

**AWM4**  
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EXTRACTS FROM WAR DIARY  
OF

INTELLIGENCE (POLITICAL) G.H.Q., E.E.F.,

AUGUST 1918.

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3rd.

The Commander-in-Chief has received the following telegram from the War Office on the subject of the appointment of an Italian Officer to be in charge of Italian civil interests in Palestine.

It appears to us that you have not quite understood the position, owing possibly to lack of clearness on our part. H.M. Govt., are ---ed? in considerable difficulty owing to interests and claims of a traditional nature in PALESTINE which both Italian and French Governments put forward.

The Italians insist that the present arrangement is not consistent with their prestige and require that they should have an officer in PALESTINE occupying the same advisory and consultative position in regard to Italian-Palestinian interests as is exercised by the French in regard to Franco-Palestinian civil interests.

We consider that we should accord this request and trust that you will accept an Italian officer in this capacity. The advisory and consultative powers of the Italian representative are to be confined to Italian-Palestinian interests in area marked as of international concern in the agreement map 1916. You should further observe that the position of the French representative in regard to Syrian affairs and his relations with C-in-C on administrative or political questions concerning Syrian areas of special interest to France are to be looked upon as considerations quite apart from Franco-Palestinian or Italian-Palestinian interests, that non-Palestinian questions would not concern Italian representative at all.

4th.

The Commander-in-Chief has informed the War Office that he agrees to the appointment of an Italian officer to be in charge of Italian interests in the capacity laid down in War Office telegram of August 2nd.

11th.

Intelligence Officer Medjel, reports that there is a strong antipathy in the district against the French Algerian troops. Several complaints have been received of their bad behaviour towards the population and particularly towards the woemn. Reports also state that gardens have been robbed by them.

15th.

The War Office has now decided that measures should not be taken against Aistrian and German firms in occupied territory in Palestine for post-war economic reasons but only if justifiable for military

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reasons or for preservation of derelict properties. The general policy with regard to business of evacuated Austrians and Germans should be to appoint agents to safeguard businesses. The British Military Authorities and not the enemy firms should appoint these agents.

Intervention by neutral consuls is undesirable.

This policy has approval of the Foreign Office.

16th.

The Commander-in-Chief has sent the following telegram to the War Office:-  
"I wish to emphasize, with reference to the relations existing between IBN SAUD and the KING of the HEJAZ as dealt with in telegrams which have passed between the HIGH COMMISSIONER of EGYPT, the CHIEF POLITICAL OFFICER, MESOPOTAMIA, and the FOREIGN OFFICE, that the probable result of a serious outbreak of hostilities between these two chiefs would be a call on SHERIF FEISAL by the KING for reinforcements, and a consequent unfavourable reaction on my own operations. As far as the HIGH COMMISSIONER's telegram of August 12th to the FOREIGN OFFICE is concerned I have the following comments to offer:-

1. The rightful ownership of KHURMA is the immediate point upon which the whole question hinges, and the bulk of the evidence which we possess distinctly favours the KING of the HEJAZ.

We should, I consider, inform IBN SAUD, that we shall throw no hindrance in the way of KING HUSSEIN, as far as the restoration of his position in KHURMA intself is concerned, but that beyond this he will not go. Consequently IBN SAUD must withdraw his adherents from there, and till such time as the question of the boundaries between himself and the King of the HEJAZ can be adjusted he must reserve his claims.

2. Information furnished by PHILBY makes it clear that the followers of IBN SAUD are, though restrained by the influence of their Chief, potentially hostile. I am of opinion therefore that IBN SAUD should be given no arms or ammunition at present, and that nothing in the way of a promise of any kind should be held out to him.

3. No advantage is to be derived, to my thinking, from urging IBN SAUD to make an attack on IBN RASHID. The latter is no longer a serious factor from a military point of view, and it is known to us that he is using SHERIF ABDULLA as a medium for overtures to the KING. The probability is that if IBNSAUD attacks him he will immediately make terms either with us or the KING of the HEJAZ, and we shall be placed in a difficulty in either case. It cannot be doubted indeed that if he joins KING we shall be invited to call IBN SAUD off. Furthermore, the KING is not likely to regard IBN SAUD's possession of

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HAIL with any favour and the friction between the latter and him and in consequence of our own difficulties in CENTRAL ARABIA would be to that extent increased."

17th.

Intelligence Officer, Jerusalem, also reports that the French Mission seems to be extending its propaganda among the natives. In the French hospital, patients are now treated free of charge, and the French are also said to be buying chairs and other furniture to present to the Mukhtataf ed Druss (Arab Literary Society).

28th.

Having been very cordially received, the Anglo-Italian Mission to Sayed Mohammed Idris has returned.

The following conclusions have been arrived at from the report of the Mission:-

1. Whilst present conditions exist, an attack on Egypt in force is out of the question.
2. An attack on Sayed Mohammed Idris and the Italians very improbable and could not have support from Sayed Ahmed, as now he has no armed forces at his disposal.
3. Provided relations between the Italians and Sayed Mohammed Idris continue as at present, the chance of hostile action indicated in para. 2 diminishes monthly.

The situation on the whole may be considered satisfactory and free from any anxiety.

The British Officers of the Mission make special mention of the extreme hospitality and kindness shown them by all Italian officers and officials, and it is suggested that an expression of thanks be forwarded to the Italian Authorities.