] something that may not be suitable to their rules. We do not know them that we should write to them according to their desire, and we expect that from your kindness. We hope from God that He will prolong your existence, and amaan."

N.B.—I have not seen the original, but I have no reason to suppose that this is not genuine.

[18790]

No. 38.

India Office to Foreign Office.—(Received June 1.)

THE Under-Secretary of State for India presents his compliments to the Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and, by direction of Mr. Secretary Morley, forwards herewith, for the information of the Secretary of State, copy of inclosures in a letter from the Foreign Secretary to the Government of India, dated the 19th April, relative to affairs in the Aden Hinterland.

India Office, May 31, 1906.

Inclosure 1 in No. 38.

Government of Bombay to Government of India.

Sir,

Bombay Castle, March 9, 1906.

WITH reference to my letter dated the 23rd February, 1906, I am directed to forward herewith, for the information of the Government of India, copy of a Memorandum from the Political Resident, Aden, dated the 25th idem, and of its inclosures, being notes of an interview between Captain Hancock and Imad-bin-Ahmed, Sheikh of

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Inclosure 1 in No. 46.

Major Cox to Government of India.

(Confidential)

Husnir, February 4, 1905.

IN reply to Foreign Department letter, dated the 8th December, 1905, regarding the possibility of an endeavour by Abdul Aziz-bin-Saood to visit Oman and the Pirate Coast, I have the honour to attach copies of correspondence which has since passed in that connection between myself and the Political Agent, Koweit.

2. Even allowing a modicum of discount upon the views expressed by Sheikh Mubarak, the probability is that they are primarily well founded. At the same time the question of the spread of Wahabi influence is one with regard to which we need to maintain a very vigilant attitude, and I should have addressed Government on the subject on my recent return from Beraimi had I not found the Foreign Department letter under reply awaiting me at Bushira.

3. The Sheikh of Abu Thabi, at a confidential interview which he asked me to give him on the "Lawrence" spoke to me very strongly on this question. The Government of India will have learnt from paragraph 2 of Captain Truor's previous communication that Sheikh Zaeed was sufficiently disturbed by Bin Saood's missive to proceed to Muscat and discuss the situation with the Sultan, and I found him still much exercised at heart.

It is not surprising that being, as he is, the leader of the Hinawi element in Northern Oman (as the Sultan of Muscat is further south), and having been himself instrumental in the final extinction of Wahabee influence from Beraimi and the Pirate Coast in 1870, Sheikh Zaeed, and his kinsman the Sheikh of Dubai, should regard the contingency of the appearance of Bin Saood with much anxiety.

4. Nor is there, on the other hand, much cause for wonder if, as is the case, the Ghafiri section of the Trucial Chiefs, that is to say, all except Abu Thabi and Dubai, should regard Bin Saood's overtures with favour, if not with pleasurable excitement. An indirect result of them has been that Shargah and Hamriyah, and Shargah and Umm-el-Kowain, who have respectively for a long time been on strained terms, have lately made the support of the Beni Katab Bedouins in a quarrel with Sheikh Zaeed on the Beraimi side an occasion for reconciliation among themselves, as Ghafiris, for united resistance to Sheikh Zaeed, whom, as the most powerful Chief on the coast and as a Hinawi, they regard with jealousy and distrust.

I did my best to impress upon Sheikh Zaeed the folly of inducing a combination of the other Sheikhs against himself by proceeding to extremities with the Beni Katab, and I am glad to hope from the Residency Agent's recent reports that he has found a pacific solution of his quarrel with them, so that any cause for actual unrest is for the present removed. I think, however, that I have said enough to show that the progress of Bin Saood's fortunes will be keenly watched on the Pirate Coast by all parties.

5. Sheikh Zaeed was very anxious that the Government of India should take steps to prevent any movement of Bin Saood towards the Pirate Coast, and that imperative orders should be issued to the Ghafiri Sheikhs not to intrigue with him.

Beyond the sign which we have already made through Sheikh Mubarak, as now reported, there seems little else that we can do at present; but if the Government of India approve, I see no objection to my giving all the Trucial Sheikhs, both Ghafiri and Hinawi, to understand that on the grounds that general unrest prejudicial to our commercial interests on the coast would inevitably result, the Government of India would not view with complacency the intrigues of any of them with Bin Saood. The existing impression on the Trucial Coast undoubtedly is that as long as Bin Saood restricts his movements to the land, the British Government will, as heretofore, refrain from interfering in any way; but the political situation has been so much modified in the last thirty-five years, that I can hardly think that in regard to the present problem a strict adherence to tradition would be a safe policy for us to pursue.

I beg to be favoured with the views and instructions of Government as early as may be possible.

Inclosure 2 in No. 111.

Major Cox to Captain Knox.

January 17, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to forward a copy of a communication from the Government of India regarding the reported ambition of Bin Saood to visit the Pirate Coast and Oman. This was one of the matters which I had hoped to discuss with you personally at Bussorah last week, but, as you know, I was prevented from proceeding there at the last minute.

2. The position is briefly this:—

Abdul Aziz-bin-Abdul-Rahman has shown by letters which he has addressed to some of the Trucial Chiefs that he has some idea of attempting to re-establish the old Wahabee influence which his forefathers formerly acquired in Oman; and of paying a preliminary visit to the Pirate Coast in connection with that aspiration.

His interference in the affairs of the Trucial Chiefs or with subjects of the Sultan of Muscat would obviously be a most undesirable contingency; and the Government of India consider that our best means of preventing it is through the medium of Sheikh Mubarak. Hence their desire that you should sound him on the subject.

In order that it may not appear that we attach very great importance to the reports at present existing, it would be better that you should in the first instance discuss the matter with Sheikh Mubarak, not as if you were acting on the instructions from Government, but as if on a casual reference from me. You might tell him, as is the case, that during a tour on the Trucial Coast from which I have just returned, I heard from some of the Sheikhs that Abdul Aziz-bin-Saood had been writing to them about a visit which he said that he contemplated paying to their country, and then ask him if he thinks that Bin Saood seriously contemplates such a thing. You could go on to say that you cannot suppose that Government would approve of any interference by Bin Saood in the affairs of Chiefs in Treaty relation with us; and that you would advise Sheikh Mubarak, as our friend and that of Bin Saood, to discourage the latter from the project should Bin Saood consult him in the matter.

Please report as early as possible the results of your interview.

Inclosure 3 in No. 111.

Captain Knox to Major Cox.

Camp Jahra, January 10, 1906.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your Confidential letter, dated Bushire, the 17th instant, on the subject of Bin Saood's projected visit to the Pirate Coast and Oman.

3. This morning I took the opportunity of discussing the matter with Sheikh Mubarak on the lines indicated at the close of paragraph 2 of your letter quoted above.

3. Sheikh Mubarak informed me that he had heard of Bin Saood's plans, which he regarded as a mere attempt to extort money from the various coastal Chiefs; that he had written already to Bin Saood, pointing out to him the impolicy of a confession, on the part of a Ruler, to lack of funds; and, further, reminding him that Bin Rashid was only scotched, not killed; that Bin Saood's power in Nejd was anything but finally established; that he had neither funds, nor transport for a policy of aggression in the direction of Oman; and that the first fruits of such an attempt would be that Sheikh Mubarak would break off relations with him.

4. The Sheikh, in conclusion, said that he did not suppose that, after this letter, Bin Saood would persist in his design, though Sheikh Mubarak would not undertake to answer for the opinions and policy of an ignorant savage.

5. The Sheikh and I were quite alone at this interview, and I have done my best to render accurately the substance of his remarks. It would appear that Sheikh Mubarak by no means approves entirely of Bin Saood; he complains that there is a want of system and organization in El-Riadh, and that Bin Saood is not the man to attain to the position of his forefathers. Recently the Sheikh has been constantly complaining of the degeneracy of the Arabs and the utter want of security and order outside the limits of his own territories; but I have been unable, so far, to learn what recent occurrences have given rise to these complaints.